

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XIV.—No. 17.

SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 1894.

PRICE TWOPENCE.



## EXIT CHRIST.

"In conversation Carlyle was sometimes so bitter against Christianity that it appeared as if he felt a sense of personal wrong. One evening, talking of William Maccall, with whom John Sterling had a notable correspondence, Carlyle said: 'I remember Maccall; I have lost sight of him, but remember a vigorous way of expressing himself. I recall his breaking out in conversation about elevating the people: "What can you do for a people whose God is a dead Jew?" A fair enough question. If I had my way the world would hear a pretty stern command—Exit Christ!'"—*Carlyle's Religion*, by M. D. Conway; in "Open Court," July, 1889.

## LIVERPOOL BIGOTS.

LIVERPOOL is a famous city for drink, prostitution, and rowdyism. It goes without saying, therefore, that Liverpool can easily hold its own in the matter of piety. It has indeed a most godly reputation. Its two Bishops—one Protestant, the other Catholic—its army of parsons and ministers, and its multitude of churches and chapels, give that great city at the mouth of the Mersey a certain godly distinction.

In such a haunt of all the virtues, save those which are useful, it is not surprising that Secularism has been at a great disadvantage. For many years it was chased from pillar to post. Then it was confined to the little hall in Camden-street, where hell was half realised at a crowded Sunday night meeting. One large hall was occasionally available for special lectures, but a price was asked that was almost prohibitive.

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Religious parties had it for three guineas, and ten guineas was the charge to the Secularists. Possibly the difference was meant to cover the proprietor's risk in the next world. But matters have somewhat improved since then. The Secularists have for some time been using the Oddfellows' Hall, and they seem likely to remain there, though at one time a very determined effort was made to oust them.

The Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society wished the Annual Conference of that body to be held in their city this year, and as a large hall was desirable for the public meeting in the evening they applied for the use (on the ordinary terms) of the Picton Lecture Hall, which is town property. Birmingham and Hanley had allowed their Town Halls to be used for this purpose on former occasions, and Liverpool was asked to follow suit. But Liverpool declined. The Library Committee refused the application.

Complaint was then made to the City Council in the form of a letter from Mr. Laurence Small, the Branch president. On the other hand, a certain Mr. E. G. Stafford begged the Council to stand by the Committee, and not allow the Picton Lecture Hall to be used for the propagation of blasphemy by persons who aimed at "the disestablishment of the religion of our land"—which is precisely what is aimed at by the vast majority of the Liberal party. Naturally the newspapers did not print Mr. Small's letter. Just as naturally they gave every word of Mr. Stafford's imbecility.

When the complaint came before the City Council the Chairman tried to get rid of it by a paltry dodge. He suggested that the letters should be referred to the Library Committee. This was opposed by Mr. Taggart, an Irishman and a Roman Catholic, who showed the Protestants a generous example. The longest report of his speech is given in the *Daily Post*:—

"Mr. Taggart wished to move an amendment to the general proceedings of the Committee. As the Society were willing to pay the usual charge, he did not see why the application should be declined. He complained of the hypocrisy of the Committee, who were willing to allow of arrangements being made, if possible, for another day, and he thought if it was willing to allow the hall for the purposes of the Society on a week-day, there was no reason why it should be refused on a Sunday. He did not share the sentiments of the people who wished to have the hall on the Sunday, but he thought that no religious body, or non-religious body that corresponded to a religious body, or any religious body of any kind, should be refused. They were a denomination, no matter what might be their object. They had a particular program and belief, and they congregated together in the belief that that belief was the correct one. The fact remained that they were a well-recognised body in the country, and they had as much right to the expression of their views and propagation of their doctrines as any member of the Council. The Society had an annual Conference, which met together like the Trades Congress, and there was no harm in allowing those who believed in a particular belief in meeting when they desired. It was hypocrisy of the worst kind to refuse to allow them to meet on a Sunday ("Oh"), but to allow them to meet on any other day. These people were citizens, and the man who made the application was a citizen and ratepayer, and represented citizens and ratepayers."

This is a manly speech, and its spirit animated Mr. Grierson, who seconded the motion. This gentleman said he "could not vote for any disability on account of opinion." According to his judgment, Secularists had the same rights as any other body. This was not, however, the view of Dr. Commins, M.P., alderman, and chairman of the Library Committee. Being a barrister-at-law, he enquired in his special-pleading fashion, What right the Secularists had to dictate to the Committee the day on which they should have the use of the hall? He thought they had selected Sunday in order to give "offence to somebody,"—whereas, had he taken the trouble to listen, he would have learnt that the National Secular Society's Conference is always held on Whit-Sunday. Dr. Commins admitted, theoretically, that Secularists were entitled to express their opinions; but what right had they, he asked, to expect the Corporation servants, who would have to be in attendance at Picton Hall, to "be present at speeches and lectures which would probably be extremely offensive to them." This was a climax of silliness, and no wonder it excited "laughter." Every member of the Council must have been well aware that Dr. Commins was only inventing excuses for a flagrant act of bigotry.

When the poll was taken, five voted for Councillor Taggart's resolution and thirty-four against it. Yet the City Council pretends to be Liberal! In relation to the rights of Secularists only five of them are Liberal; their names being Taggart, Grierson, Scott, Smith, and Beloe. Even the Unitarians—who have been giving at Manchester their "Message to Freethinkers"—treated the Freethinkers at Liverpool as outside the pale of citizenship. Councillor Taggart's motion had no support from the Lord Mayor (Bow-

ring), the Deputy Lord Mayor (Holt), and the prospective Lord Mayor (Rathbone), who are all Unitarians. We congratulate these gentlemen on their exquisite appreciation of the great principles of civil and religious liberty.

We invite the Freethinkers of this nation to reply to the Unitarian and other Christian bigots of Liverpool by flocking to the city in strong force on Whit-Sunday. Let us have a fine Conference—large, representative, enthusiastic, and determined. Let us show that we uphold a great cause, which despises bigotry and defies persecution. Let us prove to the cowardly City Council of Liverpool, in the language of one of the great men of Shakespeare, that we can make our way through twenty times the impediments their puny opposition offers. G. W. FOOTE.

### CARLYLE'S RELIGION.

THOMAS CARLYLE is the literary Colossus of this century. You may point to his grotesqueness, his gloom, his exaggeration, his splenetic judgments upon men and things, but you cannot deny his power. There are his volumes, a solid achievement, every page displaying energy in earnest, all written because he felt he had something to say. And the man is as notable as his work. Rough and craggy as his own Scotch mountains towering into the clouds, "yet in the clefts beautiful green valleys with flowers." What was his religion? He was well described by Sir Henry Taylor as a Calvinist who had lost his creed. The grim religious feeling of his Covenanting "forebears" lay deep in his blood. Though modified and partially erased by his liberal education, it was never wholly eradicated. Intended for the kirk, reading, especially of Gibbon—that splendid bridge from the old world to the new—made him see that he could not adopt a vocation which demanded at the threshold that one should solemnly constitute himself an impostor. The picture of Carlyle and Irving at the parting of the ways upon Drumclog Moss, when "Irving actually drew from me by degrees in the softest manner the confession that I did not think as he of the Christian religion, and that it was vain for me to expect I ever could or should," is now an historic one. Yet this scene was reserved for his biographer to unfold. Although his writings are full of subtle and indirect sarcasms upon Christianity, his full mind upon the subject was never shown except to his private friends, and to some readers unacquainted with his life he might appear to be but of what the first Lord Shaftesbury declared was the religion of all sensible men—and what that is sensible men never tell. Sufficient, however, can be gathered to say, with certainty, what that religion was not.

In his early essays, despite the inbred repugnance of his Puritan training, and despite the great attraction of German mysticism, Carlyle was drawn in closest sympathy to his fellow countryman, Burns, and in intelligent criticism to the French rationalists, Voltaire and Diderot. Much in these writers "scunnered" him, yet he recognised their power and insight, and dealt with them in the spirit in which he afterwards wrote to Sterling: "Fear no *seeing* man. Know that *he* is in heaven, whoever else be not; that the arch-enemy is the arch-stupid. I call this my fortieth church article, which absorbs into it and covers up in silence all the other thirty-nine."

Goethe, who, with all his admiration for "the religion of sorrow," refused to recognise a deity distinct from the universe, professed himself "decidedly non-Christian," and said the objects of his aversion were the cross and bugs, was the great liberating agency to Carlyle, for which he always regarded the German poet as a true prophet.

At a dinner party in Berlin the talk was about Goethe's "want of religion;" the regret was that so

"great" and "godlike" a genius should not have devoted himself to the service of "Christian truth," etc. Carlyle sat grimly silent for some time, and then, in his slow, emphatic way, said: "Meine Herren, did you never hear the story of that man who vilified the sun because it would not light his cigar?"

In his private letters to Emerson appear some of his most characteristic utterances. Thus, in one dated November 5, 1844, he says:—

"I dare say you are a little bored occasionally with 'Jesus,' etc., as I confess I myself am, when I discern what a beggarly Twaddle they have made of all that, what a greasy Cataplasm to lay to their own poltrooneries; and an impatient person may exclaim with Voltaire, in serious moments, *Au nom de Dieu ne me parlez plus de cet homme là!* I have had enough of him—I tell you I am alive too!"

So he bursts out in another passage:—

"Yes, the Redeemer liveth. He is no Jew, or image of a man, or surplice, or old creed, but the Unnamable Maker of us, voidless, formless; within our own soul, whose voice is every noble and genuine impulse of our souls. He is yet there, in us and around us, and *we* are there. No Eremite or fanatic whatever had more than we have; how much less had most of them?"

In a letter to Emerson, dated August 31, 1847, Carlyle says: "I even think there is yet another Book in me; 'Exodus from Houndsditch' (I think it might be called), a peeling off of fetid *Jewhood* in every sense from myself and my poor, bewildered brethren: one other Book; and, if it were a right one, rest after that, the deeper the better, forevermore."

Why did not Carlyle carry out his threat and write the *Exodus from Houndsditch*? Possibly he thought the time was not ripe, and he might do more harm than good. The following passage from the *Latter Day Pamphlets*—"Jesuitism," perhaps, suggests the explanation, "We cannot make our Exodus from Houndsditch till we have got our own along with us! The Jew old-clothes having now grown fairly pestilential, a poisonous incumbrance in the path of men, burn them up with revolutionary fire as you like, and can: even so,—but you shall not quit the place till you have gathered from their ashes what of gold or other enduring metal was sewed upon them, or woven in the tissue of them. That is the appointed course of human things."

Professor Bain, in his book on John Stuart Mill, tells the following anecdote: Mill, Carlyle, and Bain were one day walking together from the Indian House to the London Library. "It was as we were entering St. James's-square, that Carlyle was denouncing our religion and all its accessories. Mill struck in with the remark, 'Now you are just the very man to tell the public your whole mind upon that subject.' This was not exactly what Carlyle fancied. He gave, with his peculiar grunt, the exclamation 'Ho,' and added, 'It is some one like Frederic the Great who should do that.'"

On this once projected *Exodus from Houndsditch* he wrote: "That, alas! is impossible as yet, though it is the gist of all writings and wise books, I sometimes think—the goal to be wisely aimed at as the first of all for us. Out of Houndsditch, indeed! Ah, were we but out, and had our own along with us! But they that come out hitherto come in a state of brutal nakedness, scandalous mutilation; and impartial bystanders say sorrowfully, 'Return, rather; it is better even to return.'"

Dislike of Atheism, or at any rate of the mechanical philosophy, prevented Carlyle from assisting in the work of destruction. Mr. Froude says: "The Exodus from Houndsditch Carlyle saw to be then impossible—impossible; and yet the essential preliminary to true spiritual recovery. The 'Hebrew old clothes' were attached so closely to pious natures that to tear off the wrapping would be to leave their souls to perish in spiritual nakedness, and were so bound up with the national moral convictions that the sense of duty could not be separated from a belief in the technical inspiration of the Bible. And yet Carlyle knew that it could do no good to anyone to believe what was untrue; and

he knew also that, since science had made known to us the real relation between this globe of ours and the stupendous universe, no man, whose mind and heart were sound, could any longer sincerely believe in the Christian creed."\* J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

## PROPOSED REMEDIES FOR SOCIAL EVILS.

[CONCLUDED.]

IN submitting his proposal for remedying our present social evils Henry George thinks he has discovered that the prevailing wrongs in society are largely due to interference by man with the exercise of Almighty Power. He says: "He who made food and clothing and shelter necessary to man's life has also given to man, in the power of labor, the means of maintaining that life; and when, without fault of his own, man cannot exert that power, there is somewhere a wrong of the same kind as denial of right of property and denial of right of life—a wrong equivalent to robbery and murder on the grandest style." It is presumable, from this extract, that Mr. George entertains some peculiar theological notions which he mixes up with his proposed remedy. To my mind it seems most unfortunate that social reformers will encumber their suggested remedies with mystic theological speculations. This, no doubt, has proved one of the causes why such remedies have failed to achieve the object sought. It is my firm belief that, judging from experience, ameliorating efforts will continue to fail until the evils of society are dealt with by purely natural means. The alleged supernatural aid has been evoked long enough without success; and now surely wisdom should prompt us to avail ourselves of those resources of which we have some knowledge, and over which we can have some control. It is not here a question of the truth of Mr. George's theology so much as of its non-adaptability to the purpose at issue, although, as he puts it, God's providential share in the scheme seems to be exceedingly puzzling. For instance, what can be thought of an Almighty "He" who would have so arranged matters that the present evils could be possible? Further, can it be conceived that "He," if he is benevolent and the principal in the concern, would permit "robbery and murder on the grandest style"? Would it not be better to leave all that this "He" is supposed to represent entirely out of consideration in dealing with the social evils, and to seek for the remedy in mundane conditions? Even upon the theological hypothesis, the "bane" being here, the "antidote" should be here also; and our duty is to seek to discover it, and to apply it to the "ills that flesh is heir to."

This position Henry George admits to be the practical one, despite his theological adulteration; for he says the solution of the labor problems is to be found as follows: "The opportunities of finding employment, and the rate of all wages, depend ultimately upon the freedom of access to the land, the price that labor must pay for its use." This solution, Mr. George holds, can be speedily put into practice. To this latter statement I cannot assent. No doubt, if its immediate application were possible, improvement upon the existing state of things would follow. But experience proves that the partial remedies that have hitherto been adopted, both in social and political affairs, have been gradual in their growth and slow in producing the desired results. True, he refers to the many thousands of families that were enabled to settle on estates in New Zealand through the Land Act of the late Freethinking Premier, Mr. John Ballance. But it must be remembered that this able reformer had a long and hard struggle to secure the moderate relief that he obtained for a few thousand families in that new and fertile country. It took many years of courageous and persistent advocacy of a very able organiser before his efforts were crowned with any success. And when the battle was won, it was not

\* *Carlyle's Life in London*; vol. i, pp. 445, 446; 1890.

that of the purchase of the land, but merely that it should be held at a rate equivalent to the income or property tax imposed in that colony. It should, however, be remembered that even this modicum of reform was much easier to obtain in a colony possessing new and virgin soil than it would be to "take from mere appropriators" in the old country that which could only be secured by lawful means. As regards England, the probability of any benefit arising from Mr. George's proposal appears very remote. His plan has been before the world now for many years, and at present there is no indication of its being adopted. This, of course, is no argument against its value; but it shows that Mr. George is rather premature in supposing that his remedy "can be speedily put into practice." I have not the slightest desire to depreciate any attempt to relieve the burdens of toil, or to check any possible alleviation of social suffering; still, I cannot ignore facts, although I may regret that they exist.

It will be within the knowledge of many of my readers that a whole generation has passed away since J. S. Mill and others inaugurated a movement in reference to the unearned increment, and little or nothing has been done up to date to realise the improvements those reformers suggested. Parliament has also been recently considering the subject of allotments, from which great things are expected. Leading articles in our democratic newspapers are echoing the old cry of "Back to the Land," than which nothing could be better under suitable conditions. But how is the thing to be done? and, even if it could be accomplished, would it be an unqualified advantage without other reforms equally necessary? A small plot of land, to be cultivated in spare hours, by men accustomed to it, might prove a useful investment, if the rent were nominal, of which there is not much hope at present. If, however, anyone expects a beneficial revolution by putting families on a few acres of land in this country, they would, I think, be doomed to disappointment. To make the cultivation of land in England profitable, not only industry is required, but skill, judgment, and the best appliances are necessary, and the latter need an amount of capital which, unfortunately, is not within the reach or at the command of the poor laboring man. Before land in England can become self-supporting to the working classes, the problem of a moneyless people must be dealt with. If some millions of money and some millions of acres of land were placed at the disposal of well-trained and experienced farm laborers, no doubt they would give a good account of themselves. But on any other terms I have but little faith in the advantages of going "Back to the Land."

So far as the problem of the land question is concerned, I fail to see its immediate solution in any one scheme now before the public. Still, many measures could be adopted to hasten on a solution; such, for instance, as the total abolition of the game laws, the repeal of the laws of entail and primogeniture, and an easy and a cheap mode of transferring land. The present expensive manner of selling it should at once cease, for so long as it is legal to buy and sell land there is no reason why it should not be transferred in as inexpensive a manner as that in which the beasts that feed upon it are sold. All legislation upon this subject should tend to destroy the monopoly of land, and to place it at the command of the people, so that it may be used for the two purposes of providing food and of paying its just share of national taxation. To do this it may be found that the Nationalisation scheme will be the most effectual one to adopt. But ere this can be accomplished and properly worked the toiling classes must recognise that the work of reform will have to be done by themselves. They have depended upon others too long, and now the fact must be faced, that self-help is the only successful aid to rely upon. It will also be necessary to make our Government representative in its character in the fullest sense of the word—a Government by the people, and for the people, irrespective of any particular class. With such a Government, its principal function would be to give force to the public will in removing existing obstacles to the attainment of just laws, so that the work of

amelioration may go on unimpeded by that legacy of aristocratic and class distinctions which has so long proved a potent hindrance to the general welfare. In order that such a consummation may be realised, prudence, frugality, disciplined thought, and sound education upon the part of the masses will be necessary. And in proportion as these requisites are possessed and utilised, so, in my opinion, will the remedies be found for the present evils of society. Under such conditions the revolution will not be sudden, but it will be none the less certain in its arrival, and none the less beneficial in its influence.

CHARLES WATTS.

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### CONCERNING MAN.

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So little instructed are the majority of our fellow countrymen concerning the diversity of the human family that at the mention of the name, *man*, they think only of the civilised races of Europe, and keep out of their minds all thoughts concerning the various types of mankind that are to be found in the more barbaric countries of the world. And yet the term, *man*, is only a name by which we distinguish an animal of peculiar structure in various stages of physical and intellectual development.

Let us look, for instance, at the wide divergence existing between some of the well-known varieties of men, and consider a few facts concerning them. Look first at the not unfamiliar figure of the African negro; with skin so dark as to be commonly called black; and with natural frizzed hair like so much black wool. In what respect does he resemble us? If we were to black our faces like Christy Minstrels, we should not resemble the African negro, for his features are quite distinct from ours. He has a flat nose, wide nostrils, thick protruding lips, and very protruding jaws. The coolie of South India, on the other hand, is "dark brown of skin, with black, silky, wavy hair, and a face wide-nosed, heavy jawed, and fleshy lipped." Then take another type—the Chinese. He is short of stature, his jaundice-yellow skin and coarse, straight, black hair, snub nose, high cheek bones, and a peculiar slanting set of the eyes, distinguishing him from other races.

"Even among Europeans," says Dr. Tylor, "the broad contrast between the fair Dane and the dark Genoese is recognised by all." And, further, this learned writer remarks: "Anthropology finds race differences most clearly in stature and proportions of limbs, conformation of the skull and the brain within, characters of features, skin, eyes, and hair, peculiarities of constitution, and mental and moral temperament" (*Anthropology*, p. 56). Just here the Freethinker might naturally inquire: "If God made man in his own image, and Adam was the first man, what sort of man was he? To what type did he belong? Was he like the African negro, the Chinaman, the Coolie, or the Egyptian? And if he belonged to either of these races, what evidence have we that any of the European races are his descendants?"

It is now generally acknowledged that it is only within modern times that the distinctions among races have been considered upon scientific methods. Dr. Tylor, in his admirable work on *Anthropology*, has demonstrated not only the vast antiquity of man, but has traced his gradual development by means of a study of his languages, his various stages of civilisation, his ancient relics, monuments, etc., and has made it clear, also, that man is an evolution from a lower type of being; in which view he is supported by such distinguished scientists as the late Charles Darwin, Professor Huxley, as well as most of the German scientists and thinkers. Without, however, entering upon the question of man's evolution from a lower form, let us consider for a moment a few facts in regard to differences existing in the physical and intellectual development of the various races of mankind.

First as to height. The English colonist in Australia is, on an average, 5ft. 8in. in height, and looks clear over the heads of the Chinese laborers, who rarely

exceed 5ft. 4in. In Sweden the Swede stands 5ft. 7in., while the average height of the Japps is only about 5ft. "The shortest of mankind are the Bushmen tribes in South Africa, with an average height not far exceeding 4ft. 6in. A fair contrast between the tallest and the shortest races of mankind may be seen where a Patagonian is drawn side by side with a Bushman, whose head only reaches to his breast. Thus the tallest race of man is less than one-fourth higher than the shortest, a fact which seems surprising to those not used to measurements. Struck by the effect of such difference of stature, one is apt to form an exaggerated notion of its amount, which is really small compared with the disproportion in size between various breeds of other species of animals, as the toy pug and mastiff, or the Shetland pony and the dray horse" (Dr. E. B. Tylor, F.R.S., *Anthropology*, p. 57).

Men of various races differ not only in regard to stature, but also in respect to the proportions of the body. Thus the African negro is remarkable for length of arm and leg, the Aymara Indian of Peru for shortness. But perhaps the most important difference perceptible in the various races of men is to be found in respect to the formation of their heads and in the size and weight and quality of their brains. Professor Flower gives the following as the mean estimate of the contents of skulls in cubic inches—

Australian	...	...	...	79
African	...	...	...	85
European	...	...	...	91

Some eminent scientists also declare that the brain of the European is much more complex in its convolutions than that of the negro or Hottentot. The brains of some great thinkers and philosophers have been found to weigh as much as 60 ounces, while the brains of some of the lowest races of men do not on an average weigh more than half of this. Moreover, we have to remember that there are no two persons exactly alike in the world, either in feature or faculty. And if this be true, how absurd it is to expect that persons who differ physically and intellectually should all come to the same belief in regard to religion. The truth is, if all brains differ in some respects—in size, quality, weight, convolutions—it is just as foolish to expect men to think alike as it would be to expect them to be alike in appearance. Consequently he who wishes to understand the beliefs of his fellow-man must learn something about the country in which he was born, the climatic conditions, his training, and also something about his intellectual development at the time of his acceptance of any particular belief. It will then become obvious that a man will believe a large number of things in proportion to his ignorance concerning them; and that the man with the largest knowledge of the phenomena of nature will have the fewest beliefs. For where knowledge begins, belief ceases. And moral questions have to be considered precisely in the same way. We have to understand the physical and intellectual condition of the race we are dealing with. To expect the same standard of morality from Farini's "earth men" or from African savages as from the cultivated races of Europe would be about as reasonable as to expect a child of seven to do the same intellectual work or perform the same moral acts as a grown man. Each race acts as rationally as it can up to the measure of its knowledge and capabilities; and the more highly-developed a race is in body and mind, the more moral it will be.

If we understand, then, that belief is largely a question of country, of climate, of training, and that morality depends upon our knowledge of the facts of life and of our disposition to act in such a manner as to promote the general well-being, we shall have learnt two of the most important lessons of life. And if we want to promote human happiness to the full, two things more are essential—intellectual freedom and justice. In the eloquent words of Mr. Savage, in his admirable work, *The Morals of Evolution*, let me say: "The first thing, the one thing essential to the welfare of the individual and of society, the one thing on which all other things rest, is not love, not unselfishness even; it is justice—the thing that we need first and above all things else. We need it before we need charity, we need it before we need pity, we need it

before we need love, we need it before we need beneficence—we need justice; justice in the household, between parent and wife; justice in the household, between parent and child; justice in society; justice between the different classes that make up society, between the rich and the poor, between the learned and the ignorant, between the capitalist and the laborer; justice between the different religious organisations that exist and have an equal right to exist; justice between the citizen and his ruler. This is the one grand crying need of the world, the one thing to adjust the relations of the individual to society."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE,  
 WHIT-SUNDAY, 1894.  
 (In the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool.)

A G E N D A.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By President.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.  
 Notice of Motion by North West London Branch and Finsbury Branch:—"That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1894 5."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.  
 The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election:—Dr. T. R. Allinson, George Anderson, Daniel Baker, N. B. Billany, Joseph Brown, J. E. Brumage, Prof. Ludwig Büchner, M.D.; W. W. Collins, Robert Forder, S. Hartmann, William Heaford, George Jacob Holyoake, C. J. Hunt, P. A. V. Le Lubez, Arthur B. Moss, Touzeau Parris, S. M. Peacock, William Pratt, Victor Roger, John Samson, Dr. E. Schlaeger, Thomas Slater, Robert Owen Smith, Mrs. Thornton Smith, George Standing, Joannes Swaagman, Joseph Symes, Edward Truelove, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, Charles Watts, J. M. Wheeler.
7. Election of Honorary Secretary.  
 Mr. R. Forder is nominated by the Executive for re-election.
8. Election of Auditors.
9. Notice of Motion by Chatham Branch—
  - (a) That the Branches nominate towns for holding the Conference, but that the Executive state at reasonable length, in the circular forwarded with the voting papers, their opinion as to the most suitable place nominated.
  - (b) That it be an instruction to the Executive, when issuing the circulars asking for nomination of places for the Annual Conference, that the "necessary arrangements" be detailed at length for the information and guidance of Branches.
10. President's statement *re* the Immediate Practical Objects of the Society, ordered to be drawn up at the last Conference, with a view to the formal adoption of the same.
11. Notice of Motion by Mr. E. H. B. Stephenson—  
 That to the Immediate Practical Objects of the Society be added a clause providing for the promotion of the humane treatment of animals and their protection from cruelty.
12. Notice of Motion by Liverpool Branch—  
 That the Reform of the administration of justice be in future a leading point in the program of the N.S.S.
13. Notice of Motion by West London Branch—  
 That only members who have been such for five years shall be eligible as Vice-Presidents.
14. Notice of Motion by Battersea Branch—
  - (a) That the Assistant Secretary be elected at the Conference.
  - (b) That the Organisation Committee be elected at the Conference.
  - (c) That members' certificates be issued within one month after their subscriptions are paid at headquarters.
  - (d) That cards of membership be issued which will serve as a kind of passport when members are visiting London or provincial Branches; the color of the card to be changed every year or every two years, to prove the contribution paid.
  - (e) That the N.S.S. shall advocate all political and social reforms which will tend to benefit the condition of the people.

## 15. Notice of Motion by Mr. G. W. Foote—

That the National Secular Society shall no longer await the convenience of the Liberty of Bequest Committee, but shall do its utmost to promote a Bill for the complete abolition of the Blasphemy Laws.

## 16. Notice of Motion by Mr. C. Watts and Mr. J. M. Wheeler.

That this Conference heartily endorses the action of the Executive in regard to the question of Secular Education in public schools, and calls upon Secularists throughout the whole country, and especially in London, to throw themselves promptly and energetically into the struggle against religious usurpation over the minds of the young; and this Conference further considers it the duty of all Secularists, wherever possible, to record their votes entirely for the candidates who are pledged to the "Secular" ticket.

17. Statement by President *re* a certain Prosecution, and any motion thereupon.

## 18. Any other business, by consent of the Conference.

The morning sitting of the Conference will open at 10.30 and close at 12.30; the afternoon sitting will open at 2.30 and close at 4.30, unless extended by resolution.

Only members of the National Secular Society can speak or vote. Freethinkers, who are not members, are welcome to seats in the gallery.

A public meeting will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock, when addresses will be delivered by Messrs. G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, and others whose names will be duly announced.

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## ACID DROPS.

Heine said many bitter things about Englishmen, and especially about their religion. Naturally, also, he said some bitter things about Scotchmen. One of them was that the inhabitants of "Caledonia stern and wild" were Jews born out of due season north of the Tweed who ate pork. The Covenanter was not a lovely object to the great cosmopolitan poet and wit. Nor is he such to Mr. Andrew Lang, who, in his new book on *St. Andrews*, says that the Covenanters "could do much to bring about what they predicted, and as they usually prophesied evil, they were usually correct in their forecasts." Referring to the Kirk, he speaks of "the bloodthirsty zeal of a theocracy modelled on the wildest passions of ancient Israel."

The Bishop of Norwich is in his anecdote. He appears to think that a little story he told in the pulpit settled the hash of secular education. The story was of an accomplished Spaniard who had never seen a Bible, and whom he had afterwards found in a prison to which he (the bishop) was chaplain. "And so it was," the report says, "that the merely clever man, if devoid of religion, became only the cleverer villain."

To begin with, the illustration is unhappy. The Bible is not much read in Spain. Millions of Spaniards—good, bad, and indifferent—have never seen a copy. Yes, the accomplished Spaniard was a bad selection. In the next place, the story has no relation whatever to secular education; for, although he had not seen a Bible, that accomplished Spaniard had, ten to one, received a religious training. So had Hobbs and Wright and Jabez Balfour. Does the Bishop of Norwich consider these men as arguments in favor of *secular* education? Or does he think that a single case on one side outweighs three cases on the other?

Says the Bishop of Norwich, secular education would be all very well if we were like the beasts that perish. He forgets that in his own Prayer Book is the declaration, "Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast." He may say this is not a correct translation of Psalm xxxvi. 7, but his Prayer Book is then responsible for misleading many humane people who have mistakenly thought their beasts may be saved.

The *English Churchman* points out that the London School Board circular permits the use of hymns without restriction. Though contrary to the spirit of the Act, distinctive dogmatic teaching can be inculcated in hymns; and, says the *English Churchman*, "unless great care is taken, the Board schools will be utilised to teach sacerdotal doctrine through subtle hymns."

So many Socialists, who are Freethinkers themselves, coquet with religion and pooh-pooh attacks upon it, that we are delighted to see a more outspoken article by Mr. H. M. Hyndman in *Justice*. Mr. Hyndman calls upon the Socialists to beware of the Roman Catholic Church as the great, historic, and well-organised enemy of all true secular progress. In the course of his article he makes the following admission:—"Men and women *are* still superstitious. It is no easy matter for the most capable to walk steadily along the narrow path of agnosticism. A fit of acute indigestion, a sharp attack of illness, and how apt are the majority to look tremblingly towards what the Anglican Church humorously calls their latter end." And again:—"The priest and the parson have all the best of the handicap so long as the supernatural dominates the intelligence. There can be no dispute as to that." Precisely so. And this is the justification of our Freethought propaganda.

The working-class papers seem to be waking up to the necessity of opposing the humbug of religion. A writer in the *Workman's Times* severely criticises the much-lauded address of the Chairman of the Yorkshire Congregational Union. He calls it "an exhibition of ecclesiastical insolence," and says the Christian Church is only patronising the democracy now because the balance of power has shifted from the upper and middle classes to the people.

We sometimes went to missionary meetings in our youthful days, and listened with rapt attention to some very wonderful stories. We used to picture the poor missionaries living on spare diet, and undergoing all sorts of hardship, in the midst of lions, tigers, and cannibals. As we got older the picture vanished, or rather it changed. We learnt that most of the missionaries had snug quarters and good salaries; and we came to see that Missionary Societies—to which we had foolishly given our penny instead of spending it on nuts or apples—were only emigration agencies to lessen the glut in the clerical labor market.

The Missionary ship "John Williams" has been to Hull, and people were allowed to go over her—which was a great mistake, for it has opened their eyes to the "poor missionary" dodge. The vessel is really a large and beautiful yacht for the South Seas.

Her cabins are arranged on the maindeck amidships, in the way most suitable to a tropical climate. There is a dining-room and six state-rooms, with accommodation for twelve European missionaries. Native teachers, being of a different race and color, are not so handsomely provided for. They have fifteen double-berthed cabins between decks, with a separate saloon. God is no respecter of persons, but missionaries are—at least on board the "John Williams."

This luxurious vessel will sail about the South Pacific, visiting the different islands, and "christianising" the natives. It must be a very pleasant occupation for the missionaries. Alas, for the pennies we dropped, all those years ago, into the collection boxes for those enterprising men of God!

We see from an American cutting that there is a row in Chicago over the Chinese Sunday-school there. There are forty Celestial pupils in the school, and each of them has a separate teacher, of whom all except five are girls or young women. The five who are under male teachers complain bitterly that they are not given girl teachers too. Similar schools at New York have led to the elopement of Christian girls with "some of the worst specimens of the Celestials." An anti-Chinese Sunday-school society is therefore being organised at Chicago, the head of which is Dr. J. W. Carr, an eminent local physician. Dr. Carr says:—"If the Chinese must have women teachers, let them be matrons"—at which John Chinaman smiles with a smile that is childlike and bland.

The following advertisement is translated from a paper published in Canton: "I, Achen Tea Chinchin, a lineal descendant of Coup Boi Roche Chinchin, the celebrated sculptor in wood, who, through his unremitted studies to promote rational religious worship by the classical touches of his knife and chisel, has been honoured by emperors, kings, and rajahs, and supplied them with superior idols for public and domestic worship, now humbly offer my services

in the same theological line. Idols executed to order, perfect in anatomy, from twelve feet high to the size of a marmoset monkey. The most hideous monster that can be conceived under my hands inspires an awe and reverence for religion. My charges are moderate. For an ourangoutang, three feet high, 700 dollars; and an ass, in a braying attitude, only 850 dollars. The most durable articles always used, and no deity made by me need ever fear of perishing of decay. Small idols, suitable for pilgrims, always on hand. The best establishment in the Flowery Land for cheap and lasting deities."

They have had a controversy on "Spiritism" in the pages of the *Record*, and several correspondents have shown that the Bible recognises necromancy, sorcery, and possession by devils as a real thing. Why they admit this, yet deny the wonders of Spiritualism, better testified to than those of the Bible, is a mystery.

Lady Caithness, who is an adept in Theosophy and reconciles Spiritualism with the theories of the late Madame Blavatsky—who, she says, visited her after her death—is going to issue invitations for an angels' and demons' fancy ball. There should be a few Mahatmas present. Madame Blavatsky left with Madame Coulomb full instructions how to make them. All that is needed is a bamboo pole, a bladder, and a sheet.

The *Times* of India, March 21, has a caustic article on Mrs. Besant's visit to that vast country. It concludes by bluntly saying that "Mrs. Besant has been playing to the gallery since she has been in India—playing eloquently we admit, but to the gallery all the same. And it has been a poor sort of gallery, moreover, whose applause has been cheaply got, and it is worth no more than she has paid for it."

The *Two Worlds* says of Miss Florence Marryat's lecture at Manchester: "Surely it was a slip to say there were eleven million Spiritualists in the United Kingdom! Where are they? We wish we could sell a hundred thousand of them a *Two Worlds* every week." Similar statements are frequently made about the Spiritualists in the United States. But the number of papers supported show they are scarcely more numerous than Freethinking materialists.

Nothing is sacred to the French journalist. Close upon the death of the late eminent scientist, M. Brown Séquard, noted for his restorative injections, *Le Journal* had an amusing article, entitled "Arrivée de Brown Séquard au Paradis?" St. Peter and the angels were all in commotion at his arrival. A ridiculous conversation ensues between the scientist and le bon Dieu, whom he proposes to inoculate when he has exactly the right preparation to suit the divine organism. He proposes, too, to operate on the angels, "who are absolutely senemic through beatitude," and declares that your famous Paradise is the region of perpetual chlorosis. Le bon Dieu says he needs no drugs, since he is eternal; but the physician reminds him of his little ailments of temper, shown in the incertitude of the seasons and injustice upon earth, and asks him if he has read Prof. Brüder on *The End of Causes*. Finally, Elohim gives M. Brown Séquard, for his experiment, the use of a spacious apartment, appointed as the refectory for honest members of Parliament, but which has long remained empty.

The Sunderland Guardians have had their fling back at Mr. Stead for saying the Devil was among them. Their chairman, the Rev. W. A. McGonigle, described the good man as "a speculative mountebank" whose speech was "punctuated with profanity and underlined with cant." Alderman Fairler surmised that Mr. Stead derived his notions of the Devil through the Spiritualism to which he was addicted.

The *Methodist Times* is down upon the Rev. W. Binns, of Blackpool, who read a paper at Manchester "upholding moderation," which is described as "one of the most dangerous, absurd, and even wicked papers that an assembly of believers in God could possibly listen to." The Methodists seem to hate a temperate drinker worse than a drunkard. Mr. Binns actually had the daring to say that "he never had heard of a great man who was a teetotaler, from Socrates downwards." Gods, angels, devils, and fishes! What a scoundrel is this Binns, to utter such sentiments in

the land of Hugh Price Hughes, who is a teetotaler (ask his friends) and a great man (ask himself—or Mr. Holyoake).

The Bishop of Manchester ought to know the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Writing to Mr. A. F. Winks, his lordship says that he "lives as plainly as any working man," and works harder and more hours than nine working men out of ten. This is good, but it is followed by something better. Bishop Moorhouse says he is obliged to spend £1,000 a year more than his official income. But he doesn't say how the deuce he does it. Does he run into debt? Does he steal the money? Or does he earn it? If the last, what an idle bishop he must be to have leisure to earn £1,000 a year in the outside labor market.

Mr. Winks has assured the Bishop that he will let working men know what the bishop says, and he goes on to say that "when they get up at 5.30 six mornings out of seven, winter and summer, to get to their work by six, work for two hours without breakfast, have a pint of weak tea or coffee and some dry bread, occasionally buttered, work again until one o'clock, taking again a bread-and-cheese dinner, then to work again until five or six, home for a meal again of weak tea and bread and butter, and, perhaps, a herring—as they go through their days of toil and privation they will be encouraged to bear their lot uncomplainingly and side with you, because you are living as they live and working as hard as they work."

Said the Mayor of Birmingham at the opening of a new Wesleyan Chapel at Handsworth, "he could not help feeling how much more easily Birmingham would be governed if everybody in it went to church or chapel." This reflects what is generally supposed to be a statesmanlike view of the subject, and yet if the Mayor reads his Bacon he will find that Atheism never perturbed states, and if he studies the statistics of crime he will find that criminals abound most in the most religious nations, and that a large percentage of those who give trouble to magistrates have had a religious education.

Oath-taking in no wise diminishes perjury, if any weight is to be attached to the retort made by Judge Austin at the Bristol County Court to a person who remarked that false witness was being given, and he "wondered the Almighty did not inflict him." Whereupon the judge observed that if Providence interfered in his court on every occasion when people did not speak the truth, the police officers would be fully occupied in removing the bodies. This was, of course, a judicial joke, but it obviously had some foundation in fact.

The Salvation Army leaders are so unworldly that they do not know the common laws of the community. The wife of Frank Keeler, an officer in the army at Detroit, Mich., recently married, was claimed by another man. The woman said "she thought she had the right to get married as often as she pleased." These are the people who send out missionaries to convert Muslims to Christianity.—*The Liver*.

The *Guardian* is astonished at the opposition to the return of the Jesuits to Germany, which it declares "irrational." But has the order changed since Pope Clement XIV. declared in his Bull that Roman Catholic kings had been compelled to banish the sons of Loyola to prevent their Christian subjects massacring one another? Pope Clement and the Catholic kings knew more about the order than the *Guardian*. A society that works in secret must expect to be suspected.

At the Court dinner given in Vienna in honor of the German Emperor, being Friday there were two menus, one a "diner maigre," the other a "diner gras." The fish menu was only patronised by the Emperor and the two invited Cardinals. Everybody else took a meat dinner. Court religion hardly goes down as deep as the stomach.

The Billericay (Essex) Board of Guardians was asked to have a prayer at the commencement of its proceedings; indeed, a resolution to that effect was moved by a layman and seconded by a parson, who thought the supplication dodge would be excellent in "these days of Agnosticism." When it came to the sticking point, two voted for the resolution and thirteen against it. Four were neutral, apparently not caring a farthing whether "To pray or not to pray" was decided in the negative or the affirmative. Some day or other, perhaps, the House of Commons will be as sensible as

the Billericay Board of Guardians. Archdeacon Farrar will then have to advertise for another praying job, though he will hardly be able to produce good credentials, for his official telephonic business with heaven hasn't brought down any special supply of wisdom to the "People's House."

A Yankee paper, the *Evangelist*, speaking of Trusts, calls them "almost an illustration of applied Christianity." The humor is unconscious, but it couldn't be bettered.

According to the Articles of the Church of England, Masses are classed with fables and dangerous deceptions. According to the *St. Margaret's Leytonstone Parish Magazine*, "The Mass of the Church of England is identical with the Mass of the Church of Rome."

The *Christian Commonwealth* "regrets" the Sunday opening of the Loan Exhibition of pictures at the London Guildhall Art Gallery. Of course it does. It naturally regrets any rivalry to the gospel-shops.

The Rev. Lord Victor Seymour is rector of Carshalton, and until recently he was a member of the School Board. He has been ousted from that position by a layman, a mere working man, bearing the more plebeian name of Rogers. Bah! It is enough to turn an aristocrat and churchman sick.

The Rev. Charles Spurgeon mentions "Show me thy glory," the words of Moses to Jehovah, as one of the most remarkable prayers in the Bible. Considering what Jehovah showed him, it may be called the most remarkable.

"Poor Tom Paine!" exclaims that ex-butcher, evangelist, and bigot, Henry Varley. Still, he thinks the "higher critics" are only following "Tom Paine's writings." Of course they are. This is a point on which we agree with Varley. But who are the teachers that Varley follows? Let us specify some of them in his own style. There is Jack the Baptist, who started the "Repentance" business. There is Josh Josephson, the converted carpenter of Nazareth, and Pete and Jack, two of his disciples, whose other names are lost. We could give a good many more, but these may suffice for the present.

Varley calls himself "a servant of Christ." No doubt, and it is a paying occupation. Eighteen hundred and sixty years ago it was not so profitable. The first Salvation Army was in sore straits, and its cashier had ratted. Times have altered since then. The service of Christ now commands the biggest possible income on the smallest possible investment of brains. That is why it affords a capital living to persons like Henry Varley.

Varley utters "words of living power." He says so himself. That settles it. He that believeth it not shall be,—ask Varley.

Talmage has been preaching a "rousing" sermon in his Tabernacle, which is now reported to be out of financial danger. Of course it was a sermon against "infidelity." Most of it is bombastic nonsense; so much so, indeed, that it shows how Christianity has degenerated. Such a vicious, vulgar style as Talmage's—the style of a third-rate auctioneer—would not have been tolerated a hundred years ago in one of the largest churches in Christendom.

The oracle of the Brooklyn Jabbernacle says it "makes him sick" to see the "literary fops" who patronise Darwinism. Well, if Talmage really feels like it, his audience should beware. For his mouth is one of the sights of America, it has enormous powers of lateral expansion, and if his sickness reaches a climax it will be very awkward for those who sit within a twenty-foot semi-circle of the rostrum.

Talmage actually believes, or says he does, that Agassiz settled evolution. Even the *Methodist Times* would be ashamed of such silliness. In England, one could only expect to find it in a paper like the *Christian Herald*, which is about on Talmage's level.

Coming to his peroration, which reads like the "smart" advertisements in some American papers, Talmage refers to Colonel Ethan Allen, who "was a famous infidel in

his day." A probably apocryphal story of him is introduced to give point to that rare old wheeze about "mother's religion." Talmage is very fond of it. His faith smacks of the bib and tucker. It is only fit—or is it fit?—for the nursery.

The Unitarian National Conference, at Manchester, wound up with a meeting in the Free Trade Hall, where selected speakers delivered "Our Message to Freethinkers." Not having seen a full report of the speeches, we are unable to criticise the "Message." We hope it was an improvement on the "message" of a few years ago, when the Unitarians decided not to help Freethinkers to abolish the Blasphemy Laws, on the ground that Unitarians were in no danger themselves; which is about the meanest decision we have the misfortune to remember.

According to the *New York Press* (April 10), "C. E. Moore, the Prohibition infidel editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, of Lexington, Kentucky, has been indicted for blasphemy, and is now in the Fayette County Jail." According to Moore's account, some weeks previously a Methodist, Rev. Mr. Southgate, prayed for rain to fall on the Catholics who were celebrating St. Patrick's Day. The preacher did not like Moore's criticism, and went before the Grand Jury and had him indicted for blasphemy, the specific charge being that he said Christ had a human father and mother. Moore is said to be a reckless writer, but that is no reason that the liberty of criticising religious dogmas should be attacked in his person. He is a Prohibitionist, and is therefore likely to suffer under a law similar in character to that invoked against him. But two wrongs cannot make a right, and when Mr. Moore finds the principle of liberty violated in his own person, he may modify his views on prohibition.

A correspondent who sends us an advertisement of "Coming Prophetic Events" from 1891 to 1908, asks, "Is it possible there are people who can swallow this?" Yes, although the same person ten years ago issued the same stuff, placing the events ten years earlier, and although he wrote a big book with the title *Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World*, he still makes such a good thing of his prophetic events that he recently invested a large sum in a provision business, and his paper has a larger circulation than any other religious organ. Could there be a better illustration of the imbecility induced by Bible belief than the career of Prophet Baxter?

We have before us one of the publications of this worthy. It is entitled *The Great Crisis from 1888-9 to 1901*. All the "coming events" are the same as in the latest advertisement, but with different dates. Thus we have "Ten Kingdome Confederacy by Great Wars and Revolutions, 1889 to 1891; Subsequent Rise of Napoleon as King of Syria by 1892-3; His Seven Years' Covenant with the Jews on April 21, 1894; Consequent wide preaching of Christ's Advent as at hand." The charlatans who gull yokels at country fairs are muffs compared to Baxter.

#### WIVES FOR MISSIONARIES.

CAPTAIN ROBERT WOOLWARD, of the Royal Mail Company, has just published his reminiscences, under the title of *Nigh on Sixty Years at Sea*. In one of his voyages to the Gulf of Mexico he had a curious cargo, the account of which must be given in his own words: "I had on board thirteen young women, sent out by the Moravian Mission as wives for the missionaries stationed along the route. None of these young women knew which man they were to marry. Thirteen missionaries had simply written home for wives, and the society sent out thirteen young women educated for the purpose, each one supposed to be as good as the other! We arrived at St. Kitts at three a.m., and the two missionaries, who had sent for wives thence, came off. I had the thirteen young women mustered up in a line, and one missionary said, 'I will have this one;' the other also took his choice, and both went off ashore with their new partners. The remaining eleven went down to bed again; whether pleased or disappointed I cannot say. At Antigua the same afternoon three were wanted, and three selected as before; but the Antigua men had a better chance, as they had their view of the young women by daylight. The same process went on at each island as we passed, leaving me only two, after Barbadoes, to go on to Demerara. If I had been in the market, I would quite as soon have had one of the twain that were left, and the last as any of them."



## SPECIAL.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed in future to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 13, N.S.S. Conference, Liverpool; 20, Plymouth.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.**—April 29, Dundee. May 6, Glasgow; 7, 8, 9, debate at Glasgow; 13, N.S.S. Conference, Liverpool; 20 and 27, Hall of Science. June 3, South Shields; 10, Sheffield; 17 and 24, Hall of Science. July 1, Liverpool; 8, Manchester.—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.W.

**JAMES HORNE.**—Such scoundrels presume on the impunity with which they have for so long uttered their filthy libels. More than one of them will be taught a lesson. Civil actions against some do not bar criminal actions against others. Meanwhile, we beg Secularists not to attend the meetings of such blackguards. Let them stew in their own juice till the time comes for dishing.

**LOUIS LEVINE.**—Thanks for your batch of cuttings. Send more as often as convenient.

**R. GETTING.**—(1) The Cambridge Companion to the Bible is apologetic rather than critical. We do not recommend it. (2) The Wolfenbüttel Fragments, or, rather, Lessing's Fragments from Reimarus, have been translated into English. They were edited by the Rev. O. Voysey, and published by Williams and Norgate in 1879.

**MR. J. E. BRUMAGE** desires us to notify to his Freethought friends that he has removed to 30 Braybrooke-road, Hastings.

**A. N. STAIGER.**—See paragraph.

**G. THURSFIELD.**—The secretary of the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society is Mr. J. Partridge, 65 Cato-street. You should communicate with him.

**J. KRIST.**—It is too long for the importance of the subject, and we are overcrowded with copy at present. Something short and sweet, like one of our "Acid Drops," would have been more eligible for insertion. We hope the open-air work will prosper at Bristol.

**F. E. ROBERTS.**—Will see if we can find room; if not, it shall be returned. The subject is worn rather threadbare.

**P. KAVANAGH.**—See paragraph. Thanks.

**UNITAS.**—A similar idea is worked out in one of our Tracts.

**A. BALLANCE.**—It would take a great deal of space to expose the falsehood and absurdity of the list. It was done in the *Freethinker* in 1883. The more recent names are utterly unknown to our party.

**NOAH LOT.**—The printer has your verse. He is overstocked just now, and it must wait its turn.

**A. J. WHITE.**—No one book gives exactly what you want. You may find some matter in Coke's *Creeches of the Day*, and in Alexander's *Dynamic Theory*. In French, the works of Letourneau and A. Lefevre, and in German those of Büchner and Hæckel.

**MR. S. STANDRING** will meet Freethinkers at the Geological Museum, Jermyn-street, W., on Saturday, April 28, at 3 p.m., to examine the rocks and fossils.

**MR. H. R. CLIFTON**, secretary of the Finsbury Park Branch, intimates his change of address to 39 Cheney's-road, Leytonstone.

**X. Y. Z.**—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

**BECKTON.**—Thanks. See acknowledgment. Mr. James Anderson, at the Hall of Science, will be happy to give you information about the Cycling Club. Glad to have your approval in regard to the Atheist Shoemaker affair.

**J. KENNEDY.**—We have conveyed your congratulations to Mr. Calvert on last week's cartoon.

**J. HAMPSON.**—Glad to hear Mr. Moss gave such satisfaction at Bolton. The large attendance and sale of the *Freethinker* are excellent signs. Mr. Foote will offer you another date soon.

**H. COURTNEY.**—The N.S.S. secretary has always plenty of withdrawal forms on hand. They have been advertised for years in the Society's Almanack and its current prospectus.

**TRUTH SEEKER.**—Received on Tuesday afternoon, too late for notice this week.

**KINGSLAND.**—W. Simons wishes us to announce a special meeting at Mr. Davy's, 21 Castle-street, Kingsland, on Sunday the 29th, at 12 a.m., to make arrangements for re-opening the open air station, and asks the co-operation of Freethinkers.

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

**FRIENDS** who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention. **PAPERS RECEIVED.**—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Liver—De Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Post—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Pioneer—Twentieth Century—Independent Pulpit—Islamic World—Ethics—Progress—Eastern Evening News—Freedom—Crescent—Für Unsere Jugend—Consett Guardian—Sussex Daily News—New York Press—Isle of Man Times—Echo—Diamond Fields Advertiser—Birmingham Daily Post—Daily Chronicle—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Star—Newcastle Daily Leader—New Kingdom.

**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.

## EDITORIAL.

**ACTING** on medical advice, I have cancelled all my lecturing engagements up to Whit-Sunday, when I hope to take the chair at the Conference in perfect health and strength. When this meets the eyes of my readers I shall be enjoying a little rest, fresh air, and I hope sunshine, on the south coast of England.

Some of my friends have written to me rather anxiously, but I assure them there is no cause for alarm. The springs of my life are not really impaired, only I must not presume so much as I have done on a naturally good constitution. By delegating some of my work, guarding against all unnecessary strain, and taking an occasional holiday, I may entertain a reasonable expectation of a long career in the service of Freethought. For a week or two, at any rate, I must claim the indulgence of my many correspondents.

With respect to the Prosecution I announced a fortnight since, I have only to say that it is taking the usual course of such affairs. I shall doubtless be able to make a full and satisfactory statement at the Conference.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Cohen took Mr. Foote's place at Walthamstow on Wednesday, April 18. The crowded audience was naturally sorry to find that Mr. Foote was absent through illness, but it accepted Mr. Cohen as an excellent substitute, and heartily applauded his lecture. Mr. Watts took Mr. Foote's place at Bermondsey on the Friday evening, lecturing with his usual eloquence to a large assembly. Mr. A. B. Moss kindly lectured for Mr. Foote on Sunday at Bolton. He is a favorite there, and was cordially welcomed in the President's stead. Walthamstow and Bolton will both have a visit from Mr. Foote as soon as possible.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts had two most successful meetings in Failsforth. The hall in the afternoon was comfortably filled, and in the evening it was crowded in every part. Over forty young ladies and gentlemen were on the platform on each occasion, and the singing and instrumental music were, our colleague informs us, exceedingly good. A collection made on behalf of the Secular Sunday-school realised £11 13s. 6d.

Previous to the evening lecture Mr. Watts named two remarkably pretty children. The one was Annie Clough, and the other Robert Wright Hilton. Both these young recruits bore their public initiation into the Secular party with admirable patience, the charming little girl appearing

very anxious in "taking stock" of the large and apparently interested audience.

Mr. Charles Watts will stand for East Lambeth at the London School Board elections in November. He has come to this decision at the request of the N.S.S. Executive. Of course he will have the zealous support of the Camberwell Branch. Arrangements are being made for a good working Committee. It is a long time yet to November, but we make the announcement at once, so that our party may know what is intended and reserve their votes for the "secular" candidate.

The Executive Committee of the Metropolitan Board Teachers have appealed to the entire body of teachers to sign a withdrawal form addressed to the Board, praying for relief from the duty of dogmatic teaching which the circular imposes. Those who sign, and we hope all will do so, ask to be relieved of the duty of continuing the religious instruction until the withdrawal of the circular. This once done, they will probably ask themselves what business they have to teach religion at all, and that will help smooth the road towards the solution of the question arrived at in the majority of the States and English-speaking colonies—complete secular education.

The *Schoolmaster*, in a leader entitled "Stand To," says of the teachers' request to be relieved of the task of imparting religious instruction until the Circular shall be withdrawn: "Into this fight we have been drawn with the utmost reluctance; but now that we are in we mean that our opponents should know it." If the teachers really have this determination, they are bound to win. Religious instruction is no part of their proper business, and many even of those educated in church colleges would prefer to hand the task over to spiritual instructors.

This year the Ragged School Union holds its Jubilee. At a festival, held in connection therewith in the new Queen's Hall, Langham Place, a letter from Charles Dickens, dated September 1843, was read. He said: "In the event of my being able to procure you the funds for making these great improvements, would you see any objection to expressly limiting visitors (I mean visiting teachers, volunteers, whoever they may be) to confining their questions and instructions, as a point of honor, to the broad truths taught in the school by yourself and the gentleman associated with you? I set great store by this question, because it seems to me of vital importance that no persons, however well intentioned, should perplex the minds of these unfortunate creatures with religious mysteries that young people, with the best advantages, can but imperfectly understand. I heard a lady visitor the night I was among you propounding questions in reference to the 'Lamb of God,' which I most unquestionably would not suffer any one to put to my children, recollecting the immense absurdities that were suggested to my childhood by the like injudicious catechising."

The *Liberator* (Melbourne) for March 17th has arrived at our office. It contains the first part of a reprint from the *Freethinker* of Mr. Foote's exposure of the Atheist Shoemaker story and its reverend concocter. "Mr. Foote is to be heartily congratulated," writes Mr. Symes, "upon the splendid opportunity he has recently had for exposing the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's pious lying; and he deserves the thanks of all honest people for the thorough and efficient manner in which he has used his opportunities. He has our hearty congratulations and thanks. We may add that few things in Freethought history have pleased us more."

The Dublin Ethical Society's organ has changed its title to *Ethics*, and its price to threepence. The editor is frankly Atheistic or Agnostic. You take your preference of terms. The longest article is a vigorous criticism of the theology of Dr. Edgar, one of the pulpit lights of Dublin. Some of the editorial notes are bright and trenchant. We are afraid, however, that it is rather sanguine to believe in the extinction, or nearly so, of the doctrine of hell, because the "few Christians" present at an Ethical meeting defended it in a "half apologetic tone."

*Progress* for April reaches us from Trinidad. It opens with a firm article on Secular Education, showing that our Freethought brethren over there are fully alive to the real

character and basis of priestly dominion. Amongst the reprints is Mr. Foote's "Easter Egg for Christians." A special leader is devoted to the Atheist Shoemaker story. "We are pleased to note," says *Progress*, "that Mr. G. W. Foote has completed his exposure—a thorough one—of that noted sky-pilot, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes of the 'converted Atheist Shoemaker' fame. Mr. Foote has nailed down the lie, which cannot but belittle Price Hughes in the estimation of honest people. We are sorry to note, however, that Mr. G. J. Holyoake was made to walk into a snare, where a tool was made of him by Mr. Hughes. Mr. Foote's masterly exposure is a relief to all Freethinkers. The Freethought party is deeply indebted to him for his manner of action, and the National Secular Society should be proud to have a fighting President."

Heretical criticism is creeping in among the Catholics. Father Robert Francis Clarke, replying to his critics in the *Tablet* on the subject of "The Deluge and the Higher Criticism," gives his opinion that the Pentateuch, "with possibly the division into five books, and with the addition of explanatory or otherwise supplementary passages, of which it is impossible to make a list both complete and at all certain, was, I believe, apart from transcriptions or other mistakes by subsequent copyists, given to them, not by Moses personally, but by a Redactor, R, whether R. was Ezra or some other inspired author."

In the preface to his latest volume of essays, entitled "Science and Christian Tradition," Professor Huxley tells how he was impelled to attack the Bibliolatry established by "dominant ecclesiasticism." "I had set out on a journey," he says, "with no other purpose than that of exploring a certain province of natural knowledge. I strayed no hair's breadth from the course which it was my right and my duty to pursue; and yet I found that whatever route I took, before long I came to a tall and formidable-looking fence. Confident as I might be in the existence of an ancient and indefeasible right of way, before me stood the thorny barrier with its comminatory notice-board, 'No thoroughfare. By order.—Moses.'"

Lord Wolesley has issued the first two volumes of his *Life of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough*. What he says about the religious views of the great Sarah, Marlborough's duchess, is worth quoting: "She never shared his [her husband's] strong faith, nor allowed him to exercise any influence over her mind in spiritual matters. She seems to have died as she had lived, ridiculing all belief in God or immortality. She was a sceptic in religion, but hers was the scepticism of indifference, and if she did not believe in the Divinity of Christ, she at least created none of the sham gods of modern philosophy."

Sarah had a temper as well as beauty, but she was true to her husband, as he was to her, in a licentious age, when religion was a cloak for all kinds of sensuality. After his death, she was asked in marriage by the Duke of Somerset, and her reply is characteristic of the woman. "Were I thirty," she said, "I would not permit even the Emperor of the world to succeed in that heart which has been devoted to John Duke of Marlborough."

This sceptical Duchess of Marlborough was a very remarkable personage. She was penurious, as they said, in her old age; but she could act handsomely when she saw a live man worth troubling about. She perceived the promise of young Pitt, afterwards the great Chatham, and gave him ten thousand pounds when he was only an ensign. It was royally done, and as it laid the foundation of the career of one of the greatest of Englishmen, it was a very good investment for the nation. There was a certain largeness about her nature, and we are not surprised to find that she was an "infidel."

The Secular Committee, at the Bermondsey Gladstone Club, will hold together during the summer, and re-open proceedings early in the winter as a Branch of the N.S.S. All opposition within the Club has ceased. The Secular meetings have, indeed, ministered in every way to the Club's prosperity. We are happy to record that the collections at the lectures have covered all the unavoidable expenses.

The Wood Green Branch are about to have a course of

open-air lectures on Wednesday evenings. Mr. Stanley Jones opens on May 2, and will be followed by Mr. Cohen. As this is a new departure, they hope for the support of all Freethinkers who are able to attend.

The Bethnal Green Branch ask for the support of local Freethinkers at Mr. St. John's first afternoon lecture in Victoria Park.

The social gathering announced to take place on Wednesday last at the Hall of Science had to be postponed in consequence of Mr. Foote's indisposition.

The Liverpool Branch held a large and enthusiastic meeting on Sunday evening in the Oddfellows' Hall. Mr. Laurence Small presided, and delivered a vigorous speech on the bigoted action of the City Council. A vote of thanks was passed to Councillor Taggart for his "sturdy advocacy of the rights of citizenship," and also to those "who had the courage to support him." It was also decided to ask the Lord Mayor to receive a deputation.

We beg to call the attention of our readers to the advertisement, which they will find on another page, of the projected Freethought Headquarters in London. We have let the matter rest for some time, and we now resume the appeal. The Hall of Science, as a public institution for the advocacy and maintenance of Freethought, owes its chief fame to Charles Bradlaugh, whose memory is to be honored (if possible) in the re-building of the premises. Ever since the beginning the place has been hated by the enemy, who have made it the object of their incessant and reckless calumnies, one of which has now assumed a shape which gives an opportunity for a legal prosecution. The best reply that Freethinkers can give to such monstrous libels is to support the Hall of Science financially. By taking shares in the Headquarters project they will enable the promoters to erect a Secular Hall and Institute worthy at once of the cause and of the memory of its dead leader.

### IF CHRIST CAME AGAIN!

LET it not be supposed, gentle reader, that I regard the hero of the Gospels as an historical character. *Au contraire*, had such an extraordinary person ever lived, it seems impossible to believe that he could have escaped the notice of contemporary writers. An obscure local preacher would, of course, have been unworthy of the attention of Josephus or Plutarch. But we are told\* that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them." If this be true, the silence of Jewish and Roman historians is, to me, inexplicable.

Such considerations, however, do not trouble Christians. To them "faith is the evidence of things unseen;" and the more incredible to carnal reason the Gospels may appear, the greater the virtue of unquestioning belief. Was it not Tertullian who declared "I believe because it is absurd"?

Proceeding, then, on the assumption that the Gospels are true, let us consider what would probably happen if Christ came again. What would he say of Christendom? And how would Christendom treat him?

To answer the last question would seem easy enough. It is not to be supposed that Christians would crucify Christ. But, if Jesus resumed his old pranks of destroying fig-trees and drowning pigs that did not belong to him; if he again went about denouncing the rich and blessing the poor, who can doubt that he would soon find himself inside a prison or confined in a lunatic asylum? It is not at all likely that he would convince Christendom of his divine status and authority, by raising the dead and giving light to the blind. Miracles do not induce belief—belief pro-

duces miracles. "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." "For neither did his brethren believe in him." "Neither will they believe though one rose from the dead." No. And if Christ came again, he might once more say of himself, "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here!" and "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers!"; but who would take him at his own valuation? The Pope? The Archbishop of Canterbury? Dr. Parker? Mr. Stead? Would Tolstoi himself? Hardly. Let us hope then, for Christ's sake, that their "blessed Lord and Savior" will not come again.

But if Christ came again, what would he say of Christendom? Would he say to Tolstoi, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"? That would depend entirely on the mood of Christ at the moment of meeting the Count. The Gospels represent Christ as being "everything by turns and nothing long." It is all very well for Tolstoi to quote the Sermon on the Mount. But the Gospels attribute to Christ a good deal more than that collection of Jewish aphorisms. If in Matthew vi. 6 he rebukes the system of public prayer, in Matthew xvi. 18, 19, he gives the Pope all his authority. And, if the passages Tolstoi cites in condemnation of armies and courts of law be Christ's, so also are the words, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword." Moreover, if Christ said "Blessed are the meek," he was himself exceedingly intolerant and vituperative. On the whole, then, it seems likely that, if Christ came again, even Tolstoi would come in for a share of his Master's abuse.

Nor, *pace* Mr. Headlam, is it likely that Christian Socialists would fare any better. In Luke, xvii. 7-10, Christ says: "Which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by-and-by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me till I have eaten and drunken: and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Substitute, for the false translation "servant," the correct word "slave," and this passage is at once seen to be an emphatic endorsement of the institution of slavery. Again, in Luke xix. we find Christ hob-nobbing with a millionaire named Zacchæus. If Christ came again imbued with the sentiments expressed by him in the two passages just mentioned, he would be more likely to curse than to bless Christians who advocate Socialism.

Probably the Skoptski, and other kindred sects, would receive Christ's approbation, for in nothing was Jesus more consistent than in his commendation of self-mutilation. In unsexing themselves, and in burning their women's breasts, the Skoptski obey the teaching of Christ contained in Matthew xix. 12; Mark ix. 43-47, and elsewhere; whilst the Runaways, in reverting to savagery, are guided by passages like this:—"Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."\* One would think that a man who, in obedience to Christ, deserted his wife and children would find the fulfilment of this promise somewhat embarrassing. Most men find one mother, one wife, and, say, three or four children sufficient. But to be blessed with a hundredfold of these "encumbrances"! Well, as Ingersoll says, "I do not accept the terms. I will never desert those I love for the promise of any God." Still, if obedience merits reward, the Skoptski and the Runaways deserve Christ's blessing.

There remain to be considered those who complain of the "literalism" of Tolstoi and others; those—the vast majority of Christians—who profess to believe in Christ, but never think of obeying his teachings. If Christ came again, what would he say of these? When the Jews rebuked Jesus for his savage custom of eating his meals without first washing his hands, he called them "hypocrites"

\* Matthew iv. 23, 24.

\* Mark x. 29-30.

and "fools." If Christ came again, he would probably apply these terms to most of his professed followers. And who shall say the rebuke would not be thoroughly deserved?  
A. LIDDLE.

### WHAT I WAS TAUGHT.

In the autumn of my life, with my faculties unimpaired, but strengthened and, it may be, softened by long contact with the rough world, I sit me down, in the solitude of my chamber, to commune with myself.

From my earliest childhood I was instructed in the fundamental principles of Christianity; but I cannot say that I understood and believed, in the proper sense of those words, that which I was taught. The remembrance of my childhood is, that I said and did simply that which I was told to say or do. I learned and repeated texts of Scripture: on bended knee I recited, every morning and evening, the prayer which I had been taught. I attended divine service and a Bible-class on Sundays, and in other respects I conformed outwardly to what was expected of me; but I did not really believe in what I was taught and did. How could I when I did not understand what was meant?

I was taught that there is one Supreme Being called "God," which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is (Acts iv. 24); and that this one Supreme Being, strange to say, consists of three distinct and separate persons, who are known as "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

I was taught that there is also, in actual existence, another great and powerful Being, called "Satan," who goeth about like a roaring lion (1 Peter v. 8), and whose sole business is to oppose God and thwart his designs.

I was taught that God created man in his own image (Gen. i. 27); that he made a woman out of one of the ribs of the man (Gen. ii. 21, 22); and that these two were the parents of all living (Gen. iii. 20).

I was taught that after death, in another world, God rewards good people, and punishes those who are wicked for the deeds done by them in this world; and that Satan is always endeavoring to induce people to act in a wicked manner, in order that, when they die, they may go to a place of torment called "hell," instead of to a place of happiness called "heaven."

I was taught that heaven is a place of ineffable purity and holiness, where there is no night and no wickedness (Rev. xxii. 1-4); that hell is a lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (Rev. xx. 10); and that, according as men and women—aye, and boys and girls too—live good and virtuous lives here, so will they hereafter be either happy in the one place or miserable in the other, and that throughout eternity.

I was taught that God created the earth, and all that is therein, in six actual solar days (Gen. i. 31); that he rested on the seventh day (Gen. ii. 2); and that, in consequence, the seventh day, or Sunday, should be always devoted entirely to worshipping him.

I was taught that the first man and the first woman who ever trod upon this earth were Adam and Eve; that, when they were created, they were free from the taint of sickness and the dread of death; that God placed them in a lovely garden, with directions not to eat the fruit of a particular tree; that Satan induced Eve, and Eve induced Adam, to break this command; and that, on their doing so, God drove them out of the garden, and condemned them to labor for their daily bread, and ultimately to die.

I was taught that mankind became so desperately wicked that God at length destroyed all but eight persons by means of a flood that spread over all the earth, and was so deep that even the mountains were covered by it (Gen. vii. 20).

I was taught that the Bible is the word of God—the infallible word of God; that it was written by men who were divinely inspired for the purpose; that the events therein related are absolute facts, and did take place; that the injunctions it contains are to be implicitly obeyed; and that, from the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis to the last verse of the last chapter of Revelation, it is literally true.

I was taught that the sin which Adam had committed with Eve in the Garden of Eden had descended upon me, and that, in consequence, I was doomed from my birth to

eternal torture in the next world, unless I believed on Jesus Christ.

I was taught that Christ was the son of God by the Virgin Mary, and that, of his own free will, he came down from heaven, and took man's nature upon him, in order that he might be crucified on Calvary, and so save mankind from the vengeance of God, his Father.

I was taught that the world was 4,000 years old at the birth of Christ; that when it has existed 6,000 years the millennium will arrive; that the millennium will be a season of perfect peace and love, and will continue for 1,000 years; and that during the whole of that period Satan will be kept chained in the bottomless pit.

I was taught that, at the close of the millennium, the earth will be utterly destroyed by fire; that all persons who have ever been born will then be brought to judgment, and that, for their deeds done upon the earth, they will, for evermore, be either blessed in heaven or punished in hell.

Finally, I was taught that God is just and merciful—a God of love (1 John iv. 16); and that, although he had made me, and placed me where I am, and although he knows how I shall live, and where I shall go to in the hereafter, I can, by the exercise of my own will, determine whether at my death I shall be taken to heaven, or be carried to hell.

These things, I say, I was taught to believe, and, parrot-like, I said I believed them; though in good sooth I did not, for I did not understand what they meant, nor did I even know what was the meaning of the word "belief." My mother, whose love for me was boundless, was to me the personification of goodness, and was to me more than God; the teacher, who thrashed me simply for the purpose of displaying his power and my helplessness, was to me more terrible than Satan; whilst plum-pudding and nauseous medicine fitly represented my notions of happiness and misery. That I was, however, well grounded in the doctrines I had been taught, the following verses, which I wrote in my early teens, will prove:—

#### TO MY MOTHER!

Mother! cheer thee! Let my greeting  
From thy mind dispel thy grief;  
For this mortal life is fleeting,  
And our days are few and brief.  
Mother! cheer thee! Soothe thy spirit  
With religion—pure, divine;  
Thou, a sinner, dost inherit,  
Thou canst call the heavens thine.

What are troubles? what are cares?  
What the grief that makes you sigh?  
What the sorrow, drowned in tears,  
When viewed with a Christian's eye?  
What are these when viewed aright,  
Viewed as ill's our faith to prove?  
They are to our path the light,  
Signs of God's unchanging love.

Cheer thee then, nor ne'er despond;  
Nurture faith in God's decree.  
There is joy and peace beyond;  
There thou shalt hereafter be.  
For Almighty God hath spoken  
That he will the sinner save;  
And hath given Christ—a token—  
Who hath conquered o'er the grave.

Thus passed my early youth. But at length I began to think, and to ask for reasons for believing that which I had been taught. At first I was praised for my thirst for knowledge, and warmly recommended to exercise my reasoning powers; but, when I did so, and pointed out that the so-called explanations that were given to me were no explanations at all, I was told that such matters as I spoke of were beyond my comprehension, and that I must leave their solution to older and clearer heads than my own.

Such a statement did not satisfy me; and I began to doubt not only the knowledge and veracity of my teachers, but the truthfulness of the doctrines with which I had been crammed. With advancing years my doubts increased; and when, in learning to write shorthand, I copied out the Bible from beginning to end—from the first word of Genesis to the last word of Revelation—the spirit of inquiry was fully aroused within me. Thenceforward I made a study of the sacred volume, and, as opportunities offered, of all matters appertaining or relating thereto; and, at length, I became fully persuaded in my own mind

(Rom. xiv. 5), not as to what I ought to believe, but as to what I could and did believe. "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things" (1 Cor. xiii. 11)

In my present faith I have lived the greater part of my life, and I am happy in it. Hitherto I have felt no "call" to make a formal profession of my belief; but recently an impulse, that has now become irresistible, has stirred me to commit my views to writing; and I do so accordingly, in the full assurance that they will be welcomed by those who think for themselves.

N. M. X.

### THE BIBLE AND BEANS.

WONDERFUL are the ways of Bibliolatry. Nothing comes up but a text can be found for it in Holy Writ. If it is not plainly there, why then it lies deep hidden in the Greek or Hebrew. For a long while we have heard of Gospel Temperance. A hundred years ago, when good parsons were all three-bottle men, teetotalism was regarded as next to infidelity. Did not the good Savior come eating and drinking? Did he not, as his first of miracles, turn water into wine in large quantities, for guests who had already well drunk? Did he not institute wine-drinking as the blessed Communion celebrating the outpouring of his blood, and did not Paul recommend wine to Timothy for his stomach's sake? But the temperance racket spread, and the churches found their account in hitching on, as they are now trying to hitch on to the social movement.

Gospel temperance is funny enough, but it pales before Gospel vegetarianism as preached by a wealthy upholder of the faith as it is in haricot beans, Mr. A. F. Hills. This worthy lays it down that God instituted only herbs and grain and tree fruits for men, and cites Genesis i. 29 as in his favor. If he would only read on a little, he would find that when Cain offered God vegetables, He turned up his Almighty nose, while the firstlings of the flock with the fat thereof met his approbation. And, lest it be said that the olfactory organ of the Infinite is not mentioned, let me ask the reader to go on to chapter viii. and verse 21, where we are expressly told that when Noah took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl and offered burnt-offerings, "the Lord smelled a sweet savor."

Jehovah was particularly partial to roast meat. He ordered that in his holy temple a lamb should be killed and hacked to pieces every morning for dinner, and a lamb for supper in the evening (Exodus xxix. 38-40, Numbers xxviii. 4), besides two young bullocks, one ram, and seven he-lambs of the first year, in the beginning of each month (Numbers xxviii. 11). Jehovah gave explicit directions about killing and roasting animals (Deut. xiv. and xvi.), and was very particular about the fat (Leviticus iv.). When Elijah retired to Mount Carmel ravens brought him bread and flesh (1 Kings xvii. 6). Jesus went up to heaven with broiled fish inside him. And to Peter out of heaven there descended "as it were a great sheet tied at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him. Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

Though the Bible absolutely reeks of blood and slaughter, and has for its central doctrine "without shedding of blood is no remission of sins," should vegetarianism come to the fore, we shall not be surprised to learn that all the prophets lived on beans; while, should vegetarianism be superseded by the Densmore diet, we shall expect to find that Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover by feasting on bananas and cocoa-nuts.

LUCIANUS.

### NOT SURE OF HEAVEN.

Hostetter McGinnis: "Rev. Dr. Talmago says this is a grand old world, and he wants to stay in it as long as he can."

Gus De Smith: "Did he say that?"

"He did. I read it in one of his recent sermons."

"Well, he is a darned old humbug. I heard him preach a sermon a year or so ago, and he described heaven as so much more beautiful than this world, and containing so much happiness, that I was anxious to quit this world myself."

"Perhaps the reverend gentleman isn't quite sure of going to heaven when he dies, and that's why he prefers to bear the ills he has, than to fly to others he doesn't know much about."

### ATHEISM AND ARITHMETIC.

MR. H. L. HASTINGS, who runs an Anti-Infidel Library, to which a testimonial is given by Ira D. Sankey, the Rev. H. Webb Peepoe, and Geo. J. Mingsen, sends us a volume entitled *Atheism and Arithmetic*. It is dated 1889, but, as it has only just reached us, we suppose he has a few copies still on hand. Mr. Hastings sets out by saying that "the mass of mankind, from the remotest ages, have believed and acknowledged the existence of a God." But what the mass have believed in are gods, just as they have believed in ghosts, devils, and witches. Monotheism is a development from polytheism. Our author tells us "Only bad men could have exalted or worshipped the adulterers, the cutthroats, and the villains whose names stand blazoned on the pages of heathen mythology," So, according to Mr. Hastings, their genesis is bad. In this charitable spirit he continues: "There are men who do not choose to know any God who is likely to interfere with their appetites, passions, and desires." As though belief were a matter of choice, and God could not as assuredly demonstrate his existence now as after we are dead.

Mr. Hastings undertakes the little task of demonstrating deity, who, it appears, is an arithmetician with a partiality for the number seven. "Throughout the whole history of man, from the forty weeks which cover his embryotic existence onward to the close of his life, the number seven rules his entire being." He dilates on "sacred seven" almost as much as the late Madame Blavatsky. "The ages of seven, fourteen, and twenty-one are clearly marked. Forty-nine is a critical period in human history; sixty-three is another; while seventy, the tenth seven, marks man's three-score years and ten." Wonderful! But the Registrar-General knows nothing of these peculiar sevens, and finds fifty as critical as forty-nine, and seventy-one as seventy. That the periods in females are usually a definite number of weeks is probably to be traced back to the influence of the moon on the tides, when mammals were partially sea-creatures; while the week itself is but a division of the moon's periods, till they could be no further divided into complete days.\*

Mr. Hastings's argument from the seven notes of music is rather impaired by the admission that to have adequate command over all the keys used in modern music would need an instrument having seventy-two notes in each octave. Indeed, it is the number eleven, rather than seven, which measures the vibrations of sound affecting us as musical notes. But it is men who have agreed to call 264 vibrations per second the middle C, half that number an octave lower, and double that number an octave higher. The well-known fact that harmony has a physical basis in the proportionate vibration of atmospheric molecules has rather a materialistic than a theistic bearing.

Just as much beside the purpose is Mr. Hastings's argument from *phylloclaxis* in plants. He says: "If the leaves upon a stem were arranged by chance, they might sometimes be all on one side of the stem, and sometimes upon the other." He might as well have said, "If men were arranged by chance, their eyes might be under their armpits or in the soles of their feet." Men could not live so. Nor could plants live if their leaves had not a due portion of light and air. They are as they are because they could not exist otherwise. Monstrosities are born, but, in the struggle for life, they are soon crushed out. That the constant effort to live results in an arrangement which can be mathematically calculated, is only a demonstration of the universality of law. Every atom must have definite relations to chemically unite, but these relations exist within, and are not imposed from without.

Plato long ago said God was the great geometrician. To make him an arithmetician, running in a rut of seven, is rather a descent, and between Plato and Hastings there is indeed a vast abyss. But neither understands the Atheist's point, that man being a product of nature, they must have something in common. The laws of his being must be affected by the universe without. But that does not warrant him in speaking of the universe in the terms of his own nature. Moreover, with this necessary likeness, there is also an essential difference. And that difference is a moral one; nature being heedless of human interests. We have no thanks for the absolute laws of sound, any more than we thank Omnipresent Space for giving us elbow-room. For harmonising sounds to the human ear we praise not the God of thunder, but Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner. For arithmetical science we praise no God, but Colenso, Napier, Euler, Lagrange, Euclid, and all human thinkers who have helped to build the science up from the time of the rude savages who first began to count upon their fingers.

### FUND FOR NAILING DOWN THE "ATHEIST SHOEMAKER" LIE.

W. Bailey, 10s.; Bockton, £1.

\* The curious reader may consult "Sacred Seven" in *Bible Studies*.

**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.]

Secretaries may, to save postage, send their monthly lecture lists.

**LONDON.**

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, George Bernard Shaw, "The Price of Brains under Socialism" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, Touzeau Parris, "How we Obtain Knowledge" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, musical and dramatic entertainment (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, H. Snell, "Science, Art, and Education."

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

Walthamstow—Workmen's Hall, High-street: Wednesday at 8, W. Heaford, "God and the Enigma of Evil."

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Curtis's Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, C. W. Mowbray will lecture (free).

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Battersea Park-gates: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, H. Snell, "Bible Teaching in Board Schools."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11, St. John, "The New Christianity"; 3, F. Haslam will lecture.

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6, a lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, C. J. Hunt will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam, "The Bible and Science."

Islington—Prebend-street, Packington-street, Essex-road: 11.30, E. Calvert, "Secularism and its Aims."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "What must I do to be Saved?"

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Bible Studies"—part i.

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, James Rowney, "Christ's Teaching Defective"—part iv.

Tottenham Green (corner of Seven Sisters-road): 3.30, Sam Standing, "The Art of Discussing Theology."

Victoria Park (near the Fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, St. John will lecture.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "The Plagues of Egypt"; 7, Sam Standing, "How shall the Dead be Raised Up?" Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Matters."

**COUNTRY.**

Bolton—Borough Chambers, Rushton-street: 6.30, a social evening.

Derby—Friar Gate Coffee Tavern: Tuesday at 7.30, business meeting.

Dundee—City Assembly Rooms: Charles Watts, at 11, "The Horrors of the French Revolution, and what Caused them"; 2.15, "Theism and Agnosticism, which is the more Reasonable?" 4.15, festival; 6.30, "Secularism the True Gospel of Mankind."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12 (class), selected article from *Free Review*; 6.30, "Ion," "Modern Geology Criticised."

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, Mr. Monroe, "A Review of Miss Florence Marryat's lecture, 'There is no Death.'"

Liverpool—Oddfellows' (Large) Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Ernest Newman (of the *Free Review*), "Modern Christianity," with an allusion to recent local events. (6d. and 3d., gallery free.)

Manchester—Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints': 6.30, dramatic entertainment.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, a meeting. Wednesday at 7.30, Social Club.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rotherham-street: 11, O. Cohen, "Charles Darwin"; 3, "The Rise of Christianity"; 7, "Religion and Freethought." Monday, at 8, "Science and Supernaturalism." Tuesday, at 8, "Gods and God-Makers." Wednesday, at 8, "The Fate of Religion." Thursday at 8, "Religion and Progress."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, business meeting.

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults (long room above), Bridge-street: 7, W. Cook, "Morality from a Freethought Standpoint."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Brighton—on the Level: 3, W. Heaford, "Secularism or the Bible—which?" On the Front at 7, "The Problem of Pain in relation to the Idea of God."

**LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.**

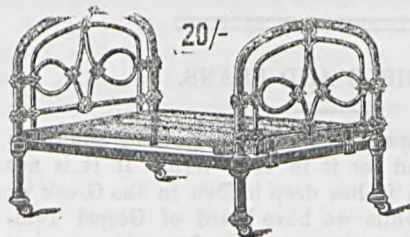
O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—April 29 to May 6, Sheffield; 8, Battersea; 9, Wood Green; 13, m. Camberwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Camberwell; 15, Battersea; 18, Wood Green; 20 to 28, Manchester; 29, Battersea.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 29, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith. May 6, Belfast; 13, Conference; 20, e., Edmonton; 27, m., Pimlico Pier.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 29, Old Pimlico Pier. 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 29, Hall of Science. May 6, South Shields.

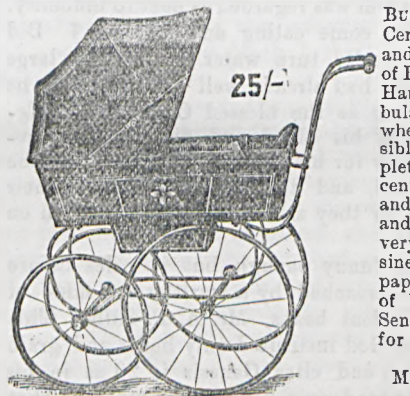
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