

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## THE DEAD JEW.

THE ancient Jews occupied an insignificant place in the world's history. The land they inhabited, as Gibbon says, was of the size and fertility of Wales. Yet the chosen people described it as a land flowing with milk and honey. In the same way, they made themselves out to be the most important nation on this globe—which they regarded as flat, as we should be if we believed in their nonsense. God Almighty was always thinking about them. Even when they got into trouble it was only his way of showing his concern about them. Their chastisements were a sign of his love.

The plain truth is the exact opposite of their patriotic boastings. The Jewish nation simply existed on sufferance. Its existence as an independent kingdom was remarkably brief. It disappeared as soon as one of the great empires stretched out its paw for the mouse of Palestine.

What did the Jew contribute to the world's civilisation? In science, art, and philosophy he was absolutely barren. But he was a fierce religionist. He clung to his god Jahveh with invincible tenacity. His god was himself, immensely magnified; and he was therefore worshipping himself in disguise. His religion was patriotism, as his patriotism was egotism. It was the Jew against the world, and of course the world got the best of it.

Nevertheless, the Jew had his revenge. He imposed himself on the modern world by proxy. As luck would have it, his prophetic Scriptures were the starting point of the new universal religion which arose out of the wreck of the old national religions of the Roman Empire; and the Jewish spirit of fanaticism was necessary in the apostles of a faith which was to triumph over civilisation as well as the imperial authority.

Christianity bound up its own Scriptures with those of Judaism, and is only now, after a lapse of nearly two thousand years, beginning to make a separation, through what is called "The Higher Criticism." Christian "scholars" took Hebrew as the centre of learning, Palestine as the centre of the world, and the petty squabbles of Jewish tribes as the centre of universal history. But all this has been changing since oriental studies, scientific researches, geographical exploration, and world-wide intercommunication, have broadened our minds and enlightened our conceptions of the past. Not to put too fine a point upon it, the ancient Jew is played out. He is a detected fraud. He lied himself into a fine reputation, and Christianity, for reasons of its own, supported him in the imposture. Wider knowledge has exposed his pretensions. When we

were shut up, century after century, to slender sources of information, it was easy to deceive us. We were like the boy, who thinks a lot of his village pond, until he gazes on the mighty ocean.

Yes, we are getting over that Jewish delusion. We have studied ourselves out of its history and physics, but there still remains a final act of emancipation. Christendom goes on worshipping a dead Jew. It adores him as a veritable god; it also affects to regard him as a transcendent man. It makes him the be-all and the end-all of humanity. The thought of going beyond him is blasphemy. He is first and last, and there is none beside him. Salvation is still of the Jews, through the worship of Jesus Christ. They are dead in everything else, but they live in this, little as their modern descendants suspect the fact.

The godhead of Christ is at its last gasp. Even the reactionaries of the London School Board see that it can only be perpetuated by a tyrannous abuse of our system of national education. If the child be not captured the man is lost. This is the admission of the Trinitarians. Nor is this all. God the Father is once more asserting his predominance in Christian theology, and the Son is falling into a place of subordination. By this means he will pass out of godship altogether. It is only a question of time. Will it indeed be very long before Christendom exclaims—Great Christ is Dead!

This season of the year, with its festive commemorations, shows us how mythical is the "history" of Christ. His career is a plagiarism of that of the old sun-gods. His very crucifixion is a shifting anniversary, with the sun and moon; and his resurrection marks the real birth of the year at the vernal equinox. And thus, if Judaism has survived in Christian teaching, Paganism has survived in Christian rites and ceremonies. The old nature-gods are hard to kill. They have a deeper life than the gods of yesterday. Men will bask in the sunshine and cry "Hail!" to the "god of day" after Christ is swept down into oblivion.

What remains when Christ is gone? The man Jesus. And what is he? A dead Jew? Simply this and nothing more. And why is a dead Jew better than a dead Greek, a dead Roman, a dead Hindu, a dead Chinese, a dead Egyptian, or even a dead Englishman? It was once asked, Can any good come out of Nazareth? It is greater folly to ask, Can any good come *except* out of Nazareth? Such narrow parochialism is unworthy of the human spirit. The world is greater than Nazareth, and Humanity is greater than Jesus. We will not bend for ever over the tomb of the Nazarene. It is a slavery to keep us there. We will be eclectic. What good Jesus taught (if he ever really lived) we will accept. But we will also reject the rest. We will not worship a dead Jew.

G. W. FOOTE.



## POLITENESS AND TRUTH.

MATTHEW ARNOLD said that conduct was three-fourths of life. Manners may be said to be three-fourths of conduct. The importance of courtesy based on goodwill, on a disposition to help, to see the bright side, and to make the best of all with whom we come into contact, is unquestionable. It is, in the illustration of Gautama Buddha, the linch-pin in the chariot of life. Yet manners may be made too much of, and, by a fastidious conventionality, override yet weightier concerns. Politeness is much, but it does not comprise the whole duty of man. Truth and Justice have still more important claims. An old motto says, with much truth, "manners make the man." I prefer the saying that man makes manners. Cultivate men, broaden their sympathies, improve their tastes, and good manners will flow spontaneously, apart from conventional fashions. The gentleman, as Emerson says, "is the man of truth, lord of his own actions, and expresses that lordship in his behavior, not in any manner dependent either on persons or opinions or possessions." Little folk are usually particular about behavior, but greater ones are careless, knowing it flows naturally from their own personality. A gentleman remains one whether in prison or on a throne.

Freethinkers continually have to face the question how to comport themselves towards opponents. In forming our opinions we may and should have a single eye to truth, but in expressing them we must consider their effect on others. Questions of expediency, seasonableness, and fitness come in. To take an extreme case, one may believe that there is no resurrection from the dead, yet refrain from obtruding this opinion upon a believing mother who is weeping over her lost child. Because we see there is a time to speak and a time to hold one's peace, we need not palter with our convictions. Circumstances alter cases, and each must judge for him or herself how best to adjust complete loyalty to truth with respect to the feelings of others. Polite reticence does not always serve beneficial ends.

John Morley says with truth: "One reason why so many persons are really shocked and pained by the avowal of heretical opinions is the very fact that such avowal is uncommon. If unbelievers and doubters were more courageous, believers would be less timorous. It is because they live in an enervating fool's paradise of seeming assent and conformity, that the breath of an honest and outspoken word strikes so eager and nipping on their sensibilities." The time is pretty sure to come to all when they must speak out what is in them or play the hypocrite. Who can doubt which is the manly part?

There are many ways of saying a disagreeable truth. One will put the matter bluntly; another finds it more congenial to his genius to show his refinement by taking a circuitous route. Like the gentleman in the song, "So politely he kicked me down stairs, you'd have thought he was handing me up." "A man may be capable," as Jack Ketch's wife said to his servant, of a plain piece of work—"a bare hanging; but to make a malefactor die sweetly was only belonging to her husband." But what is the appropriate treatment for one who for his own objects says the thing that is not? Here is a fine field for casuistry, which an acute writer calls "the soul of ethics." But casuistry in the abstract is in the air. Put case, as Browning says. An eminent minister publishes as fact a story of an eloquent but dead Atheist lecturer, whom no one can identify as such. What shall we call the story of the Atheist Shoemaker? I know but three terms really appropriate to the circumstance. Untruth, falsehood, lie. This seems to me not a case for the retort courteous but for the lie direct. For lies, as Touchstone says, are of various degrees. Some are white, some grey, some black. When Mrs. A. tells Mrs. B. that she is very pleased to see her and that her dress is most becoming, while she thinks the very reverse—society excuses such "fibs" or "taradiddles," or classes them with the white variety excused by *la politesse*. To my vision untruths about a dead man's opinion are of the black species. I had rather a man call me "liar" to my face than spread a story that I recanted on my death-bed. But forcible terms are out of fashion.

Nobody lies now, at least no eminent ministers. But then unfortunately there are still some from whom it is impossible to get the truth. They could not tell it if they tried. They do not see the thing as it is, and to describe it accurately is not among their accomplishments. On the first and only occasion upon which I heard the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and reported in the *Freethinker* of 1887 two instances of untruth in a brief speech, I set him down as probably of this species, and he has since amply vindicated my judgment. Politeness is due to all of possible worth. But when a man or a system is found worthless, politeness must give way to justice and to truth.

Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow;  
The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Plain speaking is the natural companion of freethinking. For the Freethinker protests against the hypocrisy of the age which plays at pretending to believe that which is no longer credible. He goes for a clear issue. The Bible is or is not the word of God. Jesus either was or was not born of a virgin. He did or did not work miracles. The offence of the *Freethinker* has ever been that it puts what educated people really think upon such matters into plain and popular language. Mr. Holyoake could never be expected to agree with this policy. While others were seeking to strike hard and strike home, he has ever been looking for smooth phrases. To dispute about taste is proverbially useless, but common sense tells that an oppressed minority need the courage of resistance as well as of endurance. Even as a matter of style, I uphold that plain words are best. Look at the great writers, Bunyan, Swift, Cobbett, Paine, Sydney Smith, or Carlyle. No circuitous beating about the bush there, but forthright, direct, unmistakable speech, to which, indeed, some judicious qualifications might often fairly be added. But a person in the thick of the fight cannot always exhibit the suavity of the polished fencing master. He must know that his blow tells. In the phrase of the backwoodsmen, he must "hew to the line and let the chips fall as they may." Swift said, "Proper words in proper places make the true definition of a style," and Swift, who so keenly ridiculed "the art of polite conversation" would have said that lie is a proper word to apply on some occasions. Paul, a forcible, though not always a clear writer, did not scruple to use the term. He quotes with approval that "the Cretans are always liars," and a reference to the Concordance will show that both the noun and adjective are frequently used by the Bible writers.

Revolutions are not made with rose water. The pioneers of progress have to make up their minds for rough, hard work. It is no use trying to upset established imposture with kid gloves. Luther was coarse and rude. Bradlaugh hit out straight from the shoulder. A leader of the Freethought party should always know when to strike and when to stay. This is why Mr. Holyoake, with all his high qualities and many services, was futile in that position. His tender regard for the feelings of opponents hindered him from ever dealing a valiant blow for victory.

J. M. WHEELER.

## SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY.

SCIENCE and philosophy are terms that have become in modern times as familiar as "household words." The importance of what they really signify cannot be over estimated, inasmuch as they represent the very elements upon which the happiness and the progress of society depend. Science is now recognised, more than it ever was, as being the true Providence of man, and philosophy is regarded as the surest means of bringing what Hume terms, "light from obscurity." The history of philosophy is indeed the history of general humanity. As G. H. Lewes says of it: "It was the impulse to all early speculation; it was the parent of Positive Science. It nourished the infant mind of humanity; gave it aliment, and directed its faculties; rescued the nobler part of man from the domination of brutish ignorance; stirred him with insatiable thirst for knowledge, to slake which he was content to undergo amazing toil." The same writer



informs us that it was "Greek philosophy that opened men's eyes to the importance of human conduct—to the importance of moral principles."

In studying science and philosophy we do not confine ourselves to the old stereotyped definitions given by our lexicographers when they said, that science meant "to know," and that philosophy signified "a love of wisdom." Such definitions are not sufficiently comprehensive to meet the demands of the present age. Lewes says that philosophy is the systematisation of scientific conceptions, "the explanation of phenomena." He also tersely indicates the line of demarcation that should be drawn between the two terms. He observes, "Science furnishes the knowledge, and philosophy the doctrine," which means that science is a knowledge of things, and that philosophy gives them an explanation. Professor Graham, in his work *The Creed of Science*, remarks that, "If a distinction must be drawn between science and philosophy, then philosophy can only be the systematic connection of the highest conceptions and generalisation supplied by science." The same author says that, "in strictness," we should mean by science "a knowledge of the laws of phenomena, their regular sequences and conjunctions, the discovery of which is the business of science." As to the result of science, the writer further remarks: "Far as her ken stretches backward in time through millions of centuries she discovers law; deep as she penetrates now into space, she finds the same." It must not be overlooked that the word "science," taken as the representative of knowledge always signifies *certain* knowledge, that which has been tested, confirmed, and verified. It applies not only to what we perceive directly through our senses, but also to the conclusions based on predictions; such for instance as an eclipse, or the appearance of a star, or of a comet at a particular point in space, and at a certain time. The main distinction between the import of the two terms, science and philosophy, is that the first is particularly concerned with the *what* of nature, and the second with its *why*. The one observes and the other reflects. Whatever science and philosophy were supposed to have been in former times, they are now regarded as the servants of man, not instruments for the use of any God. Their functions are to discover the vast resources of nature, and to apply those resources for the benefit and for the advancement of general humanity.

Science having been accepted by Secularists as the Providence of man, theologians are ever ready to misrepresent its nature, and to depreciate its power. But in so doing they invariably fail to discriminate between science and its methods. Even men of reputed learning and scholarship frequently mistake the theories and hypotheses professed by scientists for science itself. Hence we find that theologians and others point to what they term the "uncertainties" and the "changeableness" of science, with a view of detracting from its value and service to man. With a malicious kind of glee these critics refer to the fact that scientific men do not persist in adhering to certain theories when such are found to be inadequate to explain phenomena. Now, the truth is, that no greater compliment could be paid to scientists than to recognise that they relinquish error immediately it is discovered. It is one of the glories of the scientific method to be freed from wrong conclusions—a pleasure unknown in the regions of ignorance and prejudice. This practice of abandoning false positions when they are disclosed by investigation and experiment, constitutes the great distinction between the scientific and the unscientific mind. The man of science, in his march towards the attainment of truth, changes his opinions as the new aspects of nature furnish adequate causes for so doing. Instead of this being a defect, it is the key to all scientific progress. If the method pursued were otherwise, the laws of nature and the secret of their operations would for ever remain hidden from the human race. The study of science has been one long struggle for light, and many brave toilers have fallen by the way, having failed to obtain a glimpse of what they strove for and desired to see—the demonstrated truth. The changes referred to for the purpose of depreciating science, are what occur in theories, speculations, experi-

ments, and in mistaken observations. True, they may be called scientific, but they are not science, for the reason that they have not been verified by the process of demonstration. While, therefore, theologians think they are damaging science by citing the fact of its servants abandoning theories, the objectors are only exposing their own want of understanding.

In spite of all the sneers of theology at the potency and grandeur of science, its victories in the fields of human advancement are real and lasting. Its fertilising power on the mind of man is like the effect of the sun on the earth, drawing forth a richness and vitality that are necessary to growth and development. The predictions of science are being verified day by day, and this inspires within us hope, encourages human effort, and generates a trust in the methods of the only true Providence of life. The catholicity of science consists in its acceptance of all that is proved, no matter where, when, or by whom the proof is given. The discoveries of science, and a knowledge and practice of philosophy, will constitute the revelation of the future. The contributions thereto by men of every age and country, all point to one common end, a brotherhood of truth in which all will be interested, and by which all may be benefited. Science is confined to no one sect, party, race, or nation. It is no longer the privilege of the few, but the inheritance of the whole human race.

The function then, of science, we understand to be this: To learn, as far as possible, the laws and relations of things both visible and invisible, by observation and by experiment. Still, it must be remembered, that when we say that science and philosophy are concerned with "the laws" of phenomena, we only use the term "laws" as a name, not as a thing, or a cause. It is not "law" that originates the changes in phenomena, but the changes that originate what is termed "law." Changes are called causes and effects, and as changes are interminable in nature, so likewise are causes and effects. Thus the words "a first cause," are misleading, for in science there are no first or last causes. The "laws of nature" are but names for observed changes, and the relations of causes and consequences without regard to beginning or ending. As Professor Graham remarks, "There exists, for men only, phenomena, and science gives us the only reliable and systematised knowledge of these, which knowledge is merely the invariable relations, or the unchanging successions and the constant co-existences of the same facts or phenomena."

Of course no science, and no philosophy, can explain all the mysteries by which we are surrounded, for nature is too vast and too illimitable for us to know all that lies within her mysterious bosom. The truly wise man will not dogmatise respecting the unknown, but will confine himself to what he knows, and will regulate his life in accordance with that knowledge. The old superstitions of humanity have had their day. Their puny creeds cannot unlock the secrets of the universe, or show us what lies beyond our vision and the range of our finite faculties. Let us be content with boundaries we cannot transcend, resting assured that only with the aid of science and philosophy, will it be possible to banish, from the human mind, the dark shades and phantoms of a degrading theology.

CHARLES WATTS.

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#### THE FALLEN VIRGIN.

In an American Episcopal boarding-school, not long ago, the scholars and teachers were assembled for morning prayer. The reading and singing were over, and all were resuming their seats, when one of the young ladies, of a very short and thick stature, missing her chair, seated herself with a thud on the floor. Nobody smiled. The fallen one, momentarily experiencing a loss of common sense, retained her lowly seat, opened her prayer-book, and appeared to be examining its contents. The rector then arose and began reading the first morning lesson. He read from the fifth chapter of Amos, as follows—"The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise; she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up." This was too much. The voice of the rector trembled as he looked up and saw the fallen virgin; the scholars turned red in the face, and the exercises were brought to a hasty close.



## A PLEA FOR ATHEISM.

AMONG persons of pious reputation, there seems to be a constant desire to attack, in one form or another, the now established and generally accepted ideas of Atheism. They speak of it in unmeasured language, and of those who profess it as persons who are necessarily immoral and decidedly wicked. The cumulative arguments from men of creed have awakened in the minds of the people, not merely a doubt, but a positive conviction that the opposition, in form if not in fact, must indicate a weakness which now, and in the future, will be the cause of the total break-up of the churches belonging to the popular creed; and to-day, superstition, bigotry, and intolerance are seen trying to work themselves into a more subtle, threatening, and dangerous attitude, and the result thereof has been the erection of a mental arena in which the self-elected gladiators can display their skill, but as yet the Freethinkers have obtained the victory, for their arguments and evidences are still unanswered *i.e.*, irrefutable.

The researches into modern science have dissipated the original and most ancient notion and belief in a God. The telescope has chased him from the heavens and navigation has left him no heaven above, and just in proportion as man has grown in knowledge God has diminished in extent, and each acquisition of truth has lessened the domain of uncertainty over which he spreads.

In entering upon a discussion of this kind, the Theist must not forget that the *onus probandi* lies with the affirmer of every proposition; and if it can not be supported, then, as a matter of course, it refutes itself. No logic can be more simple or more conclusive than this. The definition of terms is the first step in all philosophy, therefore the Theist should lay down the precise terms of the nature and existence of his God; in fact, it is his duty to do so, else where is the argumentative ground for reason to explore and discussion to elucidate?

If the Theist does not define his position, what right have we to argue with him? We are, as it were fighting with shadows, or a quagmire which every moment sinks us deeper and deeper with our burden. What is Atheism? It is a negative, a mere intellectual state respecting Theism, and therefore has no strictly definite existence. To what are we Atheists? To what description of God are we renegades? When we say to the Theist, "Prove to us that God exists," it is no answer for him to say, "Prove that he does not." Until a proposition has been proved or demonstrated to be true, it practically remains untrue; and the man who would be imposed upon by such methods has yet to learn the rudiments of Freethought. Atheism does not "deny" God, as the Theist informs us; but in demonstrating the Atheist's position I will endeavor to do so in such a manner as to enable you to form a conception of what I mean. The Atheist does not deny God; he does not say, There is no God, but he says, I am without "idea" of God; the word "God" is to me a word without meaning, a sound conveying no clear or distinct affirmation. If the Theist says to me, "I believe in God," it means nothing to me, because the word "God" represents to me no idea. If a man says to me, "Thought is of a black color," or "The square of eighteen is sweet to the palate," or "Jesus is the son of God," I should not understand him, for the three phrases are alike absurd and ridiculous to me. I cannot adopt them as truth. But the Theist can accept a phrase quite as mystic as these, and adopt them as truth, repeating it from his cradle, until the constant repetition, like the dropping of water on a rock, has worn away the opposition which the absurdity of the phrase would have created in his mind. That man's belief in God was inevitable, I admit, because Theism is a stage in civilisation through which the race must pass; but while such belief was inevitable, human progress has consisted in growing out of it. In the early ages of man's history he perceived forces that appeared superior to his own, and independent of his will—the sun gave him light and warmth, the fire burnt, the thunder terrified, the winds buffeted, and all

the various elements acted upon him despite his resistance. Therefore he attached to them ideas of power. Their action upon him produced sensations of pleasure or pain; he conceived a like or a dislike for them; he desired or dreaded their presence. Then he prayed to the sun, he prayed to the moon, he prayed to the stars. He thought by vain sounds and useless practices to govern the elements, to change existence. O fatal error! But it has lasted till now, and, although we place the lightning conductors to guide and convey the electric fluid, although we have learned to control in a great degree, and to use for our own purposes, fire, air, earth and water, we have still retained the practices of those ignorant men. Now, to a person who really believes that a God is ordering all things for the best, everything must be necessarily good, and he can for his own part care very little about his wrongs here, for it is the will of God, he says, and there the matter ends.

The Theist then states, with some degree of certainty, that, "Belief in God is necessary as a preventive to crime"; and asserts that "the Atheist may plunder and rob without fear of the consequences." Let me ask the Theist. "Do Theists ever steal?" What will be his answer? What can it be? "Yes." Then is not the belief in God, and his power to punish, totally insufficient as a preventive of crime? You cannot brand a man as a liar, thief, and hypocrite because he cannot accept certain disputed doctrines or propositions, however reasonable they may seem to you. Who has not been amazed at the utter powerlessness of Theistic ethics to abolish or even restrain wrong doing? The belief in God has at all times encouraged murder and bloodshed; it has led to human sacrifice; and sin is just as rampant and widespread as if the name of God had never been uttered. Surely there must be a better way to reform the world. Sad, indeed, would be our lot if we had not better. But the Atheist is convinced that he has a better; for while the Atheist needs no further inducement to virtue than the simple love of virtue for its own sake, the Theist does need such further inducement in the love and favor of God, and generally in the selfish hope of heaven and the base fear of hell. Thus the morality of the Atheist, even in theory, is higher, nobler, better, and purer than is the morality of the Theist.

Atheism teaches that everyone in society has an obligation to his neighbor, and that he can never be held to be moral if such trust is broken. Honesty is manly; dishonesty is a social evil. What more can Theism advocate? Does the Theist believe that he is one wit the better because of his belief in a comprehensible something than I am? I advocate no robbery, fraud, or murder. Thus it seems to me that the Theist has a most degrading view of human nature when he asserts that Theism is necessary as a preventive to crime. I venture to think that if the Theist will make a tour of inspection to our prisons and penitentiaries he will find that their inmates are all, without exception, "believers in God"; and, indeed, it would occupy a lifetime to tell all concerning how the believers in God have persecuted and even murdered each other. Ignorant and miseducated men often mistake the true path to happiness and commit crime in the endeavor to obtain it. But Atheism would preserve man from lying, stealing, and murdering not by fear of the anger of God, but because these crimes make this life itself a cause of misery. The belief in a future life is to my mind a great and dangerous obstacle to present reform. The Atheist who expects no hereafter says that if good is ever to come to man at all, if peace and justice are to prevail, it must be for him right here and now. But the Theist, on the other hand, who has his thoughts fixed upon heaven, generally regards this life as a vale of tears through which man must pass on his way to that land whose streets are of shining gold, and where we shall have nothing to do but sing psalms, twang harps, and blow trumpets all day long; therefore his only desire is to quit this world as soon as possible; hence he can have but little thought of human welfare. Atheism affirms one existence, the existence of which it knows and refrains from speaking of an existence of which there is not a shadow of foundation.



It is said that Atheism has relation only to this world and to this life. Admitted. But does not the Theist think that it is necessary to live well here—that a well-organised society, clean, healthful children, a society whose only noblemen would be men of noble deeds and noble thoughts, would be far preferable to the society now existing? And the society we should have if man would only perform the duties he owes to his fellow man would be a society coinciding with the burden of Massey's song when he said—

This world is full of beauty as other worlds above,  
But if we did our duty, it might be full of love.

There are three words, says Shelley, by which kings and priests

Support the system whence their honors flow.

And these are :

"God," a vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend ;  
"Hell," a red gulf of everlasting fire ;

And

"Heaven," a mood for those who dare belie  
Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe  
Before the maker of earthly power

in wonder and fear ; and it remained for the light of science to dispel the darkness and to remove the mental manacles by which men were fettered. Then one by one the myths began to fade away ; one by one the phantoms disappeared, and facts, truths, and realities have taken their place. The gods have vanished, but man remains. As Byron remarks, in his passage upon the ruins of Athens—

Son of the morning rise ! approach you here !  
Come, but molest not yon defenceless urn :  
Look on this spot—a nation's sepulchre ;  
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.  
Even gods must yield—religions take their turn :  
'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's—and other creeds  
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn  
That vain his incense soars, his victim bloods ;  
Poor child of Doubt and Death whose hope is built on reeds.

JOHN R. CHARLESWORTH.

—The Thinker.

## MR. PRICE HUGHES'S VERACITY.

### A METHODIST VIEW.

(From the "Crusader.")

THE good name of our public men is not theirs alone. It is a precious possession which we all share with them. And while each must be the prime and chief guardian of his own honor, it behoves the friends of him who is slack in rising to this duty to supply incitement and stimulation for discharge of the obligation. The time has arrived for the Methodist people to render this service to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and to "whet his blunted purpose" to meet the grave impeachment upon his veracity and good faith. This necessity is the more urgently laid upon Methodists because of Mr. Hughes's well-known mental incapacity to admit a mistake except under the most overwhelming pressure. Indeed it is difficult to recollect any instance in which he has ever frankly and unreservedly done so. It is enough, however, to say that he must refute the charges now made against him if he is to continue to hold his place in the Methodist Connection. . . .

Mr. Holyoake's investigation and report carry no judicial weight for the most obvious reasons. The plaintiff was no party to the inquiry, but it was secretly instituted behind his back by friendly arrangement with the defendant. The report, which is described by Mr. Holyoake as his "opinion" and by Mr. Hughes as a "verdict," is really a defence, as studied and argumentative as ever advocate elaborated for a client, and is couched in terms of such extravagant eulogy of the defendant (Mr. Price Hughes) as to deprive it of any claim to impartiality. It is indeed not the least singular feature of this business and puzzling to understand how a man of Mr. Holyoake's reputation for keen mental sagacity, one whose ripe experience has been matured in the ceaseless effort to impress upon mankind the duty of "hearing both sides," and whose eminence is largely built upon his life-long battle for free and full and fair inquiry in all things, should have lent himself to such a hole-and-corner proceeding. Mr. Holyoake's account of the origin of his intervention does not impress us with its frankness. It is so worded that while avoiding to state such to be the case it conveys the impression that the inquiry was of his own motion and originated with himself, whereas Mr. Price Hughes, who is

seldom hampered by inconvenient candor, whilst equally reticent as to the actual fact, conveys the impression that the inquiry was at his suggestion and originated with him. Mr. Holyoake's report exhibits him as a thorough-going partisan of Mr. Hughes. He is the out-and-out advocate, briefed for the defence, ignoring or utterly blind to, or depreciating by the veriest "special pleading" the evidence on the other side, veiling the real points by rambling disquisitions and reminiscences having little or no bearing upon the case, and refusing to consider or deal with a whole series of facts relative to the vital point of the "Atheist Shoemaker" story. It is a surprising revelation to find this "Father of Secularism" as one-sided, as gullible, as regardless of facts, and as incapable of weighing evidence as the veriest religious neophyte or champion of superstition. . . .

The charges against Mr. Hughes's veracity and good faith are no longer the charges of merely Mr. Foote, the Secularist, but of the Methodist father and brothers of the dead man, people innocent surely of the crime of "gratuitous conduct" which could afford Mr. Hughes a pretext for not "taking notice" of them. As they came forward, bringing evidence on vital points, as to which Mr. Holyoake studiously refrained from inquiry, and into which he made no investigation whatever, the slight possible value which might have attached to his report is completely shattered. These relatives of the alleged "Atheist Shoemaker" state that the greater part of Mr. Hughes's book is utterly false, and they furnish the most explicit evidence demolishing statement after statement for which Mr. Hughes assumed the fullest responsibility. Yet in the *Daily Chronicle* letter already quoted he has the hardihood to say, "Since his (Mr. Holyoake's) verdict was given nothing has seen the light which impugns the substantial accuracy of any statement for which the two sisters and I are personally responsible." As this sinister remark seems to hint at the line of defence which Mr. Hughes intends to set up, it may be as well to point out that in the preface to the book he gave the fullest and most unqualified personal guarantee, in the striking words, "*It is important, however*" (i.e., although the real names were concealed) "*to impress upon my readers that this is a true story, and not fiction.*" After this declaration, and having for four years and a half circulated his story in the face of strong comments on its inherent improbabilities, having all that time defiantly maintained his cloak of secrecy and concealment for the evasion of criticism and to prevent examination of his statements, Mr. Price Hughes cannot now be allowed to shift responsibility for the "substantial accuracy" of his story to other shoulders. . . .

Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the Secular Society, who has claim to a hearing at least equal to Mr. Holyoake, makes a most fair and reasonable proposal. He is willing to refer the whole question to a committee composed of two persons to be nominated by Mr. Hughes, two by himself, and a fifth agreed upon by both sides to act as chairman and umpire. . . .

Mr. Price Hughes has reprinted in the *Methodist Times*, of which he is editor, his reply in the *Daily Chronicle* to this challenge of Mr. Foote's, but with inborn meanness omits to give the letter in the same newspaper to which it is a response. He takes care that his side only is presented to the readers of the *Methodist Times*. Mr. Holyoake's long, rambling, irrelevant "report" he prints in full, but everything on the other side is rigidly excluded. "Even in the brutal prize-ring men are obliged to fight according to the rules," says Mr. Hughes, although the words come a little strangely from him as an excuse for evading the charge of striking a foul blow "below the belt" at a rival creed. As "a civilised man" he cannot discuss with a disputant who has again and again insinuated or asserted that he is "a deliberate and systematic liar." Mr. Price Hughes forgets that Mr. Foote has done much more than this. He has presented evidence with respect to his allegations amply establishing a *prima facie* case. He has not merely asserted but is prepared to prove his charges. Mr. Hughes, of all men in the world, should be the very last to make the strong language of an assailant an excuse for evading the real issue. Has he forgotten a celebrated case in which the violence and bitterness of his own language exceeded any used by Mr. Foote, and in which he maintained that the public man he was attacking must be guilty because he did not meet in the fashion demanded by Mr. Hughes the imputations against him? Can he now object if the public deal out to himself the same measure which he insisted on meting out to another? Mr. Hughes, who now says "The time has come to insist that public men can have no dealings with those who violate the elementary laws of courtesy," said to a crowded meeting in Wesley Chapel, one of the largest in Nottingham, that "every one who does not take the *Methodist Times* is an ass!" "The Atheist Shoemaker" is not the first, nor the second, nor the third public statement which Mr. Price Hughes has put forth and failed to substantiate. This time silence will not avail him. He must refute the present charges or descend from his place as a religious teacher. Is the *Atheist Shoemaker* a true story? Or is it one of the most contemptible "pious frauds" which members of the Church in whose supposed interest it was launched ought to be the foremost to expose and condemn.



## SANDY MACTAVISH.

"The Sabbath was made for man," but the "Scawtchman" was made for the Sawbath.

SANDY MACTAVISH was walking one day  
 Along by the seashore in Armadale Bay,  
 When, splashing and dashing and quite within reach,  
 He saw, in a pool that was left on the beach,  
 A salmon that struggled in vain to be free,  
 And tried very hard to get back to the sea.  
 But Sandy rejoiced, like a canny old Scot,  
 And made up his mind that return it should not,  
 When, just as he started to capture his game,  
 He remembered the Sawbath, and thought of the shame,  
 That the Elders and Deacons would say was attached  
 To fish that on Sawbaths by sinners were "caught,"  
 And stood for a moment crestfallen and glum,  
 Now scratching his head and now biting his thumb,  
 For nothing could alter the date, or the day,  
 To justify taking the salmon away.  
 But Sandy was canny, like most of his race,  
 And thought that he might find a snug little place  
 Where the tide wouldn't reach, but the fish could remain  
 Till Monday would let him come fishing again,  
 For all the Kirk elders and all the Kirk men  
 Wouldn't have spoken to Sandy, ye ken,  
 If he'd taken the fish when the law had decreed  
 That Jews from all manner of work should be freed.  
 So he found a nice spot, in a dark little grot,  
 And rejoiced at the fortune that fell to his lot,  
 And there he conveyed the fine fish that he'd found,  
 Which he'd have for his supper when Monday came round.  
 Monday morning arrived, as did Sandy as well,  
 And there was the fish, safe, and sound as a bell,  
 And Sandy Mactavish, I hardly need say,  
 Didn't wait very long ere he took him away.  
 He straightway invited, that very same night,  
 Some friends of his bosom with him to unite,  
 To partake of a fish, which would make such a dish,  
 That never for better could anyone wish;  
 And when they appeared at his jovial board,  
 'Twas just as he said; it was fit for a lord.  
 There was Elder McPherson and Deacon McGill,  
 And Macgregor the Laird, who lived up on the hill,  
 Doctor McCulloch and Hamilton Quirk  
 The parson who preached in Mactavish's kirk,  
 Six brawny old Scots, who had long pulled together,  
 Thanks to Scotch whiskey, thro' all the Scotch weather,  
 And they didn't take very long to dispose  
 Of the salmon—and peas. Then a question arose  
 As to how such a piece of good fortune befell,  
 To enable Mactavish to treat them so well,  
 And over the whiskey they begged him to tell  
 As to who was the donor, and why he had sent  
 Such a fine bonny fish, which he doubtless had meant  
 As a token of gratitude; still, there were some  
 Who thought it might indicate favors to come;  
 But these, from respect to propriety's laws,  
 Didn't hint that they thought such a thing was the cause.  
 They had eaten the salmon, jowl, middle, and tail,  
 With the peas that I've mentioned, as well as sea kale,  
 And whiskey the best that was ever distilled,  
 And so with all peace and contentment were filled.  
 They puffed their tobacco, what more could they wish  
 Save that Sandy would say how he came by the fish.  
 Mactavish, then beaming with innocent pride,  
 Did the tale of his fishing excursion confide,  
 And expected his guests would exclaim with delight  
 That in spite o' the Sawbath he'd done what was right.  
 But picture his feelings, when never a word  
 Beyond a deep murmur of censure he heard,  
 While they sat in their places with frowns as he spoke  
 (The Elder and Deacon both stopped in their smoke);  
 'Till an unpleasant silence the minister broke:  
 "Alexander Mactavish! it's little we cared,  
 Myself and the Deacon, the Elder, and Laird,  
 To ask any questions before we appeared  
 At a house where we thought there was nought to be feared,  
 Tho' some of the folk are weak brothers, 'tis true,  
 We never expected such conduct from you.  
 But fishing on Sawbath! We ne'er could ha' thought  
 That you by the Deil were so easily caught."  
 He paused; and the others all showed by their looks,  
 That Sandy had got in their very black books.  
 And when he attempted to tell them his views,  
 They shut up their ears. Why, they might have been Jews!  
 In silence they left, except minister Quirk,  
 Who said that he'd have to report to the kirk  
 The breach of decorum, and Sandy's confession—  
 Which he couldn't deal with but left to the session,  
 Which had its next meeting that very same week,  
 And there with Mactavish again he would speak.

Kirk session was met, and Mactavish was there,  
 With minister Quirk at the head in the chair,

And the Elder, and Deacon, and Doctor, and Laird,  
 Who now for inquiring apparently cared,  
 As well as some others, who felt very queer,  
 Tho' not being asked to partake of the cheer;  
 And if a conclusion was ever forgone,  
 To make a man wish he had never been born,  
 'Twas that which they sat on in judgment this morn.  
 They sat upon this, and they sat upon that,  
 And one of the gentlemen sat on his hat,  
 And squashed his best beaver remarkably flat;  
 So when to the fishing excursion they came  
 With just indignation their hearts were aflame.  
 And didn't they give it to Sandy, and say,  
 That the fish was a test which had come in his way,  
 Being left by the Deil, as he ought to have known,  
 Who wished to secure him for one of his own,  
 And as with such ease he had taken his prey,  
 They wondered he'd gone so much out of his way;  
 For he needn't have left a fine salmon like that,  
 When all that he wished he'd have had for a sprat.  
 And this was the judgment they passed on the case:  
 "That fishin' on Sawbaths was wicked and base,  
 And Sandy had brought on the kirk such disgrace,  
 That ere he could enter its precincts again,  
 He must make an apology ample and plain;  
 And then if they thought he was penitent quite,  
 They wouldn't be sure, but receive him they might."  
 But Sandy was obstinate, little he cared  
 For the wrath of the Deacon, the Elder, and Laird;  
 And as to the minister, also the session,  
 They could all go to—(oh! such a wicked expression).  
 His dander was up, and he wasn't polite,  
 And he knew that they acted from motives of spite.  
 Himself, he considered the salmon was sent  
 By Providence and as a favor was meant;  
 And if any more on the Sawbath he found,  
 He wouldn't abide until Monday came round,  
 But take them directly, and eat every bit  
 By himself, as his neighbors were clearly unfit  
 To partake of such dainties as salmon and peas;  
 They didn't deserve more than dry bread and cheese.  
 And if in the kirk they'd receive him no more,  
 He'd go all his Sawbaths to fish on the shore.  
 The session replied, thro' their head in the chair,  
 He could do as he liked, and they'd none of 'em care,  
 And after the way that he'd treated them all,  
 Although they regretted his terrible fall,  
 They'd have him to know that they wouldn't relent;  
 And further, the fish by the Deil was sent,  
 And Sandy had better have tested the case,  
 By leaving the fish, or have hidden his face,  
 And so have avoided temptations like this,  
 And, counting such trials as nothing but bliss,  
 Have lived, as they certainly thought that he ought,  
 Without eating fish that on Sawbaths was caught.

—*Chilian Times.*

## ACID DROPS.

The Town Council of Bury St. Edmunds has been discussing a Circus performance on Good Friday. The lessee of the Abbey Grounds had let the place for March 23 without recollecting that it was the anniversary of the Crucifixion. One alderman said the town was "shocked," and another said it was an unheard of arrangement. During the discussion it was suggested that the band should play sacred music, but this was seen to be awkward for the clowns and horses. Finally, the mayor undertook to see what he could do to stop the awful profanation. We don't know whether he succeeded. Anyhow we guess that Bury St. Edmunds stands where it did. We haven't heard that Providence has wiped it out of the map of England.

Alex. McInnes, 204 Dumbarton-road, Glasgow, tells the readers of the *Christian Commonwealth* that he is a convert from Atheism, but his conversion took place thirty-six years ago! He also gives a list of twenty other converted infidels, all of them "leaders"—of course. The last two are Joshua Humphreys and J. Rowland. We never heard of them before. But what of that? Real leaders of Freethought are always learning something fresh about their own party, and their informants are generally Christians.

The Brazilian rebels seem to be getting the worst of it, and we are rather glad than otherwise, as the country would be all the better for a spell of settled government. The *Christian Commonwealth* is of opinion that Brazil, like other South American states, is in need of "the unadulterated religion of Jesus the Christ." We rather think it wants a strong and enlightened Republic. The New Testament



maxim, "Fear God and honor the King," is played out in Brazil.

George Arthur Ward, barman at the Swan Inn, Caledonian-road, London, murdered Miss Allen, his employer's daughter, and then killed himself. In a letter addressed "to all whom it may concern" he wrote—"I have gone to the land that is nearest to Him who cures both grief and pain." Not an Atheist this, Mr. Talmage, anyhow.

In a recent issue of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, there appeared an alleged message from the spirit of John Wesley, in which he confirms his former belief in the orthodox superstition about a God, a Devil, and a hell, with this qualification, that, now and then, God can, by personal intercession with the Devil, obtain the release of a soul that he thinks is being too severely punished. Wesley would appear to be on the down grade.

Miss Florence Marryatt has the latest information from the spirit world. She says the male spirits are all aged 24, and female spirits are aged 19. Those who die older grow younger again.

In a Chinese Sunday-school in Oregon the contribution-plate was passed to a young convert, who looked at the plate and inquired: "Whaf fo?" "For the Lord," said his teacher. On the next Sunday the plate again stopped in front of him. "Whaf fo?" he asked again, and once more he was told that the money was for the Lord. Thereupon a look of perplexity came over his face, which found expression in the inquiry: "Lord all time bloke?"

The irreconcilable differences of the sects must of itself in time lead to secularisation. In the colony of Victoria a grant of £50,000 a year was obtained by clerical influence in aid of religion. It was gradually decreased until it was extinguished. And the reason was this. The clergymen who agitated for the grant found it must be given to all denominations. Sects tended to spread and put in their claim. The Jews, after a severe fight, got some, and then came the Chinese and put in their claim. But the Australians could not stand paying for joss-houses, and they gradually discovered that it was just as unfair to tax Chinese for the support of churches as to tax Christians for the support of joss-houses.

Some American Unitarians have compiled a liturgy for use in their churches. It has, however, received a very critical reception among the brethren. The Rev. Joseph May particularises the service for Easter, which, he says, "is intended to commemorate an event (the resurrection) in which few of us believe."

A fierce battle is raging at present among German savants upon the question whether the Israelites ever were in Egypt. Prof. Stade, of Giessen, and others, say they were not.

Tourists will be glad to hear that in addition to a railroad from Jaffa to Jerusalem an elevator up Mount Calvary is in construction for the benefit of pilgrims. If it were not for the dirt and fleas, Jerusalem would soon be worth visiting.

Fifteen thousand pilgrims annually visit St. Baume, in Provence, not far from Marseilles, where Mary Magdalene is said to have spent the last thirty years of her life. The legend, according to the *Nouvelle Revue*, runs that Mary Magdalene came from Judæa in a small boat with Lazarus, Martha, the two Marys and Salome, bringing with them the body of St. Anne, the head of St. James the Less, and a few wee bones of the innocents massacred by King Herod. This is about as true as the story of St. Joseph visiting Glastonbury. But some people think these legends were all invented in the West.

Kate Field says that when Prophet Joe Smith led his people against the Gentiles in the "Valley of God, in which Adam placed his children," he said: "Go ahead; do all you can to harass the enemy. I never felt more of the spirit of God at any time than when we commenced stealing and house-burning." Like the ancient Jewish prophets when the spirit of the Lord came on them, they were always up to some mischief.

Price Hughes is severely censured in the *Primitive Methodist* for his nonsensical statement about a thousand Primitive Methodist ministers being in places where they were not wanted. As a matter of fact, there are only about that number of P.M. ministers altogether. As usual, Price Hughes got his "facts" from "a well informed gentleman." The *Primitive Methodist* denies this, and says—"If he had been a well-informed man he would have had a better knowledge of our ministry and work, and if he had been a gentleman he would not have made such a statement."

What will Mr. Hughes do? Will he have another "investigation," or will he rely on Mr. Holyoake's certificate that he is "entitled to be believed implicitly upon his word"?

A gentleman who has known Mr. Hughes ever since his boyhood, informs us that his besetting sin was always "rashness"—not to give it a worse designation.

On Good Friday Dr. Joseph Parker displayed his taste and fancy by depicting the modern Job as consoled by "Huxley the Moleculite, John Stuart the Millite, and Tyndall the Sadducee." Of course he holds that the true Job's comforter is Parker the Blatherskite.

Dr. Clifford, the Rev. Bruce Wallace, and the Rev. J. H. Belcher have turned the Ministers' Union into a Christian Socialist League. If the Christian Socialists could only promise their followers that they should sit on thrones and judge the tribes of Israel, they might prove less of a futility.

Christian humility was well displayed on Holy Thursday by Cardinal Vaughan, vested in a magnificent cope, washing the already well-washed feet of thirteen choir boys from a silver gilt ewer. This is how they imitate their Savior.

By the way, J. C. is reported to have said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii. 14, 15). How many of his reputed followers imitate him even in this respect.

A man with foreign dress and accent was heard at the Parliament of Religions, explaining the failure of Christianity in India. "The conditions and standards of our country," said he, "are different from those of yours. Your Chicago slaughter-houses are a shame and a curse to civilisation. A religion which allows such things, cannot be understood and is not wanted in the East."

Hastings pier was a pleasant promenade on Sunday, but there was no band to discourse excellent music. The weather was glorious, nay perfect; the sea flashed in the sunlight, and the breeze was a benediction. Nature was in a rejoicing mood, glad of her inexhaustible vitality, and bidding all her offspring share her gladness. She seemed to be laughing at the Sabbatarians, and some day or other, perhaps, she will laugh them out of their solemn folly. Meanwhile, they have their innings, and they do their best to make life miserable, on the very day when it should be the happiest. So there was no band on the Hastings pier, only hymn-singing in the concert room, which was devoted to a "service."

We dropped in to see what that "service" was like. As we entered the room they were giving out a hymn, preparatory to a collection. It was a long hymn, admirably adapted to the purpose. The last copper was well in the dish—or whatever they call it—before that hymn came to an end. There was time enough left for conscience money, if anyone felt he had given too little, or was smitten with the thought that he had not given at all.

After the hymn a reverend gentleman gave an address on Unselfishness. He apparently had it by heart. It chiefly consisted of anecdotes, one of which displayed the characteristic Christian vice of exaggeration. According to the speaker, a little boy was drowned in London, and sixty people stood by, not one of whom would wet his feet to save the lad from perishing. Something of the sort did happen, and we referred to it in the *Freethinker*; but the number of persons who stood by without helping was two. This brace of blackguards got multiplied *ad absurdum*; for anybody in



his senses could see that so many as sixty people could hardly be found without somebody amongst them who would help a drowning boy, or, if they could, the human race was so rotten that the reverend gentleman was wasting his time in addressing them.

The Hastings' pier exhorter wound up with some highly imaginative history. He referred to Moses as a gentleman who gave up the throne of Egypt to be a slave amongst slaves. He also informed the audience, in the most matter-of-fact way, that Jesus Christ was offered a place in the Roman pantheon, and that he replied, "Oh no." This and a quotation from Sidney Smith were the funny parts of the address. Sidney Smith's joke was readily appreciated, but the other two jokes were lost upon the meeting in general, though not upon the two Atheists who stood listening at the back of the hall.

An exact correspondent writes:—"The *St. James's Gazette* revives, as *à propos* of Easter, the distich—

When our Lord falls on our Lady's lap  
There shall light upon England some mishap.

As it has long been given by good authorities, the "prophecy" really runs—

When our Lord falls in our Lady's lap  
Then England look out for some mishap.

And it does not apply to Easter, but to Good Friday, as consideration of the wording might show. It means, and can mean nothing else, when the day of the Crucifixion concurs with Lady Day then will this country meet with misfortune. But the concurrence has come in 1502, 1513, 1524, 1597, 1608, 1687, 1692, 1785, 1796, 1842, 1853, and 1864, and they do not seem to have been exceptionally unfortunate years."

"One of the monks," writing in the *Pudsey News* on Mr. Herbert Gladstone's statement that "The clergy of the Church of England are arm in arm with the Tories, the brewers and the publicans, and all connected with the drink traffic," asked: "Can it be possible that Mr. H. Gladstone was under the influence of the commodity usually dispensed by brewers and publicans?"

Wesleyans as well as Churchmen are finding that their schools do not come up to the requirements of the Educational Department, which the new annual report on Wesleyan Methodist education says have created throughout the country what is little short of a panic. The result has been that during the past year the committee has had to deal with more cases of proposals to close or transfer than in any recent year.

"God give me strength" were the last words of Eliza Humphrey, a servant, living in Orange-street, Red Lion-square, who jumped out of a window, falling on the pavement and striking the back of her head with the flagstones.

A Sunday has been fixed for the royal wedding at Coburg, at which the Queen is expected to be present. The old lady is only a Sabbatarian in Scotland. At Windsor she approves of the military band on Sunday afternoons.

While the French papers note without comment the presence of the Prince of Wales at the theatre on Sunday, the precious Lord's Day Observance Society has succeeded in stopping the Sunday afternoon organ recitals at the Albert Hall. Mr. Labouchere may well ask, as he does in *Truth*, "How long the opinion and interests of the great majority of the public are to be thus insulted and overridden by a gang of persecuting bigots, armed with a musty statute, in defence of which probably not a single vote could be obtained in the House of Commons to-day." These gentry only play a game of bounce, and will hardly venture to tackle Freethinkers, who have given ample opportunity for an encounter for years.

The Nonconformists of Merionethshire apparently think God is as stupid and narrow-minded as themselves. In a memorial which they have presented to the Great Western and Cambrian Railway Companies, praying that Sunday trains may be stopped, they declare it is "a violation of God's command which, in the light of history, may lead to our decline as a nation." Evidently their only notions of history are taken from the Bible.

The Town Council of Düsseldorf, where the German Jewish Freethinking poet, Heine, was born at the beginning of the century, disgraced itself by refusing to allow a monument to be erected there to his memory. Düsseldorf is represented in the Reichstag by a violent Roman Catholic. The monument has now been offered to the town of Mainz, and probably will not go begging again.

The *Daily Chronicle*, on Easter Monday, devoted three columns to Easter Services, and four to the Easter Manœuvres. More than a column and a half is given to a sermon by the Rev. Stopford Brooke, on the significant subject of "The Laborer's Bondage and Resurrection." He took for his text "Let my people go that they may serve me," and sought to argue that, because God got the Jews out of Egypt, that therefore he is in favor of the labor movement. He appears a little in doubt about the detail of the story, "An immense wardrobe of the garments of myth and legend was made wherewith to clothe the event of the Exodus of the figure of Moses. Poet after poet, patriot after patriot, story teller after story teller, took up the old tale. What happened to Arthur of Britain happened to the Moses of Israel. "We do not preach it as a true history, we preach on it as a story." So the story of J. C. is spoken of as "the resurrection of the soul of humanity—for the time." On Mr. Brooke's fast and loose method, the old stories may mean anything or nothing.

The Bishop of London was more tangible, if more absurd in his Easter sermon at St. Paul's. The resurrection was a distinct and unique fact in the history of the race, although other mythical heroes are said to have risen. Science had done much, but it could not give life to that which was dead. The bishop is right. Science knows nothing of dead men rising, though it does of the resurrection of vegetation, and therefore the old stories must be set down as myths.

A Clerkenwell man goes home and turns over a paraffin lamp, and five sober and innocent people are burnt to death. No doubt there is a splendid argument in this incident in favor of an all-wise Providence, only we haven't time to work it out just now. Perhaps a sky-pilot of some denomination will work it out for us. We should be glad to hear from one of them with the leisure and ability to do the deed.

The Rev. W. D. Ground, vicar of Kirkharle, Newcastle-on-Tyne, runs a Society for Obtaining Apostolic Power. The subscription to the society is only one shilling, and as apostolic power includes casting out devils, healing disease, and taking deadly poisons without hurt, it must be pronounced excessively cheap.

The Uniformity and Test Acts would appear to be still unrepealed in the Channel Islands. At any rate, when a question arose of filling a vacancy among the directors of a parish school at Alderney, the judge asked a candidate, not only if he was of the Church of England, but "Do you take the holy sacrament?" The principles of religious freedom hardly appear to have penetrated to Alderney yet.

At a Salvation Army gathering on the beach at Hastings we only heard the following words after a hymn, but they were characteristic: "We thank you, friends, for the fourteen shillings and twopence you have thrown us, and if you will only give the other tenpence, God will bless it unto you." Pious impiety has no bounds, or it would pause at making the blessing of the supposed Creator of the universe contingent upon the amount of the S.A. collection.

Preachers can never keep from the vice of exaggeration. The Rev. R. A. Bedford, preaching at Highgate, declared of the resurrection "There is no fact better established as a fact, than this fundamental fact of Christianity." Why, there is nothing worthy the name of evidence for the alleged fact at all. The gospels were neither written at the time nor in the place of the alleged circumstances, nor even in the language of the people, and they contradict each other on every important point. Such evidence for a ghost story at the present day would be scouted by all sensible people as utterly ridiculous.

Mrs. Chatter: "Do you believe that cures can be effected by the laying on of hands?" Mrs. Clatter: "Most certainly. I cured my boy of smoking in that way."



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, April 1, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :— At 11.15, "The History of the House of Lords; with Present-Day Lessons"; at 7, "A Secularist's View of Mr. Gladstone."

April 8, Hall of Science, London.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—April 15, Hall of Science, London; 22, Failsworth; 29, Hall of Science. May 6, Glasgow; 7, 8, 9, debate at Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.E.

O. N. WELD.—We fear we have too much correspondence on the subject.

H. E. SMITH.—Mr. Foote is substantially where he was, but that is no reason why he should not feel sympathy with other reformers as honest as himself.

C. BRIDGER (Manila).—Foreign papers are always welcome.

W. BURRIDGE.—There is no "lunacy" in your letter to the *Mercury*. No wonder it was not inserted. The real lunacy (so to speak) on your part was the expectation that it *would* be inserted. Next time you go for a Bishop try another agency.

F. ROSS.—Will keep it by us. Haven't room for another criticism of Talmage just at present. Thanks.

F. LANE.—We quite understand that you find Ingersoll's lectures good for circulation amongst Christians. There is a lot of human nature in them.

JAS. BROWN.—We dare say we are aware of all that Mr. Sketchley could tell us on that subject. Still, we thank you for the hint.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS.—No doubt there are some Freethinkers in the town, but we do not know their addresses. To form a Branch of the N.S.S. it is necessary to have at least seven members to start with. A first meeting might be called through the *Freethinker* or the local press by advertisement.

W. E. COLEMAN (San Francisco).—Glad to have your congratulations on "the effectual manner" in which we have disposed of the Converted Atheist story by Mr. Price Hughes. Of course there are various methods of advocacy, and as they depend a good deal upon temperament it is not very profitable to discuss them. Let each do his own stroke of work in his own way.

J. UMPLEBY.—We hope to see you at Blackburn before long. The cause is progressing, we think, more than you seem to imagine.

W. G. TANNER.—You seem substantially right as to force and matter, but your expression is somewhat confused.

J. WESTON.—The Lord's Day Observance people don't appear inclined to tackle us at the Hall of Science. They prefer to threaten those who are more easily terrified.

J. KEAST.—The odd volume is of no value. The complete work is worth from five to eight shillings. Sorry to hear you are not working now with the Bristol Branch.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer of the L.S.F. acknowledges :— J. E. Bromwich 5s.

THE West London Branch offers 10s. towards reducing the Secular Federation's debt if three other Branches will give a like sum.

D. G. LINDSAY.—It is a matter for discussion at the Conference.

J. W. MOORE.—It appeared in this journal several years ago.

J. HARKIS.—Glad to hear our paragraphs are likely to do good. Let us hear from you occasionally. Mr. Foote will certainly pay Aberdeen another visit in the autumn.

E. S.—(1) Whether the Bible agrees with Science is not a question to be determined by "authority." The "reconcilers" twist the language of the Bible, and read into it, as they would never think of doing in regard to any other book. (2) Missionary work is a large question, and cannot be dealt with in this column.

THE Sunderland Branch has a new secretary. Mr. Oxley having left the town, Mr. J. Bowey, 21 Bedford-street, has been elected to the vacancy.

T. DUNBAR.—Pamphlets sent. Pleased to hear from you.

DELTA.—Thanks. See paragraph.

R. WALLIS.—It was in a recent number, but we are too busy to search the file.

W. H. SPIVEY, 19 Union-street, Huddersfield, is the new secretary of the local Branch, Mr. Dobson having left for Middlesborough. Mr. J. Cowgill, Back Spring-street, is the local newsagent.

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—De Arme Teufel

—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Liver—De Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Post—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Pioneer—Twentieth Century—Independent Pulpit—Islamic World—Western Independent—Straits Produce—Evening News and Post—Brixtonian—Vegetarian Messenger—Midland Express—Midland Evening News—Progress—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Birmingham Argus—Star—

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

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.

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.

**THE "LIE" PAMPHLET.**

WE have now an ample supply of this pamphlet, which will be maintained in advance of the demand, at least until our resources are exhausted. No one who can distribute copies effectively need hesitate to apply for them. We hope our friends in all parts of the country, as well as in London, will keep a sharp eye on Mr. Hughes's meetings. Copies of the pamphlet should be circulated on such occasions, and an adequate supply can always be obtained for the purpose. Should any difficulty be experienced, we beg our friends to communicate with us on the matter. Newsagents cannot, of course, be expected to order the gratuitous copies for their customers, as they cannot work without a profit. To meet their case we have printed a small special edition at one penny. G. W. FOOTE.

FUND FOR NAILING DOWN THE "ATHEIST SHOEMAKER" LIE.

F. Lane 1s., Aberdeen Friend 2s.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's review of Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's *Religion of a Literary Man* is unavoidably postponed till next week.

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science on the first two Sundays in April. To-day (April 1) his morning lecture is on "The History of the House of Lords; with Present-Day Lessons." In the evening his subject will be "A Secularist's View of Mr. Gladstone." This lecture will be made as interesting and instructive as possible, and there should be a large attendance.

Despite the glorious weather in London last Sunday, Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience in the evening to hear his lecture upon "The Alleged Resurrection of Christ." The applause was frequent and enthusiastic. Many friends have asked our colleague to publish the lecture, and probably he will do so at an early date. Mr. R. O. Smith presided.

The Rev. S. D. Headlam is to lecture at the London Hall of Science next Wednesday evening (April 4) on "The Work of the London School Board." We hope the London Freethinkers will be present in strong force and give Mr. Headlam a hearty reception. Mr. Foote hopes to be present himself.

The editor of the *Freethinker* and his "sub." were at Hastings on Sunday, blowing the London smoke out of them, and getting in a little fresh stock of energy for their work for "the good old cause." In the morning they walked to Hollington and paid a visit to Toby King. They found that splendid specimen of Anglo-Saxondom as bright as ever in mind, but rather distressed in body. Twenty years ago Toby



King was a figure that it did your eyes good to look upon. Tall, broad, and stalwart, he reminded you of one of the old "heroes" who went about carving out kingdoms with a mighty battle-axe; only there was no ferocity, but a steadfast goodness, in his frank and manly eyes. Toby King still looks at you with that bright challenge; the challenge of a spirit that knows neither evil nor fear. But the body has grown weaker with rheumatism and heart trouble, and the limbs that once strode so firmly have to creep along with difficulty, and, it is to be feared, with pain. Still, the man is worth looking at even now. Time and trouble have tamed his bodily powers, but the half-ruin has a majesty of its own. All of us are mortal—the best as the worst; and some day or other (but not yet, we hope) Toby King will join the mighty host of the innumerable dead; and over his grave it may be written, "Here lies a Man."

We met our old friend Mr. Edward Truelove the other day, and were glad to see him looking fairly well, despite his weight of years. Mr. Truelove has retired from active business, but his publications are still on sale at Mr. Forder's. Among them is a full report of his famous trial for publishing Robert Dale Owen's *Moral Philosophy*. Some copies of it have come to light in the clearance of Mr. Truelove's shop, and Mr. Forder is selling them at sixpence each. As the trial was an historic one, we imagine that these copies will soon find purchasers.

The *Independent Pulpit*, of Texas, has now reached its twelfth volume. The editor, Mr. J. D. Shaw, was for twelve years in the Methodist Episcopal ministry. We expect he has long since made a complete set-off to his work for superstition, and hope he will have the satisfaction of devoting many dozens of years to the work of emancipation.

*Progress* is an advanced Freethought monthly, which continues to reach us from Port of Spain, Trinidad. The editor, E. dos Santos, is a member of the N.S.S., and, with Mr. A. Spooner, is now organising a Society for the Propagation of Freethought in the West Indies.

A controversy which originated in a statement by the Rev. J. Wright, of the United Methodist Free Church, Forest Gate, Essex, that Prof. Tyndall said of God, "I do not see him, but I feel him," is published by W. Stewart and Co., 41 Farringdon-street. The minister was first tackled by Mr. Knott and then by F. St. John Parker, and does not come very well out of the encounter.

The Manchester Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday. After the election of officers a resolution of thanks was passed to Mr. Samuel Storey, M.P., for his efforts to introduce into parliament a Bill for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. We regret to learn that the Sunday evening music has had to be discontinued on account of the expense. Otherwise the Branch appears to be every way in a flourishing condition.

The Finsbury Branch holds a general members' meeting this morning (April 1) at 12 in the minor Hall of Science. All should attend. The Good Friday concert of this Branch was the most successful that has yet taken place.

The Islington Branch opens its summer outdoor campaign to-day. There were objections to the site of their meetings last year, and they intend to try a new "pitch" this spring. It is the open space in Prebend-street, off Packington-street, Essex-road, and the time of meeting is 11.30. The support of Freethinkers in the neighborhood will be esteemed.

The Brighton Branch resumes its open-air propaganda to-day (April 1). Mr. Baker lectures on the Level at 3, and at 7.30 in the Star Assembly Rooms, Whitecross-street.

Mr. W. M. Knox, the zealous secretary of the Ulster Branch, is happily recovering from his illness. A small committee of the local "saints" waited on him a few days ago and presented him with a purse of sovereigns. Mr. Knox was too much moved by this unexpected kindness to express his thanks adequately. He desires to thank his friends through the *Freethinker* for their generous consideration.

The London Secular Federation's concert and ball takes place on Wednesday evening, April 11, at the Hall of Science,

The tickets (1s.) can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from Mr. James Anderson, at the hall.

The London correspondent of the *Western Morning News* remarks that Lord Randolph Churchill was anticipated by Mr. Bradlaugh in regard to the interference of peers in parliamentary elections. It was Mr. Bradlaugh who found out the useless character of House of Commons resolutions. "Had he lived," the correspondent says, "he would have rejoiced to see this day and been glad."

### SUPERSTITION TRIUMPHANT.

WHETHER it is obvious or not to most readers, I venture to affirm that superstition moves in mysterious ways. No place is too innocent, no place is too sacred for its manifestations. From the palace down to the cottage, from the jail to the workhouse, it creeps like the ivy green of the song over every form of human existence. Let me illustrate my affirmation by the narration of a tiny story which is not only founded on fact, it is the narrative of the facts themselves. Having known the persons of the story, I have a peculiar interest in telling it.

Dickey Darkfoot and William Hardside earned their living by working as handloom weavers in the town of Carlisle, where this has long been a languishing business. Neither of them had received any education worthy of the name, but something moved in Dickey's mind which caused him to write poetry on the loom, and talk in the weaving-shop like an Atheist, openly. Of his poetry, this much may be said. A clergyman who held a Bible-class for men, offered a prize for the best piece of poetry. Dickey came in second-best, the winner having introduced Christianity into his piece, while Dickey had carefully excluded superstition from his lines.

Many eventful years in their insignificant lives had passed and gone, and the poetical contest had been forgotten until quite recently, when Dickey and Hardside, their employment failing them and their occupation gone, had to become indoor paupers. Dickey had gone some time in advance, but William followed after. Dickey had been made overlooker of the place in which Hardside, among others, slept at nights when the lights had all been put out, according to law and order. Hardside's head laid low on the pauper's pillow, so he borrowed a bolster of the unoccupied bed which was next to his. Dickey warned him, saying that if he took the pillow from off the bed he would report him.

"If you report me," said Hardside, "I'll get you put in the black hole."

Now this is where the plot comes in. Every story, you know, must have a plot; and a story without a plot is said to be not interesting. Clever writers have accounted for their being unable to write a story or tale because they could not form a plot. In this story, however, there is no difficulty of this sort. The plot, which is supplied by superstition, comes ready made to the writer's hand. This part of my tale, however, might serve the purpose of a novelist, who could with truth point out the fact that many thousands of English working men who, by their labor and industry, have made the wealth of the nation from which others receive fat pensions, while the workers themselves have to take the hard fare of the workhouse.

To Hardside's threat of the black hole Dickey Darkfoot could only silently reply that he was unconscious of having done anything to cause him to fear being put into the black hole. So he reported the case next morning to the master, who usually sat in his office to hear complaints of a morning. Hardside was called in to answer in reference to the report. His mind was made up; his answer was ready. "He is telling nothing but lies," said Hardside. "It's here, sir; this is how it is. Dickey has a spite at me. You see, he is an Atheist, and he dislikes me because I always object to his Atheism whenever he introduces it." On hearing this the master turned fiercely round to Dickey, and said, "Go along with you. If I hear of you introducing your Atheism here again, I'll put you in the black hole." It may be imagined how he felt and looked; how he would stand spellbound, as if petrified, as he was denied any opportunity to make his defence to the unlooked-for charge of Atheism. Hardside, speaking of the affair to his friends, laughed, and said, "I managed him."

CARLISLE.



"WHEN THE DEVIL WAS SICK."

II.—THE ATTITUDE OF THE MASSES TO THE CHURCHES.

IT must be pretty apparent, even to the churches themselves, that their offers of friendship held out to the masses meet with very little response. In times of popular agitation the influence of the clergy is practically ignored, except, perhaps, in the case of the bishops, who come in for a liberal share of the wrath expressed against the House of Lords. Still, the masses have not, as a whole, finally parted company with the churches. They hesitate to burn their boats, preferring to leave open some means of retreat—to be on the "safe side," as they think. A story related by the late Hugh Stowell Brown very fairly illustrates this attitude. A vessel, commanded by a Scotch skipper, was overtaken by a very violent storm. The vessel and all on board were in imminent danger. The second mate was an Irishman and a devout Catholic, and he induced the captain to promise the Virgin Mary a wax candle as big as the mainmast if the vessel should arrive safely in port. The vessel weathered the storm and got to harbor, when the second officer reminded the skipper of his vow of the wax candle "as big as the main mast." But the danger was over, and the canny Scot had resumed his usual caution. "Aweel," said he, "if she's no satisfied with ane acht to the pun' she may gang without." It might be interesting to analyse the conceptions of the mate, who offered his homage to a power which could only be moved to pity by the promise of a bribe—and such a bribe!—only to be cheated in the end. But that would be foreign to the present purpose.

Occasionally heroic efforts—judged from the clerical standpoint—are made to enlist the sympathy of the masses, but the labor has admittedly been in vain. Take the case of the Rev. Walter Walsh, of Rye Hill Church, Newcastle. We are told that in this case every vestige of creed (!) was removed from the church door; all conventionality and all traditionalism were swept away from their work and worship; they established an open platform, from which, every Sunday, any man in Newcastle could air his grievances or advocate the principles he held. And this is the result:—"They have alienated the monied classes, driven away the 'respectable,' and drawn upon themselves the condemnation of their friends and neighbors. Bankrupt in denominational reputation, with an empty exchequer, a baffled minister, and a sorely-disappointed diaconate, they face an outlook black as a congregational outlook well can be; and the democracy pass them by with cold indifference." Mr. Walsh's disappointment is very natural; and yet there was nothing astonishing in all this except to those who take a professional view of the position. Sudden changes of character do not occur outside theological experience; they necessarily belong to the region of miracles, where changes occur without adequate cause. But miracles do not happen in every-day life. Cause and effect here succeed each other with unvarying regularity. Men's habits of thought are slowly developed by their experience, and their attitude to those of the clerical profession is no exception to the general rule. Some slight regard may remain as the result of early training in the school, but the rougher school of the every-day struggle for existence has taught men very emphatically that it is useless to look for help to the churches; and though the clergy may teach that seventy years of sin may be washed away in less than seventy seconds of repentance, they will find that decades of indifference to the welfare of the masses cannot be atoned for by isolated and spasmodic efforts to regain their lost influence.

CAUSTIC SODA.

JOSEPH.

*"The Lord was with Joseph" (Gen. xxxix. 2, 21).*

A FINE old book is Genesis. Some of its yarns are a trifle tough, and illustrate the Psalmist's doctrine that "all men are liars." But there is one that is ever a favorite with bad little boys, because it shows how cheek and cunning manage to get on in the world, or, in Biblical language, have the Lord with them. I allude to the story of Joseph.

Joseph was a dreamologist. He could both dream dreams and interpret them. It was hardly statesmanship to tell his elder brethren that they should bow down before him. Still, it was unfraternal to sell him at the

market-rate to the Midianites, and unfilial to take back his coat of many colors steeped in kid's blood, and ask their dad to identify it. Doubtless, they thought it served the youngster right for his uppishness, and the old man for his favoritism. Perhaps they knew how Jacob had cheated his own father. Anyway, he must take the responsibility of bringing up so bad a family.

Joseph was sold into Egypt, but the Lord was with him, and he became slave to Potiphar, captain of the king's guard, who soon made him boss over the house. But Mrs. Potiphar wanted him to tell lies with her (I take it this is the ghost's meaning in Gen. xxxix. 12. Because he would not, she said he did, and left his garment in her hand. So they put him in prison. But the Lord was with him, and he began interpreting dreams, telling how Pharaoh's butler should be released, and his baker hanged. For the Lord was with him. So the butler, after two year's time, told Pharaoh, and Joseph interpreted his dreams, saying there would be seven years of plenty, and seven of famine; and suggesting a big trust in corn.

Pharaoh saw the game, so he looked over the little affair with wicked Mrs. Potiphar, and gave him to wife, Asenath, daughter of Poti-pherah, and called his name Zaphnath-paaneah, and made him a big pot. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he cornered all the corn without paying for it. And when the seven years of dearth came he sold at famine prices, for the famine was sore in the land, and the Lord was with him. He gave not a grain away, but "gathered up all the money in Egypt and Canaan" for the corn which he sold them. When money failed, Joe said give your cattle, and when the cattle failed he got all the land, except that of the priests, and only gave the people seed if they would give the fifth part to Pharaoh. So rent arose in the land. For the Lord was with him. So Jacob sent his sons to Egypt for corn. And Joseph knew then but never let on, but accused them of being spies and clapped them in prison, but after sending for his old dad, enriched all the family at the expense of the Egyptians. For the Lord was with him.

I forget where the moral of this beautiful story comes in, but I fancy it is just as well to state, right here, that the one thing needful is to have the Lord with you, and then you can take advantage of poor people's necessities, and play hell with other folks property just as you please. Hallelujah!

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

MAYA RELIGION.

The Mayas are a most ancient race of Central America, who yet have some representatives in the Peninsular of Yucatan. In an article on the "Customs and Superstitions of the Mayas," by Mrs. A. D. Le Plongeon, in the *Popular Science Monthly* for March, she says that, though Catholics in name, the Mayas prefer to render homage to any stone image that once ornamented the temples of their forefathers. "The Maya Indians take a great deal of pleasure in ceremonies and religious observance; religion is a very important matter with them; though it is doubtful if they could tell exactly what they believe. They punctually attend church, but their worship is, in reality, an odd mixture of Paganism and Christianity. Being fond of sweet things, and by nature indolent, their idea of heaven is a place where they will rest beneath the spreading branches of an evergreen tree, and enjoy an inexhaustible supply of sweet things; while hell is a region where they will suffer intensely from cold, fatigue and hunger. Nor do they hope to escape that torment, for it is their belief that when death claims them they will be conducted to the gloomy abode to suffer for all the wrong they have done, after which they will be in heaven for a time as a recompense for their good deeds; that then—some ages having elapsed—they must be reborn on this earth, without any recollection of the past or knowledge of the future." To the dead they offer a pie of maize chicken and pork, which they call "food for the soul." They are placed on the graves, but after an hour or two the living take home the pies and enjoy them, saying that the souls have already drawn from them all the ethereal part of the substance.

The small boy hadn't been to Sunday-school since last Christmas, and the teacher didn't recognise him. "Who was it," she inquired, after a number of questions had been unanswered, "who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me?'" "Santa Claus," he replied with vehemence,



## MR. WATTS' DEBATE AT DERBY.

ON Monday and Tuesday evenings, March 12 and 13, a debate between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. J. Hyde (Swedenborgian minister), took place at the Lecture Hall, Wardwick, a commodious building with seating accommodation for 700 people. This debate was the outcome of Mr. Watts' previous visit to Derby, the rev. gentleman attending his lecture, and opposing him on the platform. The subject of the debate was the same as the title of Mr. Watts' lecture, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?" The chair was occupied both evenings by the Rev. J. Birks (Unitarian minister), whose duties, happily, were only nominal. Although the weather was unfavorable, the hall was crowded, many persons being unable to obtain seats.

The first night the Rev. J. HYDE, who was received with applause, opened by affirming the proposition in a three-quarters of an hour's speech. The first twenty minutes of his address was taken up by an exposition of Swedenborgianism, and the remainder of his time, instead of being utilised in furnishing evidence in support of his case, was occupied in endeavoring to show that the scientist was no authority on the question of immortality; that he dealt with this life only, and that the life beyond the grave could only be apprehended by those endowed with spiritual vision.

Mr. WATTS, who had a good reception, expressed his disappointment with Mr. Hyde's remarks. The rev. gentleman had not produced the slightest evidence in favor of his belief, nor had he given any clue or definition as to the nature of a life beyond the grave. Mr. Watts, after pointing out the length of time occupied by Mr. Hyde in expounding Swedenborgianism to the exclusion of the subject before them, remarked that, as a scientist, Swedenborg admitted his failure to discover the soul. The speaker, after expressing his respect for Swedenborg, mentioned an incident in connection with him. Swedenborg, whilst staying at an hotel in London, saw in his room one afternoon, a multitude of snakes and hideous reptiles, also the figure of a man, who admonished him to eat less at meals. Mr. Watts concluded by appealing to his opponent to define the terms he used, such as "spiritual substance," "the soul," and similar expressions.

Mr. HYDE, in a quarter of an hour's speech, denied the accuracy of Mr. Watts' statement respecting Swedenborg's visions, and, amid cheers, stated that he doubted very much whether Mr. Watts could furnish him with documentary evidence. How did Mr. Watts account for the fact, that although, according to science, the atoms that constitute a human body are not the same now as they were ten years ago, yet certain events which occurred twenty or thirty years ago, may be remembered. This faculty of memory, argued Mr. Hyde, was spiritual, and unlike matter, did not change.

Mr. WATTS, in closing the first night's discussion, evoked loud applause by quoting from a book written by Professor Garth Wilkinson, a prominent Swedenborgian, *re* Swedenborg's visions, the account given therein being identical with the verbal statement made by Mr. Watts. Alluding to the assertion that the particles of the body change every ten years, Mr. Watts quoted scientific authority to prove, that though it was a fact that such was the case, the change was so gradual, the old atoms being replaced by similar ones, that the continuity of memory—a function of the brain—was not broken. As an illustration, the speaker evidenced a scar on the human body, which, although it may have been caused in infancy, exists throughout a person's life.

The second and concluding night's debate was as well attended as the first, almost every inch of available space being occupied. Mr. WATTS, in a thirty minutes' speech, quoted numerous scientific authorities to show that it was impossible for us to know anything of a life beyond the grave, and concluded amid applause, by commenting on the utter lack of evidence on his opponent's part, and an appeal to him for proof.

Mr. HYDE occupied almost his entire time in quoting from Professor Garth Wilkinson's book *re* Swedenborg's visions, but as he simply corroborated Mr. Watts' statement thereon, the time the rev. gentleman took up on the point was wholly wasted. The speaker also stated that, as the idea of a future life existed, therefore immortality was a fact, as all ideas have relation to things which exist, and that it was impossible to have an idea of that which did not exist. The remaining portion of his time was devoted to criticising the scientific authorities quoted by Mr. Watts.

Mr. WATTS, in his final speech, said he had nothing really to answer—not one solitary fact, not one jot of evidence, being adduced by his opponent in favor of his position. The speaker asked if there was a person present who had received any information from Mr. Hyde as to a life beyond the grave. With regard to his opponent's assertion that as the idea of immortality existed, therefore immortality itself existed, Mr. Watts quoted as examples of the fallacy of this argument, the case of witches and unicorns, the idea existing in both cases, *ergo* (according to Mr. Hyde), witches and unicorns existed. Mr. Watts finished with a magnificent peroration, reminding his listeners that whilst he did not deny the possibility of a future life, still neither could he affirm it. If there be no future life, the Secularist, by making the most of the one we have, is on the right side; whereas, if there should be another existence beyond the grave, we should so live as to be able to approach it with equanimity. (This was undoubtedly the crowning speech of the debate, and was enthusiastically received; the applause being deafening.)

Mr. HYDE concluded the debate by a half-hour's speech of singular weakness and irrelevancy. Instead of dealing with the point at issue, he gave us a lengthy list of the size and weight of various men's brains. The rev. gentleman, totally ignoring the subject of debate, talked time out. In the course of his remarks, however, he made the frank admission that he thought matters stood as they were before the debate; his attempt, therefore, to prove the existence of a future life ending, on his own showing, in failure.

After the customary vote of thanks to the chairman, the meeting concluded. To sum up, the attendance was very good, the behavior of the audience exemplary, the absence of all personalities between the disputants was notable, and our party here are quite satisfied with Mr. Watts' powerful advocacy, which we feel confident will increase our strength. As this was Mr. Hyde's first debate, he is to be congratulated for the courage he displayed in tackling his redoubtable antagonist. The rev. gentleman's tone and manner were admirable throughout, and he is an example to those rowdy servants of the Lord who abound in this town.—ARGUS.

## GIPSY EASTER CUSTOMS.

STUDENTS of Mr. J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* will read, with great interest, an account of "Easter with the Gipsies," in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 24. The gipsies were those of Transylvania. On the Day of Shadows, as Palm Sunday is termed by the gipsies, there was more than usual bustle and animation at their winter quarters, because it is customary on this day to celebrate the triumph of the sun over the shadows of winter with special rites and ceremonies. A big straw figure, which looked for all the world like a scarecrow, was produced by a pair of handsome thievish lads. The doll or idol, which was about 4ft high, was then dressed in the cast-off clothing of a woman of the clan who had very recently become a widow. It is usual for a widow to sacrifice her apparel in this generous fashion, as this is piously believed to be an effectual mode of sending an affectionate greeting to her husband in the other world. The straw figure was next placed upon some long planks of wood prepared for the purpose, and fastened there. Then the gipsies approached, armed with formidable bludgeons and sticks, and vehemently belabored the effigy, some smiling sceptically, others with a serious and solemn mien. Then there was dead silence for the space of about a minute, at the expiration of which all eyes were turned towards the masked and muffled men who suddenly appeared—I know not whence—and marched majestically up to the figure, sawed it in twain, and set the rags and straw ablaze. Meanwhile the rank and file chanted a wild, weird hymn to the "Great God." I felt as if I were in the midst of an unholy assembly of sorcerers and witches invoking the Spirit of Spirits to appear. And yet the words of the chant, had I known them, were reassuring enough, and might have been sung by an orderly Christian meeting:

Thou, great God, hast gladdened the world,  
Hast bespangled it with flowers,  
Hast thawed the snow and warmed the earth,  
Hast brought back Easter Day once more.  
And now, O God, pay me a call;  
Garnished is my lowly home,  
The table laid with spotless cloth.

On Easter Day, a lad, clad in green leaves, boughs, and garlands, holding in his hand three large nails which had lain in the fire three days and nights, is supposed to be sacrificed and flung in a torrent. But an idol is sacrificed instead. This represents the spirit of vegetation. The article is an interesting one, and shows that the events supposed to have taken place a long while ago in Jerusalem have some analogue in the gipsy customs of to-day.



## THE THREE GODS OF THE BIBLE.

IN discussing the question "Is there a God?" I said that the unknown and unknowable being who "created the heaven and the earth" is not the God of either the Jew or the Christian; and I now purpose to demonstrate that that statement is a verity.

The Bible speaks of many "gods"; and in certain cases the word simply designates beings who were superior to their fellows in sanctity, intelligence, or power. It was in some such sense as this that Satan must have used it when, as we read, he was tempting Eve: "Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that, in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 4, 5). And Jehovah is reported to have employed it in a somewhat similar sense when directing Moses to go before Pharaoh, as thus: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. He shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God" (Exodus iv. 15, 16). And again: "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Exodus vii. 1). And up and down throughout the Bible, in passages too numerous to quote, the word "god" or "gods" is used in the sense here indicated.

God, the "creator of the heaven and the earth," is an absolutely unique being. He himself asserts that he is so in the words: "I am the Almighty God" (Gen. xvii. 1); "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me" (Isaiah xlv. 5). Now such a being must be omnipotent, omniscient, infinite; and, being so, must be unchangeable and incomprehensible. Were he not so he would not be infinite, for the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. Language is taxed to the utmost to find words to express even the faintest notion of such a being. When, where, how, and under what circumstances, before time was, did the First Cause begin to operate? To these questions no answer can be given. Has the Supreme Being parts or members that can be seen and felt, passions and feelings that can be understood, a habitation whose locality can be indicated and whose structure can be described? No! he has none of these. To human intellect, a First Cause, a Supreme Being, are impenetrable mysteries. To endeavor to penetrate such a mystery would be a waste of time.

The God of the Jew is an altogether different being to the one Almighty God, for the Jewish writers in the Old Testament portray him as being neither more nor less than a gigantic man, endowed with supernatural power, but swayed and governed by human passions and feelings. Is it not so? Well, here are some few short extracts from the Jewish writers themselves in proof of the statement:

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die'" (Gen. ii. 16, 17). But, when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, he did not die. Jehovah, therefore, was either unable to fulfil his threat, or in the meantime had changed his mind. A result that could not possibly have happened to an omniscient and omnipotent being.

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. iii. 8). Jehovah, therefore, in his dealings with Adam, must have assumed the form of, and acted as, an ordinary mortal.

"And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect" (Gen. iv. 4, 5). Here was favoritism of the most pronounced kind—favoritism that was utterly unworthy even of an upright man.

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever'" (Gen. xiii. 14, 15). But the promises made to Abram by Jehovah, in this and other matters, have not been fulfilled. Why is this? For are we not assured that "the Lord of Hosts hath sworn, saying, 'Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand'" (Isaiah xiv. 24) It cannot, therefore, be that the God of the Jew is the Lord of Hosts; for the Bible itself tells us how the value of a prophecy is to be appraised, as thus: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not,

nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken" (Deut. xviii. 22).

"I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his hosts; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord" (Exodus xiv. 4). Are such acts the acts of a merciful God or those of an irate fiend? What should we say of the man who could deliberately push even his enemy over a precipice?

"Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both men and women, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. xv. 3). What but a human tiger would have ordered such a cold-blooded massacre?

Extracts similar to these might be multiplied indefinitely, but these will suffice to illustrate my meaning, and to prove my statement.

The God of the Christian is a truly marvellous being, for he is described as being *one* individual, and yet to consist of *three* distinct and separate persons. These three persons are known as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; God the Son being born of a human mother who is known as the Virgin Mary. According to this doctrine, therefore, God the Son may be his own father, and God the Father may be his own son; and yet, which is quite as strange, though we are assured that God the Son is the son of God the Father, it is as distinctly asserted that the Virgin Mary became pregnant not by God the Father but by God the Holy Ghost. And wonderment becomes utter astonishment when we read that the Holy Ghost was the *breath* of Christ; for what other interpretation can be put on these words? "And when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost'" (John xx. 22).

The relationship which is supposed to exist between the Christian and his God, is equally singular; for he is described as being utterly dependent upon his God, and yet as being absolutely independent of him. The statement is, that ages ago—no one knows when, or where—a sin—but nobody knows what sin—was committed by the first man and the first woman, who are represented as being the parents of all mankind; that for this sin every man, woman, and child, who has lived, or shall live, is personally responsible; that this sin is punishable with eternal damnation in the flames of hell; that the only way of escaping from such a dreadful doom, is to believe implicitly on God the Son who was crucified on Calvary to appease the wrath of God the Father; but that it is *optional with human beings so to believe or not*, and, therefore, that their final doom rests not with their God, but with themselves. Further, this God is a personality who can be button-holed at any time, by any one of his so-called "ministers"; for they blatantly assert that their God has delegated to each of them personally, the power to *remit or retain sin*. Now, such a God cannot be omnipotent and omniscient, and, therefore, he cannot be the God who "made the heaven and the earth."

These are the three gods which are portrayed in the Bible, and the biblical command is, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. xxiv. 15).  
N. M. X.

## THE SABBATH BELLE.

She is rigged up in the fashion,  
As she trots to church to pray,  
She displays her pious passion  
Every sunny Sabbath day.  
Not for God is her devotion,  
Shown in dress so neat and trim,  
God's a male, but I've a notion,  
She goes for another *hymn*.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

## CONCERNING MR. BRADLAUGH AND THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With reference to the paragraph which is going the round of the press about the libellous biography of the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and its destruction by the Library Committee of the National Liberal Club, his daughter, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, has communicated a statement to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* which throws quite a new light on their recent proceedings—the proceedings of the National Liberal Club, in whose Gladstone Library a copy of "the Bradlaugh book" was found. The paragraph in question relates that out of "respect to the memory of the deceased politician" the book was consigned to the flames "as being unworthy of a place on the shelves of a library maintained by a political party that owes much to his life's services." But what really did happen is thus explained by Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner herself in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* of Feb. 24, 1894:—

"I first applied to the National Liberal Club in January, 1892, personally asking the Library Committee, in a friendly way, to give up the book, never dreaming of refusal. But the unexpected happened—the Committee would consent only to lock it up in the Librarian's desk. Deeply wounded though I was, I allowed the matter to rest for two years: then, having criminally prosecuted a man for the sale of the book, I thought it a favorable moment to make a second application to the Library Committee, drawing their attention to the recent prosecution. The Committee again refused to give up the book, the Librarian writing that it was 'out of the question' that they should make me 'a present' of the infamous volume. A friendly entreaty having proved unavailing, I instructed my solicitor to commence proceedings against the responsible officers of the club. The solicitor's letter came before the General Committee, who, on the motion of Mr. Casson, unanimously reversed the resolution of the Library Committee and ordered the book to be burned."

To Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner's version, I have but little to add. On February 10, 1894, after a delay of more than twelve months, the first application by Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner having been made within a year of her father's death, the foul book was destroyed, the ceremony being attended in person by Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner's solicitor on her behalf. It appears, too, that some of the National Liberals had an idea that the book might have a marketable value! It is, however, a little odd, that before they could do "an act of justice" to the great Radical's memory, they needed the spur of a lawyer's letter.

As to the copy in the British Museum, the current story is equally fabulous. Being well aware of the "position and privileges of the Museum as a national collection of all books published," Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner did not request the trustees to deliver the book up to her. She simply drew their attention to the libellous nature of the volume, and they "at once and unhesitatingly withdrew it from public access, and placed it under seal."

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

## IT DOESN'T PAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Years ago I periodically read your paper, the *Freethinker*, and other Freethought publications, and have now, after mature thought, to inform you and every other Freethinker, that demonstrative Freethought is not a "winning horse"—at least "up to date"—by a long run. When I read yours and other similar publications, all of them pioneers and therefore before time, and openly expressed my opinions thereon, I was shunned by "every hypocrite" who regularly attended church (for respectability's sake) and paid due attention to the frivolities and conventionalities of *this* life (another life is problematical and conjectural, an open question to the Atheist and the Theist alike). Now I am a non-Christian, going to every Christian meeting, and conforming to the conventional rules of society—as presently

constituted—by attending, when *commanded* by my female relations and friends, to the Gzus Christ business as well as my daily business. I find it much better and more respectable. Previously, I was debarred entering society—especially ladies' society—which is very refined, though trivial and frivolous, of course. I could not then talk to them of the trivialities of every-day life—such as the last social function and the price of groceries, red herrings, and dress, and the other trivial matters of the household—and thereby enjoy their (trivial) society, like any other man (not in the know), but now I can, instead of being a Secularist, I am empowered to do so as an arch-hypocrite. I now attend every Gzus Christ's meeting, and listen to such twaddle as the oft-repeated phrases—"Only believe and thou shalt be saved," "The blood of Christ," etc., etc., and such like well-known phraseological nothings; and am, I may say, all the better of it, thereby holding my place in society. I believe your (in my mind, our) religion—the "Humanity" religion, man's humanity to man—is at least a hundred years before time, like our poet Burns, and that it will not be practicable for at least a hundred years. Hypocrisy is the religion of the hour—why should you advance too soon? If you possess money (L. S. D., the world's Trinity) hold fast to it, and abuse it in such terms as "It is the root of all evil," "Am sure they're far happier without it," and similar phrases delivered by the fox when he could not reach the grapes—but still hold fast to it.

Whether Christ existed or not it does not much matter; he is at best—assuming, of course, that he existed in the flesh—only a dead man, and there are many such. Calvinism is Utilitarianism with a God, and Atheism is Utilitarianism without a God. In either case the result is the same. I am, however, a Deist, and ever will be; and my *credo* is that God, the supreme being, is the author of all our beings, and that our hereafter is unknown to mortal man; so that all the prating and praying from the pulpit is vain.

Society is rotten in our present state. The rule is if you have money, do nothing for humanity (except for self), and pretend every time you give a donation to some charity that it is "from the Lord," and not to yourself.—Aye, "keep something tae yerself that ye maun gae tao naeboddy"—however little it be, the guiso is charity. When you enter for a church bazaar, assuming, of course, that you are a father of a large family of marriageable daughters, make, or try to make, everybody believe that it is all in the interest of Gzus Kryst (who was he?), while it is, in reality, to get rid of your "stock in trade."

In conclusion, Freethought does not pay. One of the Popes of Rome, as you quite well know, in looking over "the Eternal city," said: "Of all the trades and professions, none pays better than the profession of Christianity." How then should you be an open-minded Freethinker, when you could be a hypocritical Christian, and thereby a practical infidel in that man-made religion called Christianity? because, as it is known to all scholars, is only a religion of human origin, like all the others. It was founded by believing, not in God the Son, or the Son of God (for we are all sons of God), but by a man *supposed* to have existed—what a slender thread to hang your faith on.

Napoleon the Great (himself a fatalist) said: "Man is a child of destiny. Ancient (Roman and Greek) philosophers have already written "Virtue is only a name"—we are all virtuous according to circumstances.

With kindest wishes to your efforts for the exposition of truth, I remain one who believes it does not pay when given to the masses, but retained by the classes. DEIST.

SUPERSTITION.—It is idle to attribute the destruction of superstition to the Reformation. Protestants were as superstitious as Catholics.—*Henry Thomas Buckle, "Miscellaneous Works,"* vol. i., p. 419.

PERSECUTION.—Let the priests of any religion have power, and let men speak for themselves in opposition to their doctrines, in this case persecution is sure to follow.—*Henry Lord Brougham and Vaux, Speech in the House of Commons, May 10, 1825, on Roman Catholic Relief Bill.*

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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, "The History of the House of Lords; with Present Day Lessons" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "A Secularist's View of Mr. Gladstone" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 8d.). Wednesday at 8.15, Rev. Stewart D. Headlan, "The Work of the London School Board" (free). General meeting of the Finsbury Branch, in the minor hall, on Sunday at 12.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, W. Heaford, "The Secular Theory of Life and Duty"; 9.15, members' quarterly meeting. Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club (free).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, A. B. Moss, "The Trial of Christianity." Friday at 7.30, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway; Thursday, April 5, at 8.30, a lecture (free).

Tottenham—Workpeople's Educational Union, Gas Workers' Lecture Hall, Seven Sisters-road; 7.45, Stanley Jones, "Radicalism and Socialism."

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Curtis's Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, Miss Agnes Henry, "State and Ecclesiastical Law" (free).

Wood Green—Mr. Stewart's, 41 Morley-avenue: 3.30, members' monthly meeting.

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Battersea Park-gates: 11.30, J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"  
Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Brain and Bible."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 3.30, J. Rowney will lecture.

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6, L. Keen will lecture.  
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, L. Keen will lecture. April 4, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.

Islington—Prebend-street (south of Essex-road North District Post Office): 11.30, A. Guest, "Our Gosp 1."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature."  
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Thomas Paine."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "God's Pedigree, Birth, and Life"

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why we Reject Christianity"; 7, J. Rowney, "What think ye of Jesus Christ?"

**COUNTRY.**

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings: 11.30, monthly concert; 1, business meeting.

Bolton—Borough Chambers, Rushton-street: W. Hennifer, "Thomas Paine."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, special business meeting.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, public discussion and debating class; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, A. E. Rowcroft, "Will Socialism Benefit the Working Classes?"

Dundee—Cutlers' Hall, Murraygate: 11.30, business meeting; 1 to 2, music class; 2.30, concert; 6.30, J. McAra, "A Reply to Father Gleeson."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, G. Faulkner, "Notes on the Sayings of Jesus"; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Evolution of Myth, Religion, and Society."

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: Touzeau Parris, 11, "How we Obtain Knowledge"; 3, "Anarchy: its Origin and Meaning"; 7, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless."

Ipswich—Co-operative Hall, Cox-lane: 7, members' monthly meeting.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, J. Read, "My Path to Freethought"; committee meeting after lecture.

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 6.30, Ernest Evans will lecture.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Good Templar Hall, 2 Clayton-street, East: 7, W. R. Stansell, "A Credible Account of Creation" (free).

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 11, C. Cohen, "Spinoza"; 3, class in Spencer's ethics; 7, C. Cohen, "Belief and Conduct." Tuesday at 8, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Social Reform."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, J. Weston, "Vaccination: a Story of a Great Delusion" (conclusion).

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, R. Chapman, "Christian Evidences."  
Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults (long room above), Bridge-street: 7, open discussion on "Christianity v. Secularism."

**LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.**

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—April 1 to 14, Portsmouth; 15, m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Camberwell; 22, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Battersea.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 1, m., Mile End; 4, Bermondsey Gladstone Club; 15, m., Finsbury Park; 22, m., Pimlico Pier; 29, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith. May 13, m., Clerkenwell Green; 20, e., Edmonton; 27, m., Pimlico Pier.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Botherhithe, London, S.E.—April 1, Camberwell; 15, m., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 22, m., Wood Green. May 6, m. and e., Camberwell; 13, e., Edmonton; 20, m., Clerkenwell Green; 27, m., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 1, Grimsby; 8, Liverpool; 15, Sheffield; 22, Camberwell.

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