

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 12.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 1895.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRICE HUGHES AND CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

On returning from India, after that dreadful illness which broke his constitution, Charles Bradlaugh politely requested the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes to furnish him with particulars of that "Atheist Shoemaker" story. Hughes declined. He knew he could not face an investigation by the eagle eyes of Charles Bradlaugh. Thereupon the great Atheist declared that the story was certainly false in its main outlines, and that Mr. Hughes had peculiar notions of honor. Hughes had enough of that discretion, which is the better part of his valor, to lie low until Bradlaugh was dead. Then he took to praising the man who had despised him, and he has been at it ever since. It is a most loathsome eulogy. Freethinkers, at least, detest it more than the virulent abuse of Bradlaugh's enemies; just as sober people hate riotous drunkards, but abominate them worse when they are maudlin. Even a blow is better than a deluge of drivel.

We have before us a copy of the *Hammer*, containing a long report of the speeches delivered at the recent annual meeting of the London Wesleyan Mission. One of the speakers was the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who had a lot to say about Bradlaugh. He had been reading the great Atheist's "Life" with "painful interest." He had actually gathered, in his feeble, fatuous way, that Bradlaugh's unbelief was "caused"—yes, actually *caused*—by the treatment he received when young at the hands of a clergyman! And if it had not been for his Atheism he would have been a Cabinet Minister. He was popular with the working classes, not because, but in spite, of his Atheism. He was a good man, and "a far better Christian than the Bishops." And so forth, and so forth; in the well-known vein of pious insincerity.

Mr. Hughes, however, could not "speak with respect of his Atheism." Who asked him to? What would his "respect" be worth? He should keep it until it is wanted.

We are indebted to Mr. Hughes for the remarkable discovery that, "When Mr. Bradlaugh's Atheism was separated from his great democratic sympathies, he had no following at all." This is followed, in the report, by a note of admiration. And it certainly deserved one. *No following at all!* Mr. Hughes has never heard of the National Secular Society! He has never heard of the *Freethinker*! There is something colossal about the fellow's affectation. It is not exactly sublime, but it only falls short of it by a single step.

It was natural, of course, that Mr. Hughes should chuckle over Mrs. Besant's defection. Atheists can smile, however, when he describes her as "the only real, active, and able disciple" that Bradlaugh ever had. Certainly she has "left Atheism," but she has not become a Christian. Nor was her defection a mortal blow to the cause of Secularism. People still flock to hear our gospel; and the *Freethinker*, even at the increased price of twopence, enjoys a larger circulation than the *National Reformer* did, except at special times of great excitement.

Now comes the crowning point of Hughes's disquisition on Bradlaugh. We give his own words as they appear in the *Hammer* :—

"He was so alive to this, and well aware he owed his position to God-fearing constituents, that he told them there was, and should be, no Hall of Science in Northampton, and there would be no propagation of Atheism."

Mr. Hughes is not a man to mince words with. We tell
No. 713.]

him plainly that this is A LIE. Bradlaugh never said anything of the kind. The statement is a sheer invention.

One of our readers—Mr. W. Mole, of Sheffield—wrote to Mr. Hughes, asking him when and where Bradlaugh gave this pledge to the Christians of Northampton. Here is the reply :—

8 Taviton-street, Gordon-square, London, W.C.
March 11, 1895.

Dear Sir,—Mr. Price Hughes desires me to tell you that what he said about Mr. Bradlaugh he heard at Northampton, where it is a matter of public notoriety. You will find on inquiry that, as a matter of fact, no Hall of Science was started and maintained in Northampton during the time that Mr. Bradlaugh represented that city.—Yours truly,

Mr. W. Mole.

SISTER ADELINE.

Could anything be more ridiculous? *He heard it at Northampton!* Is this a ground for making a public statement? *It is a matter of public notoriety!* What is this but a liar's refuge? Sister Adeline's letter is no answer to Mr. Mole's inquiries. Mr. Hughes made a definite public statement, and he is bound to give a definite justification. It will not do to say "I heard it" and "People say so." Where is the evidence? Who were the people to whom Bradlaugh gave that pledge? When was it given? Where was it given? We do not invite Mr. Hughes to reply. He is too far gone on the road of mendacity. We merely put these as questions that must be answered before any sensible, honest man will believe what Mr. Hughes says about Charles Bradlaugh.

One would think that Bradlaugh went all over the country founding Halls of Science, and that Northampton was the great exception. There are only three in all England—one at Sheffield, one at Grimsby, and one in London; and it was only the last that Bradlaugh was active in establishing.

Bradlaugh did not himself deliver Freethought lectures at Northampton, and it was a wise policy. He did not choose to complicate matters in the city which he represented in Parliament; just as he would not allow "M.P." to be printed after his name on bills announcing his Secular orations. There was a scrupulosity about him which Mr. Hughes is incapable of emulating, and apparently incapable of understanding. But if Bradlaugh refrained from Freethought lecturing in the city he represented in Parliament, he continued it to the very last in every other part of Great Britain. Other lecturers spoke in Northampton, if he did not; and more would have done so, only the bigotry of the local Christians—who accepted Bradlaugh when they could not do otherwise—shut our lecturers out from suitable halls on Sundays. Indeed, it is still impossible to obtain one for love or money.

When our artist obtained one of Mr. Hughes's photographs for a Cartoon, he remarked that it could not be improved; it was a perfect type of the sneak, and might figure as such in any physiognomical collection. This man of God, who has all Jack Falstaff's peculiar love of truth, without a scintillation of his redeeming wit, is perpetually crawling away from the consequences of his public utterances. He first indulges in light and airy evasions, that would hardly deceive an infant just toddling from its cradle; then, if pressed, he stands upon his dignity, and refuses to give reasons upon compulsion, even if they were as plentiful as blackberries; finally, he skulks off into pious communion with his God. And there we will leave him. Such a God is well worthy of such a worshipper.

G. W. FOOTE.

MR. GLADSTONE ON THE LORD'S DAY.

MR. GLADSTONE has been called a "born ecclesiastic," and his wonderful activities, released from the turmoil of politics, appear now to be mainly directed towards theology. To the March number of *McClure's Magazine*, of New York, he contributes what that magazine naturally advertises as an important article on "The Lord's Day." There is certainly nothing original about the article, and its only importance, in my estimation, arises from the personality of the author. Mr. Gladstone, of course, upholds the divine authority of the Lord's Day, and even goes beyond the mass of his fellow believers in maintaining that the day should, after including works of necessity and charity, be entirely devoted to divine service. Could Mr. Gladstone have declared that he attributed his own intellectual vigor in old age to this use of the Sunday, it might have been an interesting question whether, indeed, Church attendance and prayers are as healthful as wood-chopping. But Mr. Gladstone only treats his readers to a dry course of theological argument, even while mentioning at the outset that among the forces employed in Sabbath defence there are important auxiliaries "who put wholly out of view the revealed sanction and the properly Christian motive." That is to say, the utility of a day of rest can be defended from purely secular considerations. Personally, indeed, I should uphold these as strongly as any Christian. Such a rest day belongs exclusively to no particular religion. It is found in all faiths. It existed in Judaism before Christianity, among Babylonians before the time of Moses, and among the Accadians before the Babylonians. As we trace it back we may note its lunar character and its connection with feminine periodicity. Beyond its religious dedication the observance of such a day of rest and recreation serves distinct purposes of social utility, and, indeed, separates civilised man from the mere savage, to whom all days are alike. The question between the Christian and the Secularist is not whether such a day should be retained, but how it should be utilised. Mr. Gladstone would devote it entirely to a deity, to whom all days must be alike, and who cannot need man's service. The Secularist would devote it to opportunities of health, study, recreation, and enjoyment, not possible to the masses during the dull drudgery of every day life.

Mr. Gladstone, of course, bases his argument on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, which in this case, indeed, seems a mere shifting quicksand. The Earl of Beaconsfield once sarcastically defined Mr. Gladstone as an Italian in charge of a Scotsman. The wariness implied in the definition is displayed in the agility with which he glides from the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Lord's Day. He seems aware that he is on shifting ground. He says of the former: "It was not relaxed by our Lord, who lived obediently under the conditions of the older covenant, and whom we are evidently to understand, on some marked occasions, not as impairing the Commandments, but as protesting against and cancelling an artificial and extravagant stiffness in its interpretation." Now, the Jewish law declared death even for picking up sticks on the Sabbath. Was this "not relaxed by our Lord" when he said "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath"? Mr. Gladstone says: "Two changes have indeed been imported into this law: one of them into its form, the other into its spirit. The first has been altered, by translation of the Commandment, from the seventh day of the week to the first; the second, by imparting to it a positive and affirmative, in addition to its originally negative and prohibitory, sense." Now, what authority is there for this change of form and spirit? Not one verse, not one line, not one word can be quoted from the New Testament changing the day of rest from the seventh to the first day of the week; and a Jewish delegate to the Parliament of Religions had to tell that assembly that the orthodox Jews could never sanction such a change. Mr. Gladstone, of course, cites the usual texts from the fourth and latest gospel about the disciples meeting on the first day of the week. These texts, he says, "go far towards showing that among the Apostles themselves, and, therefore, from apostolic times, the practice of divine worship on the Lord's Day has been continuously and firmly established." Here Mr. Gladstone reads into the texts what is not in them. Not a word is said about divine worship. On the contrary, we read that for this purpose they assembled on the Sabbath,

and I am unaware of any clear evidence of another practice until Constantine decreed the observance of "the venerable day of the Sun." The fact is, Protestants derive their Sunday from the Catholic Church, and that Church adopted the day held sacred by Pagan sun-worshippers. Moreover, the Catholic Church, in adopting that day, by no means invested it with the rigor of the Jewish Sabbath. So far from consecrating it entirely to God, Catholics usually hold that, the religious duty of attending mass having once been performed, the day may be devoted to innocent recreation.

The observance of the Christian Sunday being absolutely without any authority in the Christian Scriptures, why is it so frantically persisted in by the Protestant ministers and their supporters? It is to retain their monopoly of the day; to fill their empty pews and extend the power of the pulpit. For this they will go the length of erecting the authority of Moses above that of Paul or Jesus; for, despite Mr. Gladstone, it seems to me that Paul, in saying, "Let no man judge you in respect of Sabbath days," and Jesus in declaring that the Sabbath was made for man, did virtually cancel and oppose the legislation ascribed to Moses. But the freedom they would have allowed may be insufficient to-day.

The Jewish law is no longer suited to us, neither is the Christian. We want not only fires in our houses on the Sabbath day, but the refreshment of eye and heart by contact with the beauties of nature and the masterpieces of art. Those who ask that the people's libraries, museums, and art galleries shall be open on their one day of leisure demand no favor but simple justice. They do not propose that those shall visit or attend them who prefer to spend their Sunday otherwise. They only claim the right to go themselves when so disposed, and the denial of that right is a violation of liberty. To tax people to support such places when they have no chance of visiting them is flagrant injustice. Mr. Gladstone, in supporting the old-fashioned notion of the Lord's Day, is maintaining the interests of the men of God at the expense of those of the masses of the people.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE SUPERNATURAL NO GUIDE FOR MAN.

IN mentioning the term "supernatural" we do not commit ourselves to a belief in its reality; we simply accept the word as representing the belief of those persons who allege that they have faith in the existence of something besides nature. Our contention is that, supposing this assumed something exists, we know nothing of it, and, therefore, to believe in it can be of no service to the human race as a guide in conduct. We start from the fact that the natural we know, but of the supernatural we know nothing. Of course, as its name implies, the supernatural means something higher than nature—something above nature. But if there is a sphere higher than nature, and yet often breaking through nature, nature itself must be limited by something, and the question that at once arises is, By what is such limitation fixed, and what is the boundary line which marks it off and separates it from the supernatural? Further, supposing such a line to be discovered and to be well known, so that no difficulty could arise in pointing it out, a still more difficult problem presents itself for solution—namely, how man, who is a part of nature, and able only to come into contact with nature, can push his knowledge into that other sphere, which, being non-natural, cannot be at all accessible to a natural being? If the supernatural region be synonymous with the unknowable, it clearly cannot concern us, simply because we have no faculties with which to cognise it, and no powers capable of penetrating into its profound depths. In this case, as far as we are concerned, there is practically no supernatural, for none can operate on that sphere in which man lives and moves and displays his varied powers. If there be a sphere where the supernatural plays a part and exercises any control, it must clearly be in some remote region, of which we have no knowledge; and the forces in operation must be other than those with which we are conversant upon this earth. Science cannot recognise the supernatural, because she has no means at her disposal for its investigation. She leaves to the theologian all

useless speculations regarding such a region, contenting herself with reminding him that he is, in all such discussions, travelling outside the domain of facts into a province which should be left to poets and dreamers, and which belongs solely to the imagination. All law is and must be natural law, from a scientific standpoint, because we can have access only to nature. Even the most extravagant flights of imagination that we find, either in poetry or in the products of religious ecstasy, are always shaped in natural moulds, either as a whole or, what is more general, in their parts. An image formed in the human mind cannot possibly be other than natural, if not in its entirety, at least in the component parts of which it is made up. We can conceive of a centaur, though no such thing ever existed; or of a mermaid, though no person has ever seen one, these being creatures purely of the imagination. They are compound things, each part of which has been seen a hundred times, and are formed by blending a portion of one animal with a part of another, thus making an image which, on the whole, is unnatural, but the parts of which are taken from nature.

It is well known that all the great religions of the world were first floated upon the stream of time by an appeal to the feeling of wonder, and to a love of the marvellous, both having their basis in the belief in the supernatural. Christianity was no exception to this fact, for it is said that its birth was surrounded by supernatural manifestations, and that its earliest expounders were required to cast out devils, and to perform other extraordinary and, to us, incredible things, as "signs" that they were genuine believers. In fact, the claim of Christ and his faith upon the believing faculty was based upon the alleged departure from the known order of nature; the wonderful and the marvellous were considered evidences of the truth and value of the Christian faith. Fear was by far a greater factor in early conversions to Christianity than argument; hence Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, says, in writing of the fourth century: "There is no doubt but that the victories of Constantine the Great, the fear of punishment, and the desire of pleasing this mighty conqueror and his imperial successors, were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular persons, to embrace Christianity" (p. 91). The same Christian writer further observes: "Multitudes were drawn to the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain and the fear of punishment" (p. 102). Lecky also states, in his *History of European Morals*, that "Christianity floated into the Roman Empire on the wave of credulity that brought with it this long train of superstitions and legends." Again, he says Christianity "proclaimed with a thrilling power the immediate destruction of the globe—the glory of all its friends, and the damnation of all its foes" (vol. i., pp. 397, 412). Thus fear and a belief in the marvellous were striking factors in early Christianity. But the slightest reflection should convince Christians that these factors can be no evidence of the truth of their faith; for religions that are proclaimed by the followers of Christ to be false have the same claim urged on their behalf.

There is no doubt that, by Christians, Jesus is regarded as being the highest type of the supernatural. We have recently shown in these columns that, whatever his character might have been, Jesus was no guide for mankind in their efforts to secure political and social reforms. But where is the evidence that Christ was more than human? He suffered from hunger (Matthew iv. 2), he yielded to the weakness of anger (Mark ii. 5), he gave way to passion (Matthew xxi. 18, 19), he lacked power (John v. 19-30), and he was limited in wisdom (Mark xiii. 32). If a supernatural being is such as is claimed for him, Christ should have been impervious to such human weaknesses. It is utter nonsense to sing:—

Impassive he suffers, immortal he dies.

If he were impassive, he did not suffer; and if he were immortal, he could not die. It would be impossible to kill the natural body of a supernatural being, for the best of all reasons—he would not have one to kill. The infinite can no more be contained in the finite than can the mortal exist through all eternity. To urge that Jesus had a double nature is absurd. To ally the human with the alleged divine would be to destroy the perfection of both; for where humanity is, perfection cannot be. Any conception of the supernatural, whatever it may be, must be different

from a conception of the natural. To think of the greater being contained in the lesser, whether actual or imaginary, is impossible; it is not a mystery, as commonly stated, but it is a contradiction and an absurdity. Our minds are incapable of conceiving an infinite being that can exist and not exist at the same time; yet the supposition that Jesus was a God-man involves this unthinkable proposition. A supernatural power can be of no value as a guide to us, for as we are only natural we can follow nothing that is above or beyond.

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus are deemed the invulnerable rocks on which the vessel of scepticism is wrecked. But these two events involve innumerable features that do not admit of being formulated in words, so as to be comprehended. They perhaps present one of the strongest specimens of what is called the supernatural, and yet what effect can such events have upon the affairs of life? Wherein can they be a guide to us? Will the belief in their reality produce good government, promote social reform, or remove our wrongs, sorrows, and sufferings? To regard the two events as true will not lighten the burdens under which society now groans. The belief that a supernatural person had power over life and death two thousand years ago can be of no value to us at the present day in forming personal character. The power that is supposed to have sustained Christ, when he died to satisfy the justice and to appease the wrath of God, will not remove the injustice and wrath of man. If Jesus pleads for us in another world, that will not compensate us for his neglecting our welfare in this. Moreover, such pleading is vain if "the judge of all the earth" is all-wise and all-good; for in that case he would know what is best for his children, and would "reward every man according to his works."

It appears to us, therefore, that a belief in the supernatural is quite valueless for all practical purposes, and that it frequently causes much waste of time, while it also impedes human effort.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

COMFORT OF ILLUSIONS.

A CHRISTIAN friend of mine the other day said to me: "I would not wish to give up my faith in religion even though it should be proved to be untrue, because I derive the most of my happiness and comfort from my belief in the protecting power of God and the expectation of an immortal life after my death here, in which I shall meet again my wife and children, and all the friends who have made life pleasant for me here."

"Well," I said, "there is no doubt that, in a certain limited sense, happiness is the main object of life; but can there be any true happiness derived from cherishing a delusion? Go with me to the State lunatic asylum and see how many of the unfortunate patients there are happy in the illusions that it is the business of that institution to cure. Is it not cruel in the State to expend vast sums of money to destroy the happiness of that poor woman who fancies herself the queen of heaven, and who lives in daily expectation of the coming of her Lord and husband to place her on her throne, to dispel her happy illusion and send her back to the sober realities of daily life, to hard work and household cares?"

"Was it not cruel in Martin Luther to prove to the purchasers of the Pope's indulgences that those same indulgences were worthless, and that they would be damned, notwithstanding they had paid their money in good faith for salvation?"

"We spend millions in missionary effort to destroy the illusions of the poor heathen, who enjoy their religion as much as the Christians can theirs, and who derive all their happiness and comfort from their faith in the power and favor of Mumbo Jumbo, or some other huggaboo as invisible and as impotent as our Jewish Christian Jehovah."

The happiness which should be the object of life is not the happiness that results from ignorance or illusion. There may be a selfish gratification in cherishing a delusion; but true happiness—that which should be the object of life—is the happiness of the race, the well-being of all mankind; and that is only to be promoted by

knowledge, by dispelling all the illusions, and opening the eyes of men to the truth. All the progress the world has made in civilisation has been by dispelling illusions. All the arts which now conduce so much to our happiness disturbed the happy dreams of our ancestors, who found their happiness in doing without them. That we are not now grovelling in the ignorance of the dark ages is due to the light of science in dispelling the ignorance and illusions of men in the golden age of the Church. The people who now hug the delusion of a protecting God and an immortal life, because it makes them feel happy, would—had they lived three hundred years ago—have condemned the Copernican system of astronomy because they found so much comfort in the belief that the earth was flat and stationary, with God sitting immediately over their heads on the solid firmament.

Granting, for the sake of the argument, that the Christian is happy in believing in God and immortality, think of the suffering, the blood and tears, the envy, hate, and discord that that belief has brought upon the world. Think of the poor man, who can hardly earn enough to feed and clothe himself and family, obliged to deny himself the necessaries of life to feed and pamper a bloated clergy, whose goodwill he must secure or be damned to all eternity.

Think of the millions upon millions of wealth piled up in churches and cathedrals, around which cluster the close-packed tenements of poverty filled with wretchedness, filth, and crime, all the direct result of that religion which promises an eternity of joy in compensation for the evils it bids them suffer here. Think of the enormous revenues wrung from vice and poverty, used to prevent the spread of knowledge and to keep men from finding out the falsity and hollowness of the pretensions of religion. Think of the man who can find happiness in the belief that his little, contemptible soul is safe from the flames of hell, while nine-tenths of his fellow mortals, including his friends and neighbors, are to burn for ever in torment immensely worse than the imagination of man can conceive. When a man with a soul so little worth saving as this asks me not to take away his comfortable belief, he seems to me like the Thug who begs us not to make any law against murder, because he finds so much comfort in performing his religious duty by strangling his victims.

Was it for the sake of saving such fellows as this that God went to all the expense of sacrificing one-third of himself to the other two-thirds to appease the wrath of his whole? If it was, he was much more saving than the man who spoiled his jack-knife to skin a flint; though the two operations were much in the same line.

But do these Christians, who believe in God and immortality, really derive any happiness or comfort from that belief? If they do, it is not manifested in their faces, for they wear a look of woe that would eclipse the "knight of the woeful countenance." Perhaps they think they are happy, or try to make themselves think so; but their efforts are not as successful as those of Mark Tapley, who prided himself upon being jolly under adverse circumstances. If you find a professing Christian with a round, rosy, cheerful face, you may be sure that his religion sits very lightly upon him.

The bitter sorrow that weighs down our hearts when we lay away the dead we have loved and lost is not extinguished, nor is it even mitigated, by the belief that some time in the uncertain future—in some unlocated place in the endless realms of space—we shall meet again those who have gone before us. The yearning of our hearts is for the love and companionship of our lost friends now and here, in the shape and bodily presence that we have known and loved; and strive as we may to console ourselves with that problematical immortality that religion vainly offers, the feelings rebel against it, and we refuse to be comforted, till time—that heals all sorrows—has wrought its perfect work. It is a feeling common to all that lives—to the so-called lower animals as well as to man; and we are unfaithful to the truth when we cling to an illusion that all Nature repudiates, for the sake of a pretended consolation that never comes to us.

The philosophical student of Nature, who recognises the truth that all forms and individualities pass away, and that Nature, with her endless chain of cause and effect, alone persists, submits to the inevitable, and finds consolation in the reflection that his loved and lost friend or companion is past all contingencies of this uncertain life, that he is

safe from all troubles, and has experienced his last of pain. He finds in his memory an immortal influence from his life communion with the departed, and recognises the truth that that influence will be eternally transmitted to all who come hereafter. He mourns, but he knows that he too must follow in the course of Nature, and all sorrow will end in that peaceful sleep that will never be disturbed by angel, trumpet, or the voice of an anthropomorphic God calling upon him to take his chances in a trial for heresy.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

J. P. RICHARDSON.

CHURCH BELLS.

THE above is the title of a lecture given at the Victoria Armory, under the auspices of the Freethought Club, by Captain Robert C. Adams.

The lecturer began by asking why the church bells rang at five o'clock every morning. Was it to call the attention of the few who go to early mass? Thousands can go to concerts and theatres without any such warning, and in these days of dollar clocks everybody knows the time. Was it to praise God? Surely the infinite being has not so unmusical an ear as to delight in such jarring noises. Those who, on the Lord's day, suppress an orchestra and worship their God with bell-ringing pay no compliment to his taste. Noise is an accompaniment of barbarism, and the tendency of civilisation is always towards subdued sound.

In the distance the sound of bells is often musical, although near to they are distressing, and to invalids agonising. Father Prout refers beautifully to "the bells of Shandon that sound so grand on the pleasant waters of the river Lee," and to many the bells speak of "peace on earth, goodwill to men." The Church, the lecturer said, represents the current standard of morality. Religion improves with the advance of civilisation; for all religions, being of human origin, must simply represent the mental condition of their authors. It follows, therefore, that while the church bells speak of the moral sentiments of mankind, they also proclaim the frailties of those who cause them to be rung.

After giving due credit to the Church and to the Christian religion for much that is good in them, the lecturer went on to describe some of the evil things that the bells pealed forth. He spoke, in substance, as follows:—

(1) The bells ring: "No taxation. We buy corner lots, get police and fire protection, drains and pavements, and secure the increase in value caused by the growth of the city; but we pay no taxes, because it is God's property." In the Province of Quebec the Church possessions are valued at 150,000,000 dols. The revenues of the Catholic Church amount to 12 dols. per head of the population, whereas in France, before the revolution, the Church revenue was only 1.50 dols. per head, and this was felt to be cause enough for rebellion. About 10,000,000 dols. worth of Church property is exempted from taxation in the city of Montreal, and every man who pay 20 dollars in taxes pays over a dollar for the benefit of the Church. He is robbed of this amount, and robbery in the name of God is the meanest kind of robbery.

(2) The bells ring: "No recreation. Come to church all day on Sunday and every week evening. Avoid theatres and dances. Close all libraries, museums, and art galleries on the working man's day of rest. Stop all trains or boats that will take him to the green fields and the fresh air. We have the monopoly of the Sabbath, and man was made for us." Every year a bill is introduced into the parliament of Canada to suppress fishing, hunting, and games on Sunday; and the ministers of Montreal troop to the city hall, praying that the ferry to St. Helen's Island Park may be prohibited from running on Sunday. Can there be a God in heaven who does not rebuke the men who, in his name, try to rob babes of fresh air in order to drive the parents into their musty churches? Is there a greater infamy on earth?

(3) The bells ring: "Hell and damnation." They used to ring out loud and clear, but now the tones are muffled. They seem ashamed of the barbarous doctrines of ancient times, and they only mutter, in dull tones, the old curses upon unbelievers. Still, they keep up a pretence of holding to the old doctrines, though they are ignored by

all the cultivated preachers. The churches are becoming merely religious fun clubs, and in the Young Men's Christian Association more men are drawn to the swimming bath than to the "fountain filled with blood." Still, they teach their adherents to despise and ostracise those who are too intelligent to believe in miracles.

(4) The bells ring: "Church domination over every relation. In birth, marriage, death, and burial call for the priest, and if you do not believe his teaching you have no legal status in the Province of Quebec." A child is not deemed to have been born unless a minister of religion certifies to it; he alone can legalise marriage, and he is expected to perform all funeral services. Any drunken loafer who believes what the priest tells him is a credible witness; but any educated follower of Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley, who is too honest to say he knows all about the eternal mysteries, is not allowed to give evidence in the civil courts of the Province of Quebec. Until Quebec grants civil registration of births and civil marriages, and abolishes religious tests, she stands disgraced before the world as an uncivilised nation. In 1893 the dominion parliament granted the right of affirmation to all who have conscientious scruples against taking an oath. Every liberal-minded man ought henceforth to avail himself of this privilege, and refuse to take the oath in the criminal courts or the custom house. By so doing he will help on the reform in Quebec.

(5) The bells ring: "Woman's subjugation. The Church has been the enemy of woman. Beginning with the mythical rib story and the infamous libel upon God, that he inflicted the pains of motherhood because of woman's transgression, down to the days of Paul, the Hebrew scriptures enjoin the submission of woman to man. She is told to keep silence in the churches, not to teach, and to be in subjection. All the movements for woman's political and social advancement have, in their early stages, been opposed by the Church. It has only espoused her cause when the success of it was almost assured, and yet women are the chief supporters of the Church, and but for them its oppressions would cease in a day.

So the bells ring on: "No taxation, no recreation, hell and damnation, Church domination, woman's subjugation." What is the remedy for these evils?

The noise of the bells could be stopped by law. In France, except at certain hours, the bells cannot be rung without a permit; and a cure was arrested for ringing the bells at midnight on Christmas Eve. Voltaire suggested that the bell rope should be used to hang the sexton. But it is better to suppress evil by moral suasion rather than by legal enactment, and it is to be hoped that the growth of refined tastes and of human sympathies will put a stop to the bell banging.

The remedy for Church oppression is to destroy belief in the Bible, from which she draws all arguments for her authority. Men must learn that the Bible is merely a collection of Hebrew literature, and that the ideas that prevailed two thousand years ago are only to be accepted when they accord with modern science and the cultivated judgment of society. Until this book ceases to be used as an authority, its claims must be unsparingly attacked, and only when it is put on the bookshelves to take rank with Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare, as a purely human production, can Freethinkers cease to indulge in "Bible banging."

But these reforms and all other reforms hinge upon the elevation of woman. Civilisation is manifested in a country by the position accorded to woman. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Some may fear to give woman the suffrage while she is the tool of the priest, and shows her inconsiderateness by wearing a large hat at the theatre. But the vote is a means of education. If women are to think rightly, they must have equal rights with men, and equal pay for equal work. The greatest motive power in the world is woman's love. Men will do anything or be anything under that influence. The destiny of empires has often depended upon woman's will; but too often it has been the Cleopatras and the Aspasiases who have determined the fate of nations. Woman has not used her power aright. Her reproach is voiced in the lines of Coventry Patmore:—

Oh, wasteful woman, she who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
How has she cheapened paradise!

How given for naught her priceless gift,
How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine,
Which, used with due respective thrift,
Had made brutes men and men divine!

When woman wakes to the realisation of her power and the full use of her reason, the world's progress will be assured. The Shakers call God he—she, and say he was first manifested as a man in Jesus, and then as a woman in Ann Lee. It will be when upon perfect equality man and woman walk hand in hand, we shall see the world regenerated by the coming of "the Christ that is to be."

The lecture was enlivened by numerous anecdotes and narrations of facts in illustration, and frequently received hearty applause.

—*Montreal Saturday Times.*

THE TOOTING TRAGEDY.

IN face of the intensely pathetic story which will probably long be known as "The Tooting Tragedy," the ghastly mockery of Christian Theism ought surely to make some Christian ministers ashamed of their teaching. So highly respected were Taylor and his wife that even the poorest of their neighbors were willing to help them in their terrible struggle with poverty and sickness. Yet the Christians' God looks calmly on while starvation and influenza drive an affectionate father and husband mad, and while, in his frenzy, he cuts the throats of his wife, of all his children, and, finally, his own, feeling, no doubt, even in his madness, that it were better that they all should die at once than prolong their miserable existence in a world in which they were *de trop*. Say the newspapers: "Taylor, when found lying across the body of his wife, appeared to be in the position of a man who had been praying. Nor is this all the doctors noticed. They found an open Bible—open at a page in Chronicles." Poor Taylor seems, indeed, to have died crying "O Lord, O Lord." But the Lord was as deaf to his despairing cries as Baal was to the frantic prayers of his prophets. And it is for teaching the ignorant masses to trust in this God that Christian preachers draw handsome salaries, while those who oppose such preaching are denounced as "infidels!"

Poor Taylor's troubles are now over. But millions are being deceived as he was. Deluded by the hopes of retribution in another world, where Dives shall change places with Lazarus, solaced by the splendid promises of a Christ who never lived, "tens of thousands and thousands of thousands" are dragging out an existence as miserable as his, while priests, sovereigns, and statesmen live in luxury. Well might Shelley say that Christianity is, chiefly, a means of deceiving and enslaving the people.

As was, of course, to be expected, Christian Socialists blame our iniquitous social system for the Tooting tragedy. But our social system is just what some 1,400 years of Christianity have made it. For fourteen centuries Christianity has been established; it has had all the power and, practically, all the wealth of Europe on its side. If, then, we have a state of society in which thousands die of starvation, while many seek relief from a life of misery in suicide, it is absurd to say that Christianity is in no way responsible. It is no wonder that so many are starved, when tens of millions of pounds sterling per annum are wasted on "the foolishness of preaching."

ANDREW LIDDLE.

The Factors of Civilisation.

Science and freedom were the great factors of civilisation, or of progress in every kind of conceptions, sentiments, and social conditions: the first dissolved and destroyed the matrix of myth in which the intelligence was at first enveloped, and liberty, which was wholly due to science, made steady progress a matter of certainty. So that it may be said that the whole web of human history, so far as it consists in civilisation or the progress of all good things, of the arts, and of every intellectual and material achievement, was the conflict of science, and her offspring freedom, against ignorance, and the despotism which results from ignorance, under all the social forms in which they are manifested.—*T. Vignoli, "Myth and Science," p. 323.*

PARSON AND SON.

A CLERGYMAN pompous, of countenance smug,
As befitted a pious exhorter,
Entertained black-clothed brothers, ten of them all told,
In his study with whiskey and water.
Now, this generous gargle his eloquence freed,
And the sins of this world he discoursed on ;
But behind the sky-pilots his son Tom was sat
(A lad whom his sermons were lost on),
For, sad to relate, an Atheist was Tom,
And a by-word with him was "damnation"—
For somehow he couldn't, in spite of his pa,
Recognise Jesus Christ as "Salvation."
But he, nevertheless, with pater agreed
That snug quarters were good for the body,
And the holy crew jostled to get nearer the fire,
And passed up his glass for more toddy.
But the rector frowned at him with visage so stern,
And bade him get back from the fire,
For to elbow a parson was deserving, he said,
Of punishment speedy and dire.
Then hot words arose, and young Tom he was told
To go per express train to Hades
(A place, we're informed, full of brimstone and flames,
Not usually mentioned 'fore ladies).
At this mandate paternal Tom took himself off,
And for six months from home was absented,
Till one fine spring morning he turned up once more,
And himself to his father presented.
The good man inquired, "Well, where have you been?"
"Where you told me to go?" "And you found it?"
"Oh yes, but 'twas chilly; so I came away."
"What! chilly in hell! is that what you say?"
"Yes, for, like our own fire in the study that day,
For parsons I couldn't get round it!"

ALEX. MITCHELL.

ACID DROPS.

DR. DALE, of Birmingham, having fallen a victim to the fashionable epidemic, the religious papers have naturally been singing his praises; and, indeed, as clericals go, he was not a bad sort. The *Daily Chronicle* lauds his spirit of tolerance, and says he was just to "all classes of honest thinkers." Now we protest against that "honest." It is an epithet which covers any convenient amount of bigotry. There cannot be "honest" thought or "dishonest" thought. These terms are only applicable to actions. Men do not think as they would; they think as they must. The operations of the intellect are not subject to volition. This is a primary truth of psychology, and the denial of it has been the basis of all persecution.

The *Chronicle* is wrong in stating that John Milton extended toleration to all forms of opinion. He drew the line at Catholicism and Atheism. Milton was ahead of most of his contemporaries, but it is idle to assert that he was abreast of the more advanced ideas of the nineteenth century.

Clovis Hughes, the erratic Socialist poet, produced a Passion Play at the Socialist Maison du Peuple, in Paris. Jesus Christ was represented between the two thieves. The unrepentant thief twits him with not boldly preaching the right to live, and the Prophet of Nazareth replies that he tried to teach men to love one another, which, by the way, is a thing that cannot be taught at all, except by example. Jesus Christ says to the two thieves, "I bless you both," and the bad thief magnanimously says, "I forgive you." It is reported that this stuff was "listened to with reverent attention and loudly applauded."

W. R. Bradlaugh writes in the *Christian Herald*—one of the silliest papers in Christendom—that he still wants £150 to meet the costs of that Hall of Science libel action. "I fear," he says, "that, unless I obtain the balance in a few days, my home will be sold." He leaves it to be inferred that his "home" will be sold up by the "infidels." If it is sold up at all, it can only be sold up by his pious publisher, to whom he gave (or says he gave) an indemnification.

W. R. Bradlaugh wants £150 more, and his quondam friend Powell, who uttered the filthy libel that was branded by the jury's verdict, is actually stating at Sunderland that he (Powell) has paid the money out of his own pocket. What a noble brace of worthies!

Only a few subscriptions are acknowledged in the *Christian Herald*: even Baxter's gudgeons don't seem to bite at this bait. One subscriber sends half-a-crown "For Christ's

Sake." Perhaps this is an abbreviation of "For Christ's sake, don't do it again." It is charitable to suppose that the subscriber doesn't mean "For Christ's sake, libel those Freethinkers again."

Our readers have heard of St. Winifred's Well at Holywell, which is declared by the Catholics, and believed by many Protestants, to possess miraculous properties. Places of this kind were once numerous, but only a few now exist to provide for a slackened demand. It is curious how miracles keep pace with credulity.

The water of St. Winifred's Well cures all manner of diseases, though it has no effect upon ignorance and stupidity. Samples of it are ordered from all parts of the world. The *Daily News* says that two hundredweight of it is posted every night in sealed cans to all parts of the United Kingdom, to America, and to the colonies. Silliness is evidently well-spread over this curious planet.

As Easter approaches there is always an extra stir among the Second Adventists, who placard the walls with announcements of Coming Great Events, including the positive reappearance of Jesus Christ, and the ascension of 144,000 Christians to meet their Lord in the air. A strong argument for the general insanity of mankind might be drawn from the influence of the nightmare of Cranky John of Patmos, extending right down through the ages unto the nineteenth century.

Sunday last being St. Patrick's Day, the Orangemen and Catholics at the South-end of Liverpool had a riot in honor of the occasion. Ultimately, the C Division of the City Police put a stop to the religion, when it was found that a number of the celebrants were seriously hurt. Four ring-leaders were made prisoners by the bobbies, and can now wear martyrs' crowns.

Prebendary Reynolds, in his report for last year on the Church Schools of London, gives some words of warning to the teachers. It is not advisable to tell children that the evening and morning of the first chapter of Genesis means twenty-four hours, for this teaching may afterwards have to be explained away. To teach that Adam or Cain or Abraham actually saw the First Person of the Holy Trinity is to contradict the teachings of the New Testament, that "no man hath seen God at any time." Also, it would be well to restrict the teaching of the Old Testament to the smallest limits in infants' schools. Prebendary Reynolds report forcibly suggests that, after all, the old Jew books are not suitable for children.

Once more a member of the "Peculiar People" has had to appear before a coroner to explain the death of her child. The laying on of hands and prayer treatment, prescribed by the apostle James, were the only means adopted to cure the child of convulsions. Coroner Hicks said the "Peculiar People" were illogical; for, in the case of a broken arm or leg, they would send for a doctor in the ordinary course. It was, however, explained that in the Scriptures there were no instructions that God would heal a broken bone; but they were distinctly told to call upon him in the day of trouble, and he would heal the sick by the prayer of faith. They were told of no other remedy, and they adhered to the Scriptures.

The village of Greenford, Middlesex, has been excited over the strange disappearance of the Rev. Henry Treweise Briscoe, the rector of the parish. All sorts of rumors have been afloat as to the cause of his absence, one of the chief of these being that the reverend gentleman has become so involved in financial difficulties that he has left the village for good, and taken up his residence in an obscure district of the metropolis. The living was worth £350 a year.

Anna Gould became the Countess de Castellane in the city of New York. She was married to the Count by the Archbishop of New York, having secured a special dispensation permitting her, although a Protestant, to marry in Lent, the holy season in which marriages are usually deemed unlawful, or rather improper in the Catholic Church. On the same day this marriage took place a poor Italian applied to the Cathedral rectory for leave to marry in Lent. His betrothed was ill and friendless, and he wanted the right to protect her from a stepfather. Her mother was dead. The dispensation was refused. Moral: If you want dispensations, see that your bride is wealthy.

According to the *Record*, a clergyman in a West-end church announced the banns the other Sunday in a manner calculated to lead to a breach of promise action. He forgot to perform the duty at the proper time, much to the chagrin of the affianced couple, who attended church specially to hear their names read out. The reverend gentleman remembered the omission before entering the pulpit to preach, and accordingly he took the banns-book with him.

The result was that he announced: "I publish the bans of marriage between John M—, widower, and Elizabeth N—, spinster;" and, without a pause or introduction of any kind, he then read out the text of his sermon, "And the last state of that man is worse than the first."

The fight on the Circular of the London School Board has begun again. In a preliminary skirmish Mr. Athelstan Riley boasted that his party had been returned by a majority in defence of Christianity. Reminded that they represented a minority, he added: "Their opponents had got a majority of votes, it was true; but whose votes were they? They were the votes of persons who sent their representatives to the Board to wreck Christian instruction." This shows the way in which Churchmen regard the Nonconformists, who were so religiously anxious for the compromise.

Pure, unadulterated Christianity is a very dangerous article. Emperor William, for instance, is a first-water Christian. His wife builds churches, though the people won't fill them; and her hubby is constantly talking pious nonsense, especially to his army and navy, which he evidently regards as the most religious departments of his empire. Some time ago he took it into his head that democracy could only be checked by "more religion," and in this he was perfectly right. Accordingly his Government brought in a bill to provide a further supply of Christian teaching in the public schools; the said teaching, of course, to be forced upon all children, even if their parents happened to be Freethinkers. Germany stands a lot from its emperor, but it couldn't stand this. The Reichstag kicked the bill out, and pious William had to put it back in the cupboard. Its introduction, however, shows what the Christian disease is when a man has taken it badly.

More recently a bill was introduced in the Reichstag, rendering every person liable to a fine of £30, or imprisonment not exceeding two years, who should openly attack religion, the monarchy, matrimony, the family, or property. This was a pretty wide net, calculated to catch all but the most sluggish and conservative Germans. The measure was severely denounced by the Liberals and Social Democrats, and the Committee appointed to consider it, by a majority of 13 to 12 votes, rejected this particularly dangerous part of the Anti-Revolutionary Bill. Thirteen to twelve, however, is a very narrow squeak. Freethought has escaped a great peril in Germany. It is obvious that Christianity and bigotry are still synonymous, if not actually identical; and that there will be no security for freedom of thought and discussion until "the Galilean serpent" is sent the way of all the dead pests of superstition.

"King-deluded Germany," under its present pious and military régime, is fast losing every shred of liberty, and it is little wonder that the most enterprising of its sons show a disposition to quit the Fatherland as soon as possible. At a meeting at Sondershausen, the other day, Herr Weiss, a Liberal member of the Reichstag, delivered a speech on the subject of the Anti-Revolutionary Bill, in which he said that, if the Church alone had had to decide scientific questions, we should not enjoy the achievements of modern astronomy. The earth would then still be standing still, and the sun with its satellites revolving round it. In consequence of these remarks, the meeting was dissolved by the police. This occurs before the Anti-Revolutionary Bill is passed. One may imagine what would happen if it was in force. Pious William is sitting on the safety-valve. When an explosion comes he will probably be lifted to the third heaven.

A compositor's slip brought the editor of a little newspaper, published at Intersburgh, Eastern Prussia, into trouble. An article appeared in the paper on the subject of the German Emperor's speech at Königsberg, and in it occurred the word "damahlig" (of or relating to a previous period of time). But the printer set it up "damlig," which would be "damnable," and, although the article was perfectly loyal, and even complimentary, in tone, the censor saw in the introduction of such a word an outrage upon the person of the Sovereign. Hence there was a police-court prosecution. The magistrate who tried the case acquitted the editor, who had, he said, acted in perfect good faith in the matter; but all the copies of the incriminated issue were ordered to be destroyed.

The Rev. E. A. Barker, of Ludlow, in following the footsteps of the carpenter's wife's son, amassed a nice little fortune of £156,000. For of such is the kingdom of heaven!

Christ, if living Christ indeed, should have mercy on his namesake, Paula Christ, a Viennese seamstress, who has been sentenced to a week's imprisonment for pawning linen, the property of her employers. For four years she has supported her old parents by her needle, and this cold winter the need of fuel prevented her from saving enough to pay the small rent. Her father and mother would have been

turned out of doors, so she pawned the shirts she had been working upon to pay the sum owing. During all the bitter winter this girl has been paid at the rate of a shilling for each dozen shirts made. The judge asked her how long she took to make them, and she said that she had to work hard to finish them in twelve hours. One penny for an hour's hard work, and three people to keep out of it! The Court considered the theft to have been committed under very hard circumstances, and sentenced the girl to only a week's detention.

A poor woman applied at the North London Police Court for assistance from the poor-box. Her husband was ill, and she could not earn enough to support the family. She worked at the Salvation Army Laundry, where she was paid at the rate of 1½d. for washing a dozen sheets! Booth ought to have had his laundry women on exhibit at his Albert Hall reception, as an evidence of what he is doing for darkest England.

The *Daily Telegraph*, of Sydney (February 4), has a slashing attack on the Archbishop of Canterbury for his slandering the colonies in his attempt to bolster up the cause of religious education in England. It declares that the pretended statistics given by Archbishop Benson as a proof that secular education is followed by an increase of crime are "wholly imaginary."

It observes: "The facts are precisely the other way about, as throughout the whole of Australia there has, during the period, been a steady and consistent rise in the moral standard. For the last four decennial terms the crime record shows a continuous fall, the number of convictions being in 1892 only one-third of the total for 1861. Since the secular system of education came into use the rate of improvement has been fully sustained; especially so in Victoria, which has one of the lowest crime records in the whole group."

We felt quite sure at the time that Dr. Benson's figures were, what the *Sydney Telegraph* calls them, "grossly misleading"; and it shows how they are so: "It is only within the past ten years or so that Victoria has had a native-born element of the crime-committing age. In the days of denominational education the bulk of the natives were children, amongst whom convictions in the law courts were necessarily fewer than amongst the adult immigrants. They have now grown up, and prove no better or worse than their fellow colonists. But within their own ranks the percentage increase of crime by a reckless use of figures may be made to seem abnormal simply because it started from almost nil and reached the average."

"With these facts open to Dr. Benson in the official records of the colony," says the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, "there is no excuse for his hurling such a charge against a people who have not an opportunity of effective reply." "His example," it adds, "is a very poor argument in favor of the kind of religious teaching which Dr. Benson champions. The curriculum should, apparently, include special lessons upon the propriety of not going out of your way to meddle with other people's characters—at all events, until you have taken some little trouble to make sure of your facts."

The ministers of Victoria have discovered that, out of a population of 1,170,330, there are only 511,792 churchgoers. The Rev. W. A. Quick has, accordingly, been dilating upon the ungodliness of the colony; but the Rev. W. Strong says the fault is with the Church, and reminds Mr. Quick that Jesus never inculcated either going to church or keeping the Sabbath.

Twenty-one Buddhist clergymen have been appointed by the Japanese Government to go to the front and perform the rites of the Church for the dead and dying. Their principal duty will be to pray for the souls of the departed and attend to burial services. These reverend gentlemen expressed great interest in the clerical system of the British army and navy, the garrison chaplains, the warships' "sky pilots"—a term which quite took their fancy when explained.

Two poor women, a mother and a daughter, suffocated themselves at a small house in Railway-crescent, South Melbourne. The daughter left a written message or prayer. It begins: "Blessed Father, Loving Savior,—I humbly ask thy loving mercy and pardon for the deed we are going to do. I have not been able to get any work to do. I have not a penny in the house and deep in debt, and to see my darling aged mother turned out into the cold street without any money, and not to have any place to put her dear head into. Oh, God, it is more than I can bear." The only answer to this prayer was death.

Say! What conceited things they must be who imagine God answers their trumpery, formal prayers, put up when

there is nothing the matter, while he leaves hundreds to drown and hundreds to die in coal-pits, whose prayers are wrung out of them by the agony of their situation! And what an execrable thing God must be to attend to the cry of the formalist, and turn a deaf ear to the affrighted and horrible appeals of the direst agony! Religion is a monstrous thing, and the Christian God the most ridiculous monster that ever was feared or worshipped.

The *Jewish Chronicle* (March 13) extracts from the annual report of the Cardiff Charity Organisation Society an account of some conversionists and converts in that town. The report states that, under the auspices of some benevolent Cardiff gentlemen, a Home for Jews was opened, and a person holding holy orders was appointed agent. There was an influx into the town of converted Jews, and the Society was desired to investigate. It found the records of these converts more than doubtful. One of them was travelling about with another man's wife; another received two valuable pictures for framing, and sold them twice, besides receiving money for framing them. Reports of other converts were not at all satisfactory. The record of the agent was found to be bad, and he had been summarily dismissed by a prominent London clergyman who had employed him in similar work. A considerable amount in subscriptions had been collected in Cardiff, and, so far as could be discovered, no adequate work had been done for it, and no account rendered of it. Despite these disclosures, the work of bringing God's chosen to Christ goes merrily on.

The *Jewish Chronicle* remarks: "Jewish ministers are unanimous in deploring the growing laxity of the community in regard to Sabbath observance, and in viewing this laxity as the greatest danger which has ever assailed Judaism." It points out that the difficulties surrounding the question are not easy of solution. "Certainly, pulpit exhortations have not effected any cure." God calls one way and Mammon another, and the chosen race are readier to listen to the latter.

In Brampton, in Chinguacousy township, Ontario, an entire family went religiously mad. The second son of a widow, David J. McClure, claiming to be Jesus Christ at his Second Advent, nearly murdered his mother in his efforts to exorcise a devil, and was finally arrested and lodged in gaol with his brothers. The whole family had indulged for some days in a wild orgie of religious exercises, singing, furniture-smashing, etc. These people took their religion undiluted.

A Buffalo despatch says that Henry Koehler, a clergyman aged sixty-two, was sentenced to the penitentiary there for twenty days for vagrancy. Koehler says he has lectured in many towns in Canada, and was married in Port Elgin to a lady now living there with her parents. He fell from grace by means of an old failing of his—drunkenness, but he had been sober for two days when he was unjustly arrested. Where is "the power of Jesu's name" in such a case as this?

New Facts is the title of an occasional journal issued by Mr. Britnell, of Yonge-street, who appears to be a disgruntled Salvationist, and sets forth a number of damaging statements regarding the Army. It is stated that on December 16, 1888, the *Telegram* census showed a total of 3,541 attendants at the various Salvation barracks in Toronto, morning and evening. On Sunday, February 3, 1895, Mr. Britnell says he caused a census to be taken, when a total of 318 attendants was found. We could wish that the street noises would decrease in the same proportion. Seven years ago, says Mr. Britnell, the membership in Canada was 40,000, and the *War Cry* sold 23,000. To-day the Canadian membership is 6,000, and the *War Cry* sales less than 10,000. "How the Army Makes Sceptics" is one of the headlines.—*Secular Thought*.

So many laws for Sunday regulation have been introduced into the Missouri legislature that a senator has capped them by moving to substitute for the original Blue Law measure the following: "Section 1—It is a sin to steal a pin, or shave a chin, on Sunday. Section 2—No one shall smile or think of guile, or wicked wile, on Sunday. Section 3—No one shall kiss a wife or miss, on Sunday."

Cardinal Kopp, of Berlin, has given his pronouncement against woman's rights from the standpoint of the Church. He says: "It is against the order of the world that the emancipation of woman should mean her absolute equality with men. God's will is that woman should be the help-mate. She is bodily unfit for man's work, and her emancipation, to the end that she might work side by side with man, would mean the deterioration of the Christianity that freed her from slavery and made her man's social equal. Unrestricted equality would mean woman's ruin." The Cardinal holds with St. Paul and St. Peter that the woman was made for the man, and should be in subjection in all things.

Hugh Price Hughes is "in hearty sympathy with manly and recreative sport." Perhaps he is, but he doesn't look it. We fancy he speaks more sincerely in saying that "the present craze for cricket and football is a sign of mental degeneracy such as marked the decadence both of Greece and Rome." We suppose it is not "a sign of degeneracy" when people flock to hear Mr. Hughes's platitudinous sentimentalities. We also suppose, as the reverend gentleman sees danger in cricket and football, that he finds "manly and recreative sport" in tops and marbles.

"Three Hours of Hallelujah" heads the *Methodist Times* report of "General" Booth's meeting at the Albert Hall. This is not a "sign of mental degeneracy."

Dr. Lunn, one of Price Hughes's bosom friends, complains of the paltry way in which British aristocrats support religious movements. Their cheques are hardly worth lighting candles with. Rich men in America are always helping on the cause of Christ. American millionaires give big subscriptions to the churches. Of course they do. It is a sort of insurance premium. American millionaires are no fools. They know that one minister is worth ten policemen. He keeps the people down without their knowing it.

Father Ignatius continues on the warpath. He has been referring to Archdeacon Farrar as "that awful man." If that is how he refers to so mild a heretic as "not everlasting but eternal hell-fire" Farrar, what would he say of the editor of the *Freethinker*? He would have to outdo the Billingsgate of Jesus in Jerusalem.

The *Christian World* complains that Father Ignatius denounces even those who "hold enlightened views of the Atonement." Surely good phrases ever were commendable. What on earth is an "enlightened" view of the Atonement? Can it mean anything but a *dishonest* view—something between the acceptance of orthodoxy and the rejection of rationalism?

The average missionary, according to the late Matthew Arnold, is a "grotesque" creature. He and his friends carry unintelligible doctrines to the poor "heathen." They also carry some very questionable morality. It seems necessary, to their narrow minds, that the "heathen" in hot countries should dress like Britishers; which is incidentally a good thing for the missionary's friends at home in the cotton and tweed business. Well, the poor "heathen" get dressed in these unsuitable garments; and the result is that they get hot, dirty, depressed, and finally diseased.

These good Christians are actuated by what they regard as a sense of modesty. They are nice people—that is, as Swift said, people with nasty ideas. They forget that the Old Testament patriarchs, God's especial friends and favorites, were not overburdened with raiment; that when Rebekah sat at the well she probably thought nothing of displaying more than half of a glowing bosom; that Saul had not much to do when he stripped to lie down naked with the prophets; that David showed more skin than coat when he danced before the ark; and that Jesus Christ himself needed very little stripping when he was hung up naked on "that fatal tree."

Robert Louis Stevenson blazed out at a Christian lady in Samoa, who had all her female native servants dressed in the European fashion. "Woman," he thundered, "is your mind so base that you cannot see and admire what is beautiful in the form God Almighty has created? Do you not understand that their own dress is right for the climate and their simple way of living? And do you not see that the first thing you do on landing on this beautiful island is to pollute their minds and sully their modest thoughts?"

Those simple Samoans, by the way, have nothing to learn from Bible-reading countries in the essentials of morality. They are gentle and generous, and even when they engage in fighting they do not abandon their gallantry. Miss Frazer, the authoress of *In Stevenson's Samoa*, relates that once, during a war, both sides stopped a battle to let a woman drive a cow over the field!

At the milliner's hung a hat very fair,
And Mrs. Blinker prayed for it.
The powers immortal answered her prayer;
But Mr. Blinker paid for it.

American men of God are a privileged species. They travel half-fare on all the railroads. It is reported, however, that the New York Central proposes to withdraw the clerical tickets on the ground of abuse. Ministers are alleged to have lent or even sold their tickets. Well, well! It is a hard world for most of us; and men of God must make a dollar when they can.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 24, St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street, Bristol: 11, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

March 31, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 24, Hall of Science, London; 31, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 7, Sheffield; 14, Liverpool; 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow; 12, Dundee.—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 Efra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

E. G. TURNEY.—Your Christian friend who told you that Mr. Foote "would not meet the late C. Edwards in debate" has a romantic imagination. Edwards was never "put forward by the Christian Evidence Society." That Society has never put forward anyone, and steadily declines to do so. Mr. Engstrom, the secretary, will corroborate this statement. The statement that Mr. Foote is "afraid to meet Dr. Parkes" is very funny. Who is Dr. Parkes? We have never heard of him before.

W. CARTER.—"Lesson" doesn't rhyme with "blessing." Stick to prose. You do that better.

T. ELLIOT.—We deeply regret to hear of poor Brown's sad condition. No doubt his brain trouble had been coming on for a considerable time; it explains many things that were difficult to understand. Brown has been a hard and loyal worker for the Freethought cause on the Tyneside, and we should esteem it a favor if you would acquaint us with the financial aspects of his case.

F. FRISBEE.—(1) So far as phrenology is a science, it is open to study and acceptance by Atheists as well as other people. If the author you refer to says that "no Atheist can become a true phrenologist," he simply talks nonsense. (2) Dr. Aveling's *Darwin Made Easy* would serve your purpose. Mr. Forder sells it at one shilling. It is an admirable summary. If you want larger works, read Darwin's *Descent of Man* and Dr. Wallace's *Darwinism*. Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man* is largely a religious and metaphysical disquisition.

D. D. (Brisbane).—Thanks. Australian papers are always welcome.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—J. Brown, 2s.; Newcastle Branch, 18s.

W. C. P. (Wallingford).—Pleased to hear you derive so much satisfaction from the *Freethinker*. There is a Branch of the N.S.S. at Reading, but not at Oxford: The N.S.S. secretary (28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.) will send you, on application, printed forms about Secular burials and affirming in courts of justice. There is no Freethought circulating library. Several Branches have libraries, but not of that character.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Thanks. See paragraph.

H. GUTHRIE.—Sorry we must postpone doing what you desire. The libel case diverted our attention from Mr. Birrell's article.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Mr. Foote is writing to you.

R. JOSLIN.—Received with thanks. We shall refer to the matter at length presently.

W. CLOGG.—Your suggestion shall be considered.

MR. FOOTE'S review of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* will be continued next week. His pen is active in other directions in this week's *Freethinker*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Christian Herald—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Echo—Reynolds's Newspaper—Newcastle Chronicle—Open Court—Liberty—Twentieth Century—Croscent—Islamic World—Truthseeker—Newcastle Leader—Sunderland Echo—Secular Thought—Liberator—Post—Sydney Daily Telegraph—Brisbane Telegraph—Melbourne Age—Melbourne Herald—Isle of Wight Guardian—Harbinger of Light—Melbourne Argus.

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

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

I AM desired by the Board of Directors of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) to make a statement on certain matters in this week's issue of the *Freethinker*. Communication with the shareholders in a more private way would not meet the necessities of the case. Not only is there no time to be lost, but subscribers have an interest in the Hall of Science as well as shareholders.

First of all, I will say a few words about the Club. A few months ago the Club Committee persisted in allowing a professional boxing contest to take place in the large hall, in spite of the protests of the N.S.S. Executive and of the Board of Directors; on account of which, it will be remembered, the Executive felt obliged to suspend the N.S.S. affiliation to the Club. At the N.S.S. members' meeting, held early in January, the Club president stated

that it was the Club which kept the roof over the heads of the Freethought party. This statement has been industriously circulated. It is far, however, from being true. The Executive has paid a great deal more rent than the Club, and for a much less extensive use of the premises. The Club's capacity for paying rent has steadily declined. During the past year it has only paid the Directors the sum of £45 altogether. Its occupancy terminates on March 25; and the Directors are resolved, so far as they are concerned, that whatever social element is to exist there in future shall be entirely confined to members of the National Secular Society.

I now come to a more serious matter. Some five months ago the Club Committee sent a formal, written complaint to the Directors about the state of the premises. Thereupon the Directors requested a practical builder to make a survey and report. This document was not very flattering, but it was repudiated by Mr. R. O. Smith (the vendor of the premises to the Society) as partial and exaggerated. An outside builder, not a member of our party, was then called in, who made a survey in the presence of Mr. Smith and myself. His report was of such a character that it was necessary to hold a special meeting of the Board. Mr. Smith attended, and, after stating that the report was as much a surprise to him as to the other Directors, he offered to forego £600 of the purchase money (£3,000). The Directors, however, would not agree to pay more than £2,000 in all; of which £1,400 had been paid already.

The matter was then left for me to negotiate with Mr. Smith, with a view to his interest in the lease being terminated, and the premises being closed for the possibility of a speedy rebuilding.

A friend of the movement, whose name should not be disclosed without his sanction, consented at my request to find the sum of £500 for the mortgage held by Mr. Smith free of all encumbrances. After some haggling Mr. Smith agreed (I have it in writing) to take £525 in cash and £75 in shares. The gentleman in question, under a good deal of friendly pressure from me, reluctantly agreed to the higher figure; but the prolonged negotiation gave him time to see the matter in a fresh light, and at the last moment he declined the responsibility for reasons I felt it impossible to confute. I was away at the seaside then with a sick wife. On my return to London a few days afterwards, I saw Mr. Smith again, and offered to raise the money in another way if he still adhered to the terms of our agreement. Two days later the Board received a letter from his solicitor, stating he intended to obtain the money owing to him or to realise his security. Since then all our endeavors to obtain a definite answer from Mr. Smith as to a revision of the original agreement have been fruitless.

Mr. Smith objects that we have not the money in hand to make him an offer; and we reply that we shall raise no money until we have a definite understanding in black on white.

It now remains for Mr. Smith to leave the matter as it stands, in which case the Directors have no alternative but to let him foreclose the mortgage; or, after admitting that the premises are not what he thought them at the time of sale, to consider the moral claims of our party as well as his own technical rights. Personally, I am not without a hope that he will be just; I would fain hope that he will even be generous.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had three capital audiences on Sunday at Nottingham. His lectures appeared to be highly appreciated. The evening meeting was specially large and enthusiastic. Messrs. Hooper, Anderson, Stapleton, and other zealous members of the Nottingham Branch were well in evidence; and friends were present from Derby, Newark, Beeston, and other places. Announcement was made during the day that the Branch had secured a hall for its regular meetings, the new course of which is to be inaugurated by Mr. James Hooper next Sunday (March 31). We hope the Branch will be well supported in this new enterprise. Readers of the *Freethinker* in Nottingham, who have not yet joined the Branch, should make up their minds to do so at once, and to give it both moral and material assistance.

Mr. Foote visits Bristol again to-day (March 24) after a considerable absence. His lectures will be delivered in the large St. James's Hall. Unfortunately, the hall is let on condition that no discussion is permitted after the lectures. Questions, however, will be allowed.

The debate at Derby between Mr. Foote and Mr. Lee is definitely fixed to take place on Wednesday and Thursday, May 8 and 9. The subject for discussion is "Atheism or Theism: Which is the More Reasonable?" Mr. Lee, who has practically made all the arrangements himself, has the advantage of the last speech. He has also declined to discuss Christianity, which is the speciality of his religious propaganda; Theism being a system of belief that could be defended by a Mohammedan, a Brahman, or even a Jew, quite as well as a Christian. Mr. Lee prefers to take a position in which all religionists will be at his side. Perhaps it was this idea which made him, at first, stipulate the fantastic condition that a vote should be taken at the end of the debate, though he never explained what the audience was to vote upon. If he meant—and it was difficult to see what else he *could* mean—that the audience was to decide by vote whether there was a God, it was a piece of most peculiar and atrocious irreverence, to say nothing of its monstrous folly. Mr. Foote replied at once that he would never agree to such an absurdity.

The debate will not be a very profitable one to Mr. Foote. The Christians maintain laws which keep our party poor; their men have salaries, and ours have none; yet they are fond of stipulating that we shall gain nothing for the hard labor of a public debate, nor even be recouped for loss of time. A debate fell through at Nottingham because the Rev. George Bishop's committee would not consent to Mr. Foote's hotel expenses being paid during the time he would be away from home debating. Mr. Bishop lived at Nottingham, so this form of self-denial would have cost him nothing; the whole weight of it would have fallen upon Mr. Foote. The Nottingham friends offered to pay his hotel expenses themselves, but Mr. Foote said he would not connive at an act of barefaced injustice, even if he were as rich as Rothschild.

Mr. Lee's friends are not so bad as this. Mr. Foote, like the other disputant, is to be allowed his railway fare and the sum of two guineas for hotel expenses. The balance of admission money will go to the Royal Derbyshire Infirmary. Mr. Foote will not be out of pocket directly, but he will be so indirectly, as he will lose two days' time, in which he would otherwise be earning something towards the maintenance of his household. This is quite independent of whatever time may be given to preparation for the debate.

Since the preceding paragraph was written we learn that the debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. A. J. Waldron has been definitely fixed to take place in the Public Hall, New Brompton, on Wednesday and Thursday, April 17 and 18. The question for discussion is, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" The bills are already posted in the district, and the Chatham friends tell us that very large audiences are expected.

Mr. Charles Watts had a hearty reception at the Hall of Science, London, last Sunday evening. His lecture, "Theism Tested," "caught on," and was throughout enthusiastically applauded. A stranger spoke fairly in opposition, and volunteered the statement that he should again attend the hall and defend the Christian faith. Mr. Rowney made an excellent chairman.

Mr. Watts lectures again at the Hall of Science this evening (March 24), taking for his subject "The Birth, Reign, and Death of Christianity." Mr. Watts will deal specially with the why and wherefore of the origin of the Christian faith.

Mr. Watts has still a few copies left of Mr. S. Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*. The work extends to nearly a thousand pages, and comprises scores of portraits of dead and living Freethinkers. Mr. Watts will send a copy carriage free for one guinea. Applications (with remittance) to 81 Effra-road, Brixton, S.W.

Mr. Symes is in trouble once more. He now has to appear before the Chief Justice of Victoria on a charge of contempt of court for some observations made in the *Liberator* on the finding of a jury. The case was down for February 15th, but we are unable to state the result. We wish our old colleague safe deliverance from all his enemies.

The ministers of Hoboken, New Jersey, did their utmost to prevent Colonel Ingersoll from lecturing in the local theatre. As a result of their united protest the Mayor was induced to issue an order that the theatre should be closed on the day of the lecture. The decree made much excitement and comment, and the corporation attorney gave his opinion

that it was illegal. The Mayor had to ignominiously crawl down. Detectives were, however, sent to stop any blasphemous utterances. Ingersoll lectured as usual, and, when speaking of the savagery of the Bible, introduced the following: "There was enacted a statute in the State of New Jersey a hundred odd years ago, when most of its inhabitants were savages, which says that nobody shall ever discuss the Bible except on one side. Since then the inhabitants have grown civilised. They have grown to have a knowledge of fair play; they have been civilised to a degree where they can realise its absurdity, and to realise that the statute sleeps in the dimness of the past. It has now been invoked by a number of narrow-minded persons, who should have died three hundred years ago. I don't blame them; their heads are that shape, and they are not to blame."

The *New York Times* says of the Rev. Mr. Beatty, who made himself prominent in the attempt to stop Colonel Ingersoll from speaking at Hoboken: "His bumps should be felt by the common phrenologist under circumstances of the utmost possible publicity."

The *New York Independent*, one of the chief religious journals of America, now tells the ministers of Hoboken: "It is not well to pay any attention to such a man as Mr. Ingersoll." They may reply in the words of the Scotch song, "Ye should have tell't me that in time." The ministers of Hoboken found that out when too late, and the *Independent's* advice must come like a mother's scolding to foolish children who have hurt themselves.

The Committee who arranged the Children's Party are requested to meet at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening at 9 o'clock, to receive balance-sheet, etc.

The second volume of Mr. F. J. Gould's *Concise History of Religion* (Watts & Co.) has for some time been lying on our table for review. We hope to give it an adequate notice in our next issue. Meanwhile we commend it to our readers' attention. It gives an excellent account of Judaism and the Jewish Scriptures; and shows great care, thought, and research.

The Hull Branch of the N.S.S. desires to remind its friends of the forthcoming Annual Soiree and Ball, held on Monday next, Lady Day. Tickets (1s. 6d. each) may be had from any of the members.

The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, March 14, reports at length Mr. M. D. Conway's lecture on "Thomas Paine," delivered before the Literary and Philosophical Society of that city.

We understand that Mr. Conway's last Sunday's discourse on "The Story of St. Patrick" is written for publication, and will shortly appear.

Liberal governments are funny things. Mr. Asquith, for instance, said in the House of Commons that it ought not to be possible for the Lord's Day Observance Society, or any other body, to institute prosecutions on account of Sunday lectures; but he added that the Government had no intention of legislating upon the subject. We presume it is not the business of a Liberal government to remove an admitted injustice, unless the people who want it removed are strong enough to turn the government out of office if their wishes are neglected. Principle counts for nothing in itself; it only counts when allied with an obvious profit. Fortunately, however, Lord Hobhouse has introduced a Bill in the House of Lords. What an irony it will be if the Bill is carried in the Lords and shelved in the Commons! Let us hope it will meet with a better fate.

Mr. E. T. Gourley, member for Sunderland, has introduced the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill. Mr. Storey, who introduced it last session, is unfortunately not well. He backs the Bill, however, along with Mr. Maden, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Lloyd-George, and Sir Henry Roscoe. The schedule is copied verbatim from the Bill that was introduced by Mr. Bradlaugh in 1889. Mr. E. G. Taylor, who has interested himself so much in this matter, had an article on the general subject of the Blasphemy Laws in the February number of the *Westminster Review*. We were too busy to deal with it at the time, but we believe it will soon be reprinted as a pamphlet, which will enable us to atone for the oversight.

Mr. Foote's recent lectures at Sunderland seem to have made a great impression, and, in response to the urgent invitation of the local Branch, he is arranging for another visit at an early date. Meanwhile two Freethought lectures will be delivered at Sunderland, in the Co-operative Hall, by Mr. C. Cohen, on the afternoons of March 21 and 31. The chair will be taken at 3 on each occasion, and we hope our Sunderland readers will do their utmost to secure Mr. Cohen the large audiences which he deserves.

EDUCATION OF THE CHARACTER.

PARENTS who put children into the world should give them a good education, as a means wherewith to fight their way through life. There are many who will the best, but who entertain erroneous ideas as to the means. Some think that preaching morals to the child will make it moral, while example set by the elders and surroundings is really the best lesson. Once it knows that the parents' suspicion is upon it, it will pursue the vice of which the parents are suspicious, if it has it not already. What love, confidence, and example cannot accomplish nothing in the world will. It is of no use trying to introduce evil to children, and to induce them to withstand it. Their untrained will is as yet too soft and bendable to resist it, and it will result in miserable failure. The only way is to keep them away from it as long as possible, and when the time has come that they have to face it, the parents should express their abhorrence of evil and tell the child what harm it does. The old notion that to spare the rod is to spoil the child is a most fallacious and pernicious doctrine. For the stronger to lay hand on the weaker is cowardly; wisdom cannot impart itself to ignorance by physical force; love cannot prevail upon ought by striking it; and the act of beating a child is a downright declaration of mental incapability. Fear may prevent wrong-doing, but, instead of diminishing the inclination to crime, it will increase it, and, besides, originate new incentives thereto—as hatred, spite, and a desire for revenge. A most abominable practice is that of lying to children, in order to evade awkward questions, or as a persuasive. It undermines the youngster's confidence in and attraction to you; it corrupts his sense of truthfulness, and ends in imitation.

Others deem knowledge synonymous with education, and think that stuffing a lot of dry science and arithmetic into the child will educate it. Now, learning is indispensable *per se*, but something more is required besides. As soon as the child can begin to move about, symptoms of a certain character, certain likes and dislikes, are displayed. Before education begins, the educator should study the child's mind and act according to it. More prominent faculties should be cherished the most, while the rest should not be neglected. Base, brutal, and evil inclinations are often engendered by foolishness on the part of the parents. They are often seen to promise reward for good and punishment for bad conduct, which tends to degrade the moral sense; instead of teaching them that good deeds bring their own reward, and bad ones their own evil consequences. It is, further, a general habit to quell the little one's sorrow by a piece of sugar or a farthing. It seems very benevolent and innocent, and it looks, at the most, a paltry offence. But yet the result it carries with it is appalling. When the child grows up it will likewise seek to drown its sorrows in the pleasures of the world. To let the infant quietly cry out its grief will engender steadfastness of character and consignment to fate. Others, again, will teach their children to avenge themselves—to kick the stone they fell over, to hit the boy again, etc. The primary result is, that the little fellow is cooled, he and the parents are satisfied, and no more is thought of it. But a revengeful, uncharitable disposition is developed in the little mind, and the result which may spring therefrom is better untold.

There are obstinate natures to whom warnings and punishments are only enticements for continuance in wrong-doing. What should be done to them? Mental faculties cannot be destroyed, but they can—best without the child's knowing it—be gently led into other directions. Every evil principle has its corresponding good; and it is a peculiar fact that the mind of man can be led from one to the other, can be made to serve the one side or the other, without altering its especial characteristic. The mind which has an inherited inclination for hard-heartedness and cruelty may, by the guidance of a loving hand, be transformed into one with steadfast intentions for enlightening his fellow men, as Bj Björnson has shown us in his novel, *Del Flager*. The boy who roams about in the forest, climbing trees and robbing birds' nests, may be turned into a useful sailor or a naturalist. The little fighter may be guided to take a fancy to gymnastics instead. The youth who exhibits indications of lascivious tendencies may, by a tender hand and especial care, be moulded into a loving father and a true husband. A whimsical disposition may be pacified by regular habits

and exclusion from too many conditions at one time, while a one-sided mind may be enlivened by more conditions and by being forced to quick thinking. So every faculty and quality of the mind is capable of being utilised for good, as it may be manipulated by the reverse. This process must be taken in hand by parents. The school-teacher has too many under his supervision to study their minds and train them individually. Besides, they are within his reach too short a time. The education of the character does not belong to the school. The child's mind is moulded chiefly at home and in the playgrounds, wherefore care should be taken by the parents to show it a good example and provide it with good surroundings.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

CONDITIONS OF THOUGHT.

PRESENT-DAY conditions of thought are decidedly more favorable to a legitimate exercise of the reasoning faculties than have been the circumstances of bygone ages. The times when the mind was fettered as well as the body, or when the mind was retained in bondage after physical freedom had obtained, have passed away, and to-day remembrance of the tyrannical influences once exerted over peoples militates against the continuance of the insane cry for a return of the "good old times." Thought, as a function of the brain, must have existed in every era since the beginning of the human species; but thought without means and opportunities for free expression has always been valueless. What are called the lower animals think, but to very little purpose, as they are devoid of the power to give articulate interpretation to their mental conceptions. Thus, in the remotest and darkest ages of the world's history, men have turned their minds to their proper accounts; their ideas on political and religious matters, and even their conjectures respecting things pertaining to science, may have been as cultured, as finely wrought, as those of men of to-day; how many of their theories were superior to ours, and how more beneficial to the world they would have been had they been told to others and put into practice, no one can tell. Keen intellects are of no purpose unless the productions of reflection can find an outlet into the world through the tongue or by the pen. The free expression of opinion was denied our predecessors by the powers that have been, and so to-day we are not benefitted by what they thought; we do not reap the advantages of their ideas. Our forefathers—with a few exceptions—up to a few hundred years ago, may as well have been oysters for all the legacy of thought they have bequeathed us. It can be seen, therefore, that a finely constituted and active brain is, to other persons than its owner, a non-existent quantity if the conditions do not allow of the publicity of its work. Thought, to be of any value, must be freely and openly expressed.

It has never been a sin to think, but it has been made a crime to tell the world the results of your mental deliberation. Nobody would dream to-day of seeking to prevent even an excessive indulgence in reasoning. From the pulpits and the clerical platforms comes the injunction to test every question by the standard of reason and common sense, it being claimed that the old dogmas and doctrines may be examined as critically as mathematical propositions; that the foundations of belief may be as rigidly investigated as a murder by a British jury; and it is further alleged that, out of these ordeals, the grand old religious truths will emerge unscathed and firm as ever, more fully prepared to resist the onslaughts of future doubts and errors. There are, however, in these indulgences in reasoning, examinations, and investigations, important conditions laid down, which it is necessary should be fully observed. They are willing to make the conclusions coincide with established conclusions; determination to preclude from consideration everything that tends to explode these conclusions; and, therefore, exclusive assimilation of those evidences whose testimony is on the one side. Oliver Wendell Holmes remarked that "theological students developed a third eyelid—the nictitating membrane, which is so well known in birds, and which serves to shut out, not all light, but all the light they do not want."

What else was the reprimand of Dr. Pusey to a doubter, "It is not your duty to ascertain the truth; it is your

duty to accept and believe the truth as laid down by the Church," than a command to abjure reason and the dictates of conscience? It is only conventional thought that is allowed at the present day: "thought," the free expression of which can only be tolerated if it is conformist, bearing relationship to preconceived formulas. He who is so bold (and unfortunate) as to defy public custom, impartially examine for himself without deference to the antiquity or social power of the subject of his inquiry, forming his opinions according to his accumulated information, is taking the shortest route for ostracism, boycott, and calumny. Freedom of opinion is still a long way from enjoying a pleasurable existence.

Our reverend fathers, imbued with faith in the righteousness of their cause, or prompted by an ambition for dishonorable authority, seem unable to recognise thought as leading to opinions other than their own. The stubborn, asinine position which they take up on this matter is supported by wanton ignorance and dishonest affectation. Consider their hypocritical ostentation of dependence on thought and reason. Emerson deals most effectively with those who, with a pretension to intellectuality, virtually consider their cases with the end already agreed upon. In his essay on *Self-Reliance* he says: "I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his Church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that, with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution, he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister. He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation." What an ignoble position for theological teachers to hold at the close of the nineteenth century—forbidden to think for themselves. Untrammelled thought would mean for old creeds partial extinction; being created and forced on peoples by governmental systems without the sanction of investigation or reason, they would, if subjected to the influences of these forces in a more enlightened age, be instantly dismissed from the premier position in all sane minds. It is because the conditions of the time, even yet, do not allow people to think and express their thoughts with as much freedom on religious as on, say, political matters that the star of truth continues to be obscured by the cloud of error.

An amusing parade has been made lately of what is termed "religious thought." The adjective is convenient in enabling one to determine as to the nature of the mental process denoted. That those who are striving to monopolise thought are thereby doing the best that can be done to stifle true thinking altogether is as palpable as have been the efforts of the same party in the past to render reason and thought futile by causing the prohibition of their legitimate practice and expression. The only thought which they allow distribution is the thought that is conventional.

Orthodoxists make an impossible, absurd, and unnatural claim when they demand that thought shall lead all people in one direction. Were the mind independent of the body, as some would have us believe, it might be more possible to secure uniformity of thought; but the nature of thought must, to a large extent, depend upon the state of the brain, and the nature of the brain in turn must depend upon the state of the body. Thus, in no two persons can thought be identical; there must be a dissimilarity somewhere, as the conditions are not the same. As one writer has so pointedly put it: "If all people thought the same, it would be good evidence that they did not think at all." And so it is seen that the attempt to monopolise thought is an immoral one, and can only result in closing up the means of exit by which individual thought is conveyed to the outer world. The struggle for freedom of expression is really of far more importance than the fight for free thought; for that, as we have seen, has always been possible, and has only been rendered impotent by the prohibition of the methods of egress. Thought, in the first place, must be independent—if it is independent it will be valuable; and, as all the civilised advantages and blessings we experience to-day are but the outcome of the thoughts—obscure and frail at the time, maybe—of our predecessors, it is incumbent on the present generation to facilitate the conditions of that eternal source of good, so that in the times that are to come the peoples may cry and bless our memories because we made ourselves absolutely

free men. "Every revolution," to again quote Emerson, "was first a thought in one man's mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man it is the key of that era. Every reform was once a private opinion, and when it shall be a private opinion again it will solve the problem of the age."

FRED WILSON.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—V.

THOMAS SCOTT.

Few have done more valiant work for Freethought, in a quiet way, than the subject of my present sketch. Born April 28, 1808, Thomas Scott lived the life of a cultured gentleman and scholar. He had acted as page to Charles X of France, and he travelled widely in all parts of the world. Having thoroughly investigated Christianity, he, in the latter part of his life, set himself to the work of enlightening others as to his conclusions. To this task he devoted his time, money, and talents. From his house at Mount Pleasant, Ramsgate, he began by issuing small tracts designed to aid the cause of free inquiry and free expression of thought. These were printed at his own expense and given away, mostly sent by post to the clergy and the cultured classes. Soon a number of writers gathered round him whose works he published and distributed, mainly at his own cost. Altogether, the pamphlets which he published made no fewer than sixteen good-sized volumes. Among the writers who contributed to the series may be mentioned Francis Newman, W. R. Greg, Dr. Willis, J. Cranbrook, M. D. Conway, E. Maitland, M. Macfie, C. Bray, E. V. Neale, J. Robertson, F. E. Ablott, Sir R. D. Hanson, W. Jevons, M. Kalisch, T. Lestrangle, J. Muir, J. A. Symonds, P. A. Taylor, Rev. R. Sufield, Judge Strange, Dr. G. Wild, Dr. Zerffi, and Bishop Hinds. Thomas Scott was well called a prince of propagandists. He had always fresh irons in the fire, and the entire series of pamphlets were of the scholarly, cultured order, calculated to win the attention of those for whom they were designed.

As a specimen of his own incisive style, take the first of *213 Questions*, to which answers are respectfully asked from the orthodox (1865): "(1) As we are required to love our enemies, may we not safely infer that God loves his enemies? (2) If God loves his enemies, will he punish them more than will be for their good? (3) Would endless punishment be for the good of any being?" As an instance of illustration, take the following from his reply to Dr. McNeile, the Dean of Ripon, on the Resurrection: "If any one comes and tells us that a man, like the cow in the nursery rhyme, jumped over the moon, or that he walked through a six-foot-thick wall, or that he could show himself and vanish at will, we should say at once that his statements might possibly be true, so far as his report of what he thought he had seen was concerned; but that, if it was true, then the creature who did these things was not made of flesh and blood, but had an organisation so entirely different from man that no points of likeness could be traced between the one and the other."

The principal work issued with Thomas Scott's name was the *English Life of Jesus*. The title shows it was designed to do for English readers a similar work to that which Strauss and Renan had done for Germans and French. Unlike more popular and pretentious Lives of Jesus, it did not attempt to build an edifice without the needful materials, but rather examined those materials, and showed that they could not consistently be fitted together. It shows, in short, that in the Gospels we have to do with legends and fictions, rather than with facts. The work was written in conjunction with Sir G. W. Cox, or rather, I believe, was founded on manuscripts by that gentleman, who, being a dignitary of the Church of England, could not afford to put his name to such a work, and preferred that the whole credit or odium should fall on Mr. Scott, ever ready to do anything for the cause of Freethought. In 1871 Mr. Scott issued a challenge to the Christian Evidence Society, but that body acted with their accustomed discretion, and Mr. Scott followed up his challenge with a scathing exposure of *The Tactics and Defeat of the Christian Evidence Society*.

In a farewell address to his readers, after fifteen years of work, which he published in 1877, Mr. Scott said: "The spectacle of millions of my fellow-countrymen bound hand and book by metaphysical and priestly exclusiveness made so painful an impression upon my mind that I felt irresistibly impelled to expose dogmatic assumptions and promote free theological inquiry as the undoubted right of all thoughtful minds." He entered on his task single-handed, but he soon made friends who rejoiced to help him in his labors. He says: "Expressions of sympathy with my design and offers of co-operation in the work reached me from what seemed to be the most unlikely quarters, and, for a considerable period afterwards, able and highly-educated clergymen forwarded me manuscripts for publication, con-

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. FORDER has purchased a number of copies of the second edition of *The Evolution of Christianity*, by Mr. C. Gill, originally published by Williams and Norgate. The work is a thorough examination of the Christian legends and doctrines by a gentleman who unites erudition and common sense. The savage character of the Jewish records, the belief of Jesus in his speedy second coming, and the destruction of the world; his failure to rise above the superstition of demoniac possession, the misreading of the Messianic prophecies, and the evolution of the doctrine of the Trinity, are all dwelt upon in disproof of the divinity of Christianity. The author, who had edited the *Book of Enoch*, also shows the indebtedness of the New Testament to this apocryphal book, which is endorsed by Jude.

* * *

To the members of the Thirteen Club, who are endeavoring to eradicate the superstition attached to that number by the easy plan of always sitting thirteen at a table, we commend the following from p. 253 of *The Perfect Way; or, the Finding of Christ*, written, we believe, by Edward Maitland and the late Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford: "The number 13, which, on the earthly plane, and before the 'crucifixion,' is, through the treachery of 'Judas,' the symbol of imperfection and ill-fortune, becomes, in the 'Kingdom of the Father,' the symbol of perfection. As the number of the lunar months, it is the symbol also of the woman, and denotes the Soul and her reflection of God; the solar number, 12, being that of the Spirit. The two numbers in combination form the perfect year of that dual humanity which alone is made in the image of God—the true 'Christian year,' wherein the two, the inner and the outer, spirit and matter, are as one. Thirteen, then, represents that full union of man with God wherein Christ becomes Christ."

* * *

No. 17 of the Humanitarian League's publications is *The Evils of Butchery*, by Josiah Oldfield (Reeves, 185 Fleet-street; 6d.). This book, with its illustrations by Mr. R. E. Holding, is calculated to be very disquieting to meat-eaters. Mr. Oldfield's own statistics, however, show that, whereas in the period 1831-40 80 lbs. per annum was consumed by each person, in the period 1881-87 the yearly consumption per head had risen to 98 lbs. Under these circumstances only fanatical vegetarians would seek to disparage the attempts to reform the barbarities perpetrated in slaughter-houses; and, despite Mr. Oldfield's strictures on the humaner methods, we fully credit Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson's statement that animals can be killed painlessly. What is needed is that public attention should be drawn to the subject, and the Humanitarian League is worthy of all praise for seeing that this is done.

* * *

Some time ago F Brunetiere, in a moment of weakness, after having visited the Pope at the Vatican, uttered the words, *Science is bankrupt*. The phrase was caught up by all classes of obscurantists, mystics, and religionists. Its absurdity is well shown in an open letter addressed to M. Brunetiere, by an Hungarian, Sigmund Bodnar, of which a German translation, *Ueber den Bankrott der Wissenschaften*, is sent to us from Budapest. We hope the pamphlet will have a good circulation.

PROFANE JOKES.

Inquiring Boy—"Mamma, don't the little angels have a good time in heaven?" Mamma—"Certainly, my child. Why do you ask?" Inquiring Boy—"Because it says here in the Prayer Book, 'The cherubim and seraphim continually do cry.'"

A golfer who was not in the habit of playing his lofting iron with any measure of success managed, on one occasion, to send his ball particularly high, but very short. "That's a good loft," he remarked to his caddie. "Ay," rejoined the boy, "it's a gude shot—if the hole had been in heaven."

"I was sorry, Willie," said his Sunday-school teacher, "to see you keep your seat when the superintendent asked all those who wanted to go to heaven to rise. Don't you want to go to heaven?" "Yes'm." "Then why didn't you rise?" "Cos he didn't have no right to tell me to rise, ma'am," answered Willie. "He ain't no angel Gabriel."

Mr. Meeks—"Mrs. Sauers must have thought a good deal of her husband to erect that stained glass window to his memory." Mrs. Meeks—"No; she did it to spite Mrs. Bloom and her daughters. The window is right opposite the Bloom's pew, and just see what a sickly yellow and green light it casts over them during the entire service."

taining attacks on the false bulwarks of ecclesiasticism, and expositions of absolute moral verities. Cultivated and earnest laymen, capable of dealing with the points at issue, also came forward voluntarily and contributed useful papers to the series." Essays on every branch of theology were issued "illustrating the unhistorical character of many Bible records, the gradual development of beliefs and ceremonies from Solar and Phallic worship to Christianity, the priestly origin of creeds, and the true inductive methods of investigation." In laying down his work he was able to say: "The persuasion gains ground everywhere that the only true orthodoxy is loyalty to reason; and the only infidelity which merits censure is disloyalty to reason." The seed, he says, may for a while appear unproductive. Mrs. Grundy is still strong. "But over all such untoward agencies the cause of freedom of thought and freedom of expression will certainly triumph; and every anathema of priests and denunciation by bigots will but tend to accelerate its progress."

Thomas Scott died at Norwood on December 30, 1878. In a memoir contributed to the *Liberal* of March, 1879, Mr. G. G. Flaws says: "His was a grand presence; tall, yet robust, with strikingly handsome head and face; in bearing, dress, and manners every inch a perfect English gentleman. Though fond of deluding himself into the belief that he was destitute of humor, he often chuckled with kindly malicious glee at some of his own *repartees*, and unconsciously manifested great powers of drollery; albeit, his wit, if used in writing—which it seldom was—would have barbed itself with sarcasm. He hugely relished the lighter sallies in others, particularly when, through pen and pencil, they waged war against the unrealities of theology and the creeds. No man more detested cant, in every form; no man more gloried in sincerity, both in himself and others. His was as purely transparent a soul as ever honored mankind."

No notice of Mr. Scott would be complete without mention of his wife, who assisted him in all his work with whole-souled devotion. She was a lady of great culture and refinement, in every way fitted to be the helpmeet and companion of one of nature's gentlemen.

J. M. WHEELER.

SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

In calm and trustful confidence the missionary sat,
While the energetic sexton was a-passing round the hat.
The services were over, and now had come the pause
To give an opportunity to help along the cause.
But vainly went the sexton teetering up and down the aisle—
In all the congregation no one recognised the tile.
The missionary's hat returned as empty as it went;
He'd been preaching to an audience that wouldn't pay a cent.
Over the parson's face there flitted a disappointed look,
As from the solemn sexton his empty hat he took;
Then, smiling on the audience, he returned it to the rack,
With the words, "I'm very thankful that I've got my beaver back."

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WILLIAM BALS.

I hate this hypocrisy! It obscures from ourselves the measure of truth we really possess. Men put forth profession instead of belief, till they do not themselves distinguish between the two. They shuffle and confuse their own best faiths among articles of creeds to which they give a mere verbal assent.—W. H. Smith, "Thorndale; or, The Conflict of Opinions," p. 321.

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.): 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "The Birth, Reign, and Death of Christianity." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Robert Owen." (Free.) Monday, at 8, Marlowe Dramatic Company. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing. Thursday, at 8, committee.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Arthur B. Moss, "What do Christians Believe?"

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7.15, Thomas Stephenson (of Boston, U.S.), "Do Men Live After they are Dead?"

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Graham Wallas, "The Service of Mammon."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Folly of Prayer."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture; 3.30, a lecture.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. R. Thompson, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?"

COUNTRY.

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

BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): 11, G. W. Foote, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, A. E. Rowcroft, "Aerial Navigation: Is it Possible?"

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, S. Ackroyd, "Ancient Monuments and Sacred History." Monday evening, annual soirée and ball. (Tickets, 1s. 6d. each.)

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Rhodes, "The Settlement of the Jews in Palestine."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "A Chapter of Evolution." (Free.)

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, social evening.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, J. A. Aston, "Astronomical Telescopes and the Moon"—limelight illustrations.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Sam Standing, "Secularism and Social Life"; 7, "The Prayer of Faith." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, "The Holy Bible."

SUNDERLAND (Co-operative Hall, Green-street): 3, C. Cohen, "Christianity the Enemy of Progress."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "Secularism Defined and Defended."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—March 24 and 25, Derby; 31, a. and e. Tottenham. April 7, m. and e. Wood Green; 14, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 24, e. Camberwell. April 14, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Clerkenwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—March 24, 26, and 27, Sheffield; 31, Fallowfield.

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Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

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