

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.



CHARLES WATTS.

(See page 461.)

CHRISTENING YORK'S BABY.

NATURE was very ill-behaved last Monday. Her demeanor was positively scandalous. A royal baby was to be christened, and Nature ought to have looked her very best; but instead of smiling in sunshine she was sulky in rain. It may be that Nature is getting a little addle-headed in these latter days. Perhaps, after all, she went wrong out of a good intention. For such an important baptism she may have thought it was necessary to furnish plenty of water.

The baby we refer to was christened "Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David." It is a frightful catalogue of names. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will have to interfere if this baby grows up to manhood and has to sign his name in full. He will find it difficult to remember his name properly.

No. 678.]

One shudders to think of the possible permutations of those seven words. But one should remember that the four names "George, Andrew, Patrick, and David" are a delicate compliment to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, being the names of the patron saints of the four nationalities. It is to be hoped, however, that two of the four names are not in this case prophetic; for Saint George, according to Gibbon, and Saint David, according to the Bible, were two of the greatest scoundrels that ever cheated the gallows.

According to the newspaper reports, the ordinary Baptism Service was used on this occasion. Surely it was a great indignity! Something special should have been composed, instead of using the words that serve for any common brat. *This* baby was *royal*, and it behaved "as sich." When it was sprinkled with the holy water it "made no protest," but bore itself with "the utmost composure." Some blaspheming Republicans will say that all this was

but the sign of a lethargic disposition. They are wrong basely, miserably wrong. It was a sign of high breeding. John or William may snivel at the font, but something else is expected of Albert Edward Christian, George Andrew Patrick, David.

It took four clergymen to christen that baby. The water-sprinklers were led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, next came the Bishop of Rochester, then Canon Dalton, and finally the Rev. E. Carr Glyn. We are not informed how they shared the service, or "the usual consideration." But that is by the way. The point is, there were four of them. One clergyman is enough to make an ordinary child a member of the Church of Christ, but it takes four clergymen to bring a royal baby into the fold; which seems to argue that little princes of the blood have a quadruple dose of original sin, and need a lot of drawing off from "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

When a child is baptised, according to the Church of England service, he renounces the devil and all his works, and declares his steadfast belief in the articles of the Apostles' Creed. Of course the child cannot do this personally. He does it by proxy. His godfathers and godmothers say it all for him. "Sponsors" they are called, and in this case they were numerous. But the joke of it is that many of them were not present. There were sponsors for the sponsors. The royal baby spoke by proxy, and the proxies spoke by proxy. We fear it will puzzle the Holy Ghost, or at least the Recording Angel, to settle their responsibility.

Albert Edward Christian, etc., was baptised with water of extra-special holiness. It was brought all the way from the river Jordan. This is a turbid stream, whose waters cannot vie in purity with those of the New River Company. But the Jordan was the holy river of the Jews, and Jesus Christ waded into it for his baptism. Long before that a foreigner who bathed in it was cured of his leprosy. But it can hardly be on this account that Jordan water was used to baptise our royal baby. No, it must be on account of the water's peculiar sanctity. And this suggests a dilemma. Either ordinary baptismal water is efficacious, or it is not. If it is, that Jordan water was superfluous; if it is not, the clergy should procure Jordan water for every baptised infant. And really it could be done at the price they charge for the performance.

For our part, we doubt if the Archbishop of Canterbury attached any particular value to that Jordan water. He is too much a courtier to object to the superstitions of royalty, but he is too clever to be deluded by them himself. The smile on his face would be worth seeing when he retired to his study after the ceremony, and reflected on the easy credulity which sustains the pride and profit of Holy Mother Church.

The royal babe's Jordan water was "poured into a golden bowl." A sand-stone font is good enough for ordinary infants. But this child is not made of common clay. He belongs to the porcelain of humanity. True, you might not see it to look at him. Many poor men's children would probably beat him hollow in a baby show. But that is a vulgar way of treating the matter. The superiority of royal persons is interior, occult, mystic. It cannot be seen in their faces.

In one of his graver moments the Archbishop might reflect on the absurdity of all that pomp and precaution in the baptism of one little insignificant lump of human dough. If there be a God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, infinite in power and wisdom—what in his eyes is the petty distinction between the baby in a hovel and the baby in a palace? The differences between finite beings must all disappear in the presence of his infinitude.

A golden bowl for the royal babe! And then its robe of fine Irish lawn trimmed with the costliest lace! It was all so pretty, and would have been delightful, if this were not a world in which poor men's children pine and wither, and die before they have ever really lived.

"Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich," said Jesus Christ. Nearly two thousand years have rolled by, and Christianity has long been in possession of its "heritage." And here it is at a royal christening, with an Archbishop playing the flunkey, and all the sects flinging their caps in the air at the tragi-comedy. When will the workers of hand and brain arise in their wrath and put an end to the ignoble drama?

G. W. FOOTE.

THE NEWEST RELIGION.

Two curious religious movements have appeared within the present century, the one in America, the other in Asia—Mormonism and Bábism; the first a reversion to polygamy of monogamists, the last an advance to monogamy among a polygamous people. Alike in their rapid spread and their endurance of great persecution, including the death of their founders, both throw light on the genesis and development of religious faith. It is only with the latest and the least known cult, that of Bábism, I propose at present to deal. The first account of this faith was given by the Comte de Gobineau, French Ambassador to Persia, in his *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* (1865). Mr. Edward Granville Browne has recently much contributed to a further knowledge of the faith, its history, and its latest developments,* and dispelled the notion that Bábism is merely another sect of Mohammedans. It claims to be a new message from God to mankind through the Báb, its founder and prophet. It has sacred writings of its own, and advances a creed fully as different from that of Islam as Islamism is from Christianity. The title Báb, signifying gate, or entrance to truth and holiness, was assumed on May 23, 1844, by Mirza Ali Mohammed, a youth of Shiraz, born Oct. 9, 1820, who returned to Persia, after having performed his pilgrimage to Mecca, imbued with religious and moral enthusiasm, and combining several Western ideas with the Sufi tenets, which have long been dominant among the cultivated classes of Persia.

Many legends have sprung up around the person of the Báb and his followers. Signs and wonders are alleged to have heralded his birth. He is reported to have been of extraordinary precocity. When receiving instruction in Arabic grammar, he is said to have suddenly demanded, "Who is He?" in a way which showed his thought was of the Eternal. What is certain is that he was a studious youth, fond of conversing with Jews, Christians, and Parsees, as well as with Moslems, on the tenets of religion. He was mystically inclined, and impressed by the occult theory of a mysterious meaning attached to numbers. He did not, however, run with the Theosophists into the old, well-worn lunar rut of sacred seven, but adopted the mystic number 19. At nineteen years of age he began to preach nineteen new doctrines. The Bábis even divide the year into 19 months of 19 days. Many of his doctrines were more practical. Thus he declared against polygamy, divorce, and concubinage. He favored the emancipation of women and their freedom from the veil. He denounced the Solomonic practice of beating children. He struck against another pest of oriental life, sanctioned both by Jesus and Mohammed—viz, the practice of living on alms; and declared that his followers must live by their work, and not by mendicancy. Exemplary in his own life and simple in all his habits, he denounced the Moslem mollahs, or clergy, for their scandalous vices, and for their unfitnes to serve as religious guides. The young reformer is further reported to have been remarkably handsome and of surpassing eloquence, stirring to their very depths the hearts of all who heard him. No wonder the common people heard him gladly. He soon made enthusiastic disciples, some of the most noteworthy being women. Of course, the clergy, the powers that be, and the conservatives were arrayed against him, and his followers were accused of communism, wine-drinking, and immorality. Mr. Stack, in *Six Months in Persia*, quotes a Persian gentleman as saying, "We too have our Nihilists, and they are called Bábis by us." The only ground for considering the Bábis as Socialists is that which made the early Christians club together—the necessity for mutual helpfulness among a class persecuted by the presiding powers.

Bábism is, at bottom, essentially one of the many schools of the Sufis, directed into somewhat more practical channels than their mystical Theosophy. Mirza believed in one God, who reveals himself from time to time in accordance with the needs of his creatures, and into whose Essence all will finally be absorbed, the status of all being determined by the portion of the Divine Spirit with which they are suffused. The Aryan Persian, by inheritance, inclines to Pantheism, while the Semitic Arab is fanatically Mono-

* *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889. *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 1893. *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb, 1891. Tarikh-i-Jahid, The New History of Mirza, Ali Muhammad the Báb, 1893.*

theistic. The slumbering dissatisfaction with the old Moslem faith among the Shiah of Persia, the mystic and rationalistic tendencies of the Persian mind under ages of Sufistic culture, the gradual permeation of European ideas, the desire for religious sincerity and practical reform—all furnished fuel to the new fire kindled by the Báb and his apostles. One of the most renowned of these was a woman, Kurratu 'l-'Ayn (Consolation of the Eyes), a poetess, who used to preach and lecture from behind a curtain, in deference, not to her own, but her auditors' prejudices.

The movement, of course, excited the violent opposition of the Moslem clergy, and soon after the proclamation by Mirza of himself as the Báb we find that persecution ensued. Mirza was placed under arrest and incarcerated in many prisons, the locality of his confinement being changed from time to time in the vain hope of cutting off communication between him and his rapidly-increasing followers. The weary days of his confinement were spent in writing. The *Be'yan*, or Exposition, is the title of his most important work, sometimes called the Koran of the Bábis. The more he became absorbed in speculative study and habits of devotion, the more exalted became his conception of his own mission, and his imprisonment, together with the persecutions of his followers, maddened them to fury. Upon the death of Mohammed Shah (Oct. 5, 1848) insurrections followed upon the confusion that ensued. The Bábis endured terrible sufferings, and performed prodigies of valor. At length the authorities resolved to strike terror into the hearts of the reformers, by the execution of their supposed-to-be inspired leader. He was removed to Tabriz, where the populace were opposed to his claims. After enduring all manner of insults at the hands of the government, and from the clergy and rabble of the city, he was at length condemned to die on July 9, 1850. Mary F. Wilson, in "The Story of the Báb" (*Contemporary Review*, vol. xlviii., p. 823), says: "The account of this closing day in the Báb's history almost irresistibly recalls a similar day in a more sacred story. The mock trial—the outburst of blind, popular fury, stirred up by a jealous and vindictive priesthood—the cruel mockings and insult—even to the still more cruel and bitter pang of being deserted and denied in the darkest hour by his loved and trusted friend." Even his execution was attended by what is called a miracle, one of those curious accidents upon which sometimes the fate of nations may depend. Mirza and a faithful disciple were suspended from a high wall by the armpits. A company of soldiers, at the word of command, discharged their muskets at the martyrs. When the smoke rolled away there was seen the corpse of the disciple riddled with bullets, but the Báb had disappeared. The bullets had merely cut the cords by which he was suspended, and he fell to the ground unhurt. Here was a miracle. Mohammedans confess that, had Mirza taken advantage of the situation, throwing himself upon the confidence of the people, and pointing to his deliverance as a divine confirmation of his claims, the fate of Persia and of his religion would probably have been changed. But the Báb appears to have anticipated, and even longed for, death. He quietly surrendered, and a new company of soldiers were drawn up, who completed the execution. Ten years, most of them spent in prison, comprised the career of the founder of the newest religion. He died at the age of thirty.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

THOUGHTS ON LIBERTY.

(CONCLUDED.)

IN my article last week I stated that, according to my conception of mental liberty, it implied a condition in which the mind is free to act, unfettered by external authority. I do not plead for toleration, for that supposes that those who tolerate possess a right that does not belong to those who are tolerated. No such right as that exists, for the principle of liberty involves the enjoyment of equal rights in the realms of thought for all mankind. Further, it means that we should be allowed, without being intimidated, to act out our thinking, provided our actions do not infringe upon the rights of others. For instance, every person should have the choice either of entering a church or of remaining outside; people ought to be as free in this

matter as they are in reference to going in or coming out of their own houses. To use force of any kind with a view of inducing persons either to worship or not to worship is an infringement upon that liberty which is the precursor of moral and intellectual development. Secularism does not recognise any such despotism, and when Christians, as a body, pursue the same policy, it will be better for the happiness and advancement of the human race.

Much nonsense is talked at the present time about certain persons not being fit for liberty. It would be interesting to learn who gave one section of the community the authority to sit in judgment as to the fitness or otherwise of any other portion of the human family to exercise that which is their undoubted right. Probably some are less capable than others of enjoying the blessings of freedom; but that is often more a misfortune than a fault; it is certainly no reason for excluding the less fortunate ones from their right altogether. This is quite as absurd as to say that a man should not enter the water until he had learned to swim. Upon the same principle, if those who have never been permitted to taste the sweets of freedom are to be kept in subjection until they have a practical knowledge of the requirements of liberty, it is to be feared that perpetual serfdom will be the fate of these victims of injustice. Fortunately for the dignity of the race, people are more than ever preferring to decide for themselves as to their fitness for liberty, instead of delegating that function to others, however lofty their positions in society may be. This is a manifestation of a noble courage which adds a lustre to character, and is in itself a striking indication that those who exhibit it possess the fitness for the enjoyment of freedom. My plea is for the fullest liberty of thought, which has always been an impediment in the way of those who sought to oppress others. It seems as it were but yesterday when in Europe men spoke their thoughts at the risk of their lives; now, however, liberty of speech is the acknowledged right of the Saxon race. Let us hope that ere long it will find a welcome home in lands where at present it is a stranger; and that Canning's toast, "Civil and religious liberty," will be given and acted upon the wide world over.

When we consider how essential freedom is for shedding new light upon every subject, it seems almost incredible that its apostles should have been hunted down like wild beasts; but such has been the case with many brave heroes who dared to hold the torch of liberty aloft in spite of the Church and of the Throne. Liberty has ever afforded the best opportunity for the investigation of truth; and to attempt to impede its operations was as insane as it would have been to try to obscure the light of the sun. Truth is, indeed, the "light of the world," and yet those very men who strove for liberty to augment its power were denounced as being the enemies of their kind. Such unjust and short-sighted conduct was not resorted to because freedom was inimical to truth, but because liberty was destructive of superstition and aristocratic monopoly. It interfered with the perpetuation of delusions by which the human mind was held in subjection. Mental freedom is the revealer of the weakness and machinations of its enemies, and it brings to view the futility and immorality of the basis upon which intolerance is founded. Further, it is an exposé of fraud, and is diametrically opposed to any attempt to fetter the intellectual powers of mankind. What an anomaly it is that those who professed to be guides to truth should have made special efforts to prevent the free use of reason, by which truth can alone be discerned. Such a policy is like advising those who are desirous of obtaining a clear vision to keep their eyes closed. True, this method can no longer be adopted with impunity, for the days of abject submission "to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters" are passed. Hypocrisy may try to hide tyranny under various pretexts, and to cover error with misleading names; but it is impossible that these delusions should escape detection now that thought is free from its former shackles. The veil of the temple of superstition has been rent in twain, and the dark doings that were consecrated by theological teachings are exposed to the gaze of intellectual discrimination.

One of the most important results of the advent of liberty was the discovery of the art of printing. Through the agency of this powerful servant of civilisation, the newly-born thoughts of men were widely circulated, and this extension of knowledge had the effect of changing old

opinions, and of renovating decaying institutions. Old notions passed away, and a new order of things was established. The power wielded by the press lightened the burdens of oppression under which, for ages, society had been groaning, and the light which it shed around dispelled the gloom which had obscured the mental vision of a long-suffering race. When and where despotism ruled justice was unknown, and the most inhuman treatment of the helpless victims was resorted to. What more wretched picture is presented in the history of humanity than that of orthodox believers who, for the glory of an imaginary God, and for the protection of a supposed divine truth, torture with relentless cruelty those of their own species who differed from them? Thanks to the influence of liberty, the orthodoxy of our time is but a fashionable profession, a mere Sunday pastime, the weakened son of a ferocious ancestor. It is to liberty and its results that we owe the discovery of those truths which have softened the asperities of man's character, and which have imparted a peace to his mind of which the orthodox believer has had no experience, and of which, therefore, he can form no conception. In the absence of freedom no such tranquility was possible, and for its existence we are indebted to no church or creed, but rather to that love between man and man which prompts the acting up to the great truth that freedom of thought is the heritage of all.

The man who occupies the vantage ground of truth lives in the clear air of liberty; he is the one being to whom happiness is possible. Herein lies the hope of the world, the sovereign goal of human life. By the power of thought, freed from superstition, intelligence, freedom, and truth will be established among the nations of the world. This is the requirement of the age:—

We want the rights of Liberty,
With Reason's lamp to try
Each word and thought of other men
To solve our destiny.

We want our paradise on earth—
Not saints, but honest men,
Whose lives shall need no second birth,
Or Savior rudely slain.

And having these, the work shall grow:
Each effort shall set free
A thinking man, whose voice shall go
To plead for Liberty.

CHARLES WATTS.

RATIONALISM AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

RATIONALISTS ought to be, of all men, the most miserable and the most immoral. So, at least, we are constantly being told by the champions of religion. Yet it somehow happens that everywhere, and at all times, Freethinkers have been distinguished by their zeal for political and social reform; while every authority on gaol statistics bears testimony to the exceeding smallness of their contribution to the criminal classes. These well-known facts are of themselves sufficiently contradictory of the assertion that religious faith is the mainspring of all social life and human progress, even if it were not abundantly clear that religion was, in the beginning, is now, and, probably, ever shall be, a drag on the wheel of the social coach. But the religious mind learns nothing from experience and forgets nothing. Now, as ever, it is content to believe, or, at any rate, to assert, that, if Rationalists are not more immoral than their Christian fellows, it is only because they are under the influence of a social system based on religious sanctions.

That Mr. A. J. Balfour, addressing a Christian audience on "Naturalism and Ethics," should pander to their prejudices is not surprising; and that Christians should try to turn to their account his professed contempt for man and all his doings is only what was to be expected. None the less it is amusing to read in the *Daily Chronicle* that morality might not survive the general disappearance of belief in immortality. Note the implication. It is not so much the general disappearance of belief in Christ that is to be feared; morality *might* survive that. But, so soon as the general belief in another life, where wrong shall be righted, disappears, men will cease to be human! It never seems to occur to those who write this sort of stuff that it

is just this belief in retribution beyond the grave which leads the oppressed to submit, and the wrong-doer to continue in his wrong-doing. It is all very well to ask, "Why, if this life ends all, should I abstain from injuring another, if such injury will work me obvious gain?" But the criminally-disposed is more likely to argue thus: "Scripture says, 'though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' And Christ endorsed this in his promise to the repentant thief on the cross. Why, then, should not I sin if Christ's blood pays for all?" The pretence that Rationalism is hostile to social order is absurd on the face of it. Christianity, with its doctrine of the atonement—*vouli l'ennemi*. Let the *Daily Chronicle* itself bear witness. This paragraph appeared in its pages some little while ago: "It would have been hardly credible, had not a Bishop vouched for the statement, that as many as 75 per cent. of the convicts in Pentonville Prison had at one time been Sunday-school scholars. The numbers are 757 out of 1,000. A similar state of things is exhibited at Leeds, where the chaplain of the borough gaol reports 230 out of 282 prisoners as having passed through Sunday-school. Their average time of attendance was three years. But the Bishop of Dover, to whom we are indebted for these startling figures, has himself witnessed a still more terrible experience. He tried to trace a hundred of his children who had in the last few years passed out of school. He could only trace seventy-seven, and 'of those two only were attending church regularly, and thirty-nine were confirmed drunkards.' There must be something exceedingly dangerous about Sunday-school methods if this statement is not a libel. It was made with all the Bishop's gravity of conviction at the Conference of the Canterbury Diocesan Sunday-school Teachers' Association."

There is, indeed, "something exceedingly dangerous" to social welfare in Christian teaching; and so long as the Bible is set before children as a guide, such results must follow. Yet, with these results of religious teaching staring him in the face, the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* endorses the fatuous assertion of Mr. Benjamin Kidd, that Rationalism is powerless to provide a sanction for social service, and that both philosophy and science are approaching the conclusion that religion is the mainspring of all social life and human progress.

Mr. Kidd might learn something even from Thomas Paine. That writer did not need the light of that evolutionary science on which Mr. Kidd is so great an authority to teach him that the order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of religion. It has its origin in the natural constitution of man. No one man is capable, without the aid of society, of supplying his own wants; and those wants, acting upon every individual, impel the whole of them into society, as naturally as gravitation acts to a centre. The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man, and all the parts of civilised community upon each other, create that great chain of connection which holds them together. The farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, and every occupation, prospers by the aid which each receives from the other and from the whole. Common interest regulates their concerns, and forms their law; and the laws which common usage ordains have a greater influence on social welfare than the teachings of religion. Moreover, as Paine further points out,* not only is man forced into society by a diversity of wants which only the reciprocal aid of each other can supply, but he has social affections which, though not necessary to his existence, are essential to his happiness. There is no period in life when this love for society ceases to act. It begins and ends with our being.

The social instinct in man is certainly stronger than the so-called "religious instinct," else it could never have survived the conflict which religion has ever waged against it. And who can doubt that, if this were generally recognised, and the welfare of society, rather than the fear of future punishment or hope of heavenly reward, were set before the children as the guiding principle of life and conduct—who, I say, can doubt that society and every individual would be the gainer?

The question, "Why work for a perishing society?" is a silly one. If this life is the only one, it surely behoves us to make the most of it. Besides, as Spencer says, we are organically moral; and happiness is to be found in obeying

* *Rights of Man*, part ii., chap. i.

the laws of our being. No wise man or woman requires any sanction to do right. His or her humanity dictates that that is right and must be done which tends to increase the sum of human happiness. No one can work for the improvement of mankind without benefiting himself. As Ingersoll says, an intelligent self-love embraces the whole human race. But such a conception seems beyond your religionist. He must have a "sanction" other than the welfare of his fellows to prevent him from robbing his neighbor. Such, at least, is the logical inference from his language in this connection. ANDREW LIDDLE.

MR. CHARLES WATTS.

THE West of England has done its share for Freethought. Richard Carlile was a Devonshire man, and so is Mr. Foote. Mr. Charles Watts was born at Bristol on February 27, 1837. His father was a Wesleyan minister, and the lad received an orthodox training. He was a Sunday-school teacher at the age of sixteen, when curiosity led him to go and hear a lecture by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, which made a profound impression upon his susceptible mind. In 1853 he came to London and formed the acquaintance of Charles Southwell, Robert Cooper, and other Freethought leaders. His brother John remained for some time longer at Bristol, and was still orthodox enough to carry on a written debate with Charles on the truth of Paine's *Age of Reason*. Soon afterwards, however, John came to London himself, where he lost every shred of his orthodoxy, and associated himself with Mr. G. J. Holyoake and the *Reasoner*. Charles became acquainted with Mr. Bradlaugh in 1860. He entered the *National Reformer* printing office when that journal was started, and set up the first article for its columns. Like the Prophet of Nazareth, he began his public career at the age of thirty, delivering Freethought lectures in London and in the provinces. When the National Secular Society was started he became its secretary and special lecturer. Subsequently he came into still closer contact with Mr. Bradlaugh as sub-editor of the *National Reformer*, a post of much work and honor, though of small emolument. In 1877 he launched a paper of his own, which afterwards passed into other hands, and still subsists under another title. While on a lecturing tour in America, where he met with a most hearty reception, Mr. Watts was invited to settle down there. He did so, and made Toronto his headquarters. He established *Secular Thought*, a weekly journal now edited by Mr. J. S. Ellis, and assisted in forming the Canadian Secular Union. During a part of each year he travelled in the United States, lecturing and debating, and settling the hash of Christian clergymen in a manner that was rather new to the American public. Mr. Watts formed a friendship with Colonel Ingersoll, at whose house he sometimes stayed, and of whom he always speaks with love and admiration. Since his return to England with his family, in 1891, he has labored in connection with the National Secular Society, of which he is a Vice-President. He has also been on the regular staff of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Watts's articles are appreciated by a wide circle of readers on both sides of the Atlantic. As a platform speaker, he is both adroit and powerful, logical and eloquent. Few men equal him in raising an audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Perhaps he shines to the very best advantage in debate. He has encountered all sorts and conditions of orthodox champions; but the most skilful of them never got behind his fence, and the most scurrilous never made him forget his dignity. Among his platform opponents, long past and recently, we may mention—David King, Dr. Smith and Dr. Adamson of Edinburgh, A. Stewart of Aberdeen, Dr. A. J. Harrison, Brewin Grant, Z. B. Woffendale, G. Sexton, David Macrae of Dundee, and Dr. Jamieson of Glasgow. In private Mr. Watts is what his portrait bespeaks him, a genial Englishman, as pleasant in social intercourse as he is redoubtable in the arena of debate. He has a good physical constitution, and it is a reasonable hope that he may long fight in the van of the army of Freethought.

ACID DROPS.

THE Church majority on the London School Board has all its work cut out in dealing with the teachers. It will be remembered that the Teachers' Association resolved to meet the Religious Education Circular collectively. They petitioned the Board for the withdrawal of the circular, and, in default of this, they asked to be relieved from giving religious instruction. Out of the 7,000 teachers in the Association 3,130 signed the petition. Apparently the rest are afraid to sign, for it is stated that they are unanimously opposed to the new departure. The Board, however, will not recognise the Teachers' Association, and insists on dealing with them separately. Every one who signed the petition has received a letter asking what he or she meant by it. This is, of course, a blow at the Association itself, and the teachers have held a meeting to consider the matter. The Association decided not to reply to the Board by letter, but by manifesto. A determination was expressed to resist at "all hazards" the effort of the Board to break up the Association.

The teachers further decided, as they were denied the relief promised on application, to continue on the old lines "without reference to the circular," as they are still of opinion that it will "amount to a Test." This is plain enough in all conscience, and it remains to be seen whether the Board will beat the teachers or the teachers the Board. Whichever it be, the quarrel is sure to promote the interest of Secular Education. Lay on Macduff! And lay on Macbeth! No matter who wins. The fight's the thing.

"As experts," the teachers protest against "definite dogmatic teaching" in the schools. "Religious instruction," they say, "should aim at the formation of character and the inculcation of the principles of morality, rather than supplying doctrinal teaching, which is best left for a more mature age." Very likely. But such a statement could only be made when the orthodox religion is breaking up. We therefore hail it as a pleasant sign of the times—without in the least endorsing its logic, which is extremely shaky.

Lord Halifax, President of the English Church Union, said that the "Compromise" was merely a veil for Socinianism and Infidelity. Mr. Henry Gover, a School Board member for Greenwich, has taken the opinion of head teachers and school managers on this statement. Among the replies he has received is one from the Rev. Brooke Lambert, vicar of Greenwich, who characterises Lord Halifax's statement as "one which, if it were directed against a body with whom an action for libel would lie, would soon result in a verdict with heavy damages and costs." If this be true, it is a gross libel to charge anyone with Socinianism or Infidelity, as gross, indeed, as to charge him with serious vice or crime. It is worthy of notice that the vicar of Greenwich does not appear to see anything wrong in this state of the English law.

"General" Booth gave a dramatic imitation of Jesus Christ at Exeter Hall, shouting with all his power, "Lazarus, come forth." Lazarus didn't come forth. Still, the reporter says it was very impressive. Jesus Christ's opinion of the performance is not stated.

Probably the smallest man in the Salvation Army is "Ensign" Hayman, who was recently a delegate to headquarters from the Cape. He sat on a *War Cry* interviewer's knee. Once upon a time he was a professional clown. There are many other clowns in the "Army," only they were never professional, at least until they entered the "Blood and Fire" business.

The *Christian World* is far and away the most advanced Dissenting organ in England. It has done much to "improve away" the worst features of the Christian superstition, and is now giving a little attention to the superstition of royalty. Referring to the Welsh welcome to the Prince of Wales, it says: "To suggest that the popularity of royal persons is to be explained by their personal qualities would be gross and offensive flattery. It is apparently an interesting survival of the superstitious veneration with which our remote forefathers regarded the family of Cerdic as descendants of Woden."

Here is a choice morsel from the *Illustrated London News* of July 7: "The London County Council, on July 3, adopted addresses of congratulation to the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of York, on the birth of the latest infant prince. It was resolved to erect a new lunatic asylum at Bisley, the cost not to exceed £300,000." It would be a pity to spoil this with any comment.

Visitor: "Johnnie, what is that awful noise in your back yard?" Rev. Amen's Youngest: "That's Pa practising his vacation cough."

The American *Christian Statesman* laments the secularisation of the Sabbath. It says: "Open theatres, galleries,

libraries, flower-shows in the parks, excursions by rail and boat, secular meetings of labor organisations and social brotherhoods, and a thousand other desecrations of the sacred day, are seen everywhere." What a glorious change from the time when a man was stoned to death for picking up sticks on Saturday. The reign of man is more merciful than the reign of God.

Says the *Daily News*: "A cynical critic, who can hardly have intended that his remark should be applied to scriptural times, observed that the phrase 'false prophet' was the merest tautology. All prophets were false, because nobody knew anything about the future." The apparent exemption of "scriptural times" only points its special application.

The prophet of Nazareth certainly cannot be exempted, since the most prominent of his prophecies was that he should return in the lifetime of the then existing generation, and that there were those standing around him who should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom. Mohammed prophesied a Mahdi; and, of course, several Mahdis have turned up; but Jesus prophesied his own speedy return, and his followers are waiting for him yet.

The *Church Times*, though a very High Church, Romanising organ, does not respond very graciously to the Pope's appeal for Christian unity. It indicates that it expected his Holiness to offer the Anglican Church easy terms of surrender, laments he has only a Procrustean bed to offer, which all must exactly fit, and concludes that "he has signally failed to make clear the terms whereby the consummation of his and our devout wishes is to be achieved."

A missionary paper boasts of the extraordinary demand for Bibles and New Testaments in Uganda. It says that upwards of 10,000 copies of the Scriptures have been disposed of in five months. But it does not explain the secret, which is, that the natives regard all books as fetishes bringing their possessors luck.

Archdeacon Grant, in his *Bampton Lectures*, p. 92, says: "The cause of the eagerness which has sometimes been evinced to obtain the sacred volumes cannot be traced to a thirst for the word of life, but to the secular purposes, the unhallowed uses to which the holy word of God, left in their hands, has been turned, and which are absolutely shocking to any Christian feeling."

The Chinese were noted for their anxiety for the Scriptures, but it was found that the leaves were used to roll round tobacco, bacon, and other articles, and were even put to more ignoble purposes, for which the natives expressed their gratitude to the missionaries. In India, Bibles are no longer gratuitously supplied, because they were usually soon sold to merchants to wrap their drugs in.

The author of *Records of Travels in Turkey* says: "The Hebrews take the Bible with great pleasure, because saving their expense; they carefully destroy the New Testaments, and place the Old Testaments in their synagogues, sneering at the donors." The Albanians made wadding for their guns of the leaves of the Society's Bibles, if they had no other.

While the Anti-Gambling League is full of young enthusiasm, it might turn its attention to the gambling which goes on in religious circles, and in which the Catholic Church seems to have a bad distinction. We have before us a number of what are really lottery tickets, issued by the Rev. D. Burke, of St. Anne's, Blackburn. They are sixpence each, and they entitle the holder (if he has paid for them) to draw for a prize at the end of next October. "The winning numbers," it is announced, "will be published in the *Catholic Times* and *Catholic News* of November 2"—which is very edifying. A man who invests sixpence in this lottery, and draws a prize of £5, will be just in the frame of mind to "put a bit on" a horse. But gambling, we suppose, ceases to be gambling when it is done for the glory of God and the profit of the Church.

The *Man of the World* says that the Anti-Gambling League is got up by the Nonconformist conscience to divert attention from the Liberator frauds, which were purely and simply of a Nonconformist character; and Nonconformist ministers were, in many cases, the agents of that gigantic swindling concern.

"Talk about the conversation of henergy!" said a self-constituted defender of Christianity, in front of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, on a recent Sunday; "why, there isn't an Atheist as knows what matter is; they couldn't tell yer what this old 'at is made of." Shortly after the "old 'at" was used in the orthodox manner, and the defender of the faith was happy over his "Walker's sixpenny."

Mr. W. H. Quilliam, who has gone to Lagos on a mission

for the Sultan of Turkey, writes to the *Crescent*: "What a mockery this missionary craze is. Here are eight people going out to convert the foreign heathen, and on the very ship they are travelling by eighty per cent. of the European passengers—all, be it remembered, Christians by birth—refuse to attend a religious service on their holy day, and, more than that, ridicule the whole affair. Furthermore, two of the three persons who attended this service told me afterwards that they only went to pass away the time, and looked upon the whole affair as a hollow farce."

The *Crescent*, under the heading "Muslims, take Warning," calls attention to the practice of Christian missionary women taking medical degrees in order to penetrate the zenanas. It says: "Once there, she may give drugs to the inmates for the cure of the ailments their bodies are subjected to; but she will also endeavor to administer the direful poison of pernicious Christian teaching and doctrine into the minds of her patients, and thus peril their immortal souls." The *Crescent* points out that the remedy is to educate the Muslim women, so that they are able to attend to their own medical wants. This is practical Secularism, and the Christian missionaries can claim to have done some good if they spur the followers of Islam on in the work of educating their daughters.

A German missionary paper published at Bethlehem, and entitled *Evangelische Blätter* (Gospel Leaves), vol. ii., contains a paper on "The Christians and Moslems in Palestine," which is worth attention. It confesses that the chief rows in Palestine are between Christians. In Jerusalem it frequently happens that the different Christian sects engage in bloody contests; but such contests between Christians and Moslems have never been known.

Nevertheless, there is, says the evangelical paper, a deep underlying hostility between Moslem and Christian. The fact that in so many leading points, such as monotheism, punishment and reward, and the like, the two religions agree, only makes this antagonism at heart all the more bitter. The main sources of dispute are the revelations claimed by both sides, the Koran and the Bible. The Moslem appeals to the former, the Christian to the latter. The Moslem accepts much that is in the Bible, including Jesus and the patriarchs and prophets, but declares that the accounts of them as found in the Bible have been entirely falsified.

"For the Moslem," continues the Gospel organ, "the Bible in its present shape is a book of lies. For him the version of Biblical persons and events as given in the Koran is correct, and here is the source of the most bitter antagonism and hatred between the Moslem and the Christian. The former declares that both the Christians and the Jews have throughout falsified the sacred records. For them Christ—*Sa'idna Isa*—is, indeed, a great prophet; but Mohammed is greater; and nothing is more horrible in the sight of the Mohammedans than the doctrine of the Trinity and the worship of images."

"Unfortunately," our authority admits, "the Christians of Palestine are neither in knowledge nor in life able to give a satisfactory answer to their Moslem critics. Their religion is too purely formal, and not a living power for virtuous life and works, and at the same time they are full of superstitions. Morally they are so low that Europeans often declare that they would rather have dealings with the regular Moslem than with the native Christian in Palestine."

Bishop Thompson, of Mississippi, is no doubt right when he says that the religion of the plantation negro has not much to do with morals. But when he adds that "he dodges behind his Jesus to escape the consequences of his crimes, and, when he is hanged, he always goes to heaven," he is arraiging the religion of the whites as well as of the blacks. The negro did not invent this theological fiction—he was taught it.

According to the *Times Democrat*, of New Orleans, the law against the Bible institution of polygamy in Utah has not been carried out without injustice. It has the following sensational headings: "At Salt Lake City Mormon Husbands are Shamefully Deserting their Wives and Children:—They are taking advantage of the Christian, Congressional Law (for financial, not religious reasons) to literally leave the wives and their offspring to absolute beggary; but," the article goes on to say, "in every case of the kind one observes it is when the woman is *passée*. The Christian law and religion are not attended to—utterly ignored—when the woman is young."

The Rev. S. Burrows has been preaching at Adrian-street Chapel on "The Death of Socrates." He took for his text, "The memory of the just is blessed." If the Bible is right in declaring that there is no other name under heaven save

that of Christ whereby men can be saved, Socrates, instead of being blessed, is cursed to all eternity.

Truth objects to the action of the Bath Town Council in voting a grant of ten guineas in aid of the Navy Missions Society. It is doubtful whether the grant is legal. But other religious organisations are likely to put in for a share of the Council's bounty. Notice has already been given of a similar grant in favor of the Salvation Army.

According to a religious contemporary, at the quarterly meeting of a Wesleyan circuit, not a hundred miles from London, it was proposed that a subscription of two guineas per annum should be paid to the Allan Library in order to provide the local preachers with books. One "local" opposed on the ground that ministers needed no book but the Bible; which is a mistake, for they ought to have with it our *Bible Handbook*. A steward declared against books altogether as "superfluities." Even a newspaper editor would only go in for standard books that could be handed down from generation to generation. "These modern books," he said, "are so full of dangerous tendencies." The proposal was carried, however, but only by a majority of one. Good old Methodism!

Professor Smith has been tried for heresy at Washington. The Presbyterian assembly having declared the inerrancy of the original autographs of the Bible, Dr. Smith remarked that the original autographs had not been found, and professed his willingness to be deposed when they should be produced against him, if the assembly, on its part, would agree to suspend sentence until that event. God Almighty inspired the originals, but forgot to preserve them, leaving us nothing better than mutilated copies of a revelation that reveals nothing.

It is reported that the Archbishop of York has "inhibited" the Rev. C. H. Rouse for inserting shady advertisements in a London Church paper. The reverend gentleman asked "Little Mary's" to send him a shilling towards a shrine for "Our Lady." "Tell me your troubles," he added, "and I will remember you at Mass." This sort of thing would lead to imprisonment if it were not sanctified by the name of religion.

Doctors have for some time pointed out the danger of kissing the New Testament in the courts of justice. It is possible to catch all sorts of diseases by this disgusting practice. In fact, it would be a good deal safer to kiss the Pope's toe, which we presume is kept carefully clean. Some doctors have positively objected to osculate the "blessed book," and sworn in the Scotch fashion, with uplifted hand. Dr. Roberts, of Lowestoft, asked permission to do this recently before Mr. Justice Day. "By all means," said the judge, "if you think the New Testament a dangerous book"—which was a shallow and ill-natured sarcasm. Turning to the jury, his lordship observed, "The gentleman wishes to take the sanitary oath"—which was rather good. We shall hear of more people taking the "sanitary oath."

Plague at Hong Kong, cholera in Russia, and earthquakes at Constantinople, destroying houses wholesale and involving the loss of many lives, are among recent instances of our heavenly father's protecting providence.

The earthquake at Stamboul can hardly be considered a judgment upon the Moslem, since Greek and Armenian Christians have been among the principal sufferers. The Orthodox Church and Monastery and a portion of the Seminary fell in, a priest being killed and many of the occupants injured. At the village of San Stephane the Catholic Church and the houses belonging to the Capuchin Fathers were wrecked, and five women and a Greek family of six persons were buried in the ruins.

The retort of the Materialist to the design argument, that intelligent mind is found only in connection with a physical basis, has been triumphantly overcome by a genius, who suggests that the stars in their courses may be the molecular movements of the brain of God! No wonder God is spoken of as a consuming fire if the atoms of his brains are suns. Since some are so distant that their light, though travelling 180,000 miles in a second, yet takes years to reach us, this is, indeed, a God who is afar off. And the Materialist, after all, is not confounded. Give him an inch, he takes an ell. Admit such a deity, and he retorts that, if our wonderful construction needed such a deity to make us, his wonderful construction must equally require a superior deity to have made him.

The Berlin correspondent of the *Daily News* reports a curious libel suit pending against two newspapers—one at Rome, the other at Bonn: "A Catholic priest at Friburg, in Switzerland, lately refused to allow a lady to participate in the holy communion. The offended lady brought an action

against him for damaging her reputation, and demanded four hundred pounds as compensation. The Swiss court, however, rejected her claim. The above-mentioned papers, in reporting the case, denounced the lady as grand-mistress of a lady's lodge, and added that this lodge had accepted the Satan worship imported from America and the 'Devil's Mass' instituted by Grand-master Holbrook, at which the host used has been stolen from a church, and is perforated by dagger thrusts, or is black and dedicated to Lucifer."

Here is something for the Theosophists, with their love of the mystic number 7. "Superstitious people," says the *Daily News*, "are noting the curious way in which the career of President Carnot was connected with the figure 7. He was born in 1837, was admitted to the Ecole Polytechnique in 1857, was elected by virtue of Article 7 of the Constitution to the office of President of the Republic in 1887, was assassinated at the age of 57 years in the 7th year of his Presidency, in a carriage containing 7 persons (four inside and three outside, a coachman and two footmen) on the 7th day of the week, by an Italian (a word of seven letters) named Caserio (also formed of seven letters). Finally, he was borne in triumph to the Pantheon on the first day of the 7th month of the year, 7 days after his death."

Utah, having, by a divine revelation to President Woodruff, purged itself from the Bible law of polygamy, is about to be admitted as one of the United States. This revelation came after more than 1,300 men had been sent to gaol for following their Bible practice in preference to the law of Uncle Sam.

The *Hong Kong Telegraph* says that the amount of *bona fide* interest which the medical missionaries take in the well-being of the Chinese, whom they have come to Hong Kong to proselytise, may be fairly gauged by their action, or rather inaction, in respect to the plague-stricken wretches who had died by hundreds in their midst during the past month. Although it was common knowledge that helpers were urgently needed in the good work of healing the sick, distributing alms to widows and orphans, urging the people to report cases of plague promptly to the authorities, and in greatly-needed house-to-house visitation, yet no member of "the cloth" had come forward to render assistance in any shape or form in the great hour of need. And this, be it noted, although the authorities have advertised for volunteers.

An obscure bigot called E. G. Strafford writes to a Liverpool paper urging the Lord's Day Observance Society to follow up its victory at Leeds by prosecuting the National Secular Society. Not only do its Branches charge for admission, but they actually sell literature at its meetings. The noble Strafford was himself refused admission at the Oddfellows' Hall "unless payment was forthcoming." We can imagine his grief at having to "part," but we are not all alarmed at his foolish threatening. More than once we have invited the Lord's Day Observance Society to proceed against us at the London Hall of Science, but it has never shown a coming-on disposition.

By the way, there is nothing to prevent E. G. Strafford from prosecuting the Liverpool Branch himself. All he wants for the job is a little cash, a little brains, and a little courage. Judging from his letter, he is likely to want them.

The Rev. E. Baston, a retired army chaplain who does duty locally at Burton-on-Trent, has been fined £14s. for assault and damage. The man of God lodged with a widow, but, as the latter was unable to obtain payment, she instructed her servant to abstain from waiting on him when he was entertaining a friend at tea. Words ensued, and the clergyman ejected complainant from the kitchen, and bruised her arm during the scuffle. Two days afterwards the landlady locked out the reverend gentleman, who, failing to gain access to the house by other means, broke the windows. Defendant, who was for some years a cantonment magistrate in India, declared that the complainant endeavored to push him out of the house. He gave notice of appeal.

Dr. John Fiske, in his life of the late Dr. Youmans, the founder of the *Popular Science Monthly*, says that that paper was attacked for its "atheistical tendencies." An inquisitive Irishman asked, "D'ye b'lieve in the mother o' God?" "No," was the answer. "Be gorry," rejoined the Irishman, "ye're an Atheist! I wouldn't be in your boots for £20." Which leaves it open to believe that he would have taken the risk for £25.

According to the rules of the Athenæum Club, Cabinet ministers, judges, and bishops may be elected extraordinary members. The Catholics recently attempted to add the word "Cardinals," but were defeated. Of the three English wearers of the red hat, Cardinal Walsh is objectionable for his Irishism, and Cardinal Howard is known to have been virtually a lunatic.

They have a very popular preacher in Cronstadt, and pious match-making mammas have been fabricating letters in his name recommending particular matrimonial alliances between their daughters and certain pious eligible young bachelor neighbors, as being divinely ordained. The spurious letters proved successful baits in many instances, but the men have discovered at last that the will of God only meant the will of their mothers-in-law.

"Christian Ministers Awake!" is the heading of a letter by "A Sunday School Teacher" in *Mona's Herald*. The writer calls upon the "clergy and ministers of all sections of religious belief" to "stem the tide of scepticism and infidelity." It appears that "since the visit of the Apostle of Atheism last summer"—that is, since Mr. Foote's lecture on Douglas Head—"many who have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord have become the victims of doubt." Well, we are delighted to hear it. Mr. Foote himself could scarcely have expected such good fruits from a single visit to the Isle of Man. The seed of Free-thought appears to have fallen on very promising soil.

This writer begs the clericals of the Isle of Man to "combat the silly and insane notions promulgated so barefacedly by the rabid freethinker." Fancy the gentleman who uses all these adjectives calling his opponents "rabid." There is no foam that we can see except on his own lips. When the poor man talks about "the fanatical and devilish insinuations of blasphemous atheists" he only excites our commiseration.

It would please us mightily if the clergy and ministers of the Isle of Man were to take this gentleman's advice. He recommends them—nay, he calls upon them—to expose and refute Atheism by means of "public debates and lectures." But we fear they are not "game." Persecution is their first weapon; when that is broken, they resort to silence. Should there be, however, a high-inspired and unsuspecting man of God at Douglas, who is willing to encounter "the Apostle of Atheism" in public debate—or, as the frightened Sunday School Teacher says, to "manfully meet this giant"—the duel can be easily arranged. "This giant," this "leader of the army of the aliens," will be happy to visit the Isle of Man for the purpose of crossing dialectical swords with any champion of the Lord who is worth meeting in the arena. And the "gate money" could go to the local hospital.

East Kent Methodism has been having a spiritual bean-feast at Lyminge. Dr. Stephenson was present, and declared that "Jesus Christ's kingdom was advancing." America, he said, had one infidel preacher, and his name was "Ingersole," or the "Goliath of Gas." Dr. Stephenson does not know much about America. There are many "infidel" preachers in the United States, and no Methodist would like to tackle the poorest of them. Nor does Dr. Stephenson know much about Ingersoll. It is easy enough to call the Colonel names in East Kent. It is another thing to answer him in America. Judge Black, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. Gladstone have tried it—not very successfully.

Mr. Gladstone says that Colonel Ingersoll "writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy." Dr. Stephenson uses the word "gas." But we fancy Mr. Gladstone is the better judge, and anything goes down at the opening of a Methodist chapel.

The *Western Mail* is a Christian and a Tory paper, and would doubtless hail with delight another prosecution of the *Freethinker*. Still, it likes to do a little "blasphemy" on its own account, and we should not think of denying it the privilege. Its cartoon, entitled "The Liberal Unionist Paradise," depicts Birmingham as Mrs. Eve in a state of complete nudity, her flowing hair serving as a fig-leaf. Lord Rosebery is offering her the apple, and she is turning with alarm to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who wears a collar and an eye-glass.

Sir Richard Temple has been discoursing at Richmond on his travels in Palestine. In conclusion he reminded his hearers that it was "their faith in the Bible alone which differentiated them from the beasts of the field and the stones of the mountain." Probably the stones were thrown in to give weight to the observation. Leaving them out of the case, we beg to ask Sir Richard Temple a few questions. Socrates and Plato knew nothing of the Bible; what differentiated them from the beasts of the field? Julius Caesar was a much greater soldier than Sir Richard Temple, and he was an Atheist; what differentiated him from the beasts of the field? The great men in Plutarch are far superior to the heroes of the Old Testament; what differentiated them from the beasts of the field? Charles Bradlaugh was a greater member of Parliament than Sir Richard Temple, and he had no faith in the Bible; what differentiated him from the beasts of the field? But the worst question is yet to come. According to the Bible, there is no essential difference between men and beasts, who have "all one breath" or spirit. We therefore ask Sir Richard Temple, as a Bibli-

olater, what it is that differentiates him from the beasts of the field?

The Duke of Beaufort assumes the air of a lord of the feudal times. The parishioners of the village of Stoke Gifford having elected Admiral Close as parish churchwarden, and the Admiral being objectionable to the Duke, he issued notices to quit upon every farmer in that part of his estate, the condition of their withdrawal being that Admiral Close should resign. Under this high-handed coercion Admiral Close has promised not to attend any parish meetings, and to abstain from any interference in church affairs.

Christian superstition has taught that, if it rains on St. Swithin's Day, it will rain for forty days after—more or less, of course. Millions of people devoutly believe it, and there is no reason why they should not go on believing it for ever and a day; for such people have a large natural share of credulity, and are not troubled by anything in the shape of evidence. The sure way to kill a superstition is to study the facts. A writer in the *Daily News* of July 16 has tabulated the "forty days" for the last forty years; and, lo and behold, it turns out that the average rainfall during that period has been greatest in those years when St. Swithin's Day was dry! Thus endeth the superstition of St. Swithin.

"In these sceptical days," says the *Daily Chronicle*, "a little superstition is quite refreshing." We did not know the article was so uncommon.

THE FOOTE TESTIMONIAL FUND.

[Ninth List.]

Collected at Mr. Watts's lecture at Manchester, £1 2s. 3d.; W. Bailey, £1; E. P. (42), £1; J. Glasse, 12s.; J. L. Spiers, 10s. 6d.; A. Stanley, 10s.; W. Hopper, 10s.; Manchester Branch, 10s.; B. E. Marks, 10s.; Profit on Bradlaugh Souvenirs, per J. Anderson, 9s. 6d.; E. G. Taylor, 5s.; Mrs. H., 5s.; W. Macfarlane, 5s.; Stalybridge Branch (second subscription), 5s.; Two Freethinkers and a Christian, 3s.; J. Tellons, 2s. 6d.; J. Collinson, 2s. 6d.; G. Hobson, 2s.; G. L. Mackenzie, 2s.; H. Towers, 2s.; E. Self, 1s. 6d.; A. Friend, 1s.; F. Thornett, 1s.; P. Griffiths, 1s.; W. Pike, 1s.; M. L. B., 1s.; C. H. Norton, 1s.; W. Cann, 1s.; E. Cleaves, 1s.; C. Kinnerley, 1s.; J. Williams, 1s.; R. Wright, 1s.; W. Mitchell, 1s.; W. Stephens, 1s.; J. Burrell, 1s.

As it is proposed to close this Fund at the end of July, all intending subscribers are requested to lose no time in forwarding their donations.

GEO. ANDERSON, *Treasurer*, 35a Great George-street, S.W.
R. FORDER, *Sub-Treasurer*, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.
GEO. WARD, *Secretary*, 91 Mildmay-park, N.

GOD'S IMAGE IN PRESTON.

"A replica of Michael Angelo's colossal figure of David, recently placed in the museum of Preston, has been condemned as immoral."

The image of God isn't fit to be seen,
The people of Preston have said it;
Jehovah must, therefore, immoral have been,
Since he was the sculptor who made it.

In Eden the sculptor and subject were nude—
For neither had trousers nor vest on—
In fact, the Creator's so shockingly rude
He mustn't appear about Preston.

To look on the nude is to look on the Lord,
If biblical writings we rest on;
Yet man in the image of God is abhorred
By priests of his Maker in Preston.

The shame of the nude all results from a tree;
Its name—as experience teaches—
Instead of "the knowledge of morals," should be
"The Tree of Knowledge of Breeches."

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Faith of Science.

When Humboldt was asked as to his faith, he replied: "I am of the faith of all men of science"; leaving it to be inferred that he had discarded all untenable assumptions and all unverifiable theories. Darwin was more explicit. He said: "Science has nothing to do with Christianity, except in so far as the habit of scientific research makes a man cautious in admitting evidence. For myself, I do not believe that there ever has been any revelation."

SPECIAL.

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

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 22, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C. : 7.30, "Bible Beauties for Board School Children." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

July and August, London Hall of Science every Sunday evening.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

J. WILSON.—(1) There is no religious census in England; consequently we cannot tell you "the number of persons who were registered as Freethinkers." (2) Articles have appeared in the *Freethinker* on the New Testament Canon, but not recently. We may deal with the subject again before long. (3) We have no further information as to the Devil worship in Paris than what we printed some weeks ago. (4) The reference to Mr. Stead's new version of the New Testament was jocular.

M. BROWN.—There is nothing *illegal* in what the London School Board is trying to do with respect to religious education.

J. TROPWEN.—Your verse has "go," but the form is not quite up to the mark. "Fickleness," for instance, does not rhyme with "littleness."

G. W. B.—We could not undertake to issue it for you, and we have no interest with any of the publishers. We fear you would find great difficulty in getting the work put on the market except at your own risk.

F. WEEKS.—Your letter is no reply to our question. Opinion must be based upon facts. Abstract discussion in such a case is a mere waste of time. We should never have asked what Mr. Bruce Wallace lives on if his friend, Mr. Kenworthy, had not publicly stated that he refuses any remuneration for his pastorate of the Brotherhood Church. This was stated as a merit, but before a true judgment can be formed it is necessary to know the source and extent of Mr. Wallace's income. Tell us that first, please.

A. HINDLEY.—Thanks. See paragraph.

H. P. CHANTER.—It has not reached us. Shall be happy to insert a good notice if you will oblige us with fresh particulars.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Huddersfield Branch, 7s. 6d.; W. Mann, 5s.; West London Branch, 10s.

H. BUTCHER.—We printed that bill in the *Freethinker* about ten years ago.

E. S.—(1) Mr. Wheeler has frequently stated his view of mission work in India. He regards it as a ridiculous failure. (2) Strong excitement, like "conversion," may change the direction of a man's life, but if you watch him closely you will find it does not change his nature. All the essential characteristics remain. (3) Glad to hear your friends are pleased with the cartoons.

J. SAUNDERS.—Colonel Ingersoll has never been in the Congress or the Senate. At one time he was an active Republican campaigner, but of late he seems to have contracted a distaste for politics, as most of the best men in America do in time.

PERCY REID.—May find a corner for it.

J. UMPLERY.—Thanks for your good wishes. We are always pleased to hear from a veteran like yourself. See "Acid Drops."

MANCHESTER BRANCH.—Last week your notice arrived on Wednesday, too late for "Sugar Plum."

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Liberator—Western Figaro—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—La Verité—Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Freedom—Für Unsere Jugend—Crusader—Thames Valley Times—Secular Thought—Folkestone Herald—Manchester Guardian—Progress—Dover Express—Hull Times—Crescent—Hull Daily News—Church Record—South Wales Echo—Chat—Kansas Lucifer—Scottish Guardian—Liverpool Courier—Echo—Twentieth Century—Straits Times—Daily News—Holloway and Hornsey Press—Yorkshire Evening Post—Isle of Man Times—Justice—West Middlesex Times—Accrington Observer and Times—Dundee Catholic Herald—Oldham Standard—Liberty.

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.

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.

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.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a specially good July audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Christ in Chicago," with reference to Mr. Stead's book and the recent social war in Illinois. Judging from the close attention and marked applause, the lecture was highly relished. Mr. Robert Forder presided, and made a warm appeal on behalf of the Hall scheme.

After the lecture Mr. Foote had the pleasure of speaking to a Freethinker from Chicago. This gentleman was very pleased to meet the President of the N.S.S. and editor of the *Freethinker*. "But," he said, "you're a different man from what I expected." "How?" asked Mr. Foote, smiling. "Well," said the American, "you're so strong and well-built. I don't exactly know why, but I had the impression you were thin and delicate." If any other American friends have this impression, they had better get rid of it at once. It would take something more than a frail, delicate man to do Mr. Foote's work.

Mr. Foote occupies the London Hall of Science platform again this evening (July 22), his subject being "Bible Beauties for Board School Children."

Miss Brown, the new secretary of the London Secular Federation, has completed the arrangements for the annual excursion on Sunday, August 19, which we hope will be a glorious success. The tickets will be available for Broadstairs and Ramsgate as well as Margate, and the special train, starting from Holborn Viaduct, will call at St. Paul's, Elephant and Castle, Victoria, Clapham, Brixton, or Herne Hill, at times announced on the handbills to be obtained with the tickets. The price of the ticket for the return journey is four shillings. Friends can be provided by Mr. J. Anderson at the Hall of Science Club, by Mr. G. Ward at the bookstall, by Mr. Forder or Miss Vance at 28 Stonecutter-street, or by any London Branch secretary.

To-day the Bradford Branch take their annual outing, leaving the Midland station at 7.45 a.m. for Morecambe Bay. Return tickets 3s. 6d.

The Liverpool Branch also take an outing this Sunday, leaving the Central Station (low level) at 2.23 or 2.35 for Docks Station. They then walk to Bidston Observatory; tea at five; proceed to New Brighton to meet the Manchester Branch at the entrance to the pier at 7 p.m. They return together to Liverpool by ferry.

The Manchester friends start for Liverpool from the Central Station at 9.30. Tickets can be had there, price three shillings each. We trust there will be fine weather and a good turn out.

The *Edinburgh Review* (July), noticing the Lives of Dr. Pusey and Dean Stanley, says: "The mark of Pusey's writings, as of his intellect and aspiration, is mediævalism; of Stanley's, the common characteristic of himself and all that emanated from him is *modernism*."

The *Edinburgh Review* for July has an attack on Dr. Sayce's *Verdict of the Monuments*, written, probably, by Major Conder. The writer admits (p. 105): "The monuments have, as yet, told us nothing of an Eden or of the Fall of Man; but they have transferred the infant hero floating in his bulrush cradle from the Nile to the Euphrates; and this story is also found in the *Zendavesta* at a later date. No monuments, as yet, speak of the Exodus; no records of Moses, or David, or Solomon have been found."

The writer further confesses that the monuments have not cleared up the internal difficulties of the Bible. He says (p. 106): "The chronological errors of the Book of Kings (as they may be justly called on the evidence of self-conflicting statements) may easily have arisen in copying, during the lapse of centuries; but the historical difficulties of some of the later books, especially Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, are not so easily explained. Fresh light may be

thrown on them by future discovery; but the monuments state that Cyrus conquered Nabonidus in Babylon. No one has explained who was the 'Darius the Mede' (Daniel v. 31) before Cyrus the Persian, who slew King Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar; though a Bel-sar-uzar, son of Nabonidus, is monumentally known. Whether Nabonidus was himself a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar we at present do not know."

Herr Otto Wichers von Gogh, author of several German Freethought works and dramas, lectures on Monday, July 23, at the Athenæum, 72 Tottenham-court-road, W., on "Das Deutsche Theater in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft."

Mr. Edward Clodd speaks out plainly in reviewing Professor Drummond's new book in the *Academy*. He charges this *fin de siècle* theologian with throwing dust in his readers' eyes "in equating Christianity, as understood by the majority of his readers, with Evolution." Mr. Clodd says, rightly enough, that Evolution does not prove the divine origin of Christianity; on the contrary, it proves that "Christianity is neither more nor less divine or human in origin than Buddhism or Islam; that its history and varying fortunes are wholly the outcome of natural causes; and that it has survived as an influence only in the degree that it has shed everything special to it, and accepted the results of all modern inquiry and discovery."

Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man* is really a re-statement of the Design Argument, with the design pushed further back "in the beginning." Mr. Clodd's comment on this is worth reproducing:—"The argument that design implies limitation—the adaptation of means to ends, the cutting of the garment of the universe according to the cloth—is fatal to all teleological theories. And these, in so far as they assume a moral element in cosmic processes, are two-edged. For, if there be a moral element, there is also an immoral element; the sinner is as much a natural product as the saint. There is, in truth, no escape from the difficulties with which Nature, 'red in tooth and claw,' confronts us, except by detaching all ethical significance from phenomena till certain stages are reached. Nature is non-moral, and moral implications arise only under social conditions. Where there is no society there is no sin, because there is no possibility of actions affecting others. Where two or three are gathered together, duty, with its limitation of the individual, arises; codes of ethics, which are but rules of conduct, are framed and based, for their effective action, on supposed supernatural authority, until the community reaches a stage when conception of the obligation of the one to the whole is sufficing motive. But, disguise it as we may under the drawing-room optimism of Professor Drummond's glib assumptions, Strife has the upper hand in the struggle with Love; and while there is life on the globe 'there is no discharge in that war.'"

Dr. Ludwig Büchner has donated ten thousand copies of the popular edition of *Force and Matter* to the German Freethought Federation. This should help to swell the funds of the treasury.

The Battersea Branch holds an important meeting at the Battersea Secular Hall on July 26, at 8 p.m. Members in arrears are requested to pay up at once, as the Committee are in need of funds to carry on the work.

Mr. Joseph Brown, secretary of the North Eastern Secular Federation, has happily recovered from a really serious illness, and is now in fairly good health. Mr. Brown weakened himself by overwork, and we hope he will be more careful in future. During his illness there have no doubt been some changes of address among the affiliated Branch secretaries. Information on this head should be forwarded to Mr. Brown at once. Address, 55 Northbourne-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

The *Ironclad Age* (Indianapolis) apologises for reprinting an article on "Peter's Pence" from the *Freethinker* without acknowledgment. Of course it was only an inadvertence. Our contemporary says it is glad to borrow thunder, but would "scorn to appropriate as original the thoughts and ideas of others." We are sure of it.

Joseph Symes's *Liberator* for June 2 says: "We are sorry to hear from the *Freethinker* that Mr. Foote, the Editor, and President of the National Secular Society, is overworked and compelled to seek some relaxation. We hope it is only temporary. We can't afford to lose him."

Joseph says he intends to "visit England to see his old friends the very first opportunity that occurs." We hope it will occur soon.

Progress for July 1 reaches us from Port of Spain, Trinidad. It contains references to the N.S.S. Conference, to Mr. Foote's illness, and to his Testimonial, which it hopes

will have the support of all those who can afford to contribute. *Progress* is published fortnightly, and we congratulate its editor, Emanuel dos Santos, on keeping a Freethought flag flying in that part of the world.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake has prepared a new edition of his *Public Speaking and Debate*, which is appearing in instalments in the *Co-operative News*. We see from this journal that Mr. Holyoake's youngest daughter, Emilie Ashurst, was married at Brighton on June 21 to Mr. Alfred Marsh, of Pentonville, London. Mr. Holyoake was present at the wedding breakfast, and made a bright little speech in proposing the health of the bride and bridegroom. We infer, therefore, that he is quite recovered from his late illness.

The new volume (Second Series) of Mr. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* contains a large number of his best essays and articles. Freethinkers might find it a good book to dip into during a summer holiday. The title is pretty enough to attract a lady's head to lean over the page, which is a wrinkle for those who are courting, and not a bad hint for the married who find the old honeymoon spirit revive under the genial influence of sea and air and sky. The type is large enough to be read in the gloaming, though we don't think it would be legible in starlight.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING held at the Hall of Science, July 5, Mr. G. Ward in the chair. Present: Mrs. Fisher, Miss Vance, Messrs. J. M. Wheeler, G. Standring, J. Neate, G. H. Baker, H. Rowden, R. Dowding, F. Schaller; Branch Secretaries: A. Wheeler, G. J. Warren, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. A letter was received from the President, explaining his absence, and also advising the Council in the matter of the School Board Election in Finsbury.

The Secretary reported receipt of grant from N.S.S., and grants were made to three Branches.

The delegate from West London inquired if any notice had been taken by Branches of the offer made through him at last meeting, and it was formally moved that the Secretary write each Branch. At the wish of the Council this delegate withdrew two resolutions he had been instructed to move, until he had conferred with his Branch.

The report of the Excursion Committee was read and adopted, and lists for August were ordered to be printed.

ANNIE G. BROWN, Hon. Sec.

N.B.—The matter for August lists *must* reach the Secretary on or before July 23.

Moral Education in France.

Lack of acquaintance with facts leads to wild assertions like that of Canon Gregory, that morals cannot be taught without religion. In all the French public schools this is done. Although the Church, the Bible, and the supernaturalism founded on them are discarded, reason and conscience are appealed to, and the duties of humanity and citizenship carefully inculcated. Indeed, it is safe to say that far more attention is devoted to ethical culture in the godless schools of France than in the Christian schools of England. In the *Normal Plan of Education*, the official code, it is laid down that morality must be as regularly taught as any other branch of study; and, although it designates only Reason and Conscience as the sources of the system of morals, books are permitted to be used in which Theism is recognised, but, necessarily, in the most general terms. Two of the most popular manuals used in the schools are Liard's *Lectures Morales et Littéraires*, and Jost and Braucnig's *Lectures Pratiques*. These works are wholly secular. They explain and emphasise the duties to one's self, to one's neighbor, and to the State. Duties to self include those towards the body, as cleanliness, temperance, etc. Duties towards the neighbor are summed up as truth, justice, and love. Duty to the country, or patriotism, is, perhaps, made too much of; but the schools are regarded as State schools, and the children's love and devotion are evoked towards that larger corporate being, France, of which they are a part. Matthew Arnold, in his last report, told how a child, asked, "To whom do you owe all you are enjoying here—this fine schoolroom, these pictures, this splendid city, all that gives security, comfort, and pleasure to your life? Who gives it all to you?" replied—not God—but "Eh bien, c'est le pays"—"It is my country." Let it be noted that, while the French child is turned out a trained citizen, ready for the work of life, the cost of education in "infidel" France is but 18s. 1d. per head; while in London, where the child is less adequately educated and there is constant squabbling over the religious question, the cost is fully three times that amount.

A PRIEST'S CAREER.

THE jury of the Mayenne Assize Court yesterday found the priest Bruneau guilty, and he was condemned to the guillotine. The pages of the *Newgate Calendar*, or the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, would be searched in vain for a record of a criminal career more astounding than that of this priestly forger, incendiary, burglar, and assassin whom justice has thus tardily overtaken. Bruneau was appointed last year to a curacy at Entrammes, a little town in Brittany, not far from Laval. How he obtained the appointment is not clear, for his antecedents were bad. Beginning his studies as a boy under the Abbé Renaudot Voutre, he was sent away because he was suspected of robbing his teacher of a sum of £56, and he was afterwards expelled from the Jesuit Seminary at Laval for thefts of money belonging to his companions. In spite of these facts, he was subsequently ordained to the priesthood, and accepted, in 1892, the post of curate at Astillé, where he had not been long when a fire broke out in the vicarage; and in the confusion a sum of £22, belonging to the vicar, a certain Abbé Pointeau, was abstracted from a desk. Six months afterwards there was another fire, and £38 disappeared in a similar manner. That the second fire was the work of an incendiary was evident from the fact that it broke out simultaneously at five different places, where rags, saturated with paraffin, had been placed. Nobody suspected the curate, who cunningly, as it has now been shown, contrived to throw suspicion upon his vicar. Anonymous letters were sent to the police, and placards were posted up in the place accusing the Abbé Pointeau of immorality and theft. The result was that the unfortunate vicar was dismissed from his post. Bruneau, meanwhile, had accepted an appointment as curate to the Abbé Fricot at Entrammes, at a salary of £68 a year, out of which he was to pay £20 a year for his board and lodging. As at Astillé, so it was at Entrammes. Hardly had the new curate taken charge of his duties when money began to be missed. Fires also broke out. His furniture was only worth about £20; nevertheless, an insurance company at Le Mans allowed him to effect an insurance upon it for no less than £160. On receiving the policy, he asked the agent: "From what date am I insured?" "From the first of November," was the reply. On the 12th of November a fire broke out which destroyed some of Bruneau's property, and he received from the company about £15 as compensation. Money was missed at the same time from the Abbé Fricot's rooms. Immediately afterwards Bruneau obtained a fresh insurance policy for £200, and within two months a fresh fire broke out, which brought him a further sum of £85 as compensation. Again the Abbé Fricot was robbed. A desk had been unlocked, and a sum of over £20 had been abstracted from it. Bruneau must have been an exceedingly cunning man, for up to the time of this last fire no one seems to have suspected him, although it was generally remarked that he seemed extremely well-off for a poor curate. But at length the Abbé Fricot's suspicions were aroused. On Jan. 1 last Bruneau waited on him, in accordance with custom, to wish him a happy new year. The vicar received his visitor coldly, and hinted that he had doubts as to his honesty. The speech in which the vicar's suspicions were conveyed cost him his life. Bruneau determined to make away with so dangerous an enemy, and on the very next day he carried his project into execution.

On the evening of the 2nd of January, a very cold day, the Abbé Fricot walked out into his garden, and soon afterwards Bruneau followed him. That night the vicar did not return home. Late at night there was a hue and cry. Neighbors' houses were visited, and the garden was searched; but for a long time no trace could be found of the missing man. Some women living next door declared they thought they heard moans for some time during the night, but they could not say whence they proceeded. At six o'clock in the morning, the search still continuing, someone discovered bloodstains at the side of a well in the garden. A long pole was procured, and presently a piece of a priest's dress was fished up. The unfortunate vicar's body was in the well, and with great difficulty it was brought to the surface. It was terrible to see. The skull and face were smashed in, and the hands and feet were lacerated. Great logs of wood, all bloodstained, were found in the well. It was evident that the vicar had been thrown alive in the well, and that after he was there someone had thrown the logs of wood upon him to prevent him from getting out. How long he remained alive can only be a matter of conjecture, but it was evident he had struggled desperately to extricate himself from his awful position. He had held on to some unevennesses of the brickwork until his feet were torn and had pieces of brick and cement sticking in the flesh. Bruneau calmly came and watched as the men searched the well. A policeman who had been fetched pointed out to him that his hands were scratched. "It is nothing," said Bruneau; "I fell down in the yard." Then someone observed that his handkerchief had blood on it, and on this being pointed out to him he declared that his nose had bled. From this

moment suspicion was fixed upon the curate. A circumstance that rather tended to confirm it was his evident anxiety to have it thought that the vicar had committed suicide. The vicar had that day, he said, declared to him that he was tired of his life, and Bruneau proposed that the affair should be kept as quiet as possible, "because of the scandal it would cause in the Church." The police now thought it high time to search Bruneau's rooms, and the result was that he was immediately placed under arrest. It was discovered that he was possessed of numerous disguises, and of a complete set of housebreaking implements. These included keys of the cupboards and desks in the Vicarage, and also of the street-doors of a number of houses where robberies and even murders had been committed. Some astounding facts were now brought to light. Bruneau had led a double life. As a priest he had always seemed extremely devoted to his duties, so much so that one old lady left him, by her will, £640 to be distributed in charity as he saw fit, and several parishioners had been induced to trust him with considerable sums of money under various pretexts. With the money obtained by these means, and with the proceeds of his robberies, Bruneau led a life of the most degraded profligacy. At night, having divested himself of his priest's attire, and dressed as an ordinary civilian, he sallied forth to the neighboring town of Laval, where he was well known in some of the vilest dens in the place. Frequently he would be seen with women of loose character carousing at taverns until the early hours; yet in the morning he was always at his post at Entrammes as though nothing had happened. On one occasion he actually went to a house of ill-fame attired as a priest, and, on a remark being made about it, he cynically said: "Bah, I am not the only priest who comes here, I daresay."

One night, when Bruneau was at Laval, a widow who kept a florist's shop there was murdered, and the contents of her till were abstracted. The poor woman's throat was cut, and she was stabbed repeatedly in the head with such violence that the knife with which the deed was committed, and which was found near her body, was bent and notched. Several cabmen swore that Bruneau was a regular customer at the shop, and one reported that he drove him near there on the night of the murder after the place was closed. Moreover, among the keys found in Bruneau's possession was one which exactly fitted the street-door of the murdered woman's house, and there were other circumstances which pointed to his guilt, as, for instance, the fact that a man answering to his description had called upon several people in the town and endeavored to throw suspicion upon a relative of the florist's, who lived next door to her. There is yet another murder of which he is suspected, although for want of sufficient evidence it was not mentioned among the charges against him. A lock-keeper, who had been heard to say that he had suspicions with regard to Bruneau, was one night found dead in the river. He had been stabbed, and his body had been thrown into the water. As for the robberies of which Bruneau is suspected, they are innumerable. Over ninety witnesses were called to depose to the facts with regard to them. It may easily be imagined how great is the feeling of relief in Laval and its neighborhood now that so dangerous a criminal is no longer at large. At the Assize Court Bruneau behaved with great coolness, admitting what could not possibly be denied, and energetically protesting his innocence wherever there was any possibility of doubt. He is about thirty years of age, tall, large-boned, muscular, with a foxy face and a shifty expression of the eyes. Throughout the four days during which the trial lasted his composure never left him, and he tried hard to keep up the appearance of a priestly character. "It is true," he said, "that I was faithless to my vows and forgetful of my sacerdotal character; but I have already asked pardon of God, and now, since I am to be tried by men, I ask pardon of men."—*Daily News*, July 13.

Date of Creation.

In the seventeenth century Dr. John Lightfoot, vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, the great Rabbinical scholar of his time, attempted to reconcile the two accounts in Genesis by saying that "man was created by the Trinity on October 23, 4004 B.C., at nine o'clock in the morning."

Here was, indeed, a triumph of Lactantius's method, the result of one thousand years of Biblical study and theological thought, since Bede in the eighth century, and Vincent de Beauvais in the thirteenth, had declared that creation must have taken place in the spring.

Yet, alas! within two centuries after Lightfoot's great theological demonstration as to the exact hour of creation, it was discovered that at that hour an exceedingly cultivated people, enjoying all the fruits of a highly developed civilisation, had long been swarming in the great cities of Egypt, and that other nations, hardly less advanced, had at that time reached a high development in Asia.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

THE REAL ORIGIN OF THE SABBATH.

THIS ancient document was discovered by a curate in the interests of the clergy, and will be warmly welcomed by them as a much-needed amplification and exposition of the somewhat meagre account of the seventh day of creation given in the second and third verses of the second chapter of Genesis. The value of it, as a portion of scripture suitable for reading at the opening of churches and chapels, cannot well be over estimated.

Portion of palimpsest, discovered by a tripper in the Isle of Man, in the possession of an aged lady, who claimed, with some appearance of truth, to be a lineal descendant of the Witch of Endor:—

“And the morning and the evening were the sixth day, and God rested on the evening of the sixth day.

“And on the seventh day God made him a great temple, and he builded him a steeple great and high; and he hung a bell therein, and the bell he rang and the sound thereof filled the heavens and the earth to the uttermost corners thereof.

“Which, when they heard, all the creatures that he had made, the work of his hands, assembled themselves together and sang praises unto his name: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; heaven and earth are full of thy glory.’

“And he gave them a song to sing on the seventh day of the week, so long as the earth shall endure:

O ye whales and all that move in the waters,
Bless ye the Lord.
O ye fowls of the air,
Bless ye the Lord.
O ye beasts and cattle,
Bless ye the Lord.
O ye children of men,
Bless ye the Lord.
O all ye green things upon the earth,
Bless ye the Lord,
Praise him and magnify him for ever.

“And God appointed man, male and female, to stand on the right hand and on the left, to tithe the creatures as they passed out of the temple, each according to his substance, even as the Lord had blessed him.

“And they cast into the treasury of that which they possessed, each male and female according to his kind. The squirrel his nuts, and the bear his grease, and the birds their eggs and feathers, male and female, each after his kind. The serpent also cast his skin, and the trees shed their fruit and seeds, and passed on. And there was a collection at the evening, and collection at the morning service—the first Sabbath.

“And man also, male and female, as yet possessing nothing, sat himself upon the plate.

“Now, when they came up again together in the evening to the house of the Lord, he would have taught them in a sermon; but for want of sense they harkened not unto him, but behaved themselves unseemly. Divers amongst them jumped upon the rafters, and hung therefrom depended by their tails; yet others, that were long by narrow, twined themselves around the pillars, and crawled upon the seats, and the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, glithered and glode about the aisles, and amongst the feet of them that sang praises. The jay also, the magpie, and the jackass restrained not their voices at the time of prayer: the trees also waved their arms, and rustled their clothing, until the Lord cursed them all in his wrath, and bade them depart from before him.

“Then great fear fell upon them, and they crawled, and flew, and glithered, and glode, and straddled, and strode out from before him; the trees also shook themselves and fled, and man, male and female, alone remained in the presence of the Lord.

“And God said unto him, ‘Increase and multiply exceedingly upon the face of the earth, and I will give you dominion over all the creatures that I have made.

“And thou shalt catch them, and kill them, and spoil them, and thou shalt make unto thyself coin, round and cunningly wrought and polished; and he that catcheth much shall sell unto him that catcheth little, and the price shall be the coin, cunningly wrought and rounded.

“And of the coin shall ye bring unto me one in every ten, of the large and of the small, one in every ten shall ye bring unto me.

“And the fattest and the fairest of your men children shall ye give unto me, to be priests unto me, to receive the coin, and to build me temples great and high, that I may rest from my labors, and rejoice in the works which I have made.

“But a female child shall ye in no wise give unto me to be a priest unto me, lest at any time, at tithing time, she unavoidably be absent.

“And the dead shall be about my temples all the days of the week, and on the seventh day the living shall enter in and shall sing praises; and the ministers that ye shall give unto me shall speak unto you all they know, and shall spend

the coin, so that the earth shall be covered with temples, as the waters cover the sea.’

“And man, male and female, went forth, and did as the Lord commanded, and the evening and the morning were the seventh day.”

M. F. H.

SELFISH PRAYING.

As Satan passed through heaven from
A walk on earth one day,
The Lord looked up and questioned him,
“Didst hear my creatures pray?”
“Ay, Lord, I heard their prayers resound
Where'er I listening stood,
But, by my soul, not one of them
Prayed for his brother's good.”

Then looked Jehovah fire and flame,
And spake this fierce decree:
“Who makes a selfish prayer is thine;
The others come to me.”
Then all that night on heaven's walls
The Lord and Satan stood,
To see how many sons of man
Would pray for a brother's good.

Alas! they watched there many an hour,
And yet there came no sound;
The poor, they prayed for pennies, and
The rich, they prayed for pounds;
The ugly prayed for beauty, and
The awkward prayed for grace;
The old ones prayed for youthful looks
To hide a wrinkled face.

The limping prayed for healthy joints,
The red-haired prayed for brown;
The short ones prayed for longer legs,
The tall to be cut down.
The brown-eyed prayed for blue ones,
The cross-eyed prayed for straight;
The fat ones prayed for melting down,
The lean ones prayed for weight.

The doctors prayed for sickness, and
The undertakers death;
The captives prayed for sunshine, and
The phthisicky for breath.
The maiden prayed for lover's vows,
The soldier prayed for war;
The beggar prayed for horse to ride,
The drunkard prayed for “more.”
The sick man prayed for break of day,
The thief for longer night;
The miser prayed for more of gold—
The blind man prayed for sight.

At last there came a tearful voice
Up to the starlit sky—
“Oh! may my uncle's soul this night
Rest with the Lord on high.”
“There's one for me,” Jehovah cries.
“Not so!” the Devil said;
“He's heir to all his uncle's wealth;
He wants the old man dead.”

Just then there came another voice
In supplicating tones—
“Oh! may the grave be late to close
O'er neighbor David's bones.”
“There's surely one for me at last!”
But Satan cried, “Not yet!
He merely wants the man to live
Until he pays his debt.”

ONLY two theories of the springs of action in humanity have ever been promulgated. One is the rational theory which we call hedonism, and which rightly recognises that pleasure and pain are, and must ever be, the sole guides of voluntary acts for all sentient beings, be they pigs or philosophers, saints or starfish. The other is the irrational theory taking its origin in theological concepts (though, with cheap imitation thinkers like Carlyle, it often outlives its source), the theory which maintains that the universe was created by one or more superior beings, who hate pleasure and love pain, or who dispense them by caprice, and who desire that some or all of their creatures should suffer abundantly. This is the theory, so well set forth (though by a smug optimist poet) in Caliban upon Setebos; it lies at the root of all religious thinking, and in its rigorously logical development it is known to us as Calvinism.—Grant Allen.

BOOK CHAT.

Three anti-Theosophical pamphlets, by W. E. Coleman, reach us from San Francisco. They are entitled *Blavatsky Unveiled*, *Plagiarism in Theosophical Teachings*, and *Critical Historical Review of the Theosophical Society*. The first-named gives some account of the *aliases* and shady doings of one of the most ingenious and interesting impostors in history; the second shows how largely the works which pass under her name were made up from the writings of others; and the third traces the Theosophical Society back to 1874, when Olcott met Blavatsky at the fraudulent spiritist *séances* of the Eddy Brothers. Mr. Coleman has closely followed the history of his subject, and his pamphlets deserve the attention of all who wish to look a little behind the Theosophic scenes. There is, however, one aspect of the movement which Mr. Coleman has overlooked—namely, the political. Mr. H. Newton, the first treasurer of the Theosophical Society, has left it on record that Madame Blavatsky had an interview with the Russian minister of Legation before transferring the Society from America to India; and the conclusion of Mr. Hodson, the special commissioner of the Psychological Research Society, was that Madame Blavatsky was a Russian spy. Of course, beyond this, she had a genuine love of mystification and occultism. The key to the *Secret Doctrine*, however, is the announcement of the near approach of an end of the cycle, when the accounts between the races will be squared.

* * *

Dr. Mombert has put forward *A Short History of the Crusades*. He holds that these long religious wars did not benefit mankind. They debased and embroiled the world; they destroyed many millions of valuable lives and countless millions worth of human labor. They enriched the Church and increased her power; but they also engendered superstition and persecution, and in the end sapped her strength. The good which they did lay in the direction of the breaking up of feudalism, the emancipation of the lower classes, the formation of society, and the enlargement of commerce, navigation, and discovery. But this was all indirect and unintended by the fanatics who fought for the rescue of God's Sepulchre from the Moslem, who holds it still.

* * *

From the Greeks to Darwin is the title of the opening volume of a new Biological Series, to be published by Macmillan & Co. Professor H. F. Osborn, Sc.D., head of the chair of Biology at Columbia University, will edit the series, and writes this initial volume.

* * *

The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, relieved from the cares of office and golf, is said to be engaged upon a second part of *Philosophic Doubt*. It is to be hoped he will clear up the doubt as to his philosophic position suggested by Part I.

* * *

A new edition of 5,000 copies of Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* is being prepared. The book has already had a sale of 73,000 copies. Though very unequal, it contains one remarkable chapter, which only a woman of genius could have produced. It is, moreover, an excellent work to open up Freethought ground in feminine minds.

* * *

Mr. Moncreu Conway's new edition of the works of Thomas Paine is progressing. One volume has already appeared. The second is to be published in September. The work will probably include four volumes. The way has been prepared for it in a great measure by Mr. Conway's two-volume biography of Paine. Political, sociological, literary topics are the chief subject-matter. The books show that the first American Anti-Slavery Society was the result of Paine's efforts for the emancipation of the blacks in America. The society was founded in Philadelphia in 1775. Besides the ordinary edition of the collected works, Messrs. Putnam's Sons are publishing a limited edition uniform with the volumes containing the writings of Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, and other founders of the Republic.

* * *

The only fault to be found with this edition is its price. Ever since Paine pioneered the way with cheap literature, refusing profit from his books in order that they might do their work among the masses, his writings have been issued in popular form at popular prices. It is well, however, that there should be a standard edition for libraries, and for rich American and other admirers with long pockets.

Two conundrums are sent us by an electrician. The first is, "What is the difference between Gabriel and the devil?" and the second, "What was the first instance of the electric light?" The answer to No. 1 is: "The one is an arc-angel, and the other an incandescent burner." No. 2 is: "When the arc lighted on Mount Ararat."

PROFANE JOKES.

Hearing it said that a Capuchin monk had been devoured by wolves—"Poor brutes!" exclaimed Sophie Arnould, "hunger must indeed be a terrible thing!"

Charles Dudley Warner said that the difference between the "faith cure" and the "mind cure" is that "the mind cure doesn't require any faith, and the faith cure doesn't require any mind."

Husband (all ready for the theatre): "I declare, dear, it's raining hard." Wife: "Well, what about a little rain? One would think, from your tone of voice, that we were about starting for church."

"What in the world, John," asked his wife, "did you open that can of tomatoes with?" "Can opener, of course," he growled. "What do you s'pose I opened it with?" "I thought, from the language you used, that you were opening it with prayer."

A little girl of three years was saying her prayers, not long since, when her little brother, about four years old, came slyly behind and pulled her hair. Without moving her head she paused, and said: "Please, Lord, excuse me a minute while I kick Herby."

A fine stone church was lately built in Missouri, upon the facade of which a stone-cutter was ordered to cut the following: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." He was referred for accuracy to the verse of scripture in which these words were written; and he transcribed the whole verse: "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Uncle Celestine was interrogated as to his opinion whether prayers were ever answered. He replied: "Well, sah, some pr'ars is ansud, an' some isn't; 'pends on w'at you axes fo'. Just arter de wah, w'en it was mighty hard scratchin' fo' de cullud broderin, I 'bsarved dat w'enebber I prayed de Lo'd to sen' one o' Marse Peyten' fat chickens fo' de ole man, dere was no notice took ob the partition; but w'en I pray dat he would sen' de ole man fo' de chicken, de matter was 'tended to befo' sun up next mornin'."

A couple of bipeds, male and female, residing at Oldham, went to have their child christened. They had perfumed themselves with gin instead of the more orthodox, but less odorous, eau de Cologne, and when the clerk desired the female to bring her infant she, on looking, found several empty bottles of perfume about her person, but never a baby, which appalling fact, when it at last dawned on her rather cloudy intellect, induced her to call out to her reeking spouse: "Aw towld thee we'd forgotten summat; go an' fetch that kid."

Absurdities in the Prayer-Book.

"O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord (*sic*), praise him and magnify him for ever!

"O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord, praise him, and magnify him for ever!

"O, all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord, praise him, and magnify him for ever."

To continue:—

O ye asses, greenhorns, and unicorns, bless ye the Lord, praise him, and magnify him for ever.

O ye whales, sharks, and bloaters that swim in the waters, bless ye the Lord, etc.

O ye winkles, shrimps, and haddocks, bless ye the Lord, etc.

O ye fogs, stinks, and blizzards, bless ye the Lord, etc.

O ye skunks, moles, and polecats, bless ye the Lord, etc.

O ye frogs, toads, and lizards, bless ye the Lord, etc.

O ye bugs, lice, and beetles, bless ye the Lord, etc.

O ye maggots, earwigs, and tapeworms, bless ye the Lord, etc.

O ye corns, piles, and bunions, bless ye the Lord, praise him, and magnify him, and stick to him for ever and ever. Amen. ("Quia non est salus in illis.")*

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

Obituary.

WESTMINSTER.—I have to announce the death of Emily, wife of our old veteran and much-respected member, J. Worster, who died in the Licensed Victuallers' Asylum, both being inmates, on the 5th inst., after a long and painful illness (cancer on liver). Day and night for eight weeks Mr. Worster acted as nurse. Her end was peaceful. The funeral took place on the 10th inst. at Forest Hill Cemetery.—J. BURRELL.

* Psalm cxlvi. 3.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Bible Beauties for Board School Children." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing class. Thursday, at 8, members' meeting.

BETHNAL GREEN (Libra Hall, Libra-road): 8.30, special members' meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. J. Hunt, "Religion and Science."

WIMBLEDON (Liberty Hall, Broadway): Tuesday, at 8.30, entertainment and dance.

GREENWICH.—Saturday, July 21, pilgrimage, by boat (if fine) or rail. Meet at entrance to Old Swan Pier, 3 sharp, or at Greenwich about an hour later.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.15, H. Courtney, "If Christ Came to London."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Inquisition."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection."

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, Lucretius Keen, "What has Christianity Done?"

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11, C. James, "What Think Ye of Christ?"; 3, A. Guest, "Divine Example: Should it be Followed?"

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism." Thursday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Character and Conduct."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Church and Science"; 3.30, Stanley Jones, "Religion and Morality." Wednesday, at 8, St. John, "The World Without a God."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "The Attitude of the Bible towards Woman."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington-green, near Vestry Hall): 6.30, P. H. Snelling, "Religious Tax on Children."

LEYTON (High-road, near Vicarage-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Jargon of Theology."

MILE-END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Miracles of the Old Testament."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Are the Teachings of Christ the Best Guide in Human Life?" 3, A. Goodrich, "How Christians Enjoyed Themselves in the Dark Ages."

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 11.15, Geo. Standing, "From the Church to Freethought"; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WESTMINSTER (Old Picnic Pier): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "King of Glory."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Sam Standing, "How they Made the Apostles' Creed"; 7, J. Rowney, "Christ's Teachings Defective." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "The Failure of Christianity."

TOTTENHAM (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, Sam Standing, "Co-operation and Collectivism."

WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road): 6.30, W. Heaford, "Belief and Unbelief."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRADFORD (Midland Station): 7.45, excursion to Morecambe; return fare 3s. 6d. Messrs. H. Smith and J. G. Fisher will lecture on the sands.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, Nelson-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, F. J. Boorman, "Glimpses of Natural History."

LULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, J. Belt, "The Evolution from Individualism to Socialism."

LIVERPOOL: Excursion to Bidstone; leave Central Station at 2.23 (see "Sugar Plum").

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Blusholme-road, All Saints): 9.15, picnic to Liverpool; train leaves Central Station at 9.30; fare 3s.

NEWCASTLE (Ante-Room above Good Templar Hall, 2 Clayton-street): 3, monthly meeting and arrangements for picnic.

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday and Saturday, at 8, dancing class for members and friends.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Bits of Difficulties in Christian Belief."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Free Library Hall, Ocean-road): 11, C. Cohen, "Humanity's Outlook"; 7, "The Dream of Immortality."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street): 7, T. Jobling, "The Authenticity of the Bible."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRIGHTON (Level): 3, St. John will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, opposite Lion Mansion, or, if weather unfavorable at Star Assembly Rooms, 6 Whitecross-street, "The Crimes of the Church of Rome."

CHATHAM (near Waghorn Memorial): 11, F. J. Swan, "Science and Miracle."

NEWCASTLE (Quayside): 11, Mr. Mitchell, "What Does Christian Theism Teach?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, C. Cohen, "Belief and Conduct."

SUNDERLAND (near the Miners' Hall, Silkworth): 11, The Secretary, "Christianity and Slavery."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—July 22, South Shields; 26, Wood Green; 29, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Walthamstow. August 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 16, Wood Green; 19, Reading.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—July 22, m. Camberwell, a. Regent's Park, e. Camberwell; 29, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—July 22, m. a., and e., Hyde Park; 26, e. Hammersmith; 29, m. Finsbury Park, e. Lambeth. August 5, m. Picnic Pier, a. Regent's Park; 12, m. Battersea.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—July 22, m. Clerkenwell; 29, m. and e. Camberwell. August 12, Failsforth.

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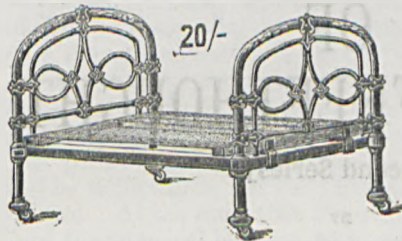
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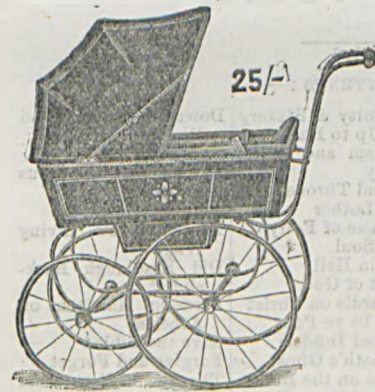
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