

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## MRS. BESANT ON DEATH AND AFTER.

WHEN I first criticised Mrs. Besant's newly-found Theosophy, and thereby incurred her severe displeasure, I predicted that her enthusiastic nature would carry her far on the road, which she thought of true philosophy, but which I thought of gross superstition. My prediction has been realised; and, unless for some accident, or some sudden turn in Mrs. Besant's mind or life, it will be realised still further. In this, as in other matters (as the French say) it is the first step which costs, because it involves all the following steps. Mrs. Besant placed her feet upon the high road of credulity when she succumbed to the Theosophical high priestess, whose life is a highly interesting and instructive chapter in the history of imposture. Madame Blavatsky had seen much of the world, and was up to most things. She had a surprising power of bamboozling people of some intelligence and culture. The broad-set eyes, and the great tiger-bar between and over them, indicated the species to which she belonged. Mrs. Besant, with her innocences and enthusiasms, was a baby in the hands of this female Cagliostro. She actually gave the Blavatsky credit for what she obviously did not possess. Her manners, for instance, were not such as might be expected from one who had tasted of spiritual wisdom at its secret sources; while her pretentious ignorance was enough to alarm any student not under the glamor of her audacity. She made the most grotesque mistakes in science, while pompously setting right in their own province such colossal authorities as Darwin and Hæckel. She had certainly read very widely (or got others to read very widely for her) in "occult" literature; but wherever one's own knowledge enabled one to test, she was a poor smatterer; and the same judgment is delivered upon her by specialists in most of the fields she invaded. It was not her learning or her intellectual power that captivated Mrs. Besant; it was her strong personality, her masculine dominance, her crafty self-possession. From the first minute of her enchantment, Mrs. Besant lost all sense of logic in relation to Theosophy. For instance, it was asserted, and the assertion was supported by positive, detailed evidence, that the Blavatsky had practised the grossest imposture in India. And how did Mrs. Besant dispose of these charges? She says she read them, and immediately joined the Theosophical Society—as though that were any answer. It is like saying, "I don't rebut the evidence against the prisoner in the dock, but I shall shake hands with him." What possible effect could that have on the sensible part of the jury? But this sort of logic has been displayed by Mrs. Besant ever since; indeed, she seems to have a dim perception of her weakness, for she dares not discuss Theosophy, or any part of it, with an out-and-out Freethinker—one who would

subject it to the critical tests with which she herself was familiar when she stood upon the Secular platform.

There is one aspect of Mrs. Besant's advocacy of Theosophy which I censured at first, and which I now think is something short of honest. Mrs. Besant used to present Secularism in its naked truth, to be embraced or rejected; but she follows a different course in regard to Theosophy; she puts its plausible features forward and conceals the rest, so that people who have heard her are positively astonished when they are told of some of her printed teachings. This seems especially the case when she addresses meetings, somewhat too chivalrously organised by Freethinkers. Now this is not fair, it is not really honest; though it may be in accord with the ethics of those who divide truth into "exoteric" and "esoteric." To my mind, it is rather suggestive of the spider and the fly. "Will you walk into my parlor?" "Oh yes," says the giddy fly, "it looks so nice, positively inviting." But what of the other rooms in your house; your garret near the sky, where you do star-gazing, and your basement, where crawl the foul things of savage superstition?

Many of our readers have heard Mrs. Besant in the sweet persuasive vein, and felt pleased if rather muddled. For their sakes, and not for our own satisfaction, we shall criticise her little volume on *Death—and After?* just issued as No. III. of a series of Theosophical Manuals. When we have done they will know more about Theosophy than if they had listened to Mrs. Besant (especially from Freethought platforms) for ten thousand years.

First, let us notice Mrs. Besant's attitude. Her devotion to the Blavatsky is complete; she mentions the great woman with profound veneration, swears to all she taught, and, in fact, just stews down the Blavatsky's voluminous nonsense. Mrs. Besant is also a patient disciple of the Masters—to wit, the Mahatmas. These Masters of Wisdom never appear for inspection. They lurk in the secret fastnesses of Tibet, which is a very unexplored part of the world, large enough to hide a good many things, even things that do not exist. They know a lot, but what dribbles out of them is very commonplace when it is not pompously silly. They inhabit higher planes of life than our greatest saints and sages, but somehow they have done nothing for Tibet, which is one of the poorest, dirtiest, and most degraded countries on earth. Still, they are going to give a tremendous lift to the civilisation of Europe; and if we live long enough we shall see—what we do see. Mahatmas are really the distinctive feature of Theosophy; it is absolutely nothing without them; and, in our opinion, they are a most farcical swindle. Madame Blavatsky created *these* out of her own fertile imagination, she put them where they could not be found, and she said, "If you want to know anything about them come to me; I am the chosen vehicle of their sublime revelations." And if you laughed at her Mahatmas, she was capable of indulging in

expletives that would strike envy into the soul of a trooper. How curious it is, if these Mahatmas are real personages, that they do not communicate with our Masters of Wisdom. Why do they neglect our Spencers and Huxleys? Why do they choose to speak through a woman like Madame Blavatsky, or a popular lecturess like Mrs. Besant? Why are they so fond of the ladies? Cannot they have some dealings with a man, a man of great eminence as a philosopher, of high and undisputed character, and of vast influence with the educated and thoughtful classes? Why, in short, do the Mahatmas confine their attention to smaller persons *with fish to fry*?

Relying upon these Mahatmas, and upon Madame Blavatsky, her great guide, philosopher, and friend, Mrs. Besant has an extremely easy task. She makes no attempt to prove, she simply asserts, and it seems to be a kind of blasphemy to ask for evidence. She dishes everything up in Hindu terminology, on the ground that "the English language has as yet no equivalents." But will it ever have them? Never, we suspect, by the assistance of Theosophists. The oriental lingo is part of the fascination to those who like to look profound on a small stock of learning. Besides, it imposes on the open-mouthed; and, if the Hindu terminology were translated into vernacular English, they would probably exclaim, "Good God! there's nothing in it." It is all very well for Mrs. Besant to pour out second-hand praise of "technical terms." We all know their value. But how is it we have not got them already? Because—and this is the only answer—because we are ignorant of the *things*. Western experience does not coincide with Oriental dreams.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

### ROBBING GOD.

I THINK it was Gibbon who shrewdly remarked that to the eye of the philosopher, the best priest was the worst. Were they all vicious, selfish or stupid, the hypocrisy and humbug of skypilotage would soon come to an end. It is the better men among those called by Carlyle "self-constituted impostors" who are the most dangerous, since they attract support to the flummery and lend countenance to the mummery of their profession. From this point of view, I am tempted to denounce Dr. Augustus Jessopp as one of the worst men in the land. 'Tis a ridiculous paradox, I own. There is certainly no person in the black business I esteem more highly or whose writings I read with greater pleasure. I do not grudge the Church its erudite Westcott, its florid Farrar, or its bland and benignant Benson. But I do grudge it the plain Norfolk parish parson, whose essays have not only the charm of style which springs from intimate acquaintance with the best literature of all time, but, better still, are instinct with fine character and humanity. In the days of Andrews, Jackson, Hooker, and Taylor, it would be natural to look for such a man as Dr. Jessopp in the Church. In those days its creeds were credible, and it alone offered leisure and a career to men of thought and refinement who were not anxious to mix in the struggles of the world. The Church then had great men. I admit it as ungrudgingly as I allow that in Dr. Jessopp they still have one worthy representative. But that day is over. Dr. Jessopp, as we shall see, admits it, and I sincerely trust he is among the last of the great writers who put their talents at the service of the Church.

In the July *Nineteenth Century* Dr. Jessopp has an article on "Robbing God." The silly phrase has been often used since Disestablishment and Disendowment have been in the air. Dr. Jessopp mildly says: "The

expression is one which I cannot but think wholly indefensible, look at the matter in what way we may." Of course the Church called gifts to itself gifts to God; but, as Dr. Jessopp points out, such gifts could properly only be made with the sanction of the State, and were in all cases subject to certain conditions binding upon the beneficiaries. Well up in English mediæval history, he knows that tithes and other gifts to God have in turn been claimed by monks, friars, secular clergy, Knights Templars and colleges. He asks, "Are we now going to denounce the principle which has guided our course for well nigh a thousand years as sacrilege? Can we seriously pretend that all these successive diversions of Church property deserved to be stigmatised as robbery?" Right, dear doctor. The nation, above all, cannot rob itself. Should it decide to devote six and a half millions yearly for purposes of education, the endowment of research, the encouragement of science, art and literature, and the relief of the poor, instead of spending this vast sum on a sort of post-mortem fire insurance, John Bull has exactly the same right to spend his money in the one direction rather than the other, that I have to buy books instead of paying for a church pew.

Dr. Jessopp cites the following from Coleridge as to the nation's right to deal with Church property. "Had every rood, every peppercorn, every stone, brick and beam been retransferred and made heritable at the 'Reformation,' no right would have been invaded, no principle of justice violated. What the state by law—that is, by the collective will of its functionaries at any one time assembled—can do or suffer to be done, that the State by law can undo or inhibit." He points out that since 1836 we have dealt with Church property on the assumption that it constitutes a fund which the Legislature has not only the right to administer for the well being of the people, but that it was the duty of the nation too to guard against its being in any way wastefully administered. The episcopal and capitular estates have been taken out of the hands of those bodies and readjustment of the revenues has been carried out with a high hand. This process must go on. Some day a Chancellor of the Exchequer will arise who will cut down the bishop's salaries and see that funds for university extension and grants for education shall be provided for out of the revenues in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Of course the men of God will cry out that God is being plundered. It is only natural for curs to yelp when shut out in a back-yard. There is, as Dr. Jessopp knows and shows, ample precedent. The universities were endowed from Church funds. Their ecclesiastical character is almost abolished. Fifty years ago there were twenty-four professors at Cambridge of whom five only were laymen. Now there are forty, of whom, excluding the professors of divinity, only three are in holy orders; while at Oxford, of the forty-eight professors, excluding the same class again, only three are clergymen. Further, Dr. Jessopp points out—

"The leaders in thought and culture, in mathematical and physical science, in history, economics, linguistics, even in classical learning—the leaders in literature in its widest acceptation—are no longer to be found among the ordained clergy of the Church of England, but outside their ranks. One fact alone may serve as a most startling confirmation of these assertions. In 1843 there were ninety Fellows of the Royal Society who were in Holy Orders. In 1893 the names of no more than sixteen clergymen of the Established Church are to be found in the roll-call of England's most illustrious brotherhood. It is worse than idle to shut our eyes to all this—the logic of facts is irresistible."

But Dr. Jessopp is a parson, though a very uncommon and superior one, more's the pity. Naturally he thinks the parsons are doing pretty well for what they take, and he wishes his brethren to drop their wild talk about robbing God, and to base the title of the Established Church to her vast

endowments on considerations of political expediency. That will be a plain and a reasonable issue. Fortunately his brethren are not so reasonable nor so far seeing as Dr. Jessopp. The church is falling more and more into the hands of inferior men. They know at bottom its power is based on blind reverence and superstitious fear. Instinctively they resort to these to maintain their position. Nothing is more ludicrous to the sceptic than to find himself menaced with a hell he has ceased to believe in. Yet the mass of the clergy will still continue to denounce the judgment of God against all who seek to lessen their incomes, for in their eyes the worst sacrilege is to threaten their tithes. To interfere with the privileges of the church is to lay hands on the holy ark of God, and to employ its revenues to secular purposes is to rob the Maker of the Universe! Let them rave; they will only render themselves ridiculous as well as contemptible.

J. M. WHEELER.

### PREDESTINATION AND DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

CHRISTIANITY is composed of some curious and perplexing elements. Many of its teachings are, moreover, grossly absurd and revolting. Take, for instance, the doctrine of Predestination, which is based on the New Testament, taught in the Prayer-book, defended in the Confession of Faith, and firmly believed in by thousands of orthodox Christians. This doctrine is unjust and inhuman in the extreme; it enunciates that which is an insult to man and a disgrace to any good God. It assumes that a being termed "Our loving Father" has so arranged the affairs of this world that his "children" are compelled to adopt a certain course, and for so doing they are threatened by this "Father" with eternal suffering in a place where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." From a human standpoint such conduct is rightly regarded as that of a cruel despot who ignores all sense of justice and generosity. Yet this is represented as being the work of a God who, according to theologians, inhabits the heavens, and is supposed to be the author of a religion of love and mercy. No marvel that the demon of fear possesses the hearts of those who have faith in such a being. The amount of evil involved in the conception of the existence of such a tyrant it is impossible to estimate; for it has been, and still is, the source of untold miseries. According to the doctrine of Predestination, God has predetermined all the events that happen to every individual; this in itself may not necessarily be a serious objection, providing that the events so ordained are suited to the desires, requirements, and happiness of the individual and of the general community. But the very opposite is the fact, inasmuch as by this "divine" plan the "few" only are sent to heaven, while the "many" go to hell. If a person thinks that he may be one of the "many" the reflection must appal him in the most serene hour of his existence. Whether the doctrine be true or false, the belief in it is sufficient to render life a burden and death a terror.

In St. Paul's time the question was raised, if the destinies of men were determined for them, how could God justly punish them for doing what they did? Paul met the difficulty by declaring (Rom. ix.) that man was like an earthenware vessel, for as the potter had the power and the right to mould the clay as he thought fit, so God was justified in making "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" It is "God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure" (Phil. ii.) Hence the true believer must leave all to God, for man cannot prepare him-

self for what is to come. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. iii. 5). "For of grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not by works lest any man should boast" (Ephes. ii. 8, 9). To be forewarned of what *may* happen is one thing, but to be assured of what *must* happen, in spite of one's own efforts, is a very different thing. It is no advantage to have these things "revealed," for if our destinies are fixed by one whose will is supreme, we are no more able to alter them than a straw floating down the river can direct its destination.

Paul denies our right to question this matter, but as it is supposed to personally concern us, and as it is alleged that our eternal happiness or misery is involved in the transaction, we altogether repudiate St. Paul's authority upon the subject. Our nature rebels against all teachings which are repulsive to our sense of justice—such as are taught in this Christian doctrine of Predestination. To put it in plain language, we are told upon "divine" authority, that God in the beginning designed, planned, or enacted, that during our lives many of us should endure trouble and suffering, and that our final doom should be everlasting destruction. If that is not the very incarnation of injustice, we are at a loss to conceive what can be. Moreover, we judge of this matter upon the same principle as Christians do of the actions of men in every-day life. A man is considered good who intentionally gives pleasure or affords relief to his fellow creatures, and a man is deemed bad who intentionally inflicts privation or pain upon others. According to this standard a God who is Almighty can be regarded as being good only when he determines the well-being of the human family here, and guarantees their happiness hereafter. Those who dispute this simple proposition deny that God has the quality that in man is considered moral and commendable. If the misery of men either in this, or in any other world, is determined or foreordained by God, than, as the Bishop of Chester recently said, "The character of God is at stake." The old notion that God has the right to do what he pleases with his own created creatures is as repulsive as the doctrine is that supports it. If we are held responsible for our actions, we should have some power in determining what those actions should be. The fact that this doctrine of Predestination is sustained by the Bible, divines and the authoritative books of the Church, increases in our opinion the magnitude and intensifies the force of the mischief, for the firmer the idea is established in the human mind, the greater will be the misery and evil inflicted.

Besides, the theory that there is a personal power who predetermines and controls what events may happen, makes it impossible for men to help themselves. There is also a further objection to the Predestination doctrine. If all things were preordained in the divine mind, then the alleged interference, or miraculous events, must be included. The scheme lands its believers in logical contradictions and paradoxes, from which we fail to see any means of their extricating themselves. We are aware that it has been suggested that we should not form a conception of God having human attributes, but that would amount to his having no attributes at all so far as we are concerned. When the affairs of life go well, the theologians ascribe them to the goodness and mercy of God, showing thereby that they judge him by the human standard of what is required and what is useful and beneficent. They never thank God for bad harvests, for earthquakes, for storms and cyclones, but they point to such events as warnings to those who escape their consequences that they should repent of their sins. The preordainer of disasters that destroy whole populations, or inflict tortures upon thousands of helpless victims, should

be looked upon as a malignant demon, and it is inconsistent to suppose that malignity can be a characteristic of a God of love. It is true that Lord Roseberry, at the recent Trinity House banquet, in speaking of the sad catastrophe of the loss of the "Victoria" and of hundreds of brave lives, attributed that fearful calamity to Providence. We grant that this was in accordance with the doctrine of Predestination, for the logical outcome of that theory must be that Providence is the cause of all events that happen. Still, we were not prepared to find that our Foreign Secretary could indulge in the monstrous notion that a good God would be guilty of an action that should be revolting to every humane mind. These debasing ideas would be avoided by accepting the facts of science, which teach that the laws of mind and matter are invariable and impersonal. Science admits of no interference from a personal providence, for nature serves all alike who are under precisely the same conditions. The waves engulf both parsons and pirates, the earthquake buries alike saint and sinner, and the lightning has no more consideration for the believer than it has for the sceptic. Nature may be cruel, but she is impartial and does not mock her votaries by torturing them when she should be kind and beneficent. Her laws are fixed, but she has not made it impossible for us to understand and obey them. But the God of Predestination first makes us impotent, and then damns us because we lack power.

This habit of ascribing to God the results of human action is rank superstition, and indicates to what an extent of folly theology will lead its victims. What can be more absurd than to say that the English were preordained by a good and an all-wise God to slaughter the French and to repulse the Russians, or that it was predetermined that the Germans should devastate France and deprive her of a portion of her territory? Why, the use men make of the name of God in modern times would have shocked the old Pagans. Special days have been set apart to ask God's help in ravaging a country and in destroying its inhabitants; and then prayers of thanksgiving have been offered to the deity for success in human slaughter. Thus we had the German emperor rejoicing that—

Ten thousand Frenchmen gone below;  
Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

CHARLES WATTS.

### THE APOSTLES' CREED.

MRS. HUMPHREY WARD, the authoress of *Robert Elsmere*, sends to the July *Nineteenth Century*—apropos of the attempt to introduce the Apostles' Creed as the minimum of dogmatic religious teaching into Board schools—a translation of a pamphlet on the Apostles' Creed, by Prof. Adolf Harnack, the most eminent of German theologians, and, according to Lord Acton, the Catholic, and Mrs. Ward, the Rationalist, the best ecclesiastical historian now living.

Prof. Harnack, holding the chair of historical theology at Berlin University, of course does not tell the blunt truth about the Apostles' Creed, or he would say it was a forgery. Down till the time of Erasmus and Valla it was taught in all Latin Christendom that this creed was the verbatim production of the apostles when the Lord sent among them the Holy Ghost he had promised. Peter began with the inspired words, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." Andrew continued, "And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord"; and so on till the latest apostle, Matthias, uttered the final words, "And the life everlasting." The legend is just as false and just as true as any other item of Christian mythology. What Prof.

Harnack says about the creed, and what even orthodox scholars are bound to admit, is that it is "the baptismal confession of the Church of Southern Gaul, dating from the middle, or rather from the second half, of the fifth century." I desire the reader to notice this, for it has bearings on the entire question of the origin of Latin Christianity, and is a strong argument for those who, with Prof. Johnson, believe Christendom, as we have it, to be of Franko-Italian origin.

It is true Prof. Harnack holds that the Creed as we have it is an amplification, as it doubtless is, of earlier forms of baptismal confession, which he calls "the old Roman Creed." But Prof. Harnack himself sees the difficulty of explaining how it came about that the Church of Rome should give up her old creed in exchange for the younger confession of Gaul. Yet Prof. Harnack is positive in his statement. "The kingdom of Charlemagne gave Rome her Creed. Nay, it also gave Rome, and through Rome the whole of Western Europe, a second Creed, the so-called Creed of St. Athanasius. Thus two of the so-called oecumenical creeds are really Gallic or, rather, Frankish." All students of Christian evidences should not only read, but mark, learn, and inwardly digest this statement of "the best ecclesiastical historian now living," and all that it implies. For if the Athanasian Creed, and still more the Apostles' Creed, which was supposed to be apostolical in authority, did not come from Asia Minor, but from Gaul, what reason is there to suppose that Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, the first alleged witness to the four gospels, ever had been in Asia Minor? If these creeds are of Frankish origin, may not some portions of the gospel story be of Frankish origin also?\*

Professor Harnack points out that the earlier forms of the Apostles' Creed omitted some of the most important dogmatic clauses. For instance, "conceived," "suffered," and "died," are added—also the clause "He descended into hell." "Catholic," "Communion of Saints," and "life everlasting." The Apostles' Creed in fact, like other portions of Christianity, has grown by a process of accretion. The Virgin birth and the Ascension Dr. Harnack holds, formed no part of early Christianity or of the early gospels. I give his own words: "It is one of the best established results of history that the clause, born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, does not belong to the earliest gospel preaching, and for these reasons (1) It is wanting in all the Epistles of St. Paul, and moreover, in all the Epistles of the New Testament. (2) It is not to be found in the Gospel of Mark, nor, for certain, in that according to John. (3) It was not included in the original material of Matthew and Luke, and in the sources common to both. (4) The genealogies of Jesus contained in both these gospels go back to Joseph, and not to Mary. (5) All four gospels bear witness, two of them directly and two indirectly, that the first proclamation of Jesus as Messiah, dated from his baptism."

In like manner Dr. Harnack gives his reasons for asserting that the Ascension forms no part of the primitive tradition. He says: "In the first Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 3, ff.) in the letters of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, and in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the Ascension is not mentioned at all. But it is also wanting in the first three Gospels. What we now read there on the subject are later additions, proved to be such by the history of the text."

The clergy want to see the Apostles' Creed taught in the public schools. But they would be very sorry

\* Note that the pun of Matt. xvi. 18 is perfect in French, *Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre*. Wetstein long ago pointed out that in the Codex Bezae, long held to be the most ancient MS. of the New Testament, appears *sonis*, which is French *soins*, and Black, in his *Palæoromæica*, p. 518, gives other instances of French words which underlie Codex D.

should the scholars learn the true history of that creed. Whence comes their anxiety to have infant minds recite their belief in a God Almighty and his Son, born of a virgin, who descended into hell and rose from the dead to sit on the right hand of an infinite being who is himself, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead? Simply because minds stultified with this disgusting nonsense will be little likely to question their privileges and pretensions. The whole purport of secular education is to train minds to be fit for the battle of life. The clergy seek to hoodwink them at the outset, that they may all their lives be willing tools in the hands of the self-elected men of God.

J. M. W.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.  
A PARABLE.

You have put into your hand a book purporting to be a work written by command of Chang-Wing or Wing-Chang, alleged to have been Emperor of China 2,000 years ago, and stating on its title-page that it was translated out of the "Original Chinese." You read the book as the original work of the said emperor, and never suspect anything wrong. You value it highly as an antiquity.

By-and-bye you learn that your printed book was not printed from the original; that, in fact, it was printed from the first manuscripts that came to hand, there being hundreds or thousands of such manuscripts about, all of them more or less different, and the whole of them differing from each other in at least 150,000 places. You are informed that no care was taken to secure the best and most correct manuscripts from which to print the book; that the original had been lost very early, that no known person had ever seen it; that all the manuscripts remaining were copies of copies of copies by no one knew whom.

You are further informed that it is extremely doubtful if such an emperor or person as the alleged author ever lived, that the Chinese records never mention him, and that for over 1,000 years the Celestials had treated the name with perfect contempt and wondered at the follies of the Westerns in accepting such a book as proceeding from an emperor of theirs.

It is further reported to you that that the manuscripts, one and all, of this book had been made and preserved by the most unscrupulous set of beings that ever disgraced humanity, and that they lived in idleness and luxury on the proceeds of the doctrines of this book.

You learn also that there are two great sects of those fellows who are so bitterly opposed to each other, that each party would burn the other to death if they had the power, and that they had actually murdered millions in their blind fury and selfish grasping after power and gold.

Beyond this you are informed that a company of scholars have set aside the text of your favorite book as unfounded, and reconstructed it from manuscripts gathered up from all quarters—except China! and in various languages. You learn last of all that scholars equally good had denounced the whole of this work, had defended the text of your book as the best copy of the original (which nobody ever saw), and declared the fresh manuscripts brought forward to correct your text to be utterly unreliable!

What value could you then attach to your book?

Well, that is essentially parallel to the case of the New Testament. Its author, "our Lord Jesus Christ," is a fictitious character; the original has never been found; the manuscripts, one and all, are of doubtful age and of no conceivable authority; and it is not within the power of any man to show which manuscripts are the best, which the worst, etc.

JOSEPH SYMES.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH IN WALES:  
WHAT THE CLERGY SAY, AND WHY THEY SAY IT.

DOUBTLESS the reader will be fully cognisant of the glaring fact that, throughout the country, there is now being raised a great commotion by those of the gold bottomed holy, out of the decaying dust-heaps of antecedent manipulation respecting the Established Church in Wales. It is, we know, anticipated that the Welsh Suspensory Bill will be introduced in the House of Commons during the present session, and thus the non-spontaneity and reason why prominence is assigned to this question of progress, slow, but of surety by those of Babel, who also arraign it before their own ebullient and so-called august personalities for judgment of peccadilloous conspicuousness and notoriety.

As, at last, a little clear daylight has been thrown upon the fracas, and as an explanation is now furnished, which, we are told, is consonant even with the ideas of many liberal Churchmen, I opine that the consideration of a few particulars of mental pabulum is worthy of Secularists, and will not be out of place in the columns of the *Freethinker*. Another purpose I have in mind—it is that of supplying subject matter and references concerning the above caption, so as to enable all who are interested to carry on the agitation in the lay newspaper press, or in journals which are conducted on strictly impartial lines.

Somewhere about two years ago, in 1891, the proprietors of a Welsh print, obtaining one of the largest and best circulations in the North, commissioned a special reporting correspondent to attend Churches during ordinary divine service in the Bishoprics of Bangor and St. Asaph, to ascertain to what extent was the attendance of worshippers (?) at these buildings. The result was the satisfactory compilation and publication of a list of a large number of the churches visited, with a tabulated statement of their various attendances during the time of the correspondent's visit. Space forbids the reproduction of the recapitulation in its entire whole, so I shall content myself (*pro tem*) with quoting only twelve, to which I will add the population of the parishes, value of living, at the time of my informant's publication.

Parish.	Population.	Living			Present.
		£	s.	d.	
Gwytherin ... ..	450	200	0	0	7
Llanefyd ... ..	876	310	0	0	8
Llanddiwe ... ..	471	171	0	0	7
Llanrilian ... ..	433	300	0	0	10
Penrhos ... ..	—	170	0	0	4
Penllech ... ..	231	190	0	0	3
Glyfin ... ..	562	300	0	0	15
Llangelynin .. ..	160	144	0	0	13
Bodfaen ... ..	303	209	10	0	7
Llithfaon ... ..	133	—	—	—	8
Pystill... ..	909	142	0	0	7
Total					2,136 10 0 89

Now let us see what the clergy say. In the language of hyperbolic vituperation, the Bishop of Winchester says the Welsh Suspensory Bill will introduce "a creeping paralysis" that will "daunt their energies, chill their hopes, diminish their resources, and give their enemies a fierce joy." It is "insolently unconstitutional," "insidious," and "threatens the conflagration of the holy and beautiful house" of the Church, which, we are told in all but the same breath, "will bleed to death"—truly a strange change of metaphor. Convocation of York passed a resolution assenting that if passed "the Bill would be a national crime, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the history of England [?!] since England became a nation." The Rev. G. N. Gray, mover of the resolution, stated that Welsh Disestablishment "would be a most tremendous blow to Christendom, a blow to the faith, a blow to the work," and "a blow to the person of Jesus Christ." Archdeacon Wilkins, in Durham Cathedral, declared Disestablishment to be "a national disaster" and "a national crime." He proceeded to remark that as he was "a priest of the Church of [the] living God, if a man came with sacrilegious hands to touch the ark"—I venture to say that it has every appearance of soon resting for ever on the mountains of Ararat—"of the living God, then by the grace of God would he seek to defend it." The Bishop of London (£10,000) says "they were defending a trust which God's providence placed in their hands, and they would never abandon that trust [I believe!] except under

downright compulsion." Dean Lefroy, at Norwich, denounced the Bill as immoral in inception, unjust in administration, tyrannical in nature, schismatical in range, and among the basest forms of political bribery"—(Charles Bradlaugh was done to death by a Christian Parliament, but from the clergy there was no language of denunciation for his doers. Oh, no, although it is now evinced that their voice is strong, and, if then raised, might have done invaluable service; but the shoe was not pinching there). The Chancellor of the diocese said it is "robbing God for the sake of votes." The Bishop of Manchester, at a defence meeting, drew a harrowing picture. He said greatly, and amongst it, behold! "Bishoprics would not be filled by the kind of men that were wont to fill them. Deaneries, canonries, and important incumbencies would not be filled by the men who were accustomed to hold them," and concluded by a false coloring of Mr. Gladstone.

The Bishop of Chester, preaching on Nonconformity, described it, vividly I suppose, as "but a crudely modern parenthesis in the religious history of the Principality," and said "the soul of Wales has now entered into the secret of those who lead Welsh political Dissent, and stands aghast." The Rev. C. C. Eccum, (C.C.E.C.C.) vicar of St. Agnes's, Villet-road, Liverpool, used strong language, diluted with prophetic frenzy of not the highest fatuity about the Bill. Previous to commencing his harangue, he warned his flock, and advised those who disagreed with him to leave the church. A considerable number took instant advantage of the condidate offer. In a rabid article in the *Times* (signed) "A Welsh Correspondent"—I wonder if he and the Bishop of St. Asaph are one and the same persons—charges Mr. Gladstone with "black treachery," and considers the introduction of the Bill "the most plausible and insidious weapon ever forged by the enemies of religion, and further, he designs the propaganda of the Liberationists as "arrant hypocrisy"; that the real forces towards Disestablishment are "the jealousy of an unofficial priesthood and the all but avowed enmity against religion of men in England and Wales, in the House of Commons and out of it, who are, to be blunt and precise, absolutely godless.

These are samples. Such is the clergy's belated subterfuge. And thus the game goes merrily round. But we can understand it, aye, even appreciate their noble efforts. The Archbishop of Canterbury (£15,000) announced in Convocation that "his brother of York" was fully alive to the necessity of the whole Church speaking, and spoken it has—speaking it is—will continue to speak for a while—why? If for one thing more than another it is, not because the Established Church in Wales is an effectual agency doing considerable good as regarding saving souls from damnation and preaching blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven in the Principality; but because they are actually realising that their term of nothing to do and a living of double good fatness is in danger of extinction.

When in recent Convocation (as above) the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London and Ely, hoped that politics would be kept out of the discussion on the Suspensory Bill. Whew! How? Logiel! O shade of Diogenes! Common sense obviously says that cannot be. Establishment is a question of pure politics.

J. COLLINSON.

#### OUR DEBT TO THE JEWS.

I dearly love the Jews upon my word  
They played the second part in our salvation,  
Had they refused to crucified the Lord  
All sons of Eve had not escaped damnation;  
So, having thank'd his Savior, who'd refuse  
His thanks to Pontius Pilate and the Jews?

#### HOW TO HELP US.

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

## ACID DROPS.

Miss Florence St. John, the papers announce, will sing at the Gaiety Theatre "Heaven Guard the Youthful Pair," a nuptial piece expressly composed and arranged by Herr Meyer Lutz. This is the most interesting announcement we have seen for a long time. Miss Florence St. John is a great authority on happy marriages. If you doubt it, ask Marius or the clerk of the Divorce Court? No doubt she is as good an authority on "Heaven," and her prayer for York and May is a very special kind of wedding present. What "Heaven" thinks of the affair is *not* announced. We should say that when the prayer of Florence ascends to the right quarter, there will be some extremely audible smiling on the Christian Olympus.

Archdeacon Sinclair preached a fine flunkey sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday evening. Like a practised courtier, he poured the oil of flattery most profusely on the heads of the Duke of York and his bride. It would have been more decent if he had preached about the great colliery accident, and begged assistance for the poor widows and orphans.

Emperor William seems to think that God Almighty is on the side of his Army Bill. "Go, gentlemen," he said to the Reichstag, "go to your labors, and may God, whom we all worship, send his blessing down upon you, so that you may accomplish an honorable work for the welfare of our Fatherland. Amen!" Which means—Gentlemen, pass my Army Bill, and please God as well as your emperor, for we are both in the same swim.

Sir John Powers, of Dublin, has a whisky exhibit in the Chicago World's Fair. The bottles are (or rather were) arranged in the form of the famous round towers of Ireland. But the glory of that "arrangement in whisky" was rudely despoiled on July 4. It appears that the Rev. John Jameson, of Virginia, was "doing" the Exhibition on that day, and saw a good deal more than the Devil ever showed J. C. up that mountain. Perhaps the wealth and variety of the exhibits turned John Jameson's head, and addled his poor supply of brains. Anyhow he raised the heavy hickory cane he was carrying, and ran amuck among the whisky bottles, bringing a large number of them to the ground. He was then arrested, and later in the day he wrote a long statement, according to which it was old Jehovah who told him to do the deed of destruction. But it will be very difficult to arrest old Jehovah, and John Jameson will have to suffer for his principal.

The first thing the Convocation of Canterbury did was to vote an address to the Queen on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of York and Princess Mary of Teck. A bishop proposed it, another bishop seconded it; and a third bishop moved, and a fourth bishop seconded, a similar address to the Prince of Wales. This, we repeat, was the *first* bit of business; and it shows what thoughts are uppermost in the minds of these wealthy flunkeys, who pretend to be the apostolic successors of the "poor carpenter" of Nazareth.

The next thing Convocation dealt with was religious education in public schools. Bishops and parsons all seemed to think that the present dosing of the children with theology was sadly inadequate. They know very well that the humbug of their craft, and the political and social humbug which it supports, all depends on the distortion and corruption of the minds of little children. If they did not train the twigs, they are well aware the trees would never grow in their fashion.

Prof. Sayce contributes an article to the July number of the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, entitled "Where was Mount Sinai?" He maintains that it was not in the peninsula now called Sinaitic, but rather on the borders of Midian and Edom, among the ranges of Mount Seir, and in the neighborhood of Kadesh-barnea (the modern 'Ain Qadis). Some day people will open their eyes to the likelihood that the whole of these sacred places have been invented for the sake of the pilgrims and to back up the old legends.

Take Nazareth for instance. There is no evidence of any place with such a name at the time of Josephus, or in the

days of the Talmud. But Jesus was called a Nazarete, or devotee, and the early Christians Nazarenes. This may have led to the legend of his being of Nazareth, and of course a village was found to fit. So probably with Magdala, which meant a plaiter of woman's hair, an euphemism for a harlot. Mary Magdalene meant Mary the Harlot. The phrase in the Talmud is applied to the mother of Jesus, but the Christians invented a different legend of a Mary born at Magdala.

Alfred Wharton, railway clerk to W. H. Smith and Son, shot himself at Upper Holloway last week. He left a piece of paper with a prayer to God to improve his creation. "Almighty God, in thy infinite wisdom spare this wonderful world of thy creation from pain and misery, and give a better sense of humanity," he wrote, and then committed suicide. His brother at the inquest expressed the opinion that he had been depressed for five weeks with "religious ideas," and had been reduced to a low state by hard work. He was continually "praying for himself." The jury's terse verdict was, "Suicide whilst temporarily insane, brought on by religious mania." Another victim to faith in supernaturalism.

Thus Charles Frederick Stanley, canteen steward at the Military Hospital, Devonport, wrote to his wife ere taking a fatal dose of poison:—"My dear and loyal wife,—God's blessing on you. I am hounded out of this world by this canteen, on whom my curses rest. I can only throw myself at the foot of divine grace and say, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' May God bless you." Yet Talmage would have the world believe that the substitution of humanity for God makes Atheists so miserable that they end in suicide.

In his memoirs Mr. Lockwood tells of what Marlborough School was like in his young days, when "spare the rod and spoil the child" was considered a divine precept. The boys were starved and beaten brutally. As in Africa some white men become savages, so did some schoolmasters. "Occasionally two masters would be caning at the same time, with the rhythm of blacksmiths hammering on an anvil." As Mr. Lockwood says, a village dominie would get a month at the treadmill now for what was common conduct in the Marlborough of Mr. Lockwood's day. But these masters were "reverend men called to the ministry." They all believed with Solomon, "Let not thy soul spare for his crying."

"The Signs of the Times" was the title of this year's Merchants' Lecture, delivered by the Rev. A. Rowland, who said that the future lay in the hands of the democracy, and whether the democracy was to be Christian or infidel depended upon the conduct of the Church during the last years of this century. Well, there are only seven years left in this century, so the Church has a very short time to save the world, or rather to save Christianity. It can't be done in the time, Mr. Rowland, and you may as well throw up the sponge at once. The very fact of your talking in this way shows that you have no real belief in Jesus Christ. If you had such a belief, you would trust in him absolutely, and not rely upon the efforts of the Church. It doesn't need a very great intellect to see that, if Christ is God, the Christian religion will last just as long as he pleases.

The Cathedral of St. Stephen, Vienna, was last week the scene of a terrible panic. Some withered flowers on the staff of a pilgrim were accidentally ignited, and a cry of "Fire!" was raised, whereupon there ensued a general rush for the doors. A number of women and children were knocked down and trampled upon; but happily the Fire Brigade arrived in time, not only to extinguish the flames, but to clear the building. The incident is one which proves the power of religion to control the selfish instincts of men, and to lend them a superhuman dignity.

There was a peculiar passage in the *Daily Chronicle's* review of Dr. Whyte's book on Bunyan. "Your street preacher," it said, "under the gas-lamp, bawling his texts, has the pride of a king's ambassador." That is, he speaks in the name of God; and, as a general rule, the "rot" he utters would hardly be listened to for five minutes, if it were not for that same "pride." But what a pity it is that God chooses such fools for his ambassadors. Some of them would never be selected to convey a common message in business.

According to "Urbanus" in the *Echo*, the religious societies cook their accounts to show a paper deficit, as part of the machinery of begging. He reports the statements of a Methodist, that the financial statement of the Wesleyan Society never includes an account of the invested funds, amounting to about £200,000; that for several years no statement was published of a Legacy Average Reserve Fund, formed by annual abstractions from the current income; that of this reserve fund of £19,000, not a penny has been required by the purpose for which it was created; that in last year's accounts there was a deficiency of £10,800, but more than half this deficiency was caused by abstracting from the income £5,628 and carrying it to the reserve fund. The treasurers are supposed to be very generous in advancing the deficiency, but, as a matter of fact, the deficiency is a bogus dodge to ensure subscriptions.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been having a conference with twelve delegates from the Upper House of Convocation and twelve of the Lower, and ten of the House of Laymen, with a view, as Earl Nelson said, to putting forward some corporate scheme "whereby Church and Board schools could exist side by side." The Bishop of London said that the bishops had been considering this for some time past, and hinted as much as that the Bishop of Salisbury's Bill was the result of their joint cogitations. But this would be opposed by the Government and would be unlikely to pass the Commons. He suggested they should not seek too much, but hold on to what they had got for fear they lost that. This drew attention to the presence of reporters, and the *Times* says, "The further discussion of the question was conducted with closed doors."

The Church no doubt finds it prudent to keep as dark as possible its schemes to get denominational schools endowed out of the public rates. The British public is blind and long-suffering, but it will hardly endorse that with its eyes open. Already the immensely larger proportion of the expenses of voluntary schools is borne by the State, which is well entitled to demand much firmer control and a larger share of management than it possesses. If the clergy expect they will ever recover the control over education which they had in the past, they are egregiously deceived. Freethinkers at any rate will never rest until clerical influence is nullified and children's minds are allowed to grow up unwarped by their pernicious nonsense.

Convocation has been complaining that the requirements of the Education Department involve an outlay of money the Church cannot easily raise, and they object to such orders being made. But the Department pays the largest share of the expenses, and makes no order unless some deficiency is reported. What Convocation wants is that Church schools shall receive public grants even when they are inefficient. Only the men of God are capable of such cheek.

Poor Bishop Ellicott sees the waters of Rationalism rising and threatening to obliterate all the old landmarks. He presented a petition to the Upper House of Convocation, which read as follows: "It is generally known that certain clergymen of the Church of England, in positions of influence and authority, are deliberately undermining, by their teachings and public writings, the faith of the Church in this country in the trustworthiness of the Holy Scriptures, and are also repudiating the common faith of Christendom; and that the said Holy Scriptures, as received by the Church of England, are the infallible and inspired words of God." The hands of the Philistines are upon the fetish Bible, and all that the bishops can do is to cry out Ichabod! its glory is departed.

Dr. Lunn has opened his nice little clerical picnic in Switzerland. These enjoyable parties are organised on the pretence of bringing about the re-union of Christendom. Dr. Lunn told the picnickers that "The unity of the Christian Church was to be the great testimony to an unbelieving world of Christ's mission." No doubt it will be—when it arrives. The unity of the Christian Church does not seem to be approaching very rapidly. Dr. Lunn himself has only just resigned his position as a Wesleyan minister, after a three years' row with his fellow men of God.

Christian unity is far distant in Montreal, where the Catholics and Protestants came into collision last Sunday,

and only the decisive action of the police prevented a religious massacre.

Liverpool has a Psychic Hospital and Dispensary, where patients are treated on New Testament lines with the prayer of faith. Dr. Charles Williams presides over this faith cure, but we do not gather that he does it "without money and without price."

A writer in an evening paper has been calling attention to a blue line used to limit the presence of women to certain parts of Durham Cathedral. All continental travellers are aware of similar restrictions in churches abroad. In some cases the guide-books say, "This chapel, on account of the peculiar sanctity of the relics it contains, is not entered by women." Of course the superstition is the same as that which makes many youths emasculated to be eunuch singers in choirs where women are not allowed. The better sex was held to defile the house of the masculine God.

In our own Prayer-book we may see a trace of this superstition. Women, after childbirth, have to be re-admitted to church, and in ancient times were exorcised at the door of the church before being permitted to enter. Christianity has done a wonderful deal for woman!

The Rev. George Griffiths stands charged with the wilful murder of his mother at Killynn Rectory, Tralee, Ireland, on June 22. Two bullet wounds were found on the right side of her head, either of which would cause instantaneous death.

Canting Thomas Pratt Wills, the aged and pious secretary of the Portsea Island Building Society, who in the days of his splendor, when he was living in style on the savings of other people, had a poor girl turned from her situation as governess because she was a Secularist, is at length sentenced to five years penal servitude. He is an instance of the truth of the statement made by Inspector Littlechild of Scotland Yard, that the worst scoundrels are always the religious ones.

The Catholics are backing up their dedication of England to Peter by re-issuing their lying legends as to old Peter having introduced Christianity into Britain. The Rev. W. Fleming, M.B.—Redemptionist or Ransomer?—has a pamphlet in which he quotes Guilielmus Eysengrannius, as saying that the first church in Britain was founded by St. Peter in the reign of Nero. But old Eysengrannius—or the monks who wrote under that name—should be taken with a grain of salt. St. Paul, St. Simon, and St. Joseph of Arimathea, are also said to have brought Christianity to Britain, although Thomas Wright, one of the best of our antiquaries, challenged any evidence of Christianity in Britain before the sixth century, and Prof. E. Johnson challenges proof that it was here before the fourteenth century. Whenever the monks set up an establishment they said it was founded by some saint or other, generally choosing the one whose reputation they thought would bring most cash.

Dreadful reports of the cholera come from Mecca. The official reports give several hundreds of deaths daily, but these are said not to represent half the truth. Between Mecca and Mouna the road is strewn with corpses, and it is found impossible to bury the dead. Some time ago Mr. W. P. Ball, in one of his thoughtful articles, pointed out that Christianity had unwittingly brought about some improvement, by killing off the most fanatical of its devotees in monasteries and religious wars. In like way the Mohammedan pilgrimages may serve some purpose in killing off the fanatical, but meanwhile they are certainly an instance of the insanitary character of religion.

In China the Weiling River has overflowed its banks, causing the deaths of over a thousand persons. Disastrous floods are also reported from Nansaingfu, where ten thousand have been drowned or killed by their houses falling on them. He doeth all things well!

The Rev. Mr. Plunket, of Texas, has had a revelation from the Lord announcing that in consequence of the Sunday opening of the World's Fair, the Lord will destroy Chicago on August 16. Jonah gave the Ninevites forty days. Mr. Plunket slightly extends the date of his catastrophe. Will he not kindly defer it until after the sitting of the Free Thought Conference?

The *Christian Commonwealth* calls the Sunday opening of the World's Fair "a great calamity." So it is—to the bigots. It is a great triumph for the other side.

A pilgrim walked about the famous monastery of Einsiedel, in Switzerland, clad in a long blouse fastened round the waist with a heavy chain, while round his neck was a thick rope to which he had attached a heavy stone. No doubt he was a very pious gentleman, but the hard-hearted police ran him in and sent him to a lunatic asylum. A thousand years ago he would have been an object of popular veneration, and perhaps have become a famous saint.

A retired sergeant-major named Hathaway, of the Wesleyan Methodist persuasion, died the other day at Ewelme, Oxfordshire, and the sexton having refused to toll the bell at his funeral, the matter was referred to the rector. That worthy replied: "The church bell is tolled for those funerals only which are conducted according to the Prayer Book service.—H. K. Simcox." It is impossible to say what sectarian animosity is or is not capable of; but I should have thought that even a country rector would have been ready to waive his professional prejudices in honor of an old soldier who had served his Queen and country faithfully for the best part of his life.—*Truth*.

Henry Leman, ex-bank manager, charged at Lowestoft with appropriating a considerable sum of trust money, has for years been sidesman at St. Peter's Church.

Scepticism has reached Hawick. A street preacher there was asked to explain how Samson caught three hundred foxes when it took the Duke of Buccleuch hounds a whole day to catch one. The preacher asked the meeting to join in prayer.

Edward Atterbury, of West Bromwich, the wretch sentenced to five years' penal servitude for stabbing ladies with a long needle, seems to have been blessed with religious tendencies. A witness heard him at his residence playing "Safe in the arms of Jesus" on a concertina. He is now safe in the stone jug, which is a good deal cooler.

It is a great item of Hindu religion that asceticism gives power even over the gods. Hence their religious exhibitions of tortures. It appears, however, from a newspaper correspondent that the hook-swinging festival is not quite so horrible as it looks. The holes through which the hooks are passed are made in the tendons under the shoulder blades when the actors are quite young, and are kept open like the holes in ladies' ears by rings or plugs. Suspended and swung round, the person is regarded as a saint, and the pious Hindus at the foot of the swing chant and call on their gods. What little pain there may be in the ceremonies is usually drowned by a free consumption of alcohol.

James Kaffleigh has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for stealing a quantity of waste-paper belonging to General Booth. He was foreman of the salvage or rag section, and was paid the magnificent salary of eighteen shillings a week—a fact which lends great interest to Booth's denunciation of sweaters.

Lawrence Bradley, R.C. parish clerk, of Mullingar, is charged with poisoning a smith named Kelly, on Dec. 26 last. In the meantime the cathedral safe was broken open, the money abstracted, and Kelly's tools found near, though at the time he was lying in his death agony. This was to suggest that Kelly had robbed the church, and had been struck down by Providence as a retribution for his sacrilege. The crime shows a combination of piety and villainy worthy of the ages of faith.

The eccentric Rev. John Robertson, of Glasgow, has had his house visited by thieves, who took away two watches and a pair of earrings. The reverend gentleman has our sympathy, or at least as much as we can get up for the occasion. But will he explain how, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he came to have anything in his house for the thieves to appropriate? J. C. would have looked upon him as a monster of luxury.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 16, Hall of Science, 142 Old-Street, E.C.: at 7.30, "A Jew on the Jew Book."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—July 16 and 23, 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.

J. W. SIMMS (Christchurch, N.Z.).—Cuttings to hand. Pleased to hear the portraits in our Special Numbers are admired at the antipodes.

A. THORNTON.—Hardly worth a paragraph. The writer is a nobody as well as a nincompoop.

G. JACOB.—You are, after the President, the first subscriber to the Shilling Month. Yes, it is important that all cheques and postal orders *should be crossed*. We have added a note to that effect to the appeal.

E. SIMS (Southport) sends us £2 10s. to be divided as follows: £1 annual subscription to the N.S.S.; £1 fully paid up share in National Secular Hall Society in the name of G. W. Foote; and 10s. Chicago Delegation Fund. Mr. Sims adds—"Please accept the assurance of my high esteem and hearty thanks to you for the noble efforts you are making to free humanity from the gross superstition called Christianity."

W. HOLLAND.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. ROWDEN.—Your Lecture Notice was too late. It arrived on Friday. In future you must please post your notices on Monday, if you want them inserted.

T. DUNBAR.—Glad you appreciate the article on "Canting Loyalty." Perhaps it is not "stiff enough"; still, it is *plain* enough, which is more than can be said for the comments of most of the Radical papers. Thanks for good wishes. Summer Number sent.

M. CAYLEY (Nelson).—It is gratifying to learn that you have doubled your sale of the *Freethinker* since you exhibited a contents-sheet. This should be a lesson to other newsagents. Contents-sheet of Summer Number has been forwarded.

E. C. LEGG.—Hardly up to the mark, though not without merit.

J. GRAY.—(1) *Cruden's Concordance*, (2) *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, (3) *Cassell's Encyclopedic Dictionary* or the *Century Dictionary*. With the exception of (1) all are expensive.

H. W. JONES.—Pleased to hear of Mr. John Grange's successful lectures on Blackburn market-square, and that he created a very favorable impression on this occasion of his first visit.

A. SIMSON.—It is quite right to let a fair and courteous opponent occupy your platform occasionally, provided he allows discussion.

W. LUKE.—Look at the article again. You will see that we did not object to wedding presents from friends, but merely to cadging from the public. We know cases of poor men out of work whose children were worried to bring pennies.

J. R. ROBSON.—Thanks. Contents-sheet shall be forwarded weekly. Sorry to hear of Mr. Pratt's death; such veterans can be ill-spared.

E. S. H.—(1) The Tacitus passage has been disputed; indeed, it has been maintained that the whole work in which it occurs is a forgery of the fifteenth century. In any case, it lends no support to the supernatural Gospel story. (2) It all depends on what you mean by "religion." The belief in ghosts or spirits seems to be universal amongst savages, but not the belief in "a god."

B. WRIGHT.—Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, was born in 1804, and was shot by the mob at Carthage Gaol, while awaiting his trial for riot in 1844. Mormonism extended much after his death.

F. H. HART.—We note your approval of every line of our article on "Canting Loyalty." There is no analogy between the cases of the two ladies you refer to. Princess May is a *public* character, and open to criticism. If her domestic affairs were kept private, we should have nothing to say. As it is, her marriage is a state marriage, and the cant of the newspapers must half sicken the men who write it. We don't say she has committed a crime, but don't ask us to burst our eyeballs with astonishment at her matchless grace, tenderness, and all the rest of it.

NEL DESPERANDUM.—Mr. Bradlaugh did not serve twelve months in prison. Your friend is mistaken. Perhaps he is thinking of Mr. Foote. The pamphlet you mention, we believe, has long been out of print.

A. J. H.—It has no special relation to Freethought.

GRIST YUN.—Will consider it.

H. BORLAND (Jullundur).—Thanks for your interesting letter and enclosure. Your renewal for *Freethinker* is duly entered. It is pleasant to find that our Special Numbers are so appreciated out in India.

C. HEATON.—You call it Self-Denial Fund, and some of the poorer may take Shilling Month in that way. Many readers, however, can subscribe without much sacrifice.

J. WILLIAMSON.—Thanks. The 1s. 1d. is put to the *Freethinker* as desired.

R. FORREST.—Mr. Foote will offer you a date in a few days. LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—E. Pack, collected in Hyde Park, July 8, 2s. 6d.

E. PACK.—Send direct to the treasurer, R. O. Smith, in future. CHICAGO DELEGATION FUND (FOOTE AND WATTS).—George Anderson, £5; E. Sims, 10s.; J. McC., £5; J. Williamson, 2s. 5d.

W. CALDER.—The opinion of a paper like the *Bazaar* on Shelley is unworthy of notice.

F. S. AYERS.—See "Acid Drops."

F. GELL.—Can't do so just now; may give Folkestone a turn by and bye. Will find room next week if possible.

P. A. RYAN.—We have more than once referred to Mr. James Rowney's successful lectures in Regent's Park. Pleased to have your testimony to their great usefulness.

J. K. HAWKE.—It is a mere juggle of words. Let metaphysical conundrums alone, and study something useful.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Tablet—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dagoraad—Modern Thought—La Verité Philosophique—Fur Unsero Jugend—Ironclad Age—Watts's Literary Guide—Weekly Bulletin—Church Reformer—Daily Chronicle—Natural Food—St. Pancras Guardian—Hampshire Independent—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Birmingham Argus—Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette—Nottingham Express—Reading Observer—Weekly Times and Echo—Lyttelton Times—Huddersfield Chronicle—Market Rasen Mail.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

The *Freethinker* (including the twopenny special number for the first week in each month) will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 7s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 9d.; Three Months, 1s. 10½d.

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

## SHILLING MONTH.

My readers are requested to remember that this is Shilling Month. Freethinkers all over the country are earnestly invited to give a shilling (or more) for "the good old cause." More than £120 was raised in this way in January, and a larger sum should be realised at this more favorable time of the year. Of the total amount received, two-thirds will be paid over to the National Secular Society, and one-third will go to the Chicago Delegation Fund. All Subscriptions should be sent to me direct, and will be acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*. Cheques and postal orders should all be crossed.

G. W. FOOTE.

## RECEIVED.

[When no figures follow the name the amount is 1s.]

G. W. Foote 10s., D. R. Gordon, Mrs. C. Hill 2s. 6d., W. C. (Dorking) 10s., W. Holland, T. Dunbar, G. Jacob 2s., F. Clark 2s. 6d., C. Heaton, J. F. Hall. Collected at Mr. Watts's lecture at the Hall of Science: Griggs 2s., A. Elcombe, L. and E. Hamilton 2s., Anonymously 17s. Per Miss Vance: M. Brown, Cody 2s., R. Judge, Rae, G. O. M., X. X., Rutter, Well Wisher, S. Gladding, Anonymously 2s.

## SPECIAL.

MR. GEORGE ANDERSON has handed me his cheque for £300. It only wants his signature, which he will add with the greatest of pleasure if the number of shares in the Hall of Science scheme is made up to 3,000 by the end of July. I appeal to all Freethinkers who read this journal to do their level best during July. Readers should apply at once to Miss Vance, 28, Stonecutter-street, E.C., for share application forms.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Our SUMMER NUMBER is now on sale, and list, O reader, while we sing its praises. First, for the illustrations. There are no less than seven fine portraits, the largest being one of Colonel Ingersoll, far superior to anything ever before published in England. The great orator is on the war path; his hands are on his hips, his head is thrown back as if in challenge, and the eyes and mouth are full of fire and eloquence. This portrait alone should sell off every copy of our "extra special." But there are others—Professor Huxley, Professor Tyndall, Professor Büchner, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Moncure D. Conway. There is also a portrait of Erasmus, heading Mr. Foote's article on "The Praise of Folly." After the portraits we might enumerate no less than twelve Cartoons, five of them drawn by Mr. Calvert, the most elaborate being "The Theological Three-Card Trick," which makes a very striking and spirited picture, well worth framing; in fact, it ought to be hung up in the London Board Schools. Then for the reading matter. It is a mixture for all tastes, supplied by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Wheeler, Standring, Moss, Heaford, Ryan, Guest, etc. Most of it is gay, some of it is grave, and the rest between the two. Altogether we say (having no one else to say it for us) that this Summer Number beats everything hitherto issued from the Freethought press. And it ought to sell. If it doesn't (perish the thought! Down, down to Hades, and say we sent thee thither!), we shall have to exclaim with Cato—"Tis not in mortals to command success," but we've done more, we've deserved it.—After that we proceed to flour both cheeks to hide the blushes.

Our last Special Number, with the "Promise of May" cartoon sold right out, and the demand was greater than the supply. Some good Radical newsagents hung it up in their windows, and copies were bought by politicians who had never taken the *Freethinker* before. We hope it will be a good introduction to them of our Freethought views.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening at the London Hall of Science, his subject being "A Jew on the Jew Book," dealing with Mr. Montifore's newly published Hibbert Lectures. The book was reviewed at considerable length in Monday's *Chronicle*, which shows it to be of some importance.

Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, is generally closed during July and August. It was open last Sunday, however, and good audiences assembled at Mr. Foote's three lectures. Mr. Ridgway took the chair morning and afternoon, and Mr. Daniel Baker in the evening. The latter remarked that he was agreeably surprised to see so many present at such a time of the year and in such weather. We are happy to say that Mr. Baker looks remarkably fresh and lively, considering his advanced age. He made a strong announcement of our Summer Number, for which he ventured to predict a large circulation. After the evening lecture Mr. Foote had a long conversation with the Branch committee on local propaganda and organisation.

The Birmingham *Daily Argus* notices Mr. Foote's afternoon lecture on Mrs. Beant's new teaching, and concludes by remarking that the lady, in her lecture on Theosophy there, studiously avoided all reference to those doctrines which

Mr. Foote so ridiculed. "All that she included in her lecture," the *Argus* says, "was good, but the stuff that will not bear investigation or serious thought was somewhat strangely kept entirely in the background."

Mr. Charles Watts had an enthusiastic audience at the Hall of Science, London, last Sunday evening. After his lecture Mr. Watts made an appeal on behalf of the "Shilling Month" Fund, which resulted in £1 14s. 0d. being subscribed. This evening, Sunday July 16, Mr. Watts lectures in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham.

Two lectures against Theosophy were delivered in London last week. One by Mr. Nagakar, of the Brahma Somaj, Bombay, who knew of its first rise in that city, and who says that Blavatsky's frauds discredited it in the eyes of sensible Hindus. The other lecture was by Mrs. F. Macdonald at South Place last Sunday. She contended that Theosophy had all the essential dogmas of Christianity with every quality heightened to make them helpful to superstition and harmful to intellectual freedom, since, essentially, Theosophy is a secret order worked from the esoteric section.

Archdeacon Farrar says that "There are thousands in England, where fifty years ago there were only scores, in the upper classes who now devote their Sundays exclusively to worldly amusements. In the working classes such men may be counted by millions."

The Liverpool Branch's excursion party was unfortunately thinned by the rain, which descended in torrents. Those who risked it, however, and assembled at the landing-stage, were well rewarded. The weather cleared up beautifully, and the party spent a most enjoyable afternoon.

The Brighton Branch had a fine meeting on the Level on Sunday. Mr. Baker's lecture was much appreciated, and followed by some useful discussion.

Mr. Stanley Jones is debating with a Christian this afternoon (July 16) at Tottenham. A Christian crowd is sure to be present, and perhaps the local Freethinkers will attend to support Mr. Jones. The actual spot for the encounter is the Green.

Open-air lectures are to be attempted by the Battersea Branch on Clapham Common. They will be given on Monday evenings, the first on July 17. Mr. James is to occupy the platform, and, as disorder may be met with, the local Freethinkers should attend in strong force to keep the rowdy section of the pietists in check.

The London Secular Federation's annual excursion will take place on Sunday, August 20. A special train will leave London Bridge Station at 9.5 a.m., calling at New Cross at 9.10; also Victoria at 9.5, and Clapham Junction at 9.10. The tickets are 8s. each, children half price. They can be obtained of all London Branch secretaries; of Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street; or at the Hall of Science, either of Mr. James Anderson, the Club manager, or at the bookstall. Brighton has ample accommodation for all classes. It is probable that a large gathering of Freethinkers will be arranged in conjunction with the local Branch.

London Branches that have not yet sent in their collections (or not made them) in aid of the Federation's funds, are requested to do so as quickly as possible.

Mr. W. W. Collins has been elected President of the Canterbury Freethought Association, in place of Mr. William Pratt who has resigned. Mr. Pratt was presented by Mr. Collins, on behalf of the Association, with a beautifully illuminated address, which read as follows:—"To William Pratt, Esq., J.P.—Dear Sir.—On your retirement from the position of President of the Canterbury Freethought Association, the officers and members desire to express their sincere appreciation of the untiring energy and unsparing generosity which have ever marked your sympathy with the efforts of the Society over which you have so long and ably presided. Rejoicing in your acceptance of the position of Honorary Life President, and trusting that we may long be cheered by your presence and guided by your counsel, we remain,—W. W. Collins, President; Francis J. Quinn, Secretary."

Signor Adrian Lemni, the Grand Master of the Italian Freemasons, is the *bête noir* of the Papal party, for they know that the whole strength of the order is devoted to maintaining Italian unity, in opposition to the temporal power of the Pope. A new occasion of offence, second in horror to the elevation of the statue of Giordano Bruno, has occurred. The Borghese Palace, built by a Pope in the days of splendor, has passed into the possession of the Grand Orient Lodge, and the machinations of the Vatican will be countermined from the Borghese Palace.

We see from the *Lyttelton Times* that a crowd of some 15,000 persons assembled to do honor to the funeral of John Ballance, the Freethinking Premier of New Zealand. The funeral was entirely a Masonic one, all the chief masons of the Colony turning out for the occasion.

The antipodean press pays generous tribute to the memory of John Ballance, Premier of Maoriland. The Sydney *Bulletin* says that his was an absolutely stainless record. "He was built," it says, "to be a leader of men." He was a total abstainer, he never touched tobacco, and he was an Agnostic. He died in his fifty-fourth year, comparatively poor. *Truth*, of Christchurch, quotes extensively from "a clever Wellington journalist" who calls John Ballance "a martyr to duty." It appears that he had to undergo a dangerous operation. Despite his weakness he sprang out of bed, shook hands with the doctors, said good-bye to all, and, throwing himself upon his back, bade the operators begin.

The Washington *Sentinel Free Press* reports a glowing panegyric on Thomas Paine, by George Francis Train, the inventor of tramways. He declared Paine was the greatest and best man that ever lived, and the true founder of the American Republic.

The *Daily Chronicle* of July 8 devotes over a column and a half to a review of Mr. Conway's *Life of Thomas Paine*, which it says is not merely by far the best and most appreciative that has yet been written, "but it is one of the few thoroughly good biographies that exist in the English language."

As to Paine himself, the *Chronicle* calls him the acutest and most conscientious politician of the eighteenth century. "The vile calumnies heaped on his memory by political traitors and ecclesiastical bigots were not worthy of the elaborate refutation which Mr. Conway has bestowed on them. His only failing, if he had one, was an occasional indulgence, under most trying circumstances, in intoxicants; but even that was exaggerated, and would have been considered almost a virtue in a bishop in his own day."

The *Guardian*, the sixpenny High Church organ—which, by the way, is noted for the excellence of its reviews—praised highly Mr. G. J. Holyoake's *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, and speaks of "his own singularly noble and earnest life." As a testimony from the principal Church paper to a representative Secularist, this deserves to be remembered.

Spain, which has long been impoverished by the drains of the higher clergy, has at length resolved to reduce the salaries of the clergy and prelates receiving over £200 a year by from eleven to twenty per cent. The Pope has given his consent lest a worse thing should befall them, but preserves the right to modify or withdraw this agreement in two years. This interference with the perquisites of the men of God has made an enormous sensation in Catholic circles. Other countries, it is to be hoped, will follow suit. The need may not seem so pressing as in Spain, but in every country the non-producing black parasites are the caterpillars of the commonwealth, devouring every green thing.

The Camberwell Branch held its quarterly meeting on Sunday. About eighty members and friends sat down to tea, after which there was an excellent entertainment, followed by a dance.

The Sunderland Branch sends us its prospectus for July, August, and September. Several local speakers are announced to treat a great variety of subjects, and we shall be glad to hear that the Sunday evening meetings at Bridge-street are well attended.

Every reader of the *Freethinker* should see at once what he can afford to give to the Shilling Month fund. We do not acknowledge a long list of subscriptions this week, but no doubt the cheques and postal orders will now flow in more rapidly. It is surprising what a time even wide-awake people require to be sure of anything. Shilling Month is here, friends, and you should forward your donations immediately. Our next week's list should be as long as a man's arm, and the following week's longer still.

#### HUXLEY ON EVOLUTION.

It is as impossible, to my mind, to suppose that the evolutionary process was set going with full foreknowledge of the result and yet with what we should understand by a purely benevolent intention, as it is to imagine that the intention was purely malevolent. And the prevalence of dualistic theories from the earliest times to the present day—whether in the shape of the doctrine of the inherently evil nature of matter; of an Ahriman; of a hard and cruel Demiurge; of a diabolical "Prince of this World" show how widely this difficulty has been felt.—*Essays on Some Controverted Questions*, p. 50.

#### HEAVEN AND HELL.

We have heard from both of those places—heaven and hell—according to the New Testament. There was a rich man in hell, and a poor man, Lazarus, in heaven. And there was another gentleman by the name of Abraham. And the rich man in hell was in flames, and he called for water, and they told him they couldn't give him any. No bridge! But they did not express the slightest regret that they could not give him any water. Mr. Abraham was not decent enough to say he would if he could; no, sir; nothing. It did not make any difference to him. (Laughter). But this rich man in hell—in torment—his heart was all right, for he remembered his brothers; and he said to this Abraham, "If you cannot go, why send a man to my five brethren, so that they will not come to this place!" Good fellow, to think of his five brothers when he was burning up. Good fellow! Best fellow we ever heard from on the other side—in either world.—*Ingersoll*.

#### FOLLOW GOD.

A Christian preacher told his hearers, in a recent sermon, to "follow God." How can a man follow what he cannot see, nor hear, nor smell, nor find? More senseless counsel could not be given. To follow God would be to get lost.

This preacher doubtless meant his hearers to follow the commands of the Lord God of the Israelites, as recorded in the Old Testament. But why a live man should follow the commands of a dead God we cannot see.

All this talk about following God and obeying the commandments of God in this age is foolish. There is the command of God just as much in the song of a bird as in the voice of a man; just as much in the buried fossils of the earth as in the thoughts of a dead tribe of men.

There is more sense in telling men to follow some person who is searching after truth, or looking for some way to help the world, than in telling them to follow God, which is equivalent to telling them to walk backwards blindfolded.—*Boston Investigator*.

The Church property in the United States, which is exempt from taxation, amounts to the value of over 450 millions of dollars. This is equivalent to a tax of ten millions of dollars on the rest of the community. Yet the Americans pride themselves on having no State Church.

Clerical Christian cormorants have everywhere grabbed all they could reach. In Hungary church property amounts to three and a quarter million acres, mostly belonging to the archbishoprics, bishoprics, church communities, and chapters, while four million acres belong to the state, and over twelve millions to districts and parishes. This is the way in which they teach the people to look for their treasures in another quarter.

## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. James T. Blanchard, a member of the N.S.S., has handed over to Mr. Forder, for the benefit of the Society, a number of copies of *Essays and Addresses on Education and Social Subjects*, which he delivered before an Australian Y. M. Mutual Improvement Association, and which were originally published in Melbourne. They are thoroughly Freethought in character, as may be surmised from their dedication, "To the High Priest of Noble Thought, Robert G. Ingersoll," some touch of whose style is apparent. They comprise such subjects as Mutual Culture, the Bible in Education, and Evidences of Divine Interferences. They may be procured from Stonecutter-street at sixpence per copy, and readers will doubtless be glad to make the acquaintance of Mr. Blanchard.

A weighty work in every sense is *The Dynamic Theory of Life and Mind*, by James B. Alexander (Minneapolis; 1893). It consists of over a thousand pages, and deals with every department of biology, from embryology to hypnotism. The author's aim is to prove that all organic beings are both constructed and operated by the dynamic agencies of their respective environments. Mr. Alexander attempts to show what are the essential facts and causes underlying selection and the survival of the fittest. In his view organisms do not bear "marks of design," but rather of being machine-built machines. His big book is crammed full of scientific facts which are of interest to every intelligent person, whether the author's conclusions are accepted or not.

Mr. Alexander urges that the true course of knowledge is not from above downward, but from below upward. He works his own way from the elementary facts of embryology, comparative development, and the testimony of geology, through physics, electricity, anatomy, and physiology, to an investigation of the brain and mind of man. He may be called a mechanical evolutionist. One of his most original chapters is his analysis of the will, which he resolves into a mode of the motion of brain-cells or their materials, communicated to them by antecedent motion of others. The phenomena of hypnotism and thought transference are explained in an equally mechanical manner. The intensification of one faculty arises from the subordination of others. Mr. Alexander, indeed, suggests that with the advance of intelligence the human animal may have lost something of the power of mind-reading.

The mind, Mr. Alexander holds, is entirely dependent on the brain. He compares it to a series of electric lights, and the brains to the dynamos by which the lights are produced. When the dynamos are still there is no light. So when the brain is still there is no mind. Nor does he shrink from the evident conclusion that his views subvert the theory of the immortality of the soul. When the body and brain are dissolved it looks as if the machinery for the production of mind were destroyed. A disinterested observer could hardly reach any other conclusion. But in this matter we are not disinterested, and faith will find foothold, when reason shows none.

Mr. Alexander devotes a chapter to "Theological Considerations," in which he shows the incompatibility of all supernaturalism with science. He says natural phenomena may be divided into two classes—things we know, and things we do not know. The phenomena not understood are those which have always been attributed to supernatural agency. Plagues, famines, storms, earthquakes, eclipses, lightning, and other such unmanageable or inscrutable phenomena have at one time or another belonged to this catalogue. But he proceeds to show that the kingdom of science is continually extending. "Within these wide and constantly widening limits no phenomena has been discovered which can be referred to a supernatural source. Every discovery has shown the connection between phenomena and natural causes; and reasoning from analogy, which is our only resource, we are bound to conclude that there is no warrant for supposing that in the secrets of nature yet unexplored we shall ever find a clue that leads to the supernatural. The causes which remain as yet undiscovered we may reasonably conclude are of a piece with those which have been found out. The civilised and enlightened liberal Christian of the closing decade of the nineteenth century, who has found out

that light, heat, and electricity are not caused by a worshipful personality, but who yet bows down before the phenomena of consciousness and mentality, and invokes superhuman agency in the regulation and rectification of the human 'heart' and the illumination of the human 'mind,' is like the idolater ridiculed by the prophet Isaiah (xliv. 15), who burnt part of a tree to warm himself and made the rest into a God and worshipped it."

The only fault we have to find with Mr. Alexander's book is its size, which may deter many from tackling one of the most noteworthy productions that has reached us from America. But *The Dynamic Theory of Life and Mind* is really a compendium of modern science, and traverses almost the whole of its ground in most interesting fashion. It is a digest, with criticisms and illustrations, of the works of Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Carpenter, Maudsley, Luys, Brown-Sequard, Binet, Romanes, Bain, Sully, and other of our best psychologists. It is as full of information as an egg is full of meat. It deserves, and we hope will receive, attentive consideration.

*The Moral Effects of Socialism* by W. Diack, is a thick penny pamphlet containing a lecture delivered before the Aberdeen Socialists, and also the Aberdeen N.S.S. Branch. It bears no publisher's name, but copies can be had from Mr. Martin, 17 George-street, Aberdeen. Mr. Diack is eloquent and trenchant, and advocates a high social morality, whether or not it can really be secured by the means he proposes. We heartily recommend his pamphlet to social students of every variety.

## A FEW BIBLE BLUNDERS.

1. The Bible says that death came into the world through the sin of Adam. Fossils taken from pre-Adamic strata of the earth prove there was death hundreds of thousands of years before.

2. The serpent on this account was condemned to crawl on his belly. Yet this was their condition thousands of years before this curse is said to have been pronounced.

3. Man is said to have been made from dust, and the first woman from his rib. But his constituent parts are different from those of dust, and there is no sign that he ever had an additional rib. If he did he would be lopsided.

4. Leviticus xi. 6 forbids eating the hare, "because he cheweth the cud." Hares do not chew the cud.

5. The Bible teaches "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exod. xxii. 18). Witchcraft and possession by devils, taught in the New Testament, are exploded superstitions.

6. Jesus Christ and all the apostles taught the near approach of the end of the world in the lifetime of the existing generation (Matt. xvi. 28, xxiv. 29—34, Mark xiii. 24—30, Luke xxi. 25—33, Acts ii. 17, 1 Thess. iv. 15, Heb. x. 25, Rev. i. 1, xxii. 10—20). The world has falsified their prophecies.

One instance of a blunder in an alleged divine revelation should suffice to nullify its claims. Here are half a dozen. Those who require more may find them in No. 3 of "The Freethinker Tracts." UNCLE BENJAMIN.

## OBITUARY.

I am sorry to have to record the death of Mr. Robert Pratt, of Jarrow. For thirty years he was a very active Freethinker, and for fifteen years posted the weekly contents-bill of the Freethought papers. A week previous to his death he reminded his son to be sure and have the Austin Holyoake Burial Service said over his grave in the event of his death, which occurred on June 14, at the age of 58 years. The Burial Service was read over his grave by Mr. Samuel Peacock to a large and sympathetic audience.—J. B. ROBSON.

Credulous editors published not long ago the wonderful and ridiculously absurd story of Mr. J. J. Nouri's visit to Mount Ararat and his discovery of Noah's Ark. It turns out that Mr. Nouri, with his high-sounding religious title, was insane. Recently his mental aberration took another form, and he imagined himself king of Chaldea. He has been committed to the Napa, California, insane asylum.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance of interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name .....

Address .....

Occupation .....

Active or Passive .....

Dated this.....day of.....18

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription; and, on admission of the member, a certificate will be issued by the Executive.

The minimum subscription for individual members is one shilling per year; all beyond that amount is optional, every member being left to fix his subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Members are classed as active or passive. Passive members are those who cannot allow their names to be published. Active members are those who do not object to the publication of their names, and are ready to co-operate openly in the Society's work.

Fill up the above form and forward it, with subscription (as much, or as little, as you think just to yourself and the cause), to Mr Robert Forder, sec., 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.; or to a local Branch Secretary.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

- Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 8, W. S. De Mattos (Fabian), "The Causes of Depression in Trade" (free). Tuesday at 8.30, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic class.
Camberwell—81 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, H. Snell, "Materialism."
Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.O.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "A Jew on the Jew Book" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)
West London Branch: Excursion to Burnham Beeches: brakes leave Railway Arches, Goldhawk-road, Shepherd's Bush, at 9. Monday at 8.30, at the "Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting Hill Gate, adjoined general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

- Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, S. H. Alison, "Are the Holy Scriptures Impregnable?"
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. St. John will lecture.
Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, H. Snell, "What think ye of Christ?"
Clapham Common (near band stand): Monday at 7.30, C. James, "Christ and Democracy."

- Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, J. Rowney, "New Testament Teaching Defective."
Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, R. Rosetti, "From a Lutheran Missioner to Nihilism and Atheism." Thursday at 8, C. James will lecture.
Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, A. Guest, "Prayer: What and Why"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "What, after all, is Christianity?"
Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, July 20, at 8.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery."
Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, W. Heaford, "The Delusions of Theology."
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Insanity an Ingredient of Religion"; 3.30, a lecture. Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.
Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Missionaries."
Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, Mr. St. John, "Christianity and Progress."
Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion."
Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, C. J. Hunt will lecture.
Mile End Waste: 11.30, J. Marshall, "Who Can be Saved?"
Newington Green: 3.15, A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution."
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Two Revelations."
Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, C. J. Hunt will lecture.
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones "The Cooling of Hell"; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.
Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, F. Haslam will lecture.
Wood Green — Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Behold I bring glad Tidings."

The "Queensberry" R. and A. Club: Saturday, July 15, at 6 and Sunday at 10, at Reader's Boat-house, Lea-bridge-road, rowing. Monday and Friday at 8, at the "Central" Baths, Clerkenwell, swimming.

COUNTRY.

- Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, members' meeting; 7, Charles Watts, "God's Special Friends."
Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, business meeting.
Chatham — Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, T. F. Swan, "Christian Miracles and Scientific Facts."
Liverpool — Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Smith, "Conversion" (Matt. xviii. 3, Luke xxi. 34).
Luton — Rudd's Room, 57 Bute-street: 6.45, G. Standring, "Should the Bible be Read in Board Schools?"
Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Busholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': John Grange, 11, "Secularism: Destructive and Constructive"; 6.30, "Why should Man Worship God?"
Reading: Excursion by water to Dorchester, starting from Kennetsmouth at 9, and Caversham Bridge at 9.30.
Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rookingsham-street: 3, members' quarterly meeting; 5, tea; 7, lecture or reading.
South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street; 7, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

- Bradford — Market-ground, Godwin-street: 6.30, H. Smith, "My Impressions of America and Canada."
Brighton (on the Level): 3, T. Thurlow, "Christianity and Slavery."
Chatham — New Brompton-road, High-street: 11, debate between F. J. Boorman and C. Welfare on "Is Humanity Totally Depraved?"
Luton—On the Moor, New Bedford-road: 2.45, G. Standring, "What is Secularism?"
Manchester—Stevenson-square: 3, John Grange, "Christian Socialism; or Christ Up to Date."
Sunderland—On the Green, at Ryhope: 11, J. Robertson, "The Church and Labor." At 7, opposite the "Wheat Sheaf," Monkwearmouth, J. Robertson, "Social Evolution."

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- STEPHEN H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W. — July 16, m., Battersea; 23, m., Victoria Park; a., Finsbury Park; 30, m., Camberwell.
C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—July 16, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Kilburn; 19, Hyde Park; 20, Hammersmith; 23, m., Clerkenwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 26, Hyde Park; 30, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Battersea.
JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon-street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Aug. 6, Manchester.
STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—July 16, m., Victoria Park; 23, m., Battersea; e., Kilburn; 27, Hammersmith; 30, m., Midland Arches; e., Hammersmith.
ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—July 16, m., Westminster; a., Finsbury; 23, e., Hammersmith.
H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich. — July 16, m. and e., Camberwell; July 23 to Aug. 7, holidays. Aug. 13, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell.
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