

# The Freethinker

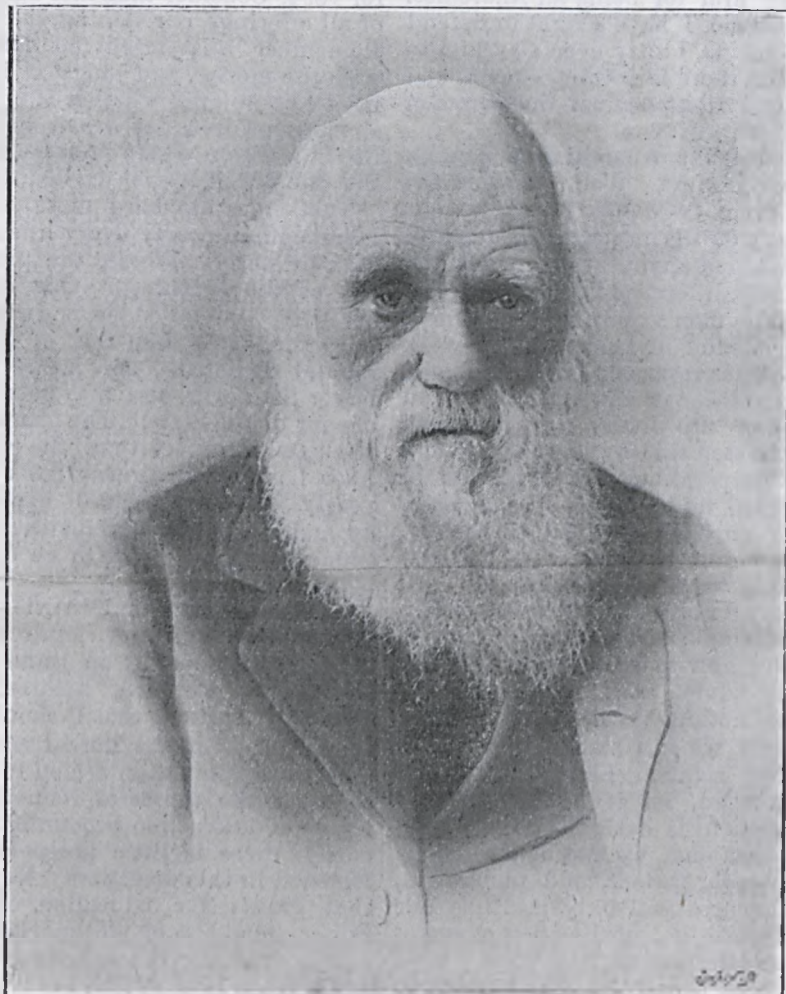
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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CHARLES DARWIN.

(See page 820.)

## HOW TO TREAT ANARCHISTS.

RECOVERING as I am from an attack of influenza, and being really unfit as yet for any kind of work—especially mental work, I must nevertheless obey what I regard as an urgent call of duty, and pen a brief article for the readers of the *Freethinker*; or, to put it more pointedly, for the whole Freethought party in Great Britain and Ireland. My position as President of the National Secular Society makes it incumbent upon me to give what sound and sober advice I can at critical times, when there is a danger of rash counsels prevailing. And the chief thing, on such occasions, is to speak promptly as well as decisively.

No one can have a greater hatred of violence than I have. I believe, even more than John Bright did, that force is no remedy; for he was willing to let it be used against Ireland. Problems of all kinds can only be solved by knowledge and reason. Any hasty fool, any splenetic enthusiast, can cut the Gordian knot; but for any useful purpose it must be untied, and that requires skill and patience. Force, at bottom, is cutting off the

head to cure the toothache. Search through history, and you will find that even Revolutions, however great or heroic as dramas or panoramas, have only succeeded in proportion to the amount of their intellectual and moral preparation. Movement beyond that point leads to reaction with mathematical necessity. The social organism can no more be *driven* into a particular direction of growth than the bodily organism. I am therefore opposed to all attempts at compelling society to do this or become that. And my opposition is entirely impartial. I object to the terrorist *régime* of the Czar of Russia as much as to the dynamite policy of Ravachol, Pallas, or Vaillant.

Now let me turn to Anarchism itself. Primarily it is a protest against Government. Now in this sense some very excellent men have been Anarchists. Thomas Paine, for instance, drew a beautiful distinction between Government and Society. The second, he said, was natural, and founded upon our mutual wants; while the first was founded upon our vices and weakness; so that, at the worst, Society was a benefit, while, at the best, Government was only a necessary evil. Without arguing this, however—for

this is not the time and place—I go to the length of saying that Governments do much evil as well as good. Bad laws, and the bad administration of good laws, inflict more suffering upon multitudes every day in England alone than has been caused by all the Anarchist outrages in the world. Be that as it may, Anarchism is a deliberate form of opinion, and is entitled to live if it can. It may be dangerous to all I hold dear, but I remember that the Christian apologist says the same of Secularism. My duty is to oppose it, if I must oppose it, by argument and persuasion. I am not going to lock up a Proudhon or a Bakounin because an infuriated mob is howling at them. I love my own liberty, and I will respect theirs. When liberty goes the value of everything else disappears with it. No, I will not be provoked into a conspiracy against freedom. Nevertheless, if Proudhon or Bakounin resorted to violence, I would restrain him. But I would not punish him for being an Anarchist. If he has a right to attack me, I have a right to defend myself; if he tries to kill me, I may even slay him to preserve my own life. But there is nothing exceptional in this. I have the same right against the common assaulter, the burglar, or the assassin.

Now suppose my aggressive Anarchist is caught. What is to be done with him? Well, there is the ordinary law. What more is wanted? If he has stolen my money to carry on his propaganda, let him go to prison; if he has killed anyone, let him pay the forfeit of the law. If any difference is made, let it be on the side of lenity. The man's brain may be turned, and, if you make him a kind of martyr, other weak heads will aspire to the same crown of glory. And may not the man's head *very well* be turned? Education and misery working together are likely to make men desperate. Nor will you stop this by law, by prisons, by executions. Social desperation is a symptom of social disease. Well then, let us study the disease, apply the remedy, and purify the blood of society. Above all, let us avoid teaching the aggressive Anarchist that he is right, for that is what panic legislation will do. Society must not cry "Force is *no* remedy!" when the Anarchist flings his bomb; and then cry "Force is a remedy!" in discussing how to treat Anarchists. Let us listen to no cowardly advice about special legislation. Government has nothing to do with *opinion*. That is the only ground we can stand on to resist any attack on minority rights. Let the law deal with *acts*; and, even then, let it be careful and discriminating. Punishment is designed for an end, and if it only *defeats* that end, we had better change our policy. Let us be cool, patient, and thoughtful. Heat, haste, and recklessness will only multiply our miseries. No panic legislation, no creation of secret societies, no driving disaffection underground. And no cruelty. I repeat, No cruelty! It is strange to have to say this, but it is necessary when a Radical evening paper calls out for "merciless extermination." That is what some of the Roman emperors tried against Christianity, and with what result? They gave away the future to a stupid fanaticism. They fanned a fire which consumed literature, science, art, and freedom. That was what came of "merciless extermination." Let us have a grain of sense, or we shall all go to the dogs together.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### NORTH-EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

The Annual Social Gathering will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 3, in Mr. Cook's Dancing Academy, Rutherford-street, opposite Blenheim-street, not far from the Tyne Theatre, about three minutes' walk from Central Station. The Committee are making strenuous efforts to make the concert and ball a great success. Concert will commence at 7 p.m., supper at 9 p.m., dancing and other games from 10 p.m. till 2 a.m. Gentlemen's tickets, 2s.; ladies, 1s. 6d.; children under 12, 1s. Tickets can be had at my address; at Mr. Peter Weston's, 77 Newgate-street, newsagent; Mr. J. H. Summerfield, 32 Yorkshire-street, Newcastle; Mr. J. W. Mein, 17 Warwick-street, Heaton, Newcastle; Mr. J. Bertram, 117 Morley-street, Heaton; Mr. S. M. Peacock, 55 Baring-street, South Shields; and all the secretaries of the affiliated Branches. An early application for tickets is desired, as only a limited number can be issued.—JOSEPH BROWN, Hon. Sec., 55 Northbourne-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

#### AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY.

In hard times sensible persons look round to see how best they can keep down their expenses. If they have a large establishment, it is likely that economy can be beneficially exercised in some department. In few ways can the character and wisdom of man or of woman be better tested than in this. Will they, for instance, retrench their wine-bill or will they make a harder bargain with their washerwoman? A wise nation, when it finds that expenditure tends to over-leap income, will act exactly as a wise man or woman, and find what superfluities can best be dispensed with while the general well-being and comfort are fully provided for. Several prominent items at once arrest the attention of a national economist. I here confine myself to but one of them—the Church. Look at the cost of the Church as given in the *Secular Almanack* for 1894. Consider that this immense sum is exclusive of all offerings, christening, marriage and burial fees. Remember what might be done for secular welfare with the money, and judge if it is not near time the nation considered whether it shall much longer spend so many millions for a *post mortem* insurance against fire in a region where even the sky-pilots are reporting that the fire, if it ever existed, is now extinct.

That times are hard most persons are sadly aware. Merchants in nearly every line are doing less business than formerly. Worse, the prospect for the future is not of the brightest. Our commercial supremacy, challenged on all sides, is dwindling. Our coal area, forty times less than that of North America, is being rapidly depleted. The army of the unemployed is larger than ever, and may soon threaten to become a danger to the State. The mass of the workers have no better prospect than the workhouse in old age. Poor Law Relief already costs close on ten millions yearly. New avenues of expenditure and debt have opened before municipalities, county and parish councils. Much needs to be done, and retrenchment is hard to effect.

Experts declare that in view of the armaments of other nations our navy requires to be increased, which can only be done by an immense expenditure. The army also, we are assured, needs enlargement. Humanity forbend that I should encourage anything connected with the horrid scourge of war, but with each Christian nation armed to the teeth and ready to spring at the throat of its neighbor—with the instruments of destruction becoming increasingly deadly and costly, there is little prospect of expenditure being lessened in this direction. No wise person would say that grants for education should be diminished; rather should they be enormously increased. What else is done for the encouragement of literature, art and science is miserably inadequate. The grant to the British Museum is scandalously insufficient for a wealthy nation. Our hospitals are unable to meet the demand upon them for lack of sufficient private support.

Well, here is the Church of England taking, at least, six millions yearly. Can the nation afford it? What return is there for the money? In ancient times the Church served the State by helping to "haud the wretch in order." Who now would think its services worth six millions, as an auxiliary to the Police Department? A tithe of the sum spent on education would show a far better return. For centuries the Church has pocketed its stipends, and instead of diminishing crime, became itself an Augean stable of corruption. In twenty years of Board School education, juvenile crime has become comparatively a thing of the past, and other crimes have sensibly diminished. What does the Church for its money? Do we need highly-paid bishops to legislate for us? Has it helped or hindered civilisation? Has it ever added anything to our knowledge or secular welfare? No. Science has done more in fifty years to make life tolerable, than the Church in all the centuries of its existence. With wealth and devotion incalculable at its service, the Church has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. It has been the constant friend of privilege and foe of liberty. It talks to men, not of what is needful for them to know, but of what

they have to die before they can know. Its claims are based on dubious documents, and still more dubious apostolical succession. It permits the people no voice in the appointment of their religious teachers. It is pledged to teachings that are neither credible nor useful; to eighteen-century-old dogmas, on which no improvement is possible. Its very Ecclesiastical Canons endorse the superstition of possession by devils. It threatens that if you do not use its magic and believe its mysteries "without doubt, you shall perish everlastingly." Yet its doctrines of creation and redemption are discredited by the intelligence of the age. In seeking to accommodate itself to modern thought, it gives only an example of prevarication. The Church has become a school of hypocrisy, dishonesty, and sacerdotal pretension. Should it, in the face of a half dissentient population, be supported to the tune of six millions annually?

I have put the case against the Church solely on the safe ground of economic expediency. It might be put in another form. Suppose a man not freely spending his money on what he will, but subject to a blackmail, an impost to which he never consented, but which he knows was put upon his forefathers by unscrupulous persons taking advantage of their weakness and ignorance. Dread of threats or of expensive litigation may defer the hour of liberation. But, should he not both await the occasion and make it as speedily as possible? And this is the light in which the State Church may fairly be regarded by dissenters.

Of course the organs of the Church dignitaries will cry out that any attempt to deal with the revenues of the Church is "robbing God." Let us give the dear old deity credit for being able to take care of his own property. The nation can no more rob itself than a man can rob himself. When the Parliament of Henry VIII. dissolved the monasteries and applied their revenues to founding new bishoprics, new colleges and professorships, and to purposes of national defence, it set a sufficient precedent. Should the nation deem it wise and expedient to devote to the promotion of science, art, learning and research, or to the relief of the poor and pensions for the aged, the enormous wealth devoted to the established Church, it has exactly the same right as I have to spend money on books instead of on a church pew.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### CHRISTIAN UNCERTAINTIES.

ACCORDING to the popular orthodox belief, Christianity really originated with the alleged Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and its great culminating event was the crucifixion of Jesus in Palestine. These two incidents form the basis of popular Christianity, and in the orthodox mind there appears to be no doubt as to the certainty of the foundation of the faith. But on inquiring into the nature of this Fall, and into its causes and consequences, and in examining into the accounts of what is reported as having taken place in connection with the death of Jesus, we find ourselves surrounded by uncertainties which have been the subject of controversy from the earliest period of the Christian era down to the present time. Surely, considering that from a Christian standpoint so much depends upon this double event, its history should be reliable, and its details ought to be clear. Such, however, is not the case, for the narratives of both the Fall and the Crucifixion reveal a series of perplexing contradictions and improbabilities, rendering it impossible to harmonise these events with reason and the laws of existence.

If we trace the pedigree of Jesus through many generations as given in the Bible, we arrive at the name of Adam. Here we are at once confronted with the greatest uncertainties. First, as to the origin of Adam. Was he created, as may be inferred from the first chapter of Genesis, from "things that were not," or was he, as stated in the second chapter, made "out of the dust of the ground"? Moreover, it is doubtful if Adam were one person or many, for in chapter v. it is recorded that God "called their name Adam." Before the slightest certainty can be claimed in this matter, it must be shown that a man named Adam

lived some few thousand years before Christ, and that there exists a line of descent connecting the two families. But this is just what cannot be proved, for the evidence that is given in reference to the name, Adam, indicates that it represents a myth, a race, or a nation. Dr. Gladstone, the lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society, says, "We cannot always distinguish in the early records between nations and individuals." This must necessarily surround the primitive features of Christianity with an uncertainty. It is remarkable, upon the hypothesis of the divine origin of the Christian faith, that its basis should be involved in so much doubt and perplexity. Another source of uncertainty in the narrative is, that the language of the record of the events which are said to refer to Adam is very peculiar, many of the words employed having different meanings. For instance, the Garden of Eden may signify the Garden of God, or a pleasure garden, or a primitive country, the only certain thing about it being, that this Garden cannot be identified with any spot on the globe known at the present day.

Upon the supposition that such a person as the Adam of the Old Testament ever lived, the question arises not only where was he created, but when did the act take place? Upon this question of date there are differences of opinion among pious men who revere the Bible, and who draw their conclusions from it, of some three thousand years. One writer gives it as 6984 B.C., while another assigns it to only 3616 B.C. Sir W. Boyd, in his *History of Literature*, which was written before the dates of modern research were published, says that upwards of three hundred different opinions have been expressed regarding the time of creation. He quotes five leading authorities who vary in their calculations to the extent of 1504 years; and he further shows that the same uncertainty pertains to the event called the Flood. He mentions six prominent writers who have fixed the date when this catastrophe is supposed to have taken place, the periods varying to the extent of nearly 1142 years. We thus see that there is no certainty as to the time when the alleged Creation, the Fall of Man, or the Flood occurred, any more than there is as to when man first appeared on earth. Another instance of the lack of certitude is in the biblical statement that Adam should die the very day that he ate a certain fruit. Now we are informed that he did partake of the forbidden fruit, and that he did not die as predicted. Where, therefore, is the certainty of the promise that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"? If we have no better assurance of being "made alive" than the inaccurate statement as to the death of Adam, the whole thing, to say the least of it, is manifestly uncertain and obscure. We urge that, if the claims of orthodoxy are to be maintained, the account in Genesis must be regarded as being historically and literally true, for if it is not so the theory that Jesus was the "Savior of the world" and also the whole scheme of Christian redemption fall to the ground. If the events recorded in Genesis are to be looked upon as myths, legends, or allegory, the foundation of the leading doctrines of the Christian faith has no basis in fact. And that this is so, appears to us to be beyond doubt from the evidence furnished by the Bible and by acknowledged Christian writers.

It must also be apparent to all candid and unprejudiced readers of the gospels and the epistles, that the accounts there given of Jesus himself are by no means free from uncertainty. The highest authorities differ as to the date of his birth, but they mostly agree that he was not born on what is termed Christmas Day, despite the fact that December 25 is generally supposed to be the day of his advent. Neither can it be said, with any degree of certainty where he was born. Was it in Nazareth, Bethlehem, or in Egypt? It would be indeed difficult to answer the question satisfactorily from the New Testament; and from secular history we can obtain no reliable information upon the subject. Moreover, is it certain that there was such a place as Nazareth known at the time Jesus is supposed to have lived? Further, was he the son of Joseph, whose relation to David cannot be established? Or was he the son of the Holy Ghost and Mary, the latter of whom could alone decide the matter? Uncertainty as

to the day, year and cause of his birth is sufficient to make us pause before accepting the theological boast that Christianity rests on verities that cannot be questioned. The uncertainty as to the date of the death of Christ and as to what is said to have immediately followed, is equally manifest. Did he live only thirty years, or was his life extended to fifty, as Irenæus informs us? Did Jesus die in agony, as stated in the New Testament; or did he pass away "feeling no pain" as related in the recently-discovered "Gospel of St. Peter"? Was he a descendant from heaven, to which he was to return as the spiritual son of God; or can those records be relied upon that omit all reference to his virgin birth and to his miraculous ascension?

Those who in their early days had received an orthodox training were taught to believe that there was no uncertainty about the Bible being God's infallible word, but now the very reverse is admitted by Christians to be the truth. It is granted by their leading exponents that the Bible is not a record of Christian certainties. T. P. Forsyth, in the lately published volume, *Faith and Criticism*, writes: "But Christianity is not a book religion. It has a book, but the book is not the Revelation. It does not even contain the Revelation any more than the reflecting telescope contains the heavens. . . . All questions of a book revelation should cease when we recall that the Revelation Himself never wrote a word, never ordered a word to be written, and apparently never contemplated any Bible more extended than the scriptures he had himself used." This view of the Christian writer has been described as being a new and enlightened theory of the subject; but the truth is, it plunges the entire subject into inextricable confusion. If the New Testament is not a revelation in itself, and does not contain a revelation, what is it from a Christian standpoint? Its claim as a revelation has hitherto been one of the most prominent enforced opinions of the orthodox Church. Heresy is indeed destroying the once endeared figments of the faith. Mr. Forsyth says such inquiries should now cease because we know that Jesus was not directly or indirectly concerned in the production of the New Testament. We submit there never was a time in Christian history when that fact was not as palpable as it is to-day. Further, we doubt if any controversialist ever seriously contended that Jesus was concerned with the written history of himself. We would here ask, if the continuity of the "message of Jesus" has not been secured by the written word, how has it been perpetuated? Christ is termed a "Revelation," but when, where, and to whom was he a revelation? He brought to light nothing that was valuable, neither did he reveal any scheme of universal redemption from the wrongs of life. His advent ushered in no truth worthy of preservation. The idea seems to prevail amongst sections of the Christian body that by giving up "infallibility" as applied to the New Testament, one source of uncertainty as to the Christian faith is thereby removed. Persons who entertain this delusion evidently do not see the logical issue of such a position. If the so-called sacred writings are divested of the element of certainty, not only does the special claim of Christianity as the superior and only certain religion disappear, but we have no guarantee that the gospels represent the "truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

The fact is, modern criticism has placed the faith of Christendom on a level with the other religions of the world, in so far as a lack of certainty of their credentials is concerned. They are all based upon the fallible opinions of man, and in judging of their nature and value we are forcibly reminded of the axiom "To err is human."

CHARLES WATTS.

A Sunday-school teacher recently asked a member of her class what was charity. "Please, ma'am, giving away things what you don't want," was the immediate and unhesitating response. On another occasion the parable of the sower was briefly recorded thus:—"A certain sower went forth to sow. And as he went he fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and devoured him." Probably the best definition ever given of faith was that by a school-boy, "Believing things that ain't true."

## THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH.

DR. C. H. PEARSON, the author of the notable work on *National Life and Character*, has, not unnaturally, been attacked in various quarters for his somewhat gloomy views of the race's future. The average man cannot bear to hear that the race will one day degenerate or become extinct. The street-corner tub thumper is often roused to terrible anger if you hint that he may not live for ever. But in the August number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Dr. Pearson replied to some of his critics, and in the course of his reply he deals with the political influence of the Church. He asks: "What has the great political influence, which the Church wields, been employed to effect during the present century? Did the bishops or the Church support the removal of religious disabilities from Protestant Nonconformists, or from Roman Catholics, or from Hebrews? Did they help to carry negro emancipation? Did they lend their aid to the cause of national education? Were they on the side of liberty in the one critical struggle of our own times, the war of North against South in America? Is it in them the Temperance party finds its chief allies? Or to them the Labor party looks for advocacy? Scores of admirable clergymen have helped in every one of these great battles for right, but the mass of their clerical brethren have been steadily on the side of vested interests, and half unconsciously, no doubt, for whatever commended their organisation to favor with the classes."

What has here to be emphasised is, that the political influence of the Church has always been against reform, always re-actionary, always retrogressive. And the causes for this state of things are not very obscure. The raising and educating of the people spells danger to the Church. Education is the foe of all priestcraft and all superstition. While the people are kept down, and while economic conditions render it well-nigh impossible that they should have leisure enough to think or cultivate themselves, there is a chance for the Church to flourish. And hence it is that the influence of the men of the Church, from the country parson who backs the country squire, up to the bench of bishops' in the House of Lords, has always been thrown into the scale against the extending or developing of a system of national education. The interest of the Church lies that way, and the sons of the Church may be trusted to guard her interest—which means their own. But there is another cause. The priests do not come from the people. Drawn from the aristocratic and upper-middle-classes by training and descent, they are out of touch with the mass of the people—and so they must, from the nature of the case, ever remain. There is little or no chance—whatever gushy enthusiasts may advocate to the contrary—of the Church becoming democratised. Verily it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a large-sized needle, than for a hodman's son to become Archbishop of Canterbury, however well versed in the black art he might be. Hence from every cause the Church, taken as a whole—for of course here and there, there may be exceptions—will remain what it has always really been—a Tory caucus. Thus it is that the Church has always been Conservative, always for an appeal to the past. The "faith of our fathers" is the bulwark of the methods of our fathers. The Church has always tested new methods by the old ones, and judged modern legislation in the light of ancient and effete scriptures.

And the sooner the people learn this lesson, the better it will be for themselves. A Christian journal the other day said there was no hope for the people if they turned from Christ. Well, we should roundly say there is no hope for them *unless* they do so turn. "Christ"—the carpenter's son—is only a decoy which is used to humbug the masses, and keep them contented in their present state. This "carpenter's son" business is a huge and bare-faced sham, and unblushing hypocrisy at which even the priests themselves must smile.

But there is a change. Happily the people *are* finding out the truth. The old platitudes do not go down so easily as before. The spread of education,

the establishment of Board Schools, the extension of the franchise, all these are rousing the people to a sense of their right. They are beginning to see how they have been cheated by the wielders of power, and how the Church has been throughout a consistent supporter of power. Church and king go hand in hand, and the Church does the king's and the aristocrat's work in the quieter and subtler places where king and aristocrat could not tread. Never once in history has the Church stood out for the down-trodden against the organised power. Whatever conflicts there have been between the civil powers and the Church, they have not been because of the Church's concern for the oppressed. These conflicts may be likened—we do not use the metaphor in an individually offensive way—to the case of two brigands falling out over their spoils, where one claims more than the other is willing to concede. And in these cases the people were used as the battle-ground on which Church and State might fight out their quarrel.

Dr. Pearson, whom we have before quoted, considers that the State is superseding the Church in the performance of civil functions because, presumably, the State "has gradually assimilated much of Christianity into its own system." Now, brilliant and scholarly as Dr. Pearson undoubtedly is, we fancy he would find it difficult, if tackled, to defend this position. What functions which are peculiarly Christian, has the State undertaken to perform? Dr. Pearson mentions "education, the relief of poverty, the ordering of the marriage laws, the protection of women and children, the opening up of careers to honorable ambition." Surely by no stretch can these be included in Christianity—unless, of course, Dr. Pearson is going to join the throng who are engaged in daily turning out brand-new "Christianities" never heard of before. The functions he mentions—whether the Church undertook them or not in past times—are secular functions and pertain to the secular life of the people. And that the State, in undertaking them, supplants the Church and, as Dr. Pearson thinks, appears "to the mass of men to give them all that they need," merely indicates that the Church, when stripped of its secular appendages, supplies no human need and responds to no real human desire. It may, no doubt, be true, as Dr. Pearson says, that the Church "can never be superseded by the civil order for the discharge of peculiar work," but then it must be allowed the work is so *very* peculiar that few ordinary people are peculiar enough to appreciate it.

There are two ways of lessening the evil influence of the Church. The first is to disestablish it and free the State from the injustice of supporting one particular body of opinion. For besides the reactionary influence which every Church necessarily is, the harm caused by a State Church is very much more. It begets toadyism, servility, unmanliness, and, in short, all those evils that accompany the reign of the parson in the rural England of to-day. The second way is by carrying on a freethought propaganda, which will show the people how the Church has thwarted and harassed every effort for reform.

Yes, let it be thoroughly understood, the sooner the democracy learns the Church is one of the instruments for its exploitation, the nearer we will be to the goal. Of course we find occasionally, here and there, a well-meaning democrat, like, say, Keir Hardie, who believes in a Christ of his own make, and fancies that democracy can be helped by building a new edifice out of the debris of the old. He does not see that the fault is not merely in any structural arrangement, that it is in the very material whereof all the creeds are builded. For the ideal of all the churches is transcendental; the very reason of their existence is an alleged future life to which this one is subordinate; they have, therefore, no logical part to play in the progressive movements of the time. And as long as men are straining their attention after Christs and Churches, so long will they tend to neglect their present necessities for the idle dreams of an imaginary future.

FREDERICK RYAN.

#### THE PRINCE OF DISCORD.

ONE of the many titles claimed for Jesus Christ is that of "Prince of Peace." According to Christians, it was Christ that the "prophecy" in Isaiah ix. 6 referred to, and we are to believe that the coming of Christ was to be the signal for the advent of a new day of peace and prosperity for humankind. Judging by the state of "Christ's Church on Earth," the title of Prince of Pieces might appropriately be applied to the meek and lowly one, for notwithstanding a plentiful supply of "Dr. Lunn's Re-union Cement," in pieces that Church seems likely to remain. The Christians' right to hang this title of "Prince of Peace" round the neck of their supposed Saviour, is, however, a very questionable one.

If we turn to the Bible to ascertain Christ's own views on the subject, we find that his utterances on this subject are hopelessly contradictory. We find this "Prince of Peace" in two separate instances, seeking to disabuse the minds of his hearers of the idea that he had any intention of fulfilling the promises of "Peace and goodwill on earth," made by the angels on his behalf in Luke ii. 14. In Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount, we find him exclaiming "Blessed are the peacemakers," yet the same evangelist, five chapters further on, gives Christ's emphatic denial of the peaceful nature of his mission (Matt. x. 34). In Luke xii. 57 this "ideal man" re-affirms the dividing character of his work in the words: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division." After nearly two thousand years of this gospel of peace, goodwill and hell-fire, who can say that the work of division has not succeeded? However, in John xiv. 27, we have the strange spectacle of this declared sword-and-fire-bringer, bequeathing to his disciples the legacy of peace in the words, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Again, Peter to whom, with the other disciples, Jesus makes the declaration recorded in Matt. x. 34 ("I came not to send peace but a sword," etc.), with the most astonishing impudence, says (Acts x. 36) God . . . preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Verily the nature of sky-pilots changeth not. In all ages we find them exhibiting the same beautiful disregard for truth.

Leaving these inexplicable and bewildering contradictions, we turn to the history of Christianity and ask: Is there evidence there to justify Christians bestowing the title of "Prince of Peace" on the author of their faith? The answer is written large on every page—No! Christ's teaching being so clear and simple that to this day nobody knows precisely what he did teach; afforded plenty of room for his followers to fall out in, and they were not slow to avail themselves of the opportunity. Each sect felt justified, by some portion of Christ's teaching, in assuming that those of their own way of thinking, and those only, were going to be the spectators at the great drama of Roasting the Damned which is to be played hereafter. The members of each sect believed that those of every other sect were treading the "broad path which leadeth to destruction" Christ told his disciples that it was better to cut their hands off than leave them "to be cast into Hell fire," and his followers interpreted it that it was better to cut their fellow-man off, than leave him to be cast into hell fire by a "God of love." So arose those bitter persecutions and those bloody wars which have constituted the record of "Christian progress" for the last eighteen hundred years. Now, after this blood spilt in the attempt to save the world from going to hell, Christians assure us either that Christ never taught a *literal* hell, or that those who have been fortunate enough to escape salvation by stake and faggot, are having a good time of it in those same nether regions.

Palpable contradictions like those mentioned above, constitute the teaching of the Christians' God, or as some now prefer to call him "the ideal man," whom they wish to set up as our authority on questions of to-day. Blood-thirsty persecution in the past have constituted the Christians' right to give Jesus the title of "Prince of Peace." How are they justifying that right to-day? How are they propagating the gospel of "peace and goodwill" in the last years of the nineteenth century? For answer, go and ask the Matabele. W. P. REDFERN.

The First Anarchist—Noah, of course, who was nothing if not an *arkist*.

A colored preacher in Kentucky declares that Adam and Eve were black, and the forbidden fruit were water-melons.

## EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIANS.

Off in clover, wine, and beer,  
Humble bishops take good cheer;  
Fight the fight—do fifty rounds—  
Strengthened with £10,000.

Onward Christians, hold your feasts,  
Take your shillings to the priests;  
Aye, deny your fondest wishes—  
Give the priests the loaves and fishes.

Shrink not Christians—don't be soft;  
Crammed and duped, ne'er mind how oft.  
In the world to come, how well!—  
You in heaven, the rich in hell.

Hold your drooping purses out,  
Parsons cannot do without;  
Let your wives and maids be spooned,  
Soon your whistles shall be tuned.

Saint John's dream is in your eye;  
Don't get fuddled when you're dry;  
Let not truth your course impede;  
Lose your reason—keep your creed.

Onward, then, to battle nearing,  
Give no heretic a hearing;  
Stuffed and fooled, with wearied bones,  
Toiling for these pious drones.

P. W. BALDWIN.

## ACID DROPS.

Croydon was the scene of Jabez Balfour's greatness, and it was fitting that a meeting should be held there in connexion with the Liberator Relief Fund. The principle speaker was the Rev. J. Stockwell-Watts, who made the following admission. "Ninety per cent," he declared, "of the victims throughout the country claimed that they had been led into their trouble by the influence of Christian men." Mr. Stockwell-Watts said it was "an awful fact," and that "Secularists were pointing the finger of scorn at them."

Henry T. Smallpage, of Leeds, embezzled £2,000, and absconded with a married woman, leaving his own wife and two children behind. He is now doing three years' "hard." Henry was secretary of the Pious Uses Trust. Evidently he devoted as much of the Trust as he could to his own spiritual improvement.

The Rev. Arthur Herbert Greenwood was charged at Cambridge with obtaining money by false pretences. Let out on bail, he absconded to Boulogne, whither he has been brought to await his trial.

Being in want of a little cash, the Rev. George Griffith, an Irish clergyman, shot his mother and went off on a holiday with her money. On leaving the house he told the servant not to trouble, as Mrs. Griffith had died of heart disease. A Cork jury has found him guilty, and he will probably be hung. The plea of insanity set up on his behalf was a failure; nevertheless he was recommended to mercy on the ground of his feeble intellect; though this sounds rather satirical when it is remembered that a Cork jury is probably Catholic.

The Rev. Thomas Closs, the chaplain of Caterham Asylum and defendant in some recent affiliation proceedings, does not appear to have been fully vindicated by the failure of the proceedings, and the subsequent attack on his person by the girl, for he has been suspended by the Metropolitan Asylums Board pending a private inquiry.

A curious trial has taken place, with closed doors, at St. Petersburg. A banker and his niece were charged with belonging to the sect of Skoptzi, or self-mutilators. The banker, a man of sixty, was condemned to fifteen years' hard labor for self-mutilation, and for having tattooed a cross on the girl's breast, and the girl to ten years for having submitted and connived at the offence.

These Skoptzi are better Christians than those who persecute them: They preserve the genuine features of the early faith and carry out the injunctions of Christ (Matt. xix. 12). Alone among professing Christians they are able to receive his doctrine, and hold that it is better to enter everlasting life

maimed than to go whole into everlasting fire. But the Czar believes rather in the Old Testament injunction to increase and multiply.

Mr. A. A. Herberte, who was formerly a member of the American Presbyterian Mission, Shanghai, but who is now a Freethinker, writes to the editor of the *Liberator* on an extract it inserted from the *Freethinker*, relative to the Chinese calling Christianity the pig religion owing to the missionaries pronouncing *chü* god or lord, as though it were *chuh* or pig. He says: "I have myself heard a preacher use *tien* a field, for *tien* heaven, and thus tell his audience that God lived in a field instead of, as he intended, in heaven.

The word *chü* says Mr. Herberte, has led to much wordy warfare among the missionaries. The Pope ordered Catholic missionaries to call God *tien chu*, i.e., heavenly lord. The Church of England, to be distinct, used *chen chu*, the true god, and the Wesleyans Shan-tih, the essence of goodness. He adds, "The literati of China are greatly amused by the squabbling, and compare it with the high-sounding talk of 'peace on earth,' and form their own opinion."

The Rev. J. Rendel Harris writes in the *Contemporary Review* on "Tatian and the Fourth Gospel." His conclusion is, "The more we know our Tatian, the more we shall be persuaded that the gospels were well established in the Christian Church when Tatian undertook to combine them." This is exactly what we should expect if, as suspected, the discovered Diatessaron ascribed to Tatian is really a late forgery.

We have it on the authority of scripture that the Devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, but Mr. Joughin, of the Peel Church Young Men's Society, Isle of Man, boasts of having seen him in the form of a black dog. One of the young men named Kermodé tried to go one better by boasting that he had seen a fairy, which he described as "a being from the other world, about 18 inches high, dressed in red, bare feet, and red cap." The Rev. J. Corlett, of St. John's, backed up Mr. Joughin, and said "He believed in the ministration of guardian angels, and it was reasonable to suppose that there were bad angels also, trying to counteract their good work among men." We wonder the papers give currency to this sad intelligence. It may frighten intending visitors from the island; for who would go in search of a fairy if they were as likely to fall in with the Devil?

In *Notes and Queries* there has been some controversy on "The Devil and his Dam," some thinking dam stands for demons, others for dame. In Shakespeare's usage it stands for mother. According to a story given by M. D. Conway in his *Demonology* from Jewish sources, when a rib had been taken out of Adam's side to make Eve, the Devil sprang out of the wound before the flesh closed up. Scripture authority is found in that verse which speaks of the making of Eve. The Hebrew letter *samech* first occurs, and this represents a serpent with his tail in his mouth. According to this version, Adam was the Devil's dam, and Eve his twin sister.

George Mason, aged nineteen, was recently hung at Winchester. He was a private soldier, and he shot a sergeant on whose evidence he had been punished for disobedience. Before being hung, George Mason was confirmed, and twice received the sacrament at the hands of the local bishop. It is to be presumed, therefore, that he has been wafted to glory. According to the newspaper reports, the Bishop of Winchester took great interest in this young murderer, who confessed (so it is said) that he had been an Atheist. But what is the value of a bishop's word in such a case? For our part, we would not believe him on oath, where he thought he could do his Church a turn at the expense of "infidelity." Look at that good man, Hugh Price Hughes! He is reckoned the very glass of fashion and the mould of form in Wesleyan Methodist circles, yet in relation to "infidels" he lies as naturally as a cat laps milk.

By the way, it was proved at George Mason's trial that his grandmother, aunt, and uncle were all lunatics. Perhaps this was why the Bishop of Winchester found him such good raw material for the manufacture of a Christian. Did not the Bishop of Exeter, a year or two ago, when confirming thirty-eight idiots at Starcross Lunatic Asylum, declare that

he found such persons especially susceptible to Christian influences?

Francis Arthur Bumford, of 41 Warner-street, Birmingham, has fallen a victim to religious mania. He took to attending Salvation Army meetings and talking incessantly about religious matters. Finally, he committed a savage assault on his mother, whom he nearly murdered. "God told me to do it," he explained. It was a difficult task to arrest him, and when, after a severe struggle, he was taken to the Police-station, he was still very violent and making incoherent quotations from Scripture. Bumford is twenty-eight years of age and a teetotaler. Drink is therefore not responsible in any way for his eccentricities. The whole credit must be given to that sweet influence which made old Father Abraham ready to stab his son Isaac.

The Brothers Bidwell, the famous Bank of England forgers, are evangelising in New York. The better the sinner the better the saint. Murderers would make splendid preachers, and what audiences they would draw! only the law has a way of hanging them.

The Glasgow tramways having passed into the hands of the Corporation, the local men of God are agitating to have their use on Sunday stopped. The only result, even if they succeed, will probably be an increase of business to the bus companies. One of the men of God declared that the Underground Railway was a judgment upon the company for having run on the blessed Sabbath.

If Glasgow ever flourished by the preaching of the word, it was certainly not by the practising of it, for money-making is its chief business. A Conference of the godly at the Christian Institute spread the alarming news, that whereas in Aberdeen 330 out of every thousand go to church, in Glasgow the proportion is only 186 per thousand. The further north you go, the stronger the flavor of piety.

The ministers of Arbroath to the number of eighteen, firmly protest against Sunday performances in the Town Hall by the Kirkcaldy Trades Band, as "calculated to demoralise the people." The band was announced to give sacred music, but the sky-pilots, though differing on every other topic, are wonderfully unanimous that any interference with their monopoly of the Lord's day is calculated to demoralise.

Dr. Parker has unbosomed himself in the Christmas Number of the *Christian Commonwealth*. It is a very egotistic performance. We began counting the "I's" and gave it up. Dr. Parker says he is a "pulpit medium." He simply puts himself into the hands of God—and finds that ancient party a profitable employer. "I write no sentences," Dr. Parker says, "chisel no phrases, study no gestures." The last statement is particularly accurate.

Dr. Geikie, a well-known gushing Christian writer, has issued a new book on the Bible, as though there were not enough in existence already. The *Christian World* evidently does not regard it as an honest book, for it speaks of the author's "adroit escapes," and ends by remarking that "Readers are growing less tolerant of religious book-making"—which, if true, is a sad look-out for Dr. Geikie.

The Rev. J. Mellor has been telling his brethren in the Manchester Methodist Ministers' Union that the Bible story of Creation will not hold water, and that the findings of science should be accepted by the pulpit, unless it is to fall behind the growing intelligence of the people. Mr. Mellor's brother ministers don't seem to relish his advice. They would rather cling to the "old, old story." But will it hold them up?

F. A. Atkins, who does the Young Men's column in a religious weekly, writes of himself in grand style. "Personally," he says, "I have received letters from some of the greatest writers of our age." Indeed! How did he manage to get them? Is he an autograph hunter, or what?

"My brethren," said Archdeacon Farrar the other Sunday, "My brethren, we have a marvellous power of deceiving ourselves." This is letting the cat out of the bag, tail and all. In this simple and luminous sentence Dr. Farrar explains the origin and history of the Christian faith.

Elijah's mantle, not much the worse for wear, has descended on to the shoulders of Showman Studt. He has only to pray for fine weather and he gets it. According to the veracious *Cambria Leader*, he was going to give a performance for the benefit of the Carmarthen charities. The incidental expenses were considerable, and the weather broken. The showman was discouraged, but flopped on his knees and implored the unchangeable to alter the weather. Says the pious *C. L.*, "the prayer was straightway answered. Although it rained heavily on the day before, and rain came down in torrents the day after, the period of the fête itself was delightfully fine." Mr. Studt netted a good sum for the charities. Mr. Studt should make a good thing by hiring his services out to farmers and others.

The *English Churchman* (Dec. 7), alluding to the recurrence of the influenza epidemic, says: "Those who believe in the Divine government of the world as revealed in the scriptures will doubtless recognise 'the finger of God' in these visitations. Curious that the finger of God is generally recognised in something nasty. One would rather fancy *la grippe* displayed the claws of Old Nick.

We never fathomed Bret Harte's religious position, but we fancy it must approach that of Mark Twain, judging by the following sentence taken from a recent story: "The creator who could put a cancer in a believer's stomach is above being interfered with by prayer."

If anybody is recovering from the influenza, and feeling a little dull, he might do worse—especially if he knows something of books and thinking—than turn for merriment to last week's *Methodist Times*, where the "Notes on Current Events" will be found almost entirely devoted to the happy Christian Conference at the Holborn Town Hall. It will be remembered that after the Coal War was ended by lay influence, the Christian Churches had a special innings. They met, informally but in great force, and recorded their opinion that working men ought to have enough to live on. It was a sublime effort of Christian philanthropy: so sublime, indeed—ay, and so stupendous—that we can easily understand how it took Christianity nearly two thousand years to screw itself up to the requisite pitch of splendid audacity.

The drawback, however, is this; the churches came in (as usual) when the matter was settled. It takes away the pith of the performance, to the eyes of common sense; but the churches know there is not enough common sense to settle their hash, so they are not at all frightened. They have done this little trick so many times before! Let who will build the dunghill, he will always find a Church cock crowing on the top.

Cock-a-doodle-do!

I did it, and not you.

That's how the *Methodist Times* bird goes on. One would think the Churches had just begun the economic redemption of the people—just because they have met and pronounced a platitude. About fifty years ago, Thomas Carlyle used to call Political Economy the "Dismal Science," and the Methody man has just caught old Diogenes up. He has also found out a writer called John Ruskin, the author of a "remarkable little volume," from which he gives an extract to show its "general character"—something like the man who carried about a brick as a sample of the house he had to sell. The Methody man (that is, brother Hughes) presents Ruskin as a brilliant new discovery. Yet *Unto This Last*, the book referred to, was published in the *Cornhill Magazine* thirty-five years ago. It has been accessible in a separate form since May, 1862. And this is the book which the Methody man gives extracts from in 1893 to show his readers that the "little volume" is worth looking at. Here again, the old truth holds good. Christians are always behind the thought of the age, and as they come up to the level of each new principle they cover it with sentimental slime which makes it slippery and dangerous.

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes says Methodists have been cursed with such a quantity of prudence that if they were transported to a planet where prudence was lacked they could sell a lot of it cheap, for it is a drug in the Methodist market. The idea of transplaneting Mr. Hugh Price Hughes is intoxicating. But, alas! no. I'm afraid the other planets

wouldn't stand him. Strange, though, isn't it, that the cursed prudence of the Methodist Church doesn't seem to take effect on H. P.—*Sunday Chronicle*.

Mr. T. Gowland is announced to lecture for the Liverpool Branch of the C.E.S. On the placards he is described as "Late Secularist Champion." Local Freethinkers feel considerably annoyed at this, as Mr. Gowland has no claim to any such title. He certainly occupied our platform half-a-dozen times, but his discourses were generally remarkable only for their dullness. Against the earnest request of the committee, he acted the part of Jack Pudding to a theological Dr. Dulcamara who has acquired some notoriety, and whilst enacting that rôle became "converted." The local officers of the C.E.S. express themselves very anxious that everything shall be done in a "gentlemanly" way. They can now find out the gentlemanly way of describing a false statement, and apply it to their own conduct. They are issuing "challenges" broadcast, but they appear to be emulating those distinguished members of the P.R., who issue their challenges in such terms, that no sane man would accept.

The Rev. Hugh H. Birley, vicar of Pelton Fell, is not satisfied with his encounter with Mr. Foote. He has returned to the attack, and has been lecturing at Chester-le-Street on "Freethought: what do you mean by it? What does it lead to?" The report says Mr. J. Laidlaw presided over a moderate attendance. Mr. Birley is simply abusive. "The freethinking anti-Christian threw over all moral restraint, and his freethinking led him into the very sink of iniquity and corruption." After all, these accusations are no worse than those brought against the early Christians by their opponents. Mr. Birley reiterated his statement that the teachings of the *Freethinker* are poisonous. We challenge him to lay finger on any "poisonous" passage in this journal from first to last, and compare it with what we can produce from his Bible. Mr. Birley is evidently familiar with the solicitor's instructions to the advocate, "No case, abuse opponent's attorney."

Pious William of Germany has ordered that when he goes to church all seats which he can see or from which he can be seen shall be filled with soldiers so that he may not be distracted in his prayers.

The French watch with interest the probable return of the Jesuits to Germany. They were credited with urging the Empress Eugenie to the Franco-Prussian War. Wherever they go they are likely to fulfil the words of their master, and bring not peace, but a sword.

One of the latest clerical eccentricities that have come under my knowledge occurred in connection with a wedding at Leamington. In this case the vicar of the church at which the service was to be solemnised objected, among other things, to the choir being paid more than a certain figure, and to any flowers being used for decoration unless they were purchased at one particular shop. The choir difficulty ended by the choristers refusing to sing on the terms fixed by the vicar. The other difficulty led to no floral decorations being used. It would be interesting to know the exact nature of the vicar's interest in the flower shop in question, which is said to be a very small one.—*Truth*.

Mr. George Harwood is said to be popular in Bolton. He is a large employer of labor, a professed democrat, and a prospective M.P. Mr. Harwood is also a Christian, and has been discoursing on "Christianity and Progress." Before he lectures on that subject again he should read Mr. Foote's pamphlet bearing the same title. It is very evident that Mr. Harwood has not studied the matter for himself, but has simply accepted the commonplaces of Christian apologetics. In face of the recent slaughter of the Matabele, it is amusing to hear Mr. Harwood say that it is only Christians who realise the importance of human life. Even at Bolton there must surely be persons outside the Secular party unable to repress a smile at such a boast.

The Rev. T. Keane, who runs the Irish Church Missionary Society, being both treasurer and secretary, boasts that "In Manchester and Liverpool recently, 600 Roman Catholics (of whom 480 passed) presented themselves for examination" before the Society. The *Catholic Times* says the statement is absolutely devoid of truth. "Not a single genuine case

of conversion from Catholicism could the Society produce." We leave the advocates of the rival faiths to settle it between them.

An advertisement for cash for Catholic missions appears in the *Weekly Register*. It is headed: "900,000,000 Heathens. 50,000 pass every day before the dread tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. Without Faith. Without Sacraments. Destitute of All Spiritual Aid." Now the doctrine of the Church is that there is no salvation outside her pale, and that the fires of hell are everlasting. So that a loving Father roasts his children for ever at the rate of 50,000 daily.

If it be said that certain theologians make a reservation, and permit the possibility of salvation to those of "invincible ignorance," then must it be asked, Why disturb that ignorance which gives them a possibility of escape? All theologians agree that those will be damned who, having heard of the gospel, nevertheless reject it, and the fact is that the majority of the nine hundred millions of heathen who do hear of it do reject it. So Christian missions only give the heathen an increased chance of eternal damnation.

Captain Lugard, in his book on East Africa, gives us a hint of Christian treatment of natives. He asserts that the rule of gold prospectors in dealing with niggers was, on the first sign of insolence, to kick them under the jaw or in the stomach. If that did not quiet them, shooting straight and promptly was usually effective.

The Dundee Presbytery have been wrestling with the subject of gambling. Nap was mentioned, and one innocent from the Highlands asked, "What is nap?" Whereat there was a chorus of laughter from the reverend fathers.

Houses of God in East Kent have been "burgled" of late, and robbed of much valuable plate. The thieves have not been discovered. Perhaps they were angels, who couldn't see the fitness of valuable plate in a church built for the worship of the poor Carpenter.

Jehovah doesn't seem to like the organ of Edonson parish church. Anyhow he let it be burnt last Sunday. The parson should square Jehovah before he incurs the cost of repairs.

Christian freedom runs pretty high at Cork. Some young men who attempted an open-air mission, we presume in the Protestant interest, were pelted with mud and brickbats, while one was knocked down and trampled upon. How these Christians love one another!

In the *Secular Almanack* for 1894 the number of clergymen is roughly stated as about 25,000. The number as given in the Clergy List is 25,750. Of these, however, a number are schoolmasters, or without livings. According to the census of 1891, there were 24,663, who returned themselves as Church of England clergy. In addition to these there were 10,057 Nonconformist ministers, 5,119 male missionaries, and 4,194 female ones, and 2,511 priests of the Roman Catholic Church; so that England alone can boast of supporting over 46,000 sky-pilots and parasites, in addition to the missionaries she sends abroad.

In the program of the Universal Week of Prayer, Jan 7 to 14, 1894, the Jews have a special place. Infidels are not mentioned, being, we suppose, past praying for.

#### OBITUARY.

It is with deep regret that I record the death of David Munro, who died at his residence, Jesmond Vale, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Dec. 3, 1893. Deceased was in the 75th year of his age. In him Secularism has lost an enthusiastic veteran. Though his illness was very brief, he seemed to fully realise that his end was near, and requested that he should have a purely Secular funeral. Deceased was a most ardent admirer and follower of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and, being a bookbinder to business, on his bookshelves could be found, neatly bound, almost every Freethought pamphlet ever published. He was buried on Dec. 6, at St. Andrew's Cemetery, in the presence of many old friends and workers of the cause, the Secular Burial Service being most impressively read by Mr. R. Mitchell.—J. G. BARTRAM.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 17, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. : at 7, "What has become of the Devil?"

December 24, Hall of Science.

January 7 and 14, Hall of Science; 21, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Dec. 17, Sheffield; 24, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.
- D. F. GLOAK.—Your Lecture Notice for last week arrived at noon on Wednesday—far too late. Pleased to hear of success at Dundee.
- J. W. ATKINS.—The destruction of the Alexandrian Library is dealt with in the second chapter of Foote and Wheeler's *Crimes of Christianity*. Thanks for cuttings.
- G. L. MACKENZIE.—Glad to have the lively account of your polemic adventure; also to find that you quite agree with our advice in the article on "Gutter Christians."
- T. JEWELL.—We decline to print his brutal language or to advertise the man. If you inquire at Ryhope you will learn enough.
- J. F. HAMPSON.—Mr. Foote never issues challenges, and never accepts them. He is always ready, however, to represent the N.S.S. or its Branches in set debate with a representative Christian. If the Bolton Branch chooses to move in this spirit, perhaps a useful debate might be arranged.
- O. B. HYDE.—Shall appear.
- E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.
- A. HOLLAND.—May fill up a corner.
- J. D. LEGGETT.—Thanks.
- G. ADAMS.—The cutting interests us to some extent, but it would hardly interest most of our readers.
- J. COLLINSON.—Send as desired.
- L. HILL.—Mr. Foote could not attend to it, being down with influenza himself. Mr. J. P. Adams was a veteran Freethinker, and we will find space in our next for an obituary notice, if we are furnished with final particulars.
- F. G. ROE.—Mr. Foote does not attend to orders for literature. Send direct, with remittance, to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.
- L. WOOD.—See "Acid Drops."
- J. SANDERSON.—Glad to hear your health is improving. Shall be more pleased to hear of your complete recovery.
- N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance, sec., acknowledges:—A. W. Marks, 10s.; S. A., 10s.; J. T. Horseman, 2s.
- J. H. MADEN will guarantee £1 towards the cost of taking a large central hall for Mr. Foote's lectures at Manchester on January 21. Intending guarantors should communicate immediately.
- G. H. (Altrincham).—The joke has already appeared in our pages. Glad you find the *Comic Sermons and Bible Handbook* "splendid." Much good is done by pushing our literature about.
- A. COLEMAN, newsagent, High-street, Wandsworth, sells this journal.
- LECTURE NOTICES, ETC., should be written on postcards or the envelopes marked outside, and be sent to 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C.
- 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.—*Dor Lichtfreund*—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Froidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—Secular Thought—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Ironclad Age—El Clamor Setabense—Good News—Dundee Advertiser—Chatham and Rochester News—Cambria Daily Leader—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Liver—Journal of Universal Information—Biblical Illustrator—Crescent—Isle of Man Times.
- 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. *The Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.
- 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.
- 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.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's place at Liverpool on Sunday was taken at very short notice by Mr. A. B. Moss, who earned golden opinions by the way in which he acquitted himself. His lectures were pointed and eloquent, and very heartily applauded. Mr. Foote was down with the influenza. He is recovering from the attack, but is still rather "low," as the doctors say. He hopes to visit the two places he was obliged to disappoint—Liverpool and Wolverhampton—at an early date. This morning (Dec. 17) he was to have lectured at the London Hall of Science, but his place will be occupied by another speaker, Mr. J. H. Martin, who will discourse on "More Antidotes to Superstition." He will lecture in the evening, however, and will be glad to see as many as possible of his London friends. His announced subject is, "What Has Become of the Devil?" In one sense, of course, this is a purely theological title; yet Mr. Foote will find it possible to say under it what he wishes to say on the Break-up of Christianity and the progress of Social Unrest in Europe.

Twelve months ago, as many of our readers will recollect, the police tried to frighten the Portsmouth Branch of the N.S.S., and Mr. Foote went down for the purpose of giving the police an opportunity for a good stand-up fight. Mr. Foote was ready and the Branch was ready, but the police were not; in fact, they cried off most ignominiously. Recently, however, they have tried the frightening business again. Last Sunday, at one of Mr. Hunt's lectures, a Police Inspector called to tell the money-taker that he was acting illegally. Now that money-taker was Mr. Scarrot, a capital good fellow if left alone, but a perfect Tartar if you touch his liberty. Mr. Scarrot grimly acknowledged the "law'n' order" gentleman's advice, given not for six-and-eightpence, but free, gratis, for nothing—and the Inspector went away. Two detectives purchased course tickets, to the great satisfaction of the Branch officials, who would like to supply the whole force on the same terms. The detectives also purchased the *Freethinker* and some pamphlets at the bookstall. They acted in the same way the Sunday before at one of Mr. Cohen's lectures. Still, we don't think there will be a prosecution. The police will probably try to get the Music and Dancing license taken away. Of course it is a cowardly procedure, for the law about charging for admission on Sunday applies to all premises, whether licensed or not. Anyhow it will not frighten our Portsmouth Ironsides. They will go on, and Mr. Foote will pay them another visit shortly. In the circumstances he will not take the large hall he was negotiating for, but go to Wellington Hall again, and see whether the police will show a more coming-on disposition.

The Rev. Fleming Williams has kindly promised to pay another visit to the London Hall of Science. It is to take place on Tuesday, January 23. Mr. G. W. Foote has promised to take the chair. Mr. Williams will deliver a lecture on Christian teaching, especially in social matters. The lecture is to be followed by discussion.

The London Secular Federation's annual dinner is a function which metropolitan Freethinkers should remember. It takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday evening, January 8. The tickets are 4s. each, and can be obtained of any London Branch secretary, at the Hall of Science, or at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote will preside. Mr. Watts will also be present, and we hope to make further "distinguished announcements" in our next issue.

On Sunday last Mr. Charles Watts again lectured at the Hall of Science, morning and evening, to capital audiences, who marked their appreciation of the lectures by repeated and enthusiastic applause. Previous to his evening lecture Mr. Watts alluded to the death of Professor Tyndall, and paid a suitable tribute to the labors of the great scientific expounder and Agnostic. Mr. Robert Forder presided.

To-day (Sunday, December 17) Mr. Watts will lecture three times in the Hall of Science, Sheffield.

The bookstall at the London Hall of Science used to be under private management, the last holder being Mr. George Standing, who resigned his tenancy last April. It was then decided that the bookstall should, if possible, be "run" in the N.S.S.'s interest. Mr. George Ward, a very active

and zealous member of the working committee, undertook the responsibility, and, with the valuable assistance of Miss Robins, he has so managed the enterprise, that he has already paid over profits to the N.S.S. exchequer at the rate of nearly £40 a year.

The *Chatham and Rochester News* devotes over half a column to a report of a debate at the Public Hall, New Brompton, between Mr. W. Heaford and Mr. W. Reynolds on the question, "Do the Bible and Science Agree?" The paper says, "The Secularist advocate had the advantage in point of voice and fluency, but speaks of Mr. Reynolds as 'holding his own fairly well.'"

The West London Branch held a most enjoyable Social Evening at the Hammersmith Club on Thursday, Dec. 7. The program included two sketches by Miss Vance's Dramatic Company, and recitations by Mr. W. Smith and Mrs. Thornton Smith. Songs were given by Miss Rita, Miss Wright, and Mr. E. Hopes, which were much appreciated. Dancing concluded a most enjoyable evening.

The Bristol Branch is arranging for a big social party in the large Shepherds' Hall on Tuesday, Dec. 26. Tea will be ready at 6 p.m., and the entertainment will begin at 7.15. There is to be dancing for the younger folk, who haven't got rheumatism yet in their lower extremities. The tickets are one shilling. We hope our Bristol friends will spend a jolly evening together.

On Sunday afternoon, December 24, at 2.30, an "At Home" will be held in St. George's Hall, Albion-street, Hull, consisting of tea, soiree, etc., brass band of thirty performers, singing, etc. Tickets (1s. each) can be had from G. E. Conrad Naewiger, 22 Osborne-street. All Secularists in Hull invited to make this tea on Sunday a success.

The Board schools just opened by the Prince of Wales in the immediate neighborhood of our office, are a sufficient evidence of the superiority of education to religion. They are erected on the site of the grim House of Detention, which flourished in the times of Church supremacy. Near at hand is the House of Correction, now used for the Parcel Post Service. As Brother Jasper said, "The world do move."

The National Union of Teachers has sent to the London School Board an emphatic protest. It is against any inquiry, either by members or officials of School Boards, or by managers deputed by School Boards to carry on the local management of schools, into the individual religious convictions of teachers. That such a protest is necessary should suffice to stir all friends of religious freedom to try and oust from the Boards those reactionaries who mainly go there in the interests of the churches.

The editor of the *New York Truthseeker* and Mr. S. M. Putnam foregathered with Mr. Charles Watts on board the "Campania" the evening before our colleague set sail again for "effete Europe." The trio had some edifying conversation, which friend Macdonald says "it wouldn't do to report too closely." However, he lets out that Mr. Watts promised to send the *Truthseeker* "frequent letters from England."

By the way, we see that when Mr. Watts lectured to a big audience at Philadelphia, his chairman, Dr. Westbrook, called him "the Niagara of the Freethought movement." It was a real American compliment.

We see that George E. Macdonald is back in New York, and making "Observations" in the *Truthseeker*. As "the man with the Badge Pin," George wrote himself into our esteem years ago, and we are glad to renew the acquaintance. Brother Eugene may do worse than find him a permanent berth on the *Truthseeker* staff.

*Secular Thought*, of Toronto (Nov. 25), has an interesting contribution from Mr. F. J. Gould on "Funeral Services for Freethinkers," and reprints Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Historic Doubt" from our columns.

Father Hyacinthe Loyson says that out of thirty-eight millions of Catholics in France, thirty millions, according to the statistics of the Catholic Church itself, do not receive the sacrament at Eastertide, and are therefore, according to

the canons, to be considered as excommunicated. Yet France is still considered a Catholic country.

Mr. F. S. Paul has issued a tract entitled *Theism Criticised*, in which he deals with the principal arguments for a God in a very acute fashion.

Sir Herbert Maxwell tells a good story in the Life of Mr. W. H. Smith which he has just issued. In 1886, while Smith's private secretary happened to be travelling in the same train as Bradlaugh, he mentioned the station at which he was going to stop. "Ah, you are going to stay with Mr. Smith," said Bradlaugh. "Well, I don't suppose there is a man in the House of Commons or in England with whom I am more widely at variance on many subjects, yet there is none for whom I have a more profound respect." In the evening the secretary told his host that he had travelled down with Bradlaugh. "Indeed," Smith replied; "well, it's a strange thing. I don't believe there is a man whose opinions I hold in greater abhorrence than Bradlaugh, but I cannot help feeling that there is not an honest man in Parliament."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

Our "Sugar Plum" department is less well stocked than usual, in consequence of the editor's indisposition. This will be compensated for in our next issue.

#### A NEW ARGUMENT AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

It just occurs to me for the first time (Oct. 10, 4.45 p.m.), as a very singular thing that the Jews did not write and publish some work or works, or statement, against Christianity as soon as they found the superstition gaining ground amongst the people. To me, this seems a fatal objection to the truth of Christianity, and also fatal to all belief in that religion having any historical basis at all.

This objection of mine to Christianity is the result of a clause in a work published in London, 1739, upon the *Method of the Principal Authors who Wrote For and Against Christianity From its Beginning*. The work is translated from the French of Abbé Houttville, by John Pettingal. In the early part of the work the author remarks, "The Jews at first writ nothing against it (Christianity); this happened," etc. I paused as I came to the passage; and now, having told the reader the history of my idea, I proceed to develop it—merely premising that, if anyone has used the argument before me, I shall be pleased to discover the fact.

1. If the gospels are true, Jesus had few friends and many enemies. The Jews, people, Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Priests, Elders, etc., were all (with here and there an exception) bitterly opposed to Jesus and his teaching. They regarded him as a blasphemer, and crucified him as such.

The Jewish hatred passed on to the disciples, and they never showed the least favor to the propagators of this superstition—as they regarded it. But for the Roman rule, it is plain Christianity must have been stamped out by the Jews ere it could have emerged from infancy.

It is very plain, then, that the Jews could not have refrained from publishing books against Christianity for want of a motive. Nay, they had several of the strongest motives that men know.

1. There was the overwhelming motive of religious bigotry and holy horror at Christ's blasphemy. No motive could have been stronger than that, as most men will allow. The motive which impelled the Jews to crucify Jesus with every mark of bitter malice, must also have impelled them to publish their own version of that transaction and of the events which led up to that tragedy. Most surely they would have done this, if they had really crucified Jesus.

2. Then there was the motive of wishing to stand well with the Romans. As we shall see, they had no reason to expect the Romans would defend either Jesus or his disciples, beyond the bare point of keeping the peace. Nay, it was in the power of the Jews to represent Jesus as a most dangerous character, a Republican, a seditious, an enemy of kings, a lawless despiser of all things good or great, whose especial aim

it was to put down all priests and rulers, and set up an empire of his own.

It certainly, therefore, was no want of motive that kept the Jews from writing something against Christ and his religion.

II. It was not for want of ability that they wrote nothing. There were, if the gospels, etc., are to be credited, plenty of educated Jews, plenty of Scribes, or men especially devoted to literature. Not only so, but Christian writers tell us they used the Greek (Hellenistic) language, and so could easily have written what could have been read in the larger portion of the Roman Empire.

III. Had the Jews been converted to Christianity, had the miracles convinced them of the truth of Jesus' mission and gospel, there would have been in that an all-sufficient reason for their never writing against the new religion. But they never ceased to hate the whole movement, nor have they ceased until now.

It is plain, the Jews must have been fully satisfied that Jesus was either insane or a deliberate impostor; that his miracles were tricks or diabolical performances; that his resurrection was a silly story. They could have felt no respect for the apostles, and must have regarded them as fanatics or impostors and liars.

All this being so, the Jews,

IV. Must have written something against Christianity and in vindication of Christ's execution—that is, on the assumption that Jesus ever lived and was treated by the Jews as the gospels relate. They could not have held their peace under such circumstances. Religion, national and personal credit, and other powerful motives must have compelled them to write and publish their side of the transactions.

V. If the motives were strong at first, they could not have been less so in the next few generations. When the Romans were so bitterly persecuting the Christians as the Christian story-tellers relate, what could have been more acceptable to the Roman rulers than a full and detailed exposure of Christianity written by Jews and founded upon documents penned at the very time when Christianity rose? And how extremely easy it must have been for the Jews to have written a taking story—true or false is not the question—just such as the Romans might have circulated for the exposure of Christianity! And how eagerly the Jews would have helped to circulate the story! And what favors the emperors might have conferred upon them for thus helping the government to stamp out this pestilent superstition!

Assuming that Jesus lived, preached, was persecuted and crucified by the Jews (or owing to the Jews); that his disciples propagated his religion after his death; and that for ages the Romans persecuted the Christians, how does the Christian account for the startling fact that the Jews, with all their bitterness, never wrote one line against Christianity or in justification of their own conduct?

Nay, further, how shall we account for that other startling fact that Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, nor any other Roman ever tried to trace the history of the superstition they so heartily despised and were so eager to destroy? How was it that neither the government, nor any Roman scholar, or priest, or philosopher, ever called the Jews together or ever visited or consulted them in order to discover the truth or the falsehood of the Christian tale?

In the face of this marvellous silence of both Jews and Romans, I can only conclude that the entire gospel story and the tales of Christian persecution are all, from top to bottom, nothing but the most detestable fudge. The Jews were silent for the best of all possible reasons—they knew nothing of this Christian superstition until hundreds of years later than the alleged birth and deeds of Jesus. They could not, of course, contradict a rumor until they heard it; nor could they give a truthful narrative of events that never happened.

For a similar reason the Romans kept silent—except where monkish forgery or interpolation has made them speak. The Roman knew no more of Christ and Christianity than did the Australians during the first five or six or more centuries of this era. If they had known, they must have said something definite about it,

Thus it stands:—Christianity has no witness, direct or indirect. It made a tremendous stir, we are told; its origin was attended with most astounding miracles. But no known author relates them, no known witness vouches for them. It was bitterly persecuted, in ways the most insane as well as cruel, and that too by the most civilised people in the world! But none of the persecutors ever bethought himself to destroy the hated superstition by historical exposure!

There is but one work known that could be suspected of having been written by Jews against Christianity, and that is the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, or Scandalous Life of Jesus. This work, like the gospels, is of unknown date and origin. It has several times been published, and not more than a year or two ago our English friends, Messrs. Foote and Wheeler, published a new edition.

This book may have been written to fill up the gap I am now calling attention to. Both Jews and Christians must have felt it passing strange that no Jewish account of Jesus existed; and somebody forged the *Sepher* to fill that vacuum, to make up by fiction what history had omitted.

Let me, by way of finish, use an old argument closely akin to the one above. It is curious that, out of all the people that Jesus cured, blessed and pleased during his public life, not so much as one came forward to speak a word for him or to stand by him at his trial! Our four gospels are silent upon that subject, though one or more of the outcast gospels bring forward such witnesses.

Lastly. Is it possible that Jesus could have done anything like what the gospels relate, and yet be left without one friend in his direst extremity?

Is it possible that the Jews could have been and have done what the gospels relate, without publishing some written vindication of their character?

Let the Christian reply.

JOS. SYMES.

—*Liberator*.

#### STARTLING CONFIRMATION OF HOLY WRIT.

IN ascending a point of the Himalayas, never yet having echoed to the foot of man, the great traveller, Warkenskipzi, came on a plain of virgin snow. Meteoric dust had thinly accumulated in places on the surface, showing the enormous time it had remained undisturbed. Nothing relieved the monotony of the scene but a piece of what looked like very old newspaper partially buried, the corner exposed being rustled gently by the wind. Warkenskipzi eagerly dug the fragment out, and found it part of a paper named the *Mars Gazette*, which, no doubt, had come within the attraction of our earth, and fluttered down like a snowflake. After great study, the traveller deciphered it and found it to be of a date answering to the time of Joshua. Being so interesting, and confirming one of the grandest epochs of that uninteresting corner of this earth wherein Joshua flourished, I append a copy of the Professor's translation.

"Erratic behavior of the planets."

"Immense damage to buildings."

"Terrible loss of life through stoppage of the planetary system."

Our reporter has interviewed Professor Chinlosti, who manages the Microtelescopic apparatus at the Astronomical Institute, and a solution to the serious catastrophe is now possible. By persistent watchfulness with his powerful instrument, the Professor has been enabled to prove, beyond doubt, that the failure of our planetary system is due to a war being waged on a very small orb in the far empyrean, the light of the sun seeming to be wanted for the warlike leader to exterminate his enemies. The Professor thinks that at the termination of the slaughter, the planets will again resume their normal work.

We stop the press to add that the battle and slaughter, having ceased on this far-distant small earth, the worlds have again commenced their usual motion. The whole of the scientific bodies are loud in their praise of Professor Chinlosti's powerful Astronomical Microtelescopic instrument.

F. ATTWOOD,

## CHARLES DARWIN.

CHARLES DARWIN, the greatest naturalist of our or any time, was himself an illustration of the doctrine of heredity, being grandson of Erasmus Darwin, a Freethinking naturalist and poetic writer, and of Josiah Wedgwood, the famous potter. Born at Shrewsbury on Feb. 12, 1809, he was educated at Shrewsbury School and Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities. He early evinced a taste for collecting and observing natural objects. He was entered in Christ's College with the intention of taking orders; but the idea of the black business gave way before his bent for science. In 1831 he accompanied Capt. Fitzroy on a five years' voyage of exploration, which he has narrated in his *Voyage of a Naturalist Round the World*. In 1839 he married his cousin, Miss Wedgwood, and in 1842 left London and settled down to a life of philosophical study and serenity at Down, Kent. His patient observations, combined with the reading of Lamarck and Malthus, led to his great work on *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. This appeared in 1859. Advancing the view that the species of plants and animals now on the earth were not created as they at present appear, but are the descendants of vanished forms, entombed in the crust of the earth, and modified by variations evolved in the struggle for existence, this work made a profound sensation, and provoked a great outcry from the theologians. Darwin took no part in the controversy, but went on with his work and lived to see his views adopted by every biologist of repute. He was ably supported by Prof. Huxley and other leading scientists, but much of the now general acceptance of Darwinism is due to his own work. In 1862 appeared *The Fertilisation of Orchids*, a work which gave physiological botany immense impetus. In *Variations of Animals and Plants Under Domestications* (1868) he gave abundant proof of this part of his case, and in 1871 followed it up with *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, which caused yet greater consternation in orthodox circles. The following year he issued *The Ex-pression of the Emotions of Men and Animals*. He also published works on the *Movements of Plants*, *Insectivorous Plants*, the *Forms of Flowers*, and *Vegetable Mould and Earthworms*. He died on April 19, 1882; and the man who had been denounced as an enemy of religion and the foremost of Atheists was, despite his expressed unbelief in Christianity, buried in Westminster Abbey, leaving behind him the most illustrious name in the annals of science. To a German student, he wrote, in 1879: "Science has nothing to do with Christ, except in so far as the habit of scientific research makes a man cautious in admitting evidence. For myself I do not believe that there ever has been any revelation." In his *Life and Letters* he relates that between 1836 and 1842 he had come to see "that the Old Testament was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos." He rejected design, and said, "I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic." For fuller information upon his opinions the reader should consult Mr. Foote's little work *Darwin on God*. J. M. W.

## LIBERTY OF BEQUEST.

(From Mr. Mansfield's recent Speech at Northampton.)

Not only my personal friends in the House have backed the Bill, but others not my personal friends have backed it, from a conviction that such a Bill is necessary. (Hear, hear.) You mentioned, sir, that there was an objection to the Bill. I have not had a single member in the House who has raised the slightest objection to it (applause); but one and all tell me it was the right thing to do, and that they were glad the Bill had been brought into the House. (Applause.) I am sorry to say that that will not carry the Bill, but it is a step in the right direction when we have succeeded in introducing the Bill into the House. It is only astonishing to me, looking at the readiness with which this Bill has been accepted, that it was not introduced long ago. (Hear, hear.) Perhaps I ought to explain why I introduced it. A townsman, before I was elected, sent me a letter asking me, if I was elected, if I would bring in a Bill to remove the disabilities which existed; and, as I had great sympathy with the proposal, I promised I would, and I have redeemed my promise. (Cheers.) The day has gone by when the law troubles itself to prohibit liberty of opinion. The Lord Chief Justice said that all opinion, if decently expressed, is free (hear, hear); and that the man who believes that his religion is true should fear attacks upon it, I am surprised. The days of coarse and vulgar attacks have gone, and now, as the Lord Chief Justice has said, if we express our dissent from established opinions in proper language, the law allows us. We want to go one step further—I say "we" because I have identified myself with the movement, though I wish it to be understood that I would not take any step that would be fatal to that religion which I believe to be true; but if my religion would not stand all inquiry, and stand the test, then so much the worse for my religion. (Applause.) At present the opinions of Harriet Martineau, Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, and Mr. Darwin attack the very foundations of the old theology, but the law entitles such opinions to be

held and advanced. In this country it is lawful to hold extreme opinions, to speak them, to publish them, but not to leave money for their maintenance. This Bill proposes to extend religious liberty to this point. (Applause.) Members of the lowest and most ignorant religious sect can bequeath money in furtherance of their views, but intelligent philosophical opinion has no such right. ("Shame.") Bequests for the furtherance of such opinions may be confiscated in the name of religion. No one can with any show of fairness condemn opinion when he has taken from it the means of defence. (Applause.) A sense of injustice breeds fanaticism, and makes heresy more virulent than it would be if it were in a position of equality. This Bill is limited in its operation. It does not propose to extend the power, which every sect in the country now has, of laying the dead hand upon future generations. It provides that at the end of every thirty years it shall be in the power of the administrators of the funds bequeathed to vary the benefaction if the original object has become obsolete. (Applause.) I said, sir, that there was no possibility under the present law of leaving money for the purpose I have mentioned. I have inquired whether a statute existed prohibiting it, but I find it is the common law. I should like to quote, with your permission, just a very few instances where the common law has thus acted in preventing the leaving of money for this purpose. The first that I name is Mr. Josiah Gimson, member of the Town Council of Leicester, who left £1,000 for the endowment of the Secular Hall there. The sons respected the father's will, and did not dispute it, or it would have been in their power to annul the gift. A gentleman left £500 to establish a Secular Hall in Manchester. The widow married a churchwarden, who at once disputed the will, I believe successfully. Mr. Daniel Baker established Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, as a Secular Hall. Wishing to leave it in trust, he was advised he could not do it, and he had to give it to an individual, who might sell it for his own ends. A Mr. Russell, of Birmingham, left £11,000 to establish a Secular School. The bequest was contested, and lost. Mr. Lien, a Norwegian gentleman of Liverpool, and Mr. Henry, a manufacturer, of Glasgow, would have left considerable sums for Secular Halls, as they assured Mr. Holyoake, could it be done legally. A gentleman, Mr. Clegg-Bullock, unable to leave it, gave £3,500 to establish a Secular School in Whitminster. No deed of trust could be made that would be good in law. No account has been given of the application of the money, nor has anyone a right to ask for it.

## WHAT GOD KNEW.

If Christ was in fact God, he knew all the future. Before him, like a panorama, moved the history yet to be. He knew exactly how his words would be interpreted. He knew what crimes, what horrors, what infamies, would be committed in his name. He knew that the fires of persecution would climb around the limbs of countless martyrs. He knew that brave men would languish in dungeons, in darkness, filled with pain; that the Church would use instruments of torture, that his followers would appeal to whip and chain. He must have seen the horizon of the future red with the flames of the auto-da-fé. He knew all the creeds that would spring like poison fungi from every text. He saw the sects waging war against each other. He saw thousands of men, under the orders of priests, building dungeons for their fellow men. He saw them using instruments of pain. He heard the groans, saw the faces white with agony, the tears, the blood—heard the shrieks and sobs of all the moaning, martyred multitudes. He knew that commentaries would be written on his words with swords, to be read by the light of faggots. He knew that the Inquisition would be born of teachings attributed to him. He saw all the interpolations and falsehoods that hypocrisy would write and tell. He knew that above these fields of death, these dungeons, these burnings, for a thousand years would float the dripping banner of the cross. He knew that in his name his followers would trade in human flesh, that cradles would be robbed, and women's breasts unbanded for gold, and yet he died with voiceless lips. Why did he fail to speak? Why did he not tell his disciples, and through them the world, that man should not persecute, for opinion's sake, his fellow man? Why did he not cry: You shall not persecute in my name; you shall not burn and torment those who differ from you in creed? Why did he not plainly say: I am the Son of God? Why did he not explain the doctrine of the Trinity? Why did he not tell the manner of baptism that was pleasing to him? Why did he not say something positive, definite, and satisfactory about another world? Why did he not turn the tear-stained hope of heaven to the glad knowledge of another life? Why did he go dumbly to his death, leaving the world to misery and to doubt?

—Ingersoll.

The milliner is pointed at as a thing of vanity; but she is a mighty great aid to church-going religion.

Dr. Fourthly—"I know how giddy fashionable life is; but, do you not pause sometimes to think of your heavenly father?" Miss Waite—"Well—or—doctor, perhaps you never heard that papa's was merely a death-bed repentance."

## LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING held at Hall of Science, Thursday, Dec. 7; Mr. A. B. Moss in the chair. Present: Mrs. Fisher, Messrs. Anderson, Callow, Dowding, Renn, Schaller, and Ward. The minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.—It was decided that the Committee be instructed to invite representatives of the Press and other influential gentlemen to the Annual Dinner.—The Secretary presented a financial statement of the Tea and Soiree of Nov. 1, showing a profit of £2 15s. 6d., which was accepted.—Mr. Renn introduced a subject of the representation of the Federation at the meeting recently called by the London Liberal and Radical Union for the consideration of the coming School Board Election; and it was decided that the Secretary communicate with that body and report at next meeting.—Messrs. Baker and Renn were elected auditors, and a balance-sheet and report were ordered to be submitted at the January meeting and printed for distribution at the Annual Dinner. The Secretary was instructed to apply to Branches in arrear with subscriptions and collections to remit in time for their inclusion in this year's accounts. It was proposed and carried that a Ball and Soiree be held early in March under the auspices of the L.S.F.—The Secretary announced that he did not intend to seek re-election.

E. POWNCEBY, Sec.

## SUNDAY 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.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, a lecture (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "What has Become of the Devil?" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday at 8.30, debating class, G. Standing, "Is Over-Population the Cause of Poverty?" (free). Tuesday at 8.30, athletic class. Wednesday at 8.15, A. Westcott, "Torture Chambers of England," illustrated by oxy-hydrogen lantern. Thursday and Friday at 8, dancing class. Saturday, in the minor hall, social evening (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park station): 7.45, J. Rowney, "What think ye of Christ?" (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free) Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, A. Westcott, "A Modern Inquisition," with oxy-hydrogen lantern.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30 (in small hall), debating society, H. T. Muggeridge (Fabian), "The Class Struggle" (free); 7.30 (in large hall), R. Forder, "The Rise of Christianity—a Review of Prof. Johnson's Book." Friday at 7.30, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver-street: 7, Sam Standing, "Ally Sloper and Jesus Christ" (free).

Pinsbury Park—91 Mildmay Park: D c. 14, at 8, members' general meeting, important business.

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, Dec. 21, at 8.30, W. Heaford, "Christian Evidences: what are they Worth?" (free).

Islington—Milner Lodge, 18 Waterloo-terrace, Upper-street: 3.30, adjourned members' annual meeting.

Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street: Monday at 8.30, West London Branch business meeting.

South Essex Secular Society, 33 and 35 Salway-road, Stratford, E.: 7.15, W. J. Woodward, "Physiology" (free).

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Hartfield-road Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, a lecture (free).

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Johnson, "Good tidings of great joy" (in the hall if the weather is unfavorable).

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): F. Haslam, 11.30, "The Fall of Man and the Atonement"; 3.30, "Mahomet and his Koran."

## COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, W. Moir, "What Spiritualism Is."

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: Mrs. Frederika Macdonald, 11, "Theosophy: a Renaissance of Superstition"; 3, "The 'Infamous,' According to Voltaire"; 7, "Buddhism."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, Council or Minty, "The Necessity of a Labor Party."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 3, important business meeting.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, W. Heaford, "Can Man by Searching Find Out God?"; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Heaford, "Confucius and Christ—a Comparison and Contrast."

Dundee—Cutlers' Hall, Murray-gate: 11.30, mutual improvement class; 2.30, concert; 6.30, Mr. Clark, "Imitation: a Study."

Fairworth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, P. Percival, "Great Types of Humanity—Frederick the Great."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: discussion class, J. Gilbert, "Individualism and Political Economy"; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Antiquity of Man," with special lantern slides.

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: Stanley Jones, 11, "The Christian Religion"; 3, "God, Man, and Design"; 7.30, "Miracles and Medicine." Monday at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Religion and Free-thought." Thursday at 8, improvement class.

Hull Sunday Association, St. George's Hall, Storey-street: 2.30, Mr. Dixon, "The Attitude of Political Parties towards Labor."

Ipswich—Co-operative Hall, Cox-lane: C. James, 3, "The Gospel of Secularism"; 7, "Christian Evidences."

Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7.30, business meeting.

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: J. M. Robertson, 3, "The Eight Hours Question"; 6.30, "Inspiration and Spiritualism."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 3, logic class, L. Small, B.Sc., "Inductive Logic," illustrated with experiments; 7, Harry Smith, "Where's yer Mor'l Code?"

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: C. Cohen, 11, "Free Will and Determinism"; 3, "The Gospel of Freethought"; 6.30, "Christianity and Modern Thought." Monday from 8 to 10.30, dancing (6d.) Tuesday at 8, debating circle, W. M. Clement, "The Coup d'etat of Napoleon III."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 11, committee meeting; 7, Carl Aarstad, "Miracles."

Nottingham—Shortland's Café, 3 Derby-road: 7, W. P. Redfern, "Astronomy as a Freethought Factor."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, chess club; 7, S. Godfrey (Fabian), "The Fabian Manifesto and Socialism."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rookingham-street: Charles Watts, 11, "The Church and our Social Problems"; 3, "America Re-visited"; 7, "Life: Secular and Theological"; tea at 5.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting; 7.30, concert.

## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Dec. 17, Manchester; 24, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell; 31, Leicester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Dec. 17, Hanley.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Jan. 4, 1894, Hammersmith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Dec. 31, Camberwell. Jan. 21, 1894, Hall of Science. Feb. 4, Camberwell.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Dec. 17, Deptford Liberal Club.

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The valiant king Sennacherib,  
Of any man could crack a rib,  
But could not of Jehosaphat,  
I'll tell you why—he was so fat!

The great problems of human life will be discussed and solved, if solved at all, not by the metaphysical but by historical inquiry. The utmost that metaphysics has done is to map out the individual, and we know that no one person can be a type or exponent of the whole race. Therefore many persons must be studied in chronological succession before a general idea can be formed of the tendencies and probabilities of the race. The Bible in this light cannot be clearly nor adequately explained by reference to any one person, or one era of the world, but must be studied as one of the many products of the activity of the race, its origin must be assigned to its proper place among mythologies, and its age to that place in the stream of time in which it is found to have risen in the nature of things, and in fact.—A. L. Rawson, in "Freethinkers' Magazine."

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