

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE CONVERTED ATHEIST SHOEMAKER. FULL PARTICULARS.

CONVICTION OF HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

(Continued from last week's "Freethinker.")

"Herbert" Certainly Gibson.

The proof that the "John Herbert" of Mr. Hughes's story is Charles Alfred Gibson is clear and decisive. Mr. Gibson senior has ample evidence in his possession. Besides letters from Julia, his daughter-in-law, written while her husband was alive, and addressed both from London and from Sidmouth, where he died and was buried, Mr. Gibson showed me letters from Sister Beatrice, signed with her full name of Lily Dewhurst, and in one case bearing the printed heading of the Wesleyan West Central Mission, Katherine House, 19 Montague-street, London, W.C. This particular letter was addressed to Julia at Sidmouth; it is dated March 27, 1889, the day that her husband died, in reply to a telegram announcing his decease. Another piece of evidence is a book referred to by Mr. Hughes, who states that on visiting "Herbert" at Islington, to administer the sacrament, he noticed a "big" volume of the proceedings of the Social Science Congress lying upon a "little round table." This volume was presented by Mr. Gibson senior to his son Charles Alfred. It was brought back to Northampton by Julia soon after her husband's death, and has since been presented to another son, Stephen H. Gibson. "This," said the father, with a twinkle in his eye, "is the only Atheistic book I ever heard of his possessing"—which was a sly allusion to Mr. Hughes's statement that he had a large collection.

But the clinching piece of evidence is *another* book. It is a copy of Mr. Hughes's story of "The Atheist Shoemaker," bearing the inscription, "To his loving father, from Julia." The inscription is not in Julia's handwriting. She wrote an illiterate hand, and her spelling is what might courteously be termed "phonetic." The handwriting of the inscription is unmistakably Sister Beatrice's. The date is December, 1889.

Now as luck would have it, Mr. Gibson senior has preserved a letter from Julia, dated from 19 Montague-street, Russell-square, and addressed to "dear father and mother," in which she asks, "Would you like to read the story of my Alfred? If so, I shall send it to you." This letter is not dated, but all her letters are alike in that respect. Of course it was written before the book was sent to Northampton. Mr. Gibson senior said he would like to read the volume, and it was sent to him. He found in it a lot of novel information about his own son. Subsequently, when Julia herself

came to Northampton again, Mr. Gibson asked her how they came to write such falsehoods, and she replied, "Oh, they make it up as they like."

There are two other pieces of evidence that must not be omitted. Stephen H. Gibson, one of the sons, has a letter written to him by Sister Beatrice, in which he is addressed as "his brother"—that is, the brother of Charles Alfred. The letter is full of pious outpourings, but I will say no more about it at present, though a good deal will turn upon it later on. What I want to add is this. Mr. Hughes came down to a revival at Northampton, and Stephen went with Julia to the meeting. She spoke familiarly to Mr. Hughes on the stairs, and introduced Stephen as "my brother."

It will now be obvious to my readers that Charles Alfred Gibson and "John Herbert" are one and the same person. Such evidence—and the family are prepared to give it *anywhere*—would satisfy a jury in any court of law. I do not believe that Mr. Hughes will question it; I fancy he will lie low and let the storm blow over.

I have a special reason for believing that Mr. Hughes will not question "Herbert's" identity—after I have stated it. Julia's portrait is in Mr. Gibson's album. She is standing between Mr. and Mrs. Gibson. The production of the lady and the photograph together would settle the matter at once.

Mr. Hughes's Loose Logic.

At this stage it is necessary to make an important statement. Will it be believed that Mr. Hughes printed his story without instituting the slightest investigation? He trusted with a more than popish faith to Julia's infallibility. He knew where the Gibsons lived, yet he never took the trouble to inquire of them as to the accuracy of statements about his "convert's" life *before* Julia was acquainted with him. Nor has Mr. Hughes ever taken the trouble to approach them since his story was challenged. Now I ask every man of common sense and common honesty what he thinks of such behavior. Talk about Mr. Holyoake's "investigation"! Why, Mr. Hughes has not investigated himself! Probably he did not dream that his story would be challenged. It would serve the turn, and that was enough. Why indeed should Mr. Hughes be more particular than the common run of "converted infidel" biographers? What harm is there in bad logic and false statement, if they redound to the honor of God?

"Herbert's" Career.

Charles Alfred Gibson was born on May 14, 1861. The date is in the family Bible. He died on March 27, 1889, nearly twenty-eight years of age, which exactly agrees with Mr. Hughes's story. "Herbert" died in "the spring" of 1889, at the "early age of twenty-eight." His death took place at Sidmouth—Mr. Hughes's "pleasant home on the Devonshire coast"—and he was buried there on March 31.

"Bit by bit," Mr. Hughes says, "we came to know his history." Well, the bits were mostly wrong. "Herbert" is stated to have "taught himself to read by a strange device." The names at the corners of the streets were "his reading book." Then follows a sample of the Bunyan vein which Mr. Holyoake so admires in Mr. Hughes.

"When quite a little lad he would run alongside a gentleman and say in a casual tone, 'Excuse me, sir, but what's the name of that street?' Then he would read it and spell it over and over again for about ten minutes. On the next day he would return to that street and see if he had learned the name correctly. Board schools, happily, leave the children of the poor no room for such pathetic ingenuity now."

It is a pity to spoil this pretty little story, but there is not a word of truth in it. It is unadulterated romance. Charles Alfred Gibson was not a child of destitution. His father was always able to support his family as a sober, industrious working-man. His "privations," therefore, are all imaginary. And the same must be said of his street-corner schooling. He was at school for five years altogether—when the Gibsons were in America—at Philadelphia, at Toronto, and in New Jersey. He was also a Sunday-school scholar at Grace Church, situated at the corner of Twelfth-street and Race-street, Philadelphia. A faded portrait of his Sunday-school teacher is still preserved in Mr. Gibson's album, and on one of his walls are hung the three American prints that were presented to his three boys over there as school prizes.

"As soon as he could read," says Mr. Hughes, "he began to accumulate books." This also is news to Mr. Gibson, who describes his dead son as intelligent, and fond of an argument, but not exactly bookish. Mr. Gibson stoutly denied that his son could possibly have uttered many of the things that Mr. Hughes puts into his mouth. He said they were quite beyond him, and that "Tom Paine couldn't have written them better."

Mr. Hughes apparently does not know that Charles Alfred Gibson served in the Fifth Lancers, in Ireland, under the assumed name of Cartwright. It was there that he made the acquaintance of the girl he afterwards married in England.

Another fact that Mr. Hughes seems to be ignorant of is, that his "convert" was in the Salvation Army at St. Albans. He and Julia both wore the "Army" uniform. After that he was in the Salvation Army at Camberwell. Mr. Gibson heard him speak once in the Camberwell barracks, and was greatly surprised at some of the things he said.

Julia, the good Christian, who helped to bring her husband to Christ—from whom his relatives were not aware that he had ever departed—caused an estrangement between Mr. Gibson and his son. I had better be silent about the *cause* of this division. Suffice it to say that Mr. Gibson never heard from his son for two years and a half prior to his death. Even after the alleged "conversion" by Mr. Hughes the son does not appear to have written a line to his father. Julia did, but not until her husband was dying in Devonshire.

Mr. Gibson reckons that his son was in London about eighteen months altogether. During a part of the time, at any rate, he worked at Ford's, in the Gray's Inn-road. Mr. Gibson never heard of his lecturing, even from Julia, until he read Mr. Hughes's book. He does not believe that his son could ever have been an orator, and certainly the space of eighteen months is too short for his acquiring such distinction in that line as Mr. Hughes alleges.

Mr. Hughes is good at pathetic stories—true or false. He tells us that when "Herbert" went down to Devonshire he was "so ill that it was necessary for his wife to accompany him." Yet in a letter from Julia to Mr. and Mrs. Gibson, written at Sidmouth, she says, "he

was down here a month before I was sent for." She also says that she "had to leave a good place" to go, and adds, "I was then a cook." This is very circumstantial, and it is in absolute contradiction to Mr. Hughes's no less circumstantial story. Somebody must be lying. If the liar is Julia, it shows what her word is worth. It also shows her power of neat invention. But if the liar is *not* Julia, the story shows another person's powers of neat invention, and what *that* person's word is worth.

Death of "Herbert."

Charles Alfred Gibson died at Sidmouth on March 27, 1889, and was buried in the Sidmouth cemetery on March 31. Mr. Gibson senior has a letter (which I saw) from the doctor who attended his son. There was bad disease of the heart and lungs, and no hope of recovery. The doctor's letter is dated March 18, a little more than a week before the end.

Mr. Hughes devotes several pages to a regular novelist's account of "Herbert's" death. The reverend gentleman was not present at the scene. All the little death-chamber touches are therefore imaginary. Julia must have told him, if anyone did, that the dying man's last words were a "touching tribute" to Sister Beatrice who "led him to Christ." Julia stated at Northampton, however, that his last words were "Go to Steve, he will look after you"—"Steve" being his brother Stephen Henry, who had also been a soldier.

This is how Mr. Hughes, in his fine, calm, restrained style, describes the fall of the curtain.

"He lay for a long time so still that the watchers began to think they would never hear his voice again. But he was yet to speak, and to speak a sentence which was destined to be read in every land in which the English language is spoken.

"He was evidently gathering his ebbing strength together for a great final effort.

"His hand tightened. He opened his lips; and in startling contrast with his previous whisper, in clear, ringing, exulting tones, he exclaimed:

"Tell Sister Beatrice and the Sisters that now when I have come to the end I fear no evil, for God is with me."

This is what Mr. Holyoake politely calls "brilliant coloring." But it is not history. I put it to any doctor whether a man dying of consumption and heart disease, after many months of suffering and slow decay, could possibly cry out in "clear, ringing, exulting tones" with his very last breath. I have myself seen cases of death from consumption, and all power of motion and speech have gone for hours before the final release. If medical men tell me I am wrong, I will give in; but until then I must take leave to regard "John Herbert's" dying oration as apocryphal.

Was He a Lecturer?

Mr. Hughes represents his convert as a young man of extraordinary eloquence, and almost a match for Mr. Bradlaugh. "I've been a ringleader," he is made to exclaim to Sister Beatrice. "I have even cheered men when they were dying," he continues, "and encouraged them not to give in." He lectured as an Atheist on Clerkenwell Green and in Victoria Park. He was "a well-known London Atheist." "Why, everybody knows Herbert!" exclaims "a journeyman shoemaker in Soho"—where, by the way, this marvel of eloquence could not have been specially famous. The journeyman shoemaker is himself but one of Mr. Hughes's inventions. His tribute to "Herbert's" oratory is tremendous. "When he used to speak in Victoria Park," says his Soho eulogist, "there was such continuous cheering that you could scarcely hear what he was saying."

In a long wrestle between the Devil and "Herbert" after his conversion, the former reminds him of "What you used to say in the Hall of Science." Not at the Hall of Science, but *in* the Hall of Science. Of course it was Mr. Hughes who invented all the dialectical points of that "wrestle," for he never saw "Herbert" *after it*. Still, words have a definite meaning, and if Mr. Hughes did not wish to signify that "Herbert" had spoken *in* the Hall of Science, what on earth was he driving at? Nor is this all. "It seemed to us of such immense importance," Mr. Hughes writes, "that he should himself go to his

old workshop, and to the Hall of Science, and to Clerkenwell Green, and to all his former haunts, and with his own lips tell the story of his conversion." Now if this does not mean that he was a speaker on Atheism in the Hall of Science, the language of Mr. Hughes is no better than thimble-rigging.

Mr. Hughes said enough to let his Christian readers believe that "Herbert" was a shining light at the Hall of Science, but now he backs out of his false position, and even admits that "Herbert" did not lecture in connection with the Secular Society. After five years of stout protest from the Secular party, he makes this lame confession, which an honest man would have made when the protest was first raised.

But this does not end the matter. Mr. Hughes must be attacked in his last entrenchment. I therefore ask the question, Was his convert ever a lecturer at all?

Personally, I never heard the name of Gibson in connection with Freethought lecturing in London. Mr. Holyoake says he never heard it, and the same answer is given by every Freethinker I interrogate. He could not, therefore, have been "a well-known Atheist." The description is an absurdity. Certainly he could not have lectured in Victoria Park amidst thunderous applause. That Soho shoemaker who said so was a thunderous liar.

Charles Alfred Gibson was in London about eighteen months altogether. He was not a lecturer when he went there. His father and brothers never heard of his lecturing afterwards—until they read Mr. Hughes's book. Not an Atheist in London that I can hear of has the faintest recollection of this oratorical prodigy. Mr. Hughes never heard him lecture. The Methodist Sisters never heard him lecture. Who did then? Why, Julia. The whole fabric of "Herbert's" fame is based upon that one woman's word.

Mr. Holyoake says he has seen "Herbert's" widow, who has since "married again." That is, Mr. Holyoake was told so. She has not been seen or heard of by the Gibsons for two years and a half. Would it not be well to produce her again for a little cross-examination?

"Herbert's" widow told Mr. Holyoake that she had been with her husband in Victoria Park "six hours at a time, he speaking at intervals to groups of persons all the while." Mr. Holyoake may believe it. I do not. Nor do I believe that "Herbert" or any other Freethought speaker in Victoria Park was "kicked on the shins by policemen." As far as I am aware, our speakers have for a long time been on very good terms with the police. But be that as it may, I wish to point out that Mr. Holyoake, as well as Mr. Hughes and the Sisters, obtained his information from the inevitable Julia. However many links are put on the chain, they all hang upon her; and I venture to say she is not strong enough to bear them. We shall see more of her presently. Meanwhile I have to say that the Gibsons do not believe her statements on this head. They feel sure that Charles Alfred Gibson was never a lecturer. Their opinion is—and, after what they told and showed me, it is my opinion too—that Julia deceived Mr. Hughes and the Sisters, and kept up the deception when introduced to Mr. Holyoake.

There is not the smallest scrap of real evidence that Charles Alfred Gibson ever lectured at all as an Atheist, and the negative evidence that he did not is simply overwhelming. Yet this is the very pivot of Mr. Hughes's story. It was nothing to convert an obscure young man from his atheistic opinions. Such a trivial incident would not afford substance enough for an eighteenpenny book. It was necessary to magnify the convert's importance, and the thing was done. He was represented as noble, intellectual, eloquent, and famous. In other words, his *status* is the very essence of the story. It is now demonstrated that he was not, and could not have been, a notorious Freethinker, and Mr. Hughes's story is therefore a lie in its deliberate exaggerations. To declare that "Herbert" was a real personage is no answer to the charge of fraud. It is the *description* of him that has to be vindicated, and Mr. Hughes knows the task is impossible.

Was He an Atheist?

I have already stated that Charles Alfred Gibson, on leaving his father's house at Northampton, knelt down and prayed in the passage. He was not an Atheist *then*. But did he become an Atheist during the eighteen months he lived in London?

In considering this question, it is requisite to bear in mind the silence of Mr. Hughes as to "Herbert's" having been in the Salvation Army. If the fact was known to Mr. Hughes, he acted dishonorably in keeping it back, and making it appear that "Herbert" had never "known Christ." If the fact was *not* known to Mr. Hughes, nor even to Sister Beatrice, it must have been kept back by "Herbert" himself, or by his wife; and, in that case, the witness of both of them lies under a very grave suspicion. It would seem that they wished to let it be thought that "Herbert" became a Christian *for the first time* through the agency of the West London Mission. I may be asked, What could be their motive in this deception? Well, a very simple one. They were dependent upon the Mission for the comforts, if not the necessities of life.

There is another thing that should be borne in mind; namely, the statement of Mr. Hughes as to "the privations of his youth" and his street-corner schooling. Both are falsehoods, and the first is a cruel reflection on Mr. Gibson senior, whose indignation at it is shared by his sons. Now if Mr. Hughes did not invent these falsehoods, they must have been invented by "Herbert" or his wife; and in either case the story of his being an Atheist at all is damned—unless we have independent evidence of its truth. For, if Mr. Hughes is the liar, how can we believe anything he *says* they told him; and if they were the liars, how can we believe what they *did* tell him?

Bearing these points in mind, let us proceed with our inquiry. We are told by Mr. Hughes that "Herbert" had "old Atheistic comrades," with whom he and his wife sometimes took a day's excursion. How was it then that he never applied to the National Secular Society for any assistance in his distress, before his conversion? Could none of them tell him of the Society's Benevolent Fund, if he was ignorant of its existence himself? Again I have had the books searched, and his name does not appear in the list of persons relieved.

As for the long conversations between "Herbert" and Sister Beatrice, there can be little doubt that they are literary performances. Sister Beatrice told Mr. Hughes something, and Mr. Hughes worked it up into telling dialogues. Still, it may be said, Sister Beatrice could scarcely be mistaken as to the bare fact of his Atheism. Well, I am not so sure of that. Her word, apart from Julia's, is all we have to go upon; and we shall now see how an emotional lady like Sister Beatrice (or Miss Lily Dowhurst) can be guilty of the wildest inaccuracy.

"Herbert's" Converted Atheist Brother.

On the last page of his pious concoction, Mr. Hughes regrets the loss of "that eloquent tongue" of "Herbert's" to the cause of Christ, but believes that his death (as dressed up by Mr. Hughes) may be "more potent even than his life would have been." Then he winds up the story with a final falsehood. It is told in the form of a question—"Has not his Atheist brother at Northampton already turned to God under the influence of his seraphic death?" Northampton, of course, was Bradlaugh's borough; and the question, put in this way, would deepen the impression that "Herbert" belonged to an Atheist family.

There is not a word of truth in the "conversion" of that brother. Stephen Henry Gibson, who is the person referred to, has always been a professed Christian. He told me so himself, and the statement was corroborated by his brother Frank, as well as by Mr. Gibson senior. Consequently there was no "atheist brother" at Northampton to "turn to God."

Mr. Hughes, I believe, did not invent this yarn, although I believe he did invent that Soho shoemaker. What he did was to publish it as though he knew it for a fact. He committed the same crime throughout the story, giving his own authority to mere hearsay, without the slightest investigation. He did this as a public

man, in the interest of the West London Mission. It is impossible, therefore, to exonerate him from responsibility. He did not care whether the story was true or false so long as he could make it useful, and that is the twin-brother of lying. There are very few persons who lie merely for the exercise of intellectual ingenuity.

I believe this yarn of the converted Atheist brother was retailed to Mr. Hughes by Sister Beatrice, and I will give my reasons.

Stephen Henry Gibson has a letter from Sister Beatrice, dated May 28, 1889. It is a very sentimental composition, with ecstatic references to the dead brother, and a fervid appeal to Stephen to come over and help the cause of Christ. I asked him how he got this letter. Was it sent to him through the post? Did he answer it? And had he written to Sister Beatrice previously?

He replied that he had never written to Sister Beatrice at all, and had never had any sort of communication with her. The letter was handed to him by Julia, who was then living in Northampton.

At the bottom of nearly everything we find Julia. She was in communication with Sister Beatrice, from whom, I am told, she sometimes obtained money. It seems to me highly probable, as it seems to the Gibsons, that she fooled the Sister with a yarn about Stephen's being an Atheist; that the sentimental Sister jumped at the bait, and wrote that letter to the young man, sending it through Julia as she did not know his address; that Julia informed the Sister that her letter had brought about Stephen's conversion; that the Sister conveyed the glorious intelligence to Mr. Hughes; and that the reverend gentleman took it without the least inquiry, and worked in this "crowning mercy" as the climax of his narrative.

This is how I believe the story of the converted "Atheist brother" was developed; and, supposing Sister Beatrice to be honest, it shows how easily she may be taken in. She utterly misled Mr. Hughes as to Stephen Gibson, and she may have utterly misled him as to Charles Alfred Gibson. At any rate, it is impossible to take such a lady's evidence without cross-examination, and therefore the Atheism of "Herbert" has yet to be established.

Mr. Hughes's Little Trick.

I say that Sister Beatrice's evidence on the point of Charles Alfred Gibson's Atheism is of no value without a cross-examination. Now let the reader see what pains were taken to save her from this ordeal. Her name is just as imaginary as that of the converted Atheist. It is now admitted that her real name is Sister Lily. Had the name she is known by in the West London Mission been given in the story, she might have been troubled by inquisitive Methodists. Mr. Hughes very kindly veiled her identity to guard her *even against her friends*. Indeed, his whole method was one of politic confusion. Feigned names were substituted for real ones at every point where the story was liable to investigation, and mystery was only abandoned where there was no danger in openness and precision.

Julia.

The Christian wife of the Atheist shoemaker in Mr. Hughes's story is "a daughter of Erin." So is Julia, whom Charles Alfred Gibson married in England, after forming her acquaintance in Ireland, while he was serving in the Fifth Lancers. Judging from the story (it is an excellent word!) of her husband's conversion, and the report of her made to me by the Gibsons, I should say she had extracted the very quintessential virtue of the Blarney Stone. And whenever we probe to the bottom of this matter we come to Julia. It is another case of *Cherchez la femme!*

It is evident that a great deal of Mr. Hughes's story *must* have been furnished by Julia, either directly or through Sister Beatrice, particularly the account of his exploits as a propagator of Atheism. We have seen how she managed that little affair of the "conversion" of Stephen Gibson, and it enables us to estimate the value of her statements about his dead brother. She knows the weakness of religionists on the look-out for converts; and, whatever she may be now, she was

formerly by no means averse from using them to her own advantage.

I have already stated that the Gibsons asked how Mr. Hughes came to tell such falsehoods about her husband, and I have given her airy reply—"Oh, they make it up as they like." She simply laughed at these precisians.

Some of the information I possess was given to me in confidence. Nevertheless I am free to say that if Mr. Hughes will divest himself of his "dignity," and condescend to make an investigation, he will learn whether Julia Gibson was all that his fancy painted her.

It is not for me to tell the reverend gentleman how he should carry out this investigation. But I may be allowed to suggest that, as he has made use of Mr. Holyoake already, he might make use of him again. I am quite willing to let Mr. Holyoake act as an intermediary, and to decide for me as well as for Mr. Hughes whether Julia Gibson is really entitled to be believed in this matter without strong corroborative evidence. Should Mr. Holyoake decline to act—although I think he is bound to if desired—I am willing to take the decision of a Christian minister; that is, of one whom I know to be a gentleman, such as the Rev. C. Fleming Williams or the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam.

After all that has happened, however, I am justified in stipulating that there shall be *two* referees, whether the first be Mr. Holyoake or a trustworthy Christian minister. The second should be nominated by me, and should be a Secularist. Mr. Hughes may reserve his right of challenge, and I will go on nominating until he is satisfied.

Mr. Hughes is at liberty to take or leave my offer, but I believe everyone will regard it as a fair one. If he does nothing he will show that he is afraid to learn the truth, and honest people will see who is in the right. From the very nature of the case I cannot be expected to say more than this in a public journal.

Mr. Holyoake's Position.

Mr. Holyoake's personal intervention was a mistake. He acted throughout in the interest of Mr. Hughes, and not at all in mine. And his "investigation" was very badly conducted, but that was inevitable when he did not consult me. All he *could* do in the circumstances was to interrogate Mr. Hughes's witnesses, who were all interested parties, and had been for nearly five years posted up in the story of "The Atheist Shoemaker." This one-sided "investigation," signed by Mr. Holyoake, who is a gentleman of high character and abilities, was calculated to wound my reputation. It was also calculated to injure the cause of Free-thought by giving a nasty weapon to its enemies. Even now it will do *some* harm, for many Christians—nay, many indifferentists—will hear of Mr. Holyoake's "vindication" of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes without reading my circumstantial exposure. Still, out of evil has come good. Had not the question been stirred up, I might not have obtained the information which settles it for ever. Yet for all that I believe it is the general opinion of Secularists that Mr. Holyoake ought not to persevere in silence. Having pronounced a judgment on imperfect information, he should alter it in the face of adequate data, and give his fresh judgment the widest publicity, even to the extent of another communication to the *Methodist Times*. His old friends in the Secular party will then be satisfied, whereas many of them are now smarting under a sense of irritation.

Mr. Hughes's Position.

Mr. Hughes's conduct has been bad from the very beginning. Portions of his story are obviously fanciful. Mr. Holyoake strains his friendship to call them "ideal." When a writer begins in the style of "It was a dark night," every sensible man knows he is not relating history. Yet the readers have it impressed upon them that "this is a true story, and not fiction."

Secondly, it was absurd, except for the sake of deception, to invest the "conversion" of Charles Alfred Gibson with all that mystery. Secrecy might be prudence in the case of a Christian converted to Free-thought, but there is no motive for concealment in such a case as this.

Thirdly, it is ridiculous to say that *my* criticism, couched as I admit it was in strong language, was any reason why Mr. Hughes could not publish his evidence. He was invited to do so, in perfectly respectful language, by Charles Bradlaugh. What he puts forward as a reason is only an excuse.

Fourthly, when the truth of his story was challenged—and especially when the leading Freethinkers in London declared that no person answering to the description of his convert had been known as a lecturer on Clerkenwell Green or in Victoria Park, to say nothing of the Hall of Science—it was inexcusable on Mr. Hughes's part not to make further inquiries. He knew where the Gibsons might be found, yet he never once approached them; and when Mr. Gibson senior on one occasion approached *him*, he was in too great a hurry to listen.

Fifthly, when he was stung by Secular taunts, and goaded by Christian queries, he scandalously abused the easy good-nature of an old gentleman like Mr. Holyoake. I admit that the trick was clever, but it was rascally. Anyone who had taken Mr. Hughes's measure more accurately would have seen that the secret sham investigation was meant to preclude an open and real investigation. And what are we to think of all the compliments showered on Mr. Holyoake? Unless the author of "The Atheist Shoemaker" is an insufferable hypocrite he believes Mr. Holyoake to be a candidate for Hell. What does he say in describing the "agony of the spiritual struggle" on the night of "Herbert's" conversion? Why this—"An immortal soul was in travail. Life and death, Heaven and Hell, were trembling in the balance." Becoming a Christian, that is, the Atheist Shoemaker secured a place in Heaven; and Mr. Holyoake, therefore, in not becoming a Christian, is securing a place in Hell.

Sixthly, it is as clear as daylight that Mr. Hughes narrated as facts of his own knowledge what were either flat lies or else mere hearsay from Julia or Sister Beatrice; the latter of whom is as evidently guilty, especially in relation to the converted "atheist brother" at Northampton, of the very same offence. The reverend gentleman thus took the full responsibility himself, and must be held to it now that the truth has come to light.

Seventhly, through positive wickedness or criminal negligence, he circulated as unquestionable truths a number of grotesque falsehoods. (1). That Charles Alfred Gibson suffered "privations" in his youth. (2). That he learnt to read by spelling out the names of streets. (3). That he was "a well-known Atheist," and a famous popular orator, who used to "discourse so confidently in Atheist assemblies," which can be disproved by testimony that would hold good in a court of law. (4). That a mythical journeyman shoemaker in Soho declared that *everybody* knew "Herbert." (5). That his "seraphic death" converted his "atheist brother" at Northampton. These are the principal falsehoods. On the other hand, Mr. Hughes had no real evidence that "Herbert" was an Atheist at all; and he either did not know, or he suppressed, the fact that his convert had been in the Salvation Army before he was taken up by the West London Mission.

It now remains to be seen what Mr. Hughes will do. Will he face the truth and apologise for deceiving the public? If not, I warn him that he will find no safety in silence. I shall put the whole matter into a fresh pamphlet, which will be circulated east, west, north, and south, until he loathes the very name of "The Atheist Shoemaker."

My Own Position.

When I first read Mr. Hughes's story in the *Methodist Times* it offended my instincts. I felt it was a tissue of falsehoods, whatever substratum of truth it might contain in the real existence of some person who had been nominally "brought to Christ" by the West London Mission. I criticised the story, and said it did not bear the appearance of truth. I asked Mr. Hughes to substantiate it, and promised, if he did so, to apologise for throwing a doubt upon his honor. When he kept silence; when he gave a shuffling reply to Robert Forder, the secretary of the National Secular Society; when he disregarded the courteous

challenge of Charles Bradlaugh, the elected chief of Secularism; I had no alternative but to speak out with the utmost plainness. I branded his story as *A Lie in Five Chapters*, and the facts now prove that I was right.

Some *nil admirari* critics ask, "What does it matter, after all, whether 'Herbert' was converted from Atheism or not? Plenty of Atheists remain who are not converted, and are not likely to be." True, but why was this lie concocted and published? Was it not to serve Christianity? And does not this prove that, taking human nature as it is, it is a profitable trick to represent Atheists as returning to Christianity in sickness and distress, and above all at the felt approach of death? This motive gave rise to the falsehoods about Voltaire and Thomas Paine, and the more recent falsehoods about Charles Bradlaugh. It was to check this pious charlatany that I wrote my *Infidel Death-Beds*, and it was for the same reason that I criticised and branded the falsehoods of Mr. Hughes. Let it be remembered that we cannot always choose our ground of battle. It is frequently decided for us by the enemy, and we cannot afford to be too fastidious.

Besides, truth is truth, and lies are lies. It is not right that a leading Christian minister, or any man of eminent public position, should be allowed to circulate falsehoods unchallenged. Christian moralists may say what they will, but the Pagan moralists were right in regarding veracity as the root of all virtue. Every successful lie that can be smitten down is a gain to the cause of truth—directly, in so far as the lie is extinguished, and indirectly, in so far as lying is made a little harder in future.

G. W. FOOTE.

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE.

It has long been customary to attribute all the actions of the lower animals to instinct, and to suppose that a vast chasm exists between such actions and those of man guided by reason. A close inspection tends to show that, however far apart their actions may be, there is no real chasm, and that taking conscious reason as one end of a line, and unconscious instinct as the other, there is every possible gradation between the two extremes. Man prides himself on being a rational being, yet his actions, no less than those of other animals, are in large part instinctive. Some instincts observed in childhood are outgrown in manhood as they are replaced by others. Test men with a cry of "Fire" in a church. Look at government, look at religion, if you want to see how irrational men are *en masse*. We often complain that men will not listen to reason, when the fact is they are not amenable to it; instinct is too strong. We say "man is a creature of habit," and "habit is second nature," thereby expressing how large a portion of life is the outcome of instinct. For after long practice habits acquired intelligently become automatic. Instance the soldier who, at the order "Attention," dropped the pie he was carrying home for dinner. Action becomes instinctive when the adjustment of organism to environment is perfect. If intelligence ceases when action becomes perfect, then God, as a perfect being, must be an unconscious automaton.

But confining and defining, with Romanes, reason or intelligence as the faculty concerned in the intentional adaptation of means to an end, it is evident that we have, though in a minor degree, exactly the same kind of evidence for attributing reason to the lower animals as we have for attributing it to our fellow human beings.

Hume long since pointed out that animals, as well as men, learn many things from experience, and infer that the same events will always follow from the same causes, and that the ignorance and inexperience of the young are plainly distinguishable from the sagacity of the old. An old greyhound will leave the more fatiguing part of the chase to the younger, and will place himself so as to meet the hare in her doubles; the conjectures which he forms being founded on his observation and experience. The effects of discipline and education on animals were also remarked by Hume, who observed that they may be taught a course

of action the most contrary to their natural instincts and propensities.

Instinctive actions leave some play to intelligence. Few can be performed twice exactly alike. Careful inspection shows no two birds' nests are precisely similar. They vary in their materials, in their weaving of them, and in their attachment to the tree. Only the shape is similar, like the superficial appearance of a row of houses. Dr. Romanes gives many cases of adaptation of instincts to new conditions by the use of intelligence. Bees, when prevented from gathering moss to cover their nests, have been known to tear up cloth and card it with their feet into a mass, which they used as moss. Beavers construct their dams and canals with ever varying ingenuity, and adapt them to the higher or lower level of their ponds. Such elaborate constructions, endlessly modified according to varying circumstances, as erected by a beaver colony, can only be explained by attributing to them the power of appreciating the benefits following their labors, and the hydrostatic principles involved.

Some small degree of intelligence is found even in molluscs. A limpet knows its home, and goes back to it. A razor fish will avoid a place where it has been alarmed. A snail, leaving a sick mate, crawled over a garden wall, and next day crawled back again. A lobster "mounted guard upon a heap of shingle, beneath which it had previously hidden some food." Ants and bees remember for months places where they got honey or sugar. Sir John Lubbock found that ants would recognise those of their own nests after a year and nine months. In the higher mammalia we find still more intelligent traits as exemplified in innumerable anecdotes of dogs, horses, elephants and monkeys. Who could deny reason to an ape who steadily persevered with a bunch of keys till he found the key that opened the door? And now Prof. Garner is going to show that apes possess language, which Max Müller and others think the great barrier of division. How much intelligence is dwarfed by the lack of this instrument is seen in the case of deaf mutes. Dr. Romanes says: "The Rev. Mr. S. Smith tells me that one of his pupils, previous to education, supposed the Bible to have been printed by a printing press in the sky, which was worked by printers of enormous strength—this being the only interpretation the deaf mute could assign to the gestures whereby his parents sought to make him understand that they believed the Bible to contain a revelation from a God of power who lives in heaven. Similarly, Mr. Graham Bell informs me of another, though similar case, in which the deaf mute supposed the object of going to church to be that of doing obeisance to the clergy." Such instances suggest that, in the absence of language, the mind of man is almost on a level with the mind of a brute in respect of its power of forming abstract ideas.

Mr. J. B. Alexander, in his chapter on Animal Intelligence (*Dynamic Theory*, chap. lxxvii. p. 878), thus summarises the subject: "The observation of the ways of animals leads to the conclusion that they exhibit the following mental qualities: surprise, fear, sexual and parental affection, social feelings, pugnacity, industry, curiosity, jealousy, anger, playfulness, affection, sympathy, emulation, pride, resentment, æsthetic love of ornament, terror, grief, hate, cruelty, benevolence, revenge, rage, shame, remorse, deceit, cunning, sense of the ludicrous, ideas of duty and loyalty to a trust, and probably superstition." Much is to be said for animals having some germs of religion.* Darwin notices that man stands to the dog somewhat in the place of a god; though it may be questioned if the dog's idea of man is not rather that of a superior member of his own pack. Sir John Lubbock professed himself unable otherwise to account for the presence of certain beetles in ants nests, unless they are retained as objects of superstitious veneration. Herbert Spencer shows animals have the germ of superstition in confounding the inanimate with the

animate, as in a dog chasing paper or a parasol blown by the wind. He says, in a curiously dubious way, "I believe that M. Comte expressed the opinion that fetishistic conceptions are formed by the higher animals." The founder of Positivism did not suppose they believed in charms, but that, like savages, they sometimes invest inanimate objects with a fancied life. Signor Vignoli, in his *Myth and Science*, even derives the personalism or animism, which is the foundation of savage religion, from the instinctive animism of the lower animals.

In view of the breakdown of the line of demarcation, some theologians admit the possible immortality of animals. Others fall back on "conditional immortality." This usually means that the believer is going to be immortal, though uncertain about any one else being so. That a man deserves everlasting bliss as his reward for faith in Christ, while the cab-horse whose life is a round of drudgery in man's service, has no compensation, is a phase of human egotism which, could it be comprehended by the animal world, would surely stimulate them to laughter.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

James Fitt, the secretary of the collapsed North London Permanent Building Society, who has been arrested, lived in a swell house with all the latest improvements. He was, and indeed still is, president of the local Young Men's Christian Association, and a preacher at Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian Bethels. There was nothing narrow about James Fitt. He took in all the followers of Christ in a comprehensive embrace. He was announced to preach at a Wood Green anniversary service on Feb. 11. It is really sad to think that the hand of Justice has stopped him from saving souls on that occasion. So pathetic is it, indeed, that we commend it to the notice of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who should be able to dish it up in an eighteenpenny shocker.

The Dean and Chapter of Rochester are patrons of a Church living in Kent, and there is no School Board in that parish. As the funds for supporting the schools in existence were running short, it was decided to raise the wind by a voluntary rate, and of course the Dean and Chapter were invited to contribute. But they were not to be tapped in that way. The reply was that they paid what they were obliged to. Most people rise to that height of generosity.

The clergy are up in arms, and shrieking Sacrilege and Ichabod! It is actually proposed to row the Oxford and Cambridge boat race in Holy Week. Shocking! What is the world coming to? Surely the end of all things is at hand.

At a Constitutional smoking concert, Mr. Ridley Smith, the Conservative candidate for Battersea, managed to squeeze in a bit of a speech between two comic songs. He said that "religion was as essential to a nation as to an individual. The recent dynamite outrages, which by some were attributed to social evils, he attributed to the absence of personal religion. On this subject too he spoke of the 'civil funeral' of M. Gambetta, a saddening sight. From the time when religion was openly cast aside by the head of the State, things had gone wrong in France, as they would in other countries in which Freethought had the ascendancy, and in which there was a marked absence of personal religion." Mr. Smith forgets that Vaillant was brought up a Christian and that Gambetta was the savior of his country.

In the good old days, men of God could burn men as heretics and old women as witches with impunity. Now the Rev. R. MacCartney, of Georgetown, New England, has been prosecuted by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for burning a weasel alive in a box of straw. He was fined fifteen dollars.

At a séance held at Battle Creek, Joseph King, of St. Joseph county, a materialising medium, announced that a spirit desired to shake hands with a young lady in the room. The spirit, robed in white, walked across the room and grasped the lady's hand. A gentleman jumped up and

* In 1672 was published a book called *The School of the Eucharist, established upon the miraculous respects and acknowledgments which beasts, birds and insects, have rendered to the Holy Sacrament of the Altar*. It was written by Pere Toussaint Bridou, a Jesuit, who outdid the stories of Balaam's ass, Elijah's ravens, Daniel's lions and Jonah's whale, by instancing how rats, mice, and such small deer, refused to devour the consecrated host.

caught the spirit, which fought hard to free itself. Women screamed and fainted. When the light was turned on the spirit ceased its struggles, and was taken at once to police headquarters. Those present had paid a dollar apiece to converse with spirit friends.

Dr. George Smith has written a book on *The Conversion of India*. According to Christians themselves, this began as far back as the days of St. Thomas. St. Francis Xavier, in the sixteenth century, is said to have converted a million, and there are now only about two millions of Christians out of two hundred and seventy millions. Most of these belong to the aboriginal tribes, and many are what is known as "rice Christians." Only about a quarter of the two millions are Protestants, and the Catholic Christians are almost as much idolaters as the adherents of Brahmanism. Yet Dr. George Smith thinks the prospects of Christianity are very hopeful.

The *Catholic Weekly Register* is trying to put itself abreast of the times. It reprints an article by Mr. Gladstone on the Rev. Blanco White, who was brought up a Spanish priest, and died an advanced Unitarian, which originally appeared in the *Quarterly Review* in 1845. The *W. R.* is coming on in literary matters. In theology it is three hundred years behind date.

Selden said, "The priests of all religions are the same." A common likeness seems, too, to affect the reports of missionaries. The Buddhist delegates to the Parliament of Religions state in their report: "The meetings showed the great superiority of Buddhism over Christianity, and the mere fact of calling the meetings showed that the Americans and other Western peoples had lost their faith in Christianity and were ready to accept the teachings of our superior religion."

Joan of Arc is at length beatified and made a "venerable" person in the Catholic Church, just one degree below a saint. Before she is completely canonised the Devil's Advocate will be able to cite Shakespeare and Voltaire. No doubt the Pope has made an astute move, as Joan of Arc is not only the symbol of patriotic feeling to all Frenchmen, but also a romantic feminine figure in an age of cruelty and bloodshed. The Pope counts her as a faithful martyr, but cannot evade the evidence that the Bishop of Rouen was accessory to her death.

Mrs. Besant arrived in Calcutta on Jan. 11, and lectured in the Town Hall the next day to a native audience on "India's Mission to the World." Colonel Olcott presided, and at times wept copiously! Mrs. Besant approved of the caste system as it at first existed in the four principal divisions, and admired the ancient Hindu estimate of women. She said that, if the youths of India would act up to the traditions of their past, instead of fawning on a foreign power, they would not long remain under a foreign yoke. She thought that Brahmins should confine themselves to religious studies, and she asserted that the downfall of India began when Brahmins first sought after political power.

Mrs. Besant, it would appear from this report, is not going to depend on the incomprehensible mysteries of Theosophy to draw audiences in India. "The foreign yoke" denunciations are certain to be popular, though they may not be useful. What special traditions of the Hindu past Mrs. Besant thinks would free India from "the foreign yoke" we would like to know.

Mrs. Besant is evidently now of opinion that what is sauce for gander is not sauce for the goose. She may talk politics under the direction of the Mahatmas, but the Brahmins have to restrict themselves to talk on the sublime mysteries of the incomprehensible. Her recent utterances will tend to confirm the opinion of "Sat Bhai" that the ulterior objects of Blavatskyism were political.

The *Methodist Times* is satisfied with Mr. Holyoake's "vindication," and keeps a discreet silence with respect to Mr. Foote's criticism of it. Instead of dealing with the Atheist Shoemaker, it devotes a leading article to "Mrs. Annie Besant," ending with a prophecy that she will yet find her way to Christ; in other words, that she will climb to the spiritual level of Hugh Price Hughes.

Most of our readers will remember the great Pearl case, in

which Miss Elliott was concerned. It will be recollected that she sold the stolen pearls to Messrs. Spink and Son, who were quite taken in by her "ladylike demeanor." This is worth bearing in mind when we are told of the charm and cultivation of the Methodist Sisters concerned in the Atheist Shoemaker story.

"Anti-Christians, with Caiaphas, conspired to shed Christ's blood for an atonement! Their successors now accuse God of having pre-ordained it, and boycott discussion! How long? (Rev. vi. 10)." This appeared some days ago in the agony column of the *Times*, and is signed by the Rev. T. G. Headley, Petersham, S.W., who seems to "have them badly." We hope the reverend gentleman will not require the services of two doctors.

S. W. Partridge and Co., the well-known religious publishers, have their imprint on a very polite Christian tract which is widely circulated. It is headed "Thou art the Man," and continues:—

Thou art the Man Who was born in sins and shapen in iniquity.—Ps. li. 5.

Thou art the Man Who hast gone astray from thy birth, speaking lies.—Ps. lviii. 3.

Thou art the Man Who art gone out of the way; who art become unprofitable; the poison of asps is under thy lips.—Rom. iii. 12, 13.

It winds up by saying: "Haste thee, escape for thy life, for the wrath of God abides upon thee, hell opens for thee; and how wilt thou escape, if thou neglectest so great salvation?" The title of this series of tracts is "Life Seeds." What fruit but contempt can be expected from such silly invectives?

In a note to his last novel in the *Graphic*, Mr. Rider Haggard states that one of the incidents was founded on fact. While in Mexico he saw two mummified bodies of nuns who had been put to death by being immured or walled up in niches of convents, for certain offences. This assertion was challenged by Father Thurston, and other champions of the Catholic Truth Society, but the result has been, not only to verify Mr. Haggard's assertion, but to multiply instances of the walling up of nuns from every part of the world. The *Liverpool Courier*, commenting on the controversy, says: "It is a melancholy but irrefutable fact that that in the name of Christianity crimes as terrible have been perpetrated as ever occurred under a regime of barbarism, and, of course, with a much larger measure of security for the perpetrators."

The anti-missionary agitation is on the increase in Japan, and, according to a recent dispatch via San Francisco, "many native Christians who have joined in this movement declare that the withdrawal of the missionaries will be a great help to the progress of Christianity." They contrive to get themselves confoundedly disliked wherever they go.

The enterprising Methodists who got up a project to impose an episcopate upon Wesleyans, appear to have reckoned without their hosts. All the prominent men of the old school have flatly pronounced against the scheme. The very idea of bishops has raised a deal of bile which will not subside for some time to come.

The fact is, between the Church on the one side and the Salvation Army on the other, the Methodist Church is going rapidly to decay. It is not increasing; it is not even holding its own, and where formerly there was energy and enthusiasm there is now only to be found apathy and indifference. Like other movements, Wesleyanism gathered up force to a certain point, but, that reached, its strength has begun to evaporate. It was never noted for intellect, but it was for fervor, and now the latter is becoming as diminutive as the former.

Jean Reissen, a Swiss cook, of 4 Noel-street, Soho, was found drowned in the Thames. He had been a very religious man, and his letters contained a great many texts of Scripture. One of them ended, "Ready! In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

During the recent very severe frost in Russia, between fifty and sixty poor people, mostly of the homeless class, were frozen to death in the southern province. On the same morning five frozen corpses were discovered in the neighborhood of Simferopol, in the Crimea. In Central and Southern Russia the cold was equally intense and abnormal. He doeth all things well.

The entire town of Koshan, Persia, has been swept away by an earthquake. Twelve thousand persons were killed in the city alone, and of these about 10,000 bodies have been recovered. The loss of cattle has been enormous, over 50,000 herd having perished. The city now presents a scene of death, desolation, and horror. The rescue parties frequently had to abandon their task, owing to the horrible sights they witnessed, while the stench from the decaying bodies of human beings and animals was sickening. The loving Father of all was too busy listening to the prayers of Jabez Balfour, to give them any attention.

Mr. G. R. Sims has long been going to the dogs as a politician and a social reformer. "Dagonet," in fact, as he gets older, and probably wealthier, is becoming a regular reactionary. The *Referee* is turning altogether Conservative, and its last week's leader was in support of the clerical party on the London School Board. What a change from the *Referee* of old, which fought ably, and sometimes brilliantly, on the side of Progress!

It is only fair, however, to say that "Dagonet" still puts his knife occasionally into pious humbugs. Last week he wrote some warm paragraphs on Jabez Balfour, winding up with the remark that "in nearly all the great banking and company frauds of late years the delinquents have almost invariably been men who have used philanthropy and religion as cloaks for their nefarious designs."

George Thomas, who is condemned to death, for the wilful murder of his sweetheart at Johnstown, Carmarthen, appears from the evidence to have gone straight from a place of worship to waylay his victim, whose throat he cut with a razor.

The Spiritist paper, *Two Worlds*, has an article on Christianity, Secularism, and Spiritualism, criticising the recent discourse of the Rev. Mr. Byles, of Hanley, in his "Sermon on a Freethinker's Funeral." Mr. Byles, as the *Two Worlds* points out, is better than his creed in allowing that a good man may be saved, since the Bible lays down a plan of salvation by faith in the blood of the atonement. Since the Spiritists agree with Mr. Byles, that not an Atheist's opinions but only his character is of real importance in the future life, what reasons have they to induce Secularists to alter convictions which command their intellectual assent.

Says the *Two Worlds*, "The contention of the Secularist that if immortality is a fact, it is a fact of Nature which will do justice to the believer and the unbeliever alike, is a realised truth of Spiritualism." The difference between the Secularist and the Spiritist is but a question of evidence.

Mr. Stead in *Borderland* extolled one Professor Baldwin, as a worker of wonders, only to be explained by Clairvoyance, Telepathy and Spiritualism. But Baldwin gave the show away by writing to Mr. Labouchere that he had not and never claimed to have occult powers, but was only a professor of "illusion" and exposé of spirit tricks. Stead lamely replies that Baldwin is really a medium, though he prefers to appear in another character. The same might as well be said of Mr. Maskeylyne.

Like attracts like all the world over. We are therefore not surprised to learn that Dr. Joseph Parker says that such a man as Talmage should be hindered for want of money is a disgrace to the so-called piety of the world. If he must leave America let him come to London, says the generous Joseph, who will perhaps offer to exchange pulpits with him.

The latest American game to make the Church attractive, at any rate to the ladies, is to give detailed descriptions in Monday's papers of the new and fascinating costumes seen at church on Sunday. "Pretty Toilets at the Church," or "Faultless Creations Worn in the House of God," makes more interesting reading than the old, old story found in the average sermon.

In *Izeyl*, M. Armand Silvestre's new play, in which Madame Sarah Bernhardt appears, the legend of Buddha is mingled with the life of Mary Magdalene. Sarah takes the part of the lady who conceives a passion for the devoted Cakya Mouni (Buddha), and under its influence is converted. Similar attempts to dramatise the legend of Jesus have been suppressed as blasphemous.

The Stundists, Baptists, and other Russian Nonconformists are yearly increasing in number, despite official persecution. There is an advanced section of the Stundists who deny more or less directly the godhead of Christ, while looking upon him as an example. They are said to be very superior to the masses of those in the Orthodox Church.

Mr. A. Lang, in the *Daily News*, noticing a book on *Church Folk-Lore*, by the Rev. J. E. Vaux, says that many ecclesiastical ceremonies were survivals of heathenism. Thus, even now, on the Mediterranean shores, we may observe a rite connected with Good Friday, which is only a survival of the Feast of Adonis. The Church accepted many pagan things, and gave them a Christian turn, as she places a cross above a sacred dolmen in Northern France.

The peasantry of the Southern Provinces of Russia are again on the borders of famine, and the local governors are appealing for imperial assistance to supply the starving people with bread through the winter. They are already four years in arrear with their taxes, and are hopelessly indebted to the Crown for advances made during and since the late famine. They look up to the Czar as their very God on earth, and if he does but little, it is yet more than they receive from their Father in heaven.

A Methodist minister of Alabama, just sent to prison for stealing a suit of clothes, pleaded that he was called by God to act as he did that he might have a better opportunity to do good among the convicts.

The Exeter side-by-side announcements of "The First Appearance of the Aztecs" and "The Second Coming of the Lord," has a parallel from Toronto, where an announcement of "A Day with God" appeared side by side with "A Night with Burns."

According to the *Christian World*, E. W. Dunbar, the author of the popular hymn in Sankey's Collection, "A Light in the Window for Thee," has just died miserably as a tramp in Koffeerville Gaol, Kansas. Dunbar was formerly a singing Evangelist, but fell into bad ways, and the only light left in the window for him was that in a Christian gaol.

It appears, from a published statement, that no less a sum than £141,000 was paid away to Nonconformist ministers as commission for introducing shareholders and depositors to the Liberator Building Society. What has the Nonconformist conscience got to say about these dear sainted men of God who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers?

There was a curious slander case heard before Mr. Justice Cave at the Norfolk Assizes last week. Mr. William Grant, head-master of Old Walsingham Board School, sued Thomas Hughes, landlord of the Black Lion, near Walsingham, for calling him "an Atheist schoolmaster." The landlord pleaded justification, and got his wife and son to testify that the schoolmaster had avowed Atheism. Politics and Mr. Bradlaugh's name seem to have been much mixed up in the discussions at the Black Lion, and, as the judge remarked, all the independent testimony was against Mr. Grant having declared himself an Atheist. The jury gave him a verdict, with, however, only a shilling damages, which one would think either too much or too little. The important part of the case was the declaration of Mr. Justice Cave that such a statement as that alleged was of the utmost importance to a person in the position of a schoolmaster, because, he supposed, no Board and no manager of a school would allow a man of Atheistical opinions to remain at the head of a school. What a comment on Christian enlightenment and fair-play! However able a schoolmaster might be, opinions on a speculative topic would debar him from position. It being laid down that in such a case the charge of Atheism is slander, entitling a person to damages, will perhaps make Christians a little more careful in formulating that particular charge against those who disagree with them.

A Goudhurst jury sat upon the remains of a burnt baby, and returned a verdict of "Died by the visitation of God." Did they mean the Devil, who is generally considered to be in the burning business? If they meant just what they said, the mothers in that district ought to keep a sharp eye on "God"—that is, if they have any love for their offspring.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 4, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :- At 11.15, "Professor Wallace's Scheme for Mending the House of Lords"; at 7, "The Atheist Shoemaker and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—Up to Date."

February 11, 18, Hall of Science; 25, Liverpool.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—February 4, Glasgow; 6, 7 and 8, Dundee; 11, Edinburgh; 18, Bradford; 25, Hall of Science, London. March 4, Hall of Science, Science, London; 11, Liverpool; 18, Nelson.—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.

H. E. SMITH.—Forwarded as desired.

FOR CIRCULATING THE "ATHEIST SHOEMAKER" EXPOSURE.—

H. E. Smith, 5s.; S. Hartmann, £1; A. Bullock, 1s.; J. Oram, 1s.; Hermit, 5s.; Convert from Wesleyanism to Atheism, 10s.; J. J. Hayes, 1s.; J. Bennett, 5s.

F. GOODWIN.—See paragraph. Shall be glad to hear of your success.

F. GILMAN.—(1) Pleased to hear of the "great satisfaction" of our Hanley friends at the Atheist Shoemaker exposure. We intend to put the whole case carefully in pamphlet form, for preservation and circulation. (2) The Rev. A. H. Byles appears to be a curious preacher, though we hear he is a good sort of a man in his way. If he chooses to regard every honest Freethinker as a real Christian, it is only a sign that the Christian iceberg is melting in the great sea of Humanity.

ENS RATIONIS.—See "Acid Drops." We quite understand that the publication of your name would mean ruin.

A. N. STAIGER.—Will let you know in a day or two.

H. GUTHRIE.—You did not quite understand us, and perhaps it was our fault. When we said that an Atheist might turn Christian, we meant chiefly a *professed* Atheist. No more than yourself can we conceive of a convinced Atheist, while in the full possession of his faculties, going over honestly to the ranks of faith. But when the faculties are impaired by disease or the approach of death, anything is possible; though, as a matter of fact, Atheists die for the most part as they lived.

N. E. SECULAR FEDERATION.—Joseph Brown, sec., acknowledges :- Bedlington Branch, 10s.; Mr. Johnson (York), 5s.

ATHEIST.—Thanks for your encouraging letter.

THE HARDIE FAMILY.—Mr. Foote hopes to meet you at Glasgow in March.

W. B. THOMPSON, secretary of the Chatham Branch, says, "Bravo! You have smashed the Atheist Shoemaker story. We are delighted."

LOT HILL.—Glad to have a line from a veteran like yourself.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—All's well that ends well.

CONVERT FROM WESLEYANISM TO ATHEISM.—As you say, the investigation and circulation of copies of the *Freethinker* all over the kingdom involves a considerable expense; and as we have done all the work, our well-to-do readers might relieve us of the cost. We intend to send copies to Wesleyan ministers as well as to the press. Thanks for *your* contribution.

J. J. HAYES.—Thanks for ordering a number of copies of this week's *Freethinker* for distribution among the followers of Hugh Price Hughes. We don't care to say anything about the other matter, but we have our eyes open.

C. D.—It is all right; merely press of other matter. We don't see the smallest room to doubt that "Herbert" is, or rather was, Charles Alfred Gibson. See the evidence we give this week.

E. H.—(1) Public opinion is not the criterion of justice; it can be mistaken and prejudiced, as well as individual opinion. It sanctioned the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as well as the imprisonment of Mr. Foote. You forget that reason and public opinion are not necessarily identical. (2) We can recommend *any* debate between Charles Bradlaugh and a Christian, but we take the responsibility for no one's views but our own.

H. JONES.—See paragraph.

J. SAUNDERS.—May be useful.

R. KILLICK.—Let them alone. Hope you are well.

QUIP.—It is all out now. This week's instalment settles the business completely.

G. W. B.—When you say "the medium did not know" you are saying more than you know. Anyhow you must think for yourself—as we do.

T. ELLIOTT.—Thanks for your good wishes. Yes, it is pretty clear that Hughes's hand was forced by grumblers on his own side. The gain is ours, though, after all.

ROBERTS.—Under consideration.

J. W. WAKEFIELD.—A good many ecclesiastics besides the Bishop of Winchester used to profit in old times from licensed brothels.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, hon. treasurer, acknowledges :- R. H. Side, £1.

W. B. J.—A piece of domestic mummery only interesting to Churchmen. It would need to be witnessed to be adequately criticised.

H. P.—Pleased to have your warm approval.

R. A. COOPER (Norwich).—Thanks for paper. We have commented on the case. The N.S.S. Executive has decided to open a hot campaign on the Education Question, and we shall deal with the matter at length in our next issue.

J. RAWLINSON.—Thanks for cutting.

J. GARVEN.—Many have found our *Infidel Death-Beds* very useful. It should be especially so at the present juncture.

D. F. GLOAK.—Take your own time, of course. We see how difficult it is for a good many to subscribe to the New Year's Fund in January, and are therefore keeping it open a week or two longer. Pleased to hear of your progress at Dundee. Our best regards to all the "saints" there. We hope to see them soon. With respect to Mr. Holyoake, we share your view that he has been imposed upon. Our respect for his invaluable past services to the cause can never be impaired.

O. R. F.—Glad you are "heartily pleased" with our action.

JOSEPH CLOSE.—We have only done our plain duty. Still, we appreciate the spirit which prompts your compliments. We thank you for taking two dozen copies of the *Freethinker* and a dozen of the *Lie in Five Chapters* for distribution. Our thanks also to your good friend, John Hume.

R. RUSSELL.—There is no need for its insertion now, otherwise we would have gladly given it a place.

J. DONOMORE.—Hardly up to the mark.

SIDNEY OSWIN.—Epitaphs are subject to "editing." The cemetery officials may object to "Freethinker" appearing on your tombstone; but, on the other hand, they may not. No one can tell beforehand.

W. MORTIMER.—Pleased to hear the last two *Freethinkers* have "gladdened your heart." This week's should keep up the sensation.

H. MALBON.—We can't interview the Soho shoemaker in Hughes's story. He is inside Hughes's head, and we can't get there.

J. PRIMROSE.—Thanks. We wish all who appreciate our exposure of the Atheist Shoemaker story would send something to the New Year's Gift fund for Freethought.

T. NESBIT.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. SCROXTON.—It shall be sent.

S. HARTMANN.—We shall deal with the Secular Education fight next week, and acknowledge your donation then. The other two pounds are acknowledged in their respective places this week. Many thanks.

J. BENNETT.—Glad you are so highly pleased with "the general style" of this journal, as well as with the hoisting of the Methodist engineer with his own petard.

GEORGE THWAITES, whose advertisement will be found on our back page, has always been a good friend to the Freethought cause, and we believe that persons who deal with him may depend on honest treatment.

G. NÆWIGER.—The copies sold 13 for 9d. to non-traders were not sold for sale, but for free distribution. But why trouble about the criticism of the poor creatures in question? Sorry to hear you are not well. Mr. Foote is in first-rate condition again.

W. YEARDIMAN.—Thanks for good wishes. We have shown your letter to our "sub."

J. NICHOLSON.—While we have health we shall fulfil your expectations to the best of our power.

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

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.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC., should be written on postcards or the envelopes marked outside, and be sent to 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Liver—De Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Post—Shafts—Newcastle Leader—Isle of Man Times—Morning—Leek Times—Western Mail—Eastern Daily Press—Whatham and Rochester Observer—Daylight—Gloucestershire Echo—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Pioneer—Boston Globe—Freethinker's Magazine—Independent Pulpit—Fritankaren—Twentieth Century—Rushden Argus.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. E. Fordor, 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*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. 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.

SPECIAL.

I INVITE the Secularists of London, and as many as possible of their Christian friends, to meet me at the Hall of Science this evening (February 4), when I intend to address them on the "Atheist Shoemaker" question, and the light it throws on orthodox methods and the character of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. I expect to have the father of the hero of Mr. Hughes's story upon the platform. He has wired me from Northampton that he will come, and I will also try to bring his two sons with him. They will hear what I say, and be able to confirm or correct it.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science to-day (Feb. 4). His morning subject will be "Professor Wallace's Scheme for Mending the House of Lords." In the evening he will speak on the "Atheist Shoemaker" case and the position and character of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, with special reference to anything that may have appeared in the new number of the *Methodist Times*. As our readers will see from a "special" notice, the father, and perhaps the two brothers, of Mr. Hughes's convert will be upon the platform; and we expect the hall will be crowded on this occasion.

Hugh Price Hughes is circulating Mr. Holyoake's "vindication" wholesale, without the slightest reference to Mr. Foote's criticism of it, and of course without reference to his subsequent exposure of the whole story. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that our side of the case should be circulated as widely as possible. We are sending out to the press all over the country copies of last week's and this week's *Freethinker*. Of course the cost of doing this is considerable, and we shall be glad to receive some financial assistance from friends who can afford it.

The weather was beautifully fine at Portsmouth on Sunday, and Mr. Foote had capital audiences and an enthusiastic welcome. The Christian Evidence folk got up rival meetings in the same street, in fact right opposite the Wellington Hall, at which they industriously advertised Mr. Foote and the *Freethinker*. They certainly did not realise their expressed intention of "keeping people from hearing the infidel." Before the evening lecture Mr. Foote named the baby daughter of two members of the Branch, Mr. and Mrs. Bickerstaff. The baby behaved remarkably well, and the meeting was greatly interested in the ceremony. Mr. Scarrot took the chair in the morning and afternoon, and Mr. Hore in the evening. The discussion was confined to the morning lecture. One of the Christian Evidence folk, a mere boy, spoke with an impudence which he had evidently learnt from the "dons" on his own side. Another speaker, a Unitarian, was full of politeness. A third speaker—Mr. Slingsby Godfrey, a Fabian—got into a mess through his ignorance of the history of the Freethought movement, which he supposed to be just beginning to patronise democracy.

As a suitable large hall, in a central thoroughfare, cannot at present be obtained at Portsmouth on Sundays, it is Mr. Foote's intention to visit the town and deliver three or four week-night lectures; in fact, to hold what may be called a Freethought mission.

Mr. Charles Watts had a splendid audience last Sunday evening at the Hall of Science, London, when he lectured on "Atheism: with Special Reference to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Story of the Converted Atheist." Mr. Watts's severe condemnation of the whole case, and the expression of his deep regret of the course Mr. Holyoake has taken in the matter, called forth most enthusiastic applause. Our colleague was in good form, and he evidently pleased the large audience. The *Freethinker* was in great demand.

To-day (Sunday, February 4) Mr. Watts lectures three times

in Glasgow, and the following three evenings he speaks in Dundee. We have no doubt that his many Scotch friends will rally on each occasion.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake lectures to-day, morning and evening, in the Manchester Secular Hall, and we hope he will have capital meetings. A good many of the Manchester friends, we know, are annoyed at his "investigating" as he did for Mr. Hughes; but it is clear to us that Mr. Holyoake's good nature was taken advantage of by clever Mr. Hughes and his "charming" Sisters. All of us should remember the veteran's great past, and do him the honor of a hearing when he puts aside the infirmities of old age and braves the labor of the platform.

The Christian papers, as was to be expected, are chortling over the "vindication" of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Of course they do not refer to Mr. Foote's criticism. Mr. Holyoake's testimonial is enough. The *Christian World* thinks that Mr. Hughes, by simply going to Mr. Holyoake, clearly "showed that he had spoken mere historic truth." Well, the *Christian World* has now an opportunity of examining this "historic truth" for itself.

As the *Christian World* is one of the few Christian papers for which we entertain any respect, we are pleased to hear it speaking as follows: "With Mr. Foote the Secularist we have at least one point of sympathy, in so far as he has been persecuted for opinion. He has been, let us hope, the last victim of the vain laws that would teach reverence by imprisonment."

The *Christian Commonwealth* informs its confiding readers that "Secularism is now on its last legs," and that Mr. Holyoake's "vindication of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's story has dropped like a bombshell in their camp." Our readers know that this is arrant nonsense. The Secularists are anything but frightened. Still, the fact that they talk about the "vindication" as a "bombshell" shows how very inconsiderate of his own party Mr. Holyoake was in going to work in such a private and unsatisfactory manner. The *C. C.* has the coolness to say that Mr. Holyoake's report is "a complete refutation of Mr. Foote's statement." Our pious contemporary must be very blear-eyed if it does not see that Mr. Holyoake simply went and asked the concoctors of the "Lie in Five Chapters" whether it was true. He never inquired of a single person outside the little ring of persons who got up the story.

Fritankaren for Jan. 15 publishes the portrait of Charles Bradlaugh reproduced from our New Year's Number. It also translates Mr. Foote's accompanying notice, and the articles by Messrs. W. P. Ball and A. Liddle from the same number.

The Newcastle Sunday Music Society held its annual meeting on Sunday, Mr. Joseph Brown in the chair. The secretary presented a very encouraging report. The concerts had been well attended and highly appreciated, and although there was a deficiency of £20 the work would be continued with every prospect of a thorough success. Open-air concerts are being arranged for at Gateshead, and one in the Olympia on Good Friday.

The West London Branch is carrying on another course of Thursday evening free lectures in the hall of the Hammer-smith Club, The Grove, Broadway. The lecturers are Messrs. Parris, Moss, Heaford, Hunt, Cohen, St. John, and Mrs. Thornton Smith. Mr. Foote takes February 15, when the Branch charges for admission. Local ministers might take the opportunity of saying a word for the basis of their faith.

Mr. F. Goodwin, a member of the N.S.S., is a candidate for the Grays School Board. Of course he is in favor of Secular Education, and gives it the first place in his program, which contains nothing that could not be heartily supported by all Progressives. We hope Mr. Goodwin will secure a seat.

The Freethought lectures at the Bermondsey Gladstone Club have been most successful. Except on one occasion, when there was a snowstorm, the audiences have been large and appreciative. Opposition to the Freethinkers using the Club hall for such meetings has entirely broken down. Mr. Foote began the season's lectures, and he will probably wind them up next month.

Professor Hæckel, or rather his brochure entitled *Monism: a Scientist's Confession of Faith*, is being prosecuted by the German police. The pamphlet has run through five editions in five months, and the police now threaten all sellers with prosecution. Such is liberty in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, that one of its most eminent scientists is not allowed to utter his thoughts. It is safe to say a change will come. From Switzerland and America Germans will read the prohibited work with indignation and disgust at its attempted suppression in their Fatherland.

The *Lagos Weekly Times* has an article on Christmas which might have been written by a Freethinker. It certainly indicates that Christianity is not so settled in the island as the missionaries would have us believe.

Mr. M. D. Conway's discourse on the late Prof. Tyndall is printed in the *Open Court*, of Chicago, Jan. 18. He says Tyndall was much interested in the abortive "Conference of Liberal Thinkers," which was held at South Place in 1876, and consented to act on a permanent council which was proposed. Had the people who met as Liberal Thinkers been workers instead of talkers, there would have been no trials for blasphemy in 1883.

New South Wales Parliamentary representatives reputedly stand thus *re* religious convictions; Freethinkers claim 18 representatives, Spiritualists, 2 Atheists 5, and Agnostics 9; total 34, or in a House of 141 members over 25 per cent of the whole. On the other hand, census returns gives the total of Freethinkers, Spiritualists, Atheists and Agnostics combined as 6371, or 6 per cent. of the population returns, on the basis of creed, 24 per cent. of the Parliamentary representatives. Which suggests many things, but obviously this: That dissent from standard religions is in New South Wales, allied with a special capacity for political and social enterprise.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The Finsbury Branch holds its annual meeting to-day (Feb. 4) at 12 noon in the minor Hall of Science. On the previous evening it holds another Smoking Concert, the tickets being sixpence each, and the proceeds to go to the Secular Federation. Chair at 8. Ladies will be welcome, if they don't mind the men's pipes and cigars.

Unfortunately the Battersea Branch had a deficit on last quarter's account and is now in debt. In order to raise funds to carry on the Secular propaganda in this district, a special entertainment (followed by dancing) will be given on Monday, Feb. 5. Tickets (3d. and 6d.) can be had at the Battersea Secular Hall, and friends who wish to see this Branch keep alive should buy as many tickets as they can afford.

Mr. Heaford, one of the N.S.S. special lecturers, is a man of very moderate physical proportions, and he has been debating at Wimbledon with a clergyman who stands six feet and a half in his boots. The debate was conducted in a very friendly spirit, and ended in compliments all round. The local reporter describes Mr. Heaford as "a skilful, well read, and earnest foe-man."

The Derby Branch unanimously regrets Mr. Holyoake's action in regard to the Atheist Shoemaker story, and "appeals to the Freethought party to circulate Mr. Foote's exposure broadcast."

The Birmingham Branch sends us a unanimous resolution of perfect confidence in Mr. Foote's investigation, which it regards as justifying his course of action ever since the first publication of the Atheist Shoemaker story.

Secular Thought (Toronto), Mr. Charles Watts's old paper, is always welcome when we receive it. We only wish it arrived more regularly. The number before us (Jan. 13) is well up to the mark, and of course we don't think it the worse for a column of reprinted paragraphs from the *Freethinker*. We wish Mr. Ellis all success in upholding this flag of Freethought in Canada, which seems to be as eaten out with superstition and hypocrisy as old England itself.

We are pleased to see, also, that our paragraphs are drawn upon in the *Liberator* (Melbourne). Occasionally we are able

to find room for a bright article from the pen of Joseph Symes, so that squares matters.

Mr. Thompson has lost no time in bringing the question of religious instruction before the Gillingham School Board. Of course he was outvoted, but he does important work by keeping the secular position before the public eye as steadily as possible.

Arrangements have been fully made for a series of social gatherings at the London Hall of Science on the last Wednesdays in February, March, and April. The tickets, price sixpence, can now be obtained from Branch secretaries, or from Miss Vance, at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote hopes to attend all these functions. Further particulars will be given in due course.

A Brooklyn preacher says that "infidelity does not care for the poor," and that nobody ever heard of a Robert G. Ingersoll asylum for the destitute. "No," replies the *New York Journal*, "Robert G. Ingersoll gives and doesn't tell. He has given away enough in the last twenty years to build two asylums for the destitute."

Christians are a funny lot. Jesus told them to keep their charities secret. "Hang Jesus!" they cry; and then they invite the "infidel" to a public bragging match.

Thomas Paine is gradually being recognised as a noble reformer. His name was in the *Westminster Gazette's* calendar on Monday, January 29, his birthday, with a telling extract from his political writings.

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* gives a portrait of Mr. B. F. Underwood, who contributes a paper on Religion. It opens with a good paper on "The Antiquity of Man," by Myron H. Goodwin, and among the contents is an interesting biography of the late Prof. R. A. Proctor, the astronomer, by his daughter, Mary Proctor. The number is an excellent one, and Mr. Green will deserve both credit and cash if he keeps the paper up to its January level throughout the year.

In the *Freethinkers' Magazine* for January, Parker Pillsbury, one of the old guard of the Abolitionist cause in America, tells how William Lloyd Garrison issued an advertisement in Boston, dated Oct. 11, 1830—"Wanted, for three evenings, a hall or meeting-house (the latter preferred) in which to vindicate the Rights of two millions of American Citizens, who are now groaning in servile chains in this boasted Land of Liberty." The only response to this call came from Mr. Abner Kneeland, editor of the *Boston Investigator*, who was shortly afterwards imprisoned for blasphemy. Mr. Kneeland was then conducting "infidel" meetings in Julien Hall, and he at once tendered the free use of his hall to Mr. Garrison.

NEW YEAR'S GIFT TO FREETHOUGHT.

[Where not otherwise marked the subscriptions are one shilling.]

Lot Hill 1s. 6d., T. Prestwich 3s. 6d., Mrs. A. F. 2s. 6d., John Hume 2s. 6d.; Joseph Close 2s. 6d., R. Robinson 6d., J. Ashcroft 6d., T. R. Almond, J. W. Wakefield 2s. 6d., J. Rawlinson 2s. 6d., Fanny Garven, M. Christopher, R. Shaw 2s., M. Bell 10s., J. Phillipson 2s., R. Bulman, A. Gosbell, T. Elliott, Janaway, H. Tonge, J. Griffith 1s. 6d., Three Slow Coaches 4s., Atheist 5s., The Hardie Family (Keir's Kin) 5s., W. Cromack 2s., A. Smith, Sidney Smith, W. Mortimer 2s., J. Primrose 2s. 6d., R. Gloag 2s., Mr. Winton, S. Hartmann £1, G. Kingston 2s., J. Mill, R. Richards 10s., W. G. T., W. Yeardiman 2s., J. Chamberlain 2s., F. Morgan.

The idea of justice is not the child of superstition—it was not born of ignorance; neither was it nurtured by the passages in the Old Testament upholding slavery, wars of extermination, and religious persecution. Every human being necessarily has a standard of right and wrong; and where that standard has not been polluted by superstition, man abhors slavery, regards a war of extermination as murder, and looks upon religious persecution as a hideous crime. If there is a God, infinite in power and wisdom, above him, poised in eternal calm, is the figure of Justice. At the shrine of Justice the infinite God must bow, and in her impartial scales the actions even of Infinity must be weighed. There is no world, no star, no heaven, no hell in which gratitude is not a virtue and where slavery is not a crime.—*Ingersoll*.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION.

II.

MANY able expounders of Christianity, failing to recognise the true causes of civilisation, urge that it has produced what they term "a change of heart," and that this change has a more beneficial effect upon the general conditions of society than secular agencies have. Now, we fail to discover any proof of this allegation. Western civilisation is the result of the cultivation of the intellect far more than it is of the fostering of the emotions. In transforming society from what it was to what it is, the teachings of science have proved more efficacious than the preaching of sermons, and the brain power of such master-minds as Galileo, Newton, Watt, and Stephenson, has been a greater civilising factor than all the emotional force manifested by the host of divines who have contributed to the history of the Christian faith. We hope to show that the improvements of modern life are not the outcome of putting into practice the injunctions of Christ, but rather the consequence of following the truths born of such geniuses as those whose names we have mentioned. The discovery of coal and of electricity, the mechanical inventions of the last two hundred years, the control of the lightning, and the navigation of the seas, have been the potent agencies in bringing about modern civilisation. But these agencies have been secured through the medium of cultivated intellects and are not the result of any Christian "change of heart."

Experience amply testifies that if we keep our bodies in a healthy condition and properly drain our land, the probability is that if epidemics come upon us they will soon depart, but if these duties are neglected, it is likely that diseases may not only visit us, but that they will linger in our midst despite any "change of heart" that might have taken place. If, however, by this phrase is meant, that men should cease to do evil and learn to do good, then we do not deny the advantages of such a change, but we contend that intelligence and secular agencies are necessary to render such advantages serviceable for all civilising purposes. We further assert that before a person's character is changed for the better, the conditions which surround him must be improved; for, as Spencer has shown, a moral character cannot emanate from immoral surroundings. Thus the very "change of heart" spoken of depends upon the superior environment caused by external influences. Moreover, we find that this "change of heart" has not induced Christians to seek to remove slavery, religious inequalities, political wrongs, and social injustice; neither has it inspired them with a desire to encourage education or to favor the discovery and the application of the sciences. In the face of these facts it cannot be consistently said that the Christian's "change of heart" has brought about the civilisation of the nineteenth century.

Persons with unbiased minds, and who are capable of generalising facts, will doubtless recognise that civilisation is not the result of any one thing, or of the efforts of any one man, and least of all of those of a person who possibly might have lived in Palestine two thousand years ago. The progress of a nation is to be attributed to the efforts of many men of different generations; and also to a combination of circumstances that have been in operation during all ages, preparing the way for the advancement of a higher condition of things. For instance, if it had not been for the scientific discoveries of a Watt, a Dalton, and a Black of the last century, the application of the sciences with which their names are associated would not have been capable of being so easily applied to the ends of general utility in this present age. It is equally true that for the freedom from theological intolerance which we possess to-day, we are indebted to the persistent and fearless advocacy of the Freethought pioneers of past ages, as well as to the efforts of Freethinkers of more recent times.

We are aware that many of the most able thinkers entertain different views from ours as to the causes of human progress, but the question is, Whose views are supported by historical facts and by general experience? If the sources of civilisation are contained in the New

Testament, how is it that at the time when its teachings were observed, more than at any other period, civilisation was comparatively unknown? It is only within the present century, when scepticism and reliance on mundane resources have been and still are so prevalent, that real progress to any great extent has been accomplished. Moreover, we know too well that two of the principal civilising agencies—science and general knowledge—have been bitterly opposed and continually retarded by those very persons who professed to be the exemplars of Christ's teachings. When the facts of modern science were first proclaimed, they were denounced as untrue by Christians who for centuries constantly condemned them as being antagonistic to the welfare of the people. New truths that were demonstrated by early scientists were regarded by believers in Christianity as instances of the insanity of the discoverers, and every fossil wonder disclosed was referred by Christians to the limited explanation of the Noachian deluge. Finding that threats and intimidation failed to check the advance of truth, persecution and imprisonment were the weapons used by Christian hands towards those who investigated the laws of nature, and who sought to make such laws known to their fellow-creatures. Dr. Ferguson, in his work *The Penalties of Greatness*, acknowledges that the Roman Catholic Church was the first to extinguish the light of reason. But truth existed in spite of the deadly agencies which surrounded it. Not only did this Christian Church employ means to prevent the least difference of opinion of religious subjects, by the invention of the most finished instruments of torture, but science itself became the object of burning jealousy and persecution, and men were made to deny the very laws of nature.

Dr. Dick, in his work, the *Philosophy of Religion* shows that the Protestant Church exhibited a similar spirit of persecution. The same may be said of Christians in their more recent treatment of such men as Lyell, Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall. Dr. White's *Warfare of Science* contains innumerable facts showing how scientific men have been denounced by Protestants and charged with promulgating theories that were said to be injurious to the welfare of mankind. And yet the very knowledge that these men endeavored to impart is now admitted to be among the most potent factors in sustaining and improving our civilisation. For as Buckle observes, "Real knowledge, the knowledge on which all civilisation is based, solely consists in an acquaintance with the relations which things and ideas bear to each other and to themselves; in other words in an acquaintance with physical and mental laws."

No one can seriously question the fact that general education has played a most important part in producing and in increasing civilisation, yet it has taken the Christian world nearly eighteen hundred years to arrive at the conclusion that it is necessary that the people should have adequate means of instruction at their command. Every step taken towards obtaining a national system of education has been determinedly opposed by men who were the leading expounders of the Christian faith. And the most resolute opponents of our present public schools are to be found in the Christian ranks. Buckle states that where Christian governments "have not openly forbidden the free dissemination of knowledge, they have done all they could to check it. On all the implements of knowledge and on all the means by which it is diffused, such as papers, books, political journals, and the like, they have imposed duties so heavy that they could hardly have done worse, if they had been the sworn advocates of popular ignorance. Indeed, looking at what they have actually accomplished, it may be emphatically said that they have taxed the human mind."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

A NICE PROSPECT.—Though the souls of the wicked in hell do now suffer punishment, yet that will be so increased at the day of judgment, that what they suffered before is, in comparison of it, as an imprisonment to the execution which follows.—*Rev. Jonathan Edwards, "History of Redemption."*

A TEXT EXPLAINED.

In my orthodox days there was one utterance of the Psalmist which occasioned considerable perplexity to my prosaic brain. It was the passage where David says: "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs" (Ps. cxiv. 4). I prayed over it, and after a long while the holy Spirit answered me. It happened in this way. I went up north for some shooting among the heather with my friend, Dougal McDonald. When I arrived, Dougal invited me, for the sake of auld lang syne, to partake of something in a bottle which he denominated a blend of Glenlivet and Glentakit. I am only used to a little weak claret, but I imbibed the strange fluid more than once, and at length determined to go out and look at the heather. When I did so, lo and behold, "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." The "letter" of the divine word had been explained by the divine "spirit." What I want to find out now is, whether David had any Glenlivet and Glentakit among the hills in Judee.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

AN ACKNOWLEDGED SCOUNDREL.

"Mrs. Truligoode has made applications for divorce, I hear."

"You don't say? Why it was only a short time ago that her husband was converted and joined the church."

"I know it. That is the cause of the trouble. You see, since his conversion, Truligoode has been in the habit of going alone to the evening experience meetings. Full of the spirit of the occasion, he would get up and tell what a bad man he had been; indeed, he seemed to take a pride in recounting his slips while he was in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. The other night Mrs. Truligoode dropped into the meeting, and from a back seat heard his confession, and when he closed, by saying his eyes were now opened to the knowledge of his sinfulness, her eyes were opened, too. She went next day to her lawyer, and proceedings for a divorce were begun."

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A Scotch minister once preached a sermon against intemperance, a vice very prevalent in his parish, and from which, report says, he was not himself wholly exempt. "Whatever ye do, brethren," said he, "do it in moderation, and aboon a' be moderate in dram-drinking. When ye get up, indeed, ye may tak' a dram, and anither jist before breakfast, and, perhaps, anither after; but dinna be always dram-drinking. If ye are out in the morning, ye may jist brace yoursel' wi' anither dram, and tak' anither in the forenoon, but dinna be always dram-drinking. Naebody can scruple for ane jist afore dinner; and when the dessert is brought in, and after it's ta'en awa', and perhaps ane, or it may be twa, in the course of the afternoon, jist to keep you frae drowsying and snoozling; but dinna be always drinking. Afore tea, and after tea, and between tea and supper, and before and after supper, is no more than right and guid; but let me caution ye, brethren, not to be always dram-drinking. Jist when you're gaun to bed, and when you're ready to pop into 't, and perhaps when ye wake in the night, to tak' a dram or twa is no more than a Christian may lawfully do; but, brethren, let me caution you not to drink more than I've mentioned, or maybe ye may pass the bounds o' moderation."

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In the estimation of good orthodox Christians, I am a criminal, because I am trying to take from loving mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, and lovers, the consolations naturally arising from a belief in an eternity of grief and pain. I want to tear, break, and scatter to the winds the God that priests erected in the fields of innocent pleasure—a God made of sticks, called creeds, and of old clothes, called myths. I have tried to take from the coffin its horror, from the cradle its curse, and put out the fires of revenge kindled by the savages of the past. Is it necessary that heaven should borrow its light from the glare of hell? Infinite punishment is infinite cruelty, endless injustice, immortal meanness. To worship an eternal gaoler hardens, debases, and pollutes the soul. While there is one sad and breaking heart in the universe, no perfectly good being can be perfectly happy. Against the heartlessness of this doctrine every grand and generous soul should enter its solemn protest. I want no part in any heaven where the saved, the ransomed, and redeemed drown with merry shouts the cries and sobs of hell—in which happiness forgets misery—where the tears of the lost increase laughter and deepen the dimples of joy. The idea of hell was born of ignorance, brutality, fear, cowardice, and revenge. This idea tends to show that our remote ancestors were the lowest beasts. Only from dens, lairs, and caves—only from mouths filled with cruel fangs—only from hearts of fear and hatred—only from the conscience of hunger and lust—only from the lowest and most debased, could come this most cruel, heartless, and absurd of all dogmas.

—Ingersoll.

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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 postcard.]

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "Professor Wallace's Scheme for Mending the House of Lords" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "The Atheist Shoemaker and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—Up to Date" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday at 8.30, debating class, Mr. Garton, "The Home Rule Problem" (free). Wednesday at 8.15, Herbert Burrows, F.T.S., "The Malthusian Delusion." Thursday and Friday at 8, dancing classes; Friday at 8.30, athletic class. The Finsbury Branch will hold a concert in the minor hall, on Saturday Feb. 3, at 8, and a members' general meeting on Sunday at 12.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, H. Snell, "Freethought in English Novels," and recital (free). Monday at 8, entertainment in aid of Branch (3d. and 6d.). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 8, members' special meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30 (small hall), debating class, opened by Mr. Teasdale (free); 7.30 (large hall), Touzeau Parris, "Some Religious Ideals of the Past and Present." Friday at 7.30, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.

Finsbury Park Branch, 91 Midway Park: 3, members' meeting. Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, Feb. 8, at 8.30, Touzeau Parris, "Theosophy—a Reply to Mrs. Besant" (free).

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Curtis's Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, a lecture (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Atheist Shoemaker and Death-bed Conversions" (in the hall if the weather is unfavorable).

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, W. Heaford will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Blackburn—Secretary's House: 3, business meeting. Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 3, J. Keast, "To Live Christ Over Again."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., 11, "Food and its Functions"; 7, "The Evidences of Evolution," with lantern illustrations.

Colne—Cloth Hall: John Grange, 11, "Christian Socialism; or Christ Up to Date"; 3, "Ashamed to be a Christian"; 7, "Unbelief, the Mainspring of Progress"

Derby—41 Copeland-street (off Traffic-street): 7, a meeting. At Mr. Kirby's, 125 Stockbrook-street, on Saturday, Feb. 3, at 8.30, tea and social evening in celebration of Paine's birthday.

Dundee—Cutlers' Hall, Murraygate: 11.30, business meeting; 1 to 2, music class (free); 2.30, H. H. Duncan, "Anarchist Morality"; 6.30, H. H. Duncan, "Political Superstition." At the City Assembly Rooms, Charles Watts lectures as follows: Monday, "Does Death End All?"; Tuesday, "Religious Fanaticism"; Wednesday, "The Bible Up to Date?"

Failsworth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, C. G. Higginson, "Duty and Happiness."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: Charles Watts, 11.30, "America Re-visited"; 2.30, "Life, Secular and Theological"; 6.30, "Does Death End All?"

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall (large hall), St. Anne-street: 7, debate between Messrs. Smith and Jackson on "Is the Bible, as a whole, Conducive to the Moral Well-being of the People?"

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': G. J. Holyoake, 11, "How Secularism Arose, how it was Arrested, and how it is Spreading Now"; 6.30, "Wayside Wisdom."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, C. H. Reynolds, "Man's Individual Responsibility."

Nottingham—Co-operative Hall, Greyfriar Gate: J. Hyder (Sec. of the Land Nationalisation Society), 3, "Luxury: its Foundations and Effects"; 7, "The Land Question and how to Settle it."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, chess club; 7, a meeting.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, W. Dyson, "A Review of a late Address on 'Tyndall' by the Rev. J. E. Manning, M.A." Wednesday at 8, literary and debating class, Mr. Castle, "Ownership of Land."

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: C. Cohen, 11, "The Origin of Species"; 3, "The Gospel of Freethought"; 7, "Gods and God Makers."

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, R. Weightman, "Design and Evolution."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Feb. 4, South Shields; 11, Sheffield; 18, Manchester; 22, Hammersmith.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—March 11, Sheffield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 18, Bolton. March 4, Camberwell. April 1, Camberwell.

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