

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

## THAT ATHEIST!

### INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a paper called the *Liverpool Pulpit*. It is issued monthly, and appears to have existed about three years. Its editors are R. A. Armstrong, C. F. Aked, and Robert Veitch. We believe these gentlemen belong to different Nonconformist denominations. We also believe that they have been very active in "putting down" the "social evil" in Liverpool—that is, in harrying prostitutes and crusading against brothels. This is not, in our opinion, an ideal way of warring against lust. Certainly it is not a way which should be patronised by the "spiritual" leaders of mankind. It seems to us a business for the police, if for anyone; but Christian teachers, ever since the days of Constantine, have shown a wonderful tendency to rely upon "the arm of flesh."

These three Nonconformist preachers are regarded—and probably regard themselves—as "advanced." One of them, we believe, is a Unitarian, and another is a friend of the "Higher Criticism." Naturally, therefore, the *Liverpool Pulpit* is of highly superior tone. And this high superiority is specially manifest in its review of Mrs. Bonner's biography of her father. The said review is headed "The Iconoclast"—a personage whom the writer holds in ill-concealed detestation. Bradlaugh is lauded for his political and social work. The oil of praise is poured out copiously in this direction; the vinegar of detraction being reserved for the Bradlaugh who battled against Theism and Christianity. That he was a great man is indisputable. He was great, says the *Liverpool Pulpit*—very great; but his greatness was all displayed in the political and social arenas; in the arena of religion he was simply farcical. Which is surely a most cheerful theory—for Christians.

For the sake of fairness, even at the risk of boring our readers, we reproduce the whole portion of the article which deals with

### "ICONOCLAST."

"It is possible now to be grateful for the services which Bradlaugh-materialism rendered to the cause of Christianity. Of course, Bradlaughism, as represented by his popular lectures against the Bible, and against what he was so fond of calling 'the God of the Bible,' is as dead as Pharaoh's Egyptians. The lectures, as lectures, as reasoned statements against religion, were simply beneath contempt. The one such in Bradlaugh's life is how so clever a man could bring himself to such puerility, or how, on another and not pleasing hypothesis, so honest a soul could degrade himself by 'playing it low down' to the ignoramuses from heart going out to this man in affection and in gratitude and in reverence for his great fight for freedom and humanity, one has taken a friend to hear him, and been disgusted and shamed by the spectacle of the lion of a man braying from beneath his ass's skin. Balaam's donkey, Jonah's whale, the Tower of Babel, the Resurrection, are all themes which will recur to the memory of men who heard him and who grieved over his buffooneries. However Mr. Bradlaugh could bring himself to repeat, in the large towns of England, that wretched witticism about the difficulty which would arise when a woman was taking her husband's dinner to a man employed as bricklayer on the Tower of Babel, and was three days on the way from the earth to the height which the man had reached; however he could bring himself to make merry over the man whose leg had been taken off on a battlefield or in a sawmill, and had to come flying through

the air to meet the body on the Judgment day; however he could condescend to address these mountebank jokes to his audience, was then, and is now, an insoluble mystery. He did not act in this way in his debates. How could he do it in his threepenny lectures?

"But, the setting of his views ignored, there can, we repeat be little doubt that those views and the enforcement of them have been of service to the Church. He popularised doubt legitimate doubt, necessary doubt, healthy doubt, whose existence was amongst the first conditions of growth. That which had grown unthinkable to the scholar and incredible to the mass of the people he forced the untrained amongst the religious public of the working and lower middle classes to reconsider, and eventually to abandon in favor of that which was more tenable and enduring. His work was destructive; he was an iconoclast in very truth; but the work of the destroyer is good work very often, and the waster, though not in this case the builder, too, nevertheless, made the work of the builder at once more necessary and more possible. Many uneducated teachers and preachers in the churches, and many people of the same class in the different denominations, have abandoned silly and dishonoring notions about God and about religion and about the Bible because of Bradlaugh's work; and after he had helped to clear the rubbish away other men have been able to get to work on the erection of a larger and more surely founded temple of the living God.

"Charles Bradlaugh's work did not die with himself. It lives in the direction just indicated, in its service to unthoughtful popular religion. But his army of followers has dwindled, we will not say to a regiment, but to a corporal's guard. His 'school' does not exist. 'Secularism,' as he defined it, is no more. A 'Society' exists; there are some meetings held, some papers published; but to all practical purposes Bradlaugh-materialism has disappeared from our midst. But for the unwise efforts of narrow-minded religionists in Bradlaugh's day, his atheistic doctrines would never have had the vogue which they came to enjoy. And if it were not for foolish and incompetent people who try to set forth the evidences of Christianity to-day, it is probable that the few people who still seek to propagate Charles Bradlaugh's negations would fail to obtain sufficient gate money to pay for the hire of a hall in any town in Britain. His weaknesses and his abuse of strength are gone; his courage, his sympathy, his goodness, live on. He was a great, heroic man, who contended valiantly for the faith which had been delivered to him; who suffered for his faith, who poured out his life in the cause of truth and for love of the right, and who must be numbered amongst the true worshippers of the Crucified if there be any reality in the saying of his friend, Mazzini, 'We worship God by serving Man.'

### OUR REPLY.

Bradlaugh's "services to Christianity" were not always regarded as such. Ardent and sincere Christians used to detest his iconoclasm. And they were right. He rendered no service to Christianity—but he did render service to Christians. He made them ashamed of the worst parts of their creed. That is, he helped to extinguish Christianity. For a religion does not die like a man, all at once; it disappears gradually, and the worst parts go first. The "service" which Bradlaugh rendered to Christianity, therefore, was the service of destroying as much of it as he could. The rest will go in time.

It is amusing to read that Bradlaugh's lectures against the Bible were "beneath contempt." We always hear that from Christians when they are beaten. Nor will it make a Freethinker wild to be told that Bradlaugh was "a fool to talk as he did," especially when his folly came out in laughing at Balaam's donkey and Jonah's whale—which, of course, are profoundly serious subjects. As for that "wretched witticism" about the confusion at Babel, some-

thing similar occurs in grave old Bishop Hall's *Meditations*. The "mountebank joke" about the joining of corporeal pieces at the Resurrection seems fair enough in the light of the historic doctrine, still held by most of the Churches, of the actual resurrection of the human body. The "insoluble mystery" is not in Bradlaugh's joking, but in grave divines teaching the nonsense he ridiculed.

The gentlemen of the pulpit should not set up as critics of wit. They read the Bible too much to be good judges. They catch its portentous solemnity, and come to regard a joke as buffoonery if cracked within a mile of a tabernacle.

Bradlaugh's work was "destructive." Indeed! Is it destructive work to pull down fetid slums in great cities? Is it destructive work to fight disease? Is it destructive work to fell forests and make room for happy homesteads? Is it destructive work to purge the human mind of evil superstitions? Is it destructive work to kill lies? "Destructive" is a canting expression. In the eternal processes of Nature, destruction and construction are interdependent. To rail at the one is to undervalue the other.

It is something, however, to learn that Bradlaugh induced many people to "abandon silly and dishonoring notions about God and about religion." What the superior persons at Liverpool overlook is the fact that these silly and dishonoring notions were established and inculcated by their own Church. It was reserved for the Atheist to remove the rubbish set in Man's path by the friends of God.

The reviewer is mistaken (perhaps he is *not* mistaken, but worse) as to the dwindling of Bradlaugh's "followers." It is ridiculous to say that "some" meetings are held, and "some" papers published. Meetings are held all over the country, and the *Freethinker*, at any rate, though increased in price, has a considerably larger circulation than the *National Reformer* had at the time of Bradlaugh's death. Of course we miss Bradlaugh. He was a giant, and giants are not easily replaced. But we always knew he was mortal, and it is only Christians who are silly enough to believe that his "party"—that is, the Freethought movement—merely existed on his tenure of life.

There is no need to say much about that "gate money." It is simply *too* ridiculous to suppose that our foremost lecturers could not take money enough to pay for the hire of a hall "in any town in Britain" unless they were advertised by Christian Evidencers. If the test is to be payment, Secularism simply takes the cake. How many people, we should like to know, would pay money at the door, even to hear the gentlemen who run the *Liverpool Pulpit*?

It only remains for us to observe that there is something peculiarly nauseous in the closing sentences of this reviewer. It is positively indecent to take a great man who fought all his lifetime against you, and to pretend that he was on your side without knowing it; and it is doubly indecent when the imbecility is clinched with the dictum of a great Freethinker like Mazzini. If there be a God, it may be true that he is best worshipped by serving Man. But what has this to do with "the Crucified"? We tell the reviewer and his friends that Bradlaugh had no sort of respect for the Jesus Christ of the Gospels, and that he had nothing but contempt for the sentimentalists who claim every good man, even though he be a convinced Atheist, as a sound and "true" Christian. Bradlaugh held aloof from them in his lifetime, and they only dishonor themselves by shedding maudlin tears over his grave.

G. W. FOOTE.

## MADAME BLAVATSKY.

(Continued from p. 227.)

PROFESSOR COUES gives the following description of Madame Blavatsky as she appeared on her return from Europe: "Except for being immensely obese, in consequence of her gross habits, she was not a particularly ill-favored old witch when I met her in 1884. Remarkably small, pretty hands and feet for such a corporosity, though with long, dirty nails; suspicion of pug in the saucy nose; pale, restless eyes; flossy, yellow hair, tending to kink; Tartar face with high cheek bones, fat chops, and a dewlap, the latter always hid by hand or fan in her photographs; stature [medium; weight, perhaps, 250 pounds; harsh, strident voice; conversation profane and witty; temper abominable; odor of tobacco abiding; dress, a sort of

a compromise between the robes of a Norma and a *robe à la nuit*. Such is the general impression she made upon me in 1884, when she was about fifty-three."

The same writer goes on to say: "The ingredients of a successful charlatan are: no conscience, some brains, much courage, great industry, the corrosive sublimate of selfishness, vainglorious ambition, vivid imagination, good address, ready resources, monumental mendacity, and a pious, living faith in the love of mankind for being humbugged."

H. P. B. was a born romancer, and delighted in fooling the "flapdoodles," as she called those she swindled and despised. Mabel Collins, who for over a year co-edited *Lucifer* with her, said: "She taught me one great lesson: I learned from her how foolish, how 'gullible,' how easily flattered human beings are, taken *en masse*. Her contempt for her kind was on the same gigantic scale as everything else about her, except her marvellously delicate taper fingers. In all else she was a big woman; she had a greater power over the weak and credulous, a greater capacity for making black appear white, a larger waist, a more voracious appetite, a more confirmed passion for tobacco, a more ceaseless and insatiable hatred for those whom she thought to be her enemies, a greater disrespect for *les convenances*, a worse temper, a greater command of bad language, and a greater contempt for the intelligence of her fellow beings than I had ever supposed possible to be contained in one person."

Her lies were incessant. Thus she wrote in the *New York Graphic*, November 13, 1874: "When I was sixteen years of age they married me to M. Blavatsky. Fancy! He was seventy-three, and I sixteen." She died at the age of sixty in 1891, and M. Blavatsky survives her. She says she lived with him three years at Tiflis, about 1863. As M. Solovyoff says: "It was always very easy to catch her lying, as she used constantly to forget her own words, assertions, and depositions" (*Modern Priestess*, p. 110). With this gentleman, who, as her countryman, she said was sacred to her, and who, as a journalist, she was desirous to spread her fame in Russia, she appears to have been particularly unfortunate. Some clumsy tricks made him watchful of phenomena. Bavaji, her Hindu attendant, who knew no Russian, confessed that, at her instigation, he *drew* for his edification the words in Russian: "Blessed are they that believe, as said the Great Adept." But, omitting some letters, it read: "Blessed are they that lie."\* One day her famous "silver bell" was heard, when suddenly something fell beside her on the ground. He says: "I hurried to pick it up, and found in my hands a pretty little piece of silver, delicately worked and strangely shaped. Helena Petrovna changed countenance, and snatched the object from me. I coughed significantly, smiled, and turned the conversation to indifferent matters."

"Another time I said that I should like to have some of the real essence of roses made in India.

"I am so sorry," she said, "I have none with me. I do not like strong scents in general, and do not keep them. But I will not guarantee that you may not receive some essence of roses from India, such as you speak of, and that very soon."

"Watching her from this moment, I distinctly saw her open one of the drawers of her table and take something out. Then, some half-hour later, after having walked round me, she very gently and cautiously slipped some little object into my pocket. If I had not watched her every movement, and had not guessed why it was that she kept passing round me, I should probably not have noticed anything.

"However, I immediately produced from my pocket a little flat flask, opened it, smelt, and said: 'This is not essence of roses, Helena Petrovna, but oil of oranges; your "master" has made a mistake.'

"Eh, devil take it!" she exclaimed, unable to restrain herself."

She even permitted him to discover the Chinese envelopes, in which the elect used to receive the letters of the Mahatmas by "astral post." Taxed with it, he says: "She tried in vain to speak; she could only writhe helplessly in her great arm-chair." Asked to put an end to the comedy, she exclaimed: "But, then, if you think I do nothing but take in all the world, you must despise me." "Why so?" he replied. "There is deceit and deceit, and there is trickery and trickery! To play the part you play,

\* This Bavaji was the Babajee said by Sinnett to have been ten years with the Mahatmas.

to make crowds follow you, to interest the learned, to found societies in distant lands, to start an entire movement—good gracious! Why, it is so out of the common that I am enraptured at you against my will. In all my life I have never met so extraordinary a woman as you, and I am sure I shall never meet another." In great excitement she exclaimed: "Yes, you have a very warm heart, and a very cool head; it was not for nothing that we met"; and, after calling Olcott an ass and a blockhead, "If you will only come to my aid, we will astonish the world between us; we shall have everything in our hands."

"What is one to do," she said, "when in order to rule men it is necessary to deceive them, when in order to persuade them to let themselves be driven where you will you must promise them and show them playthings? Why, suppose my books and the *Theosophist* had been a thousand times more interesting and more serious, do you imagine I should have had any sort of success anywhere, if behind all that there had not been the 'phenomena'? I should have done simply nothing. I should have long ago starved to death. They would have crushed me, and it would never have even occurred to anyone to think that I too was a living creature, that I too must eat and drink. But I have long, long since learnt to understand these dear people, and their stupidity sometimes affords me unbounded satisfaction. Why, you are 'not satisfied' with my phenomena; but do you know that almost invariably the more simple, the more silly, and the more gross the 'phenomenon,' the more likely it is to succeed? I may tell you such stories about this some day as will split your sides with laughter, indeed they will. The vast majority of people who are reckoned clever by themselves and others are inconceivably silly. If you only knew how many lions and eagles in every quarter of the globe have turned into asses at my whistle, and obediently wagged their great ears in time as I piped the tune!"

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

## WHAT IS MEANT BY LAWS OF NATURE?

(Concluded from page 228.)

It is, we think, rather unfortunate that we have no other term to take the place of "law" as describing the operations of nature. The word is so generally associated with a "lawgiver" that its true meaning, when applied to nature, is misunderstood. The late G. H. Lewes suggested the phrase, "The methods of nature," as that would "express the paths along which the activities of nature travelled to results (phenomena)." The Duke of Argyll, who is, of course, rather orthodox upon this subject, admits, in his *Reign of Law*, that the word "law," in many cases, means nothing more than "an observed order of facts" (p. 66).

Professor Huxley, in his *Essays on Controverted Questions*, writes: "A law of nature, in the scientific sense, is the product of a mental operation upon the facts of nature which come under our observation, and has no more existence outside the mind than colour. . . . Scientifically speaking, it is the acme of absurdity to talk of a man defying the law of gravitation when he lifts his arm. The general store of energy in the universe working through terrestrial matter is, doubtless, tending to bring the man's arm down; but the particular fraction of that energy which is working through certain of his nervous and muscular organs is tending to drive it up, and, more energy being expended on the arm in the upward than in the downward direction, the arm goes up accordingly" (pp. 252 and 253). The Professor points out with great clearness that law is not a cause. He says: "Law is often inadvertently employed in the sense of cause, just as in common life a man will say that he is compelled by the law to do so and so, when, in point of fact, all he means is that the law orders him to do it, and tells him what will happen if he does not do it. We commonly hear of bodies falling to the ground by reason of the laws of gravitation, whereas that law is simply the record of the fact that, according to all experience, they have so fallen (when free to move), and on the grounds of a reasonable expectation that they will so fall. . . . The habitual use of the word 'law,' in the sense of an active thing, is almost a mark of pseudo-science; it characterises the writings of those who have appropriated

the forms of science without knowing anything of its substance" (pp. 254 and 255).

To make the true meaning of natural law clear, we give the words of Mr. M. J. Savage, who, in his *Morals of Evolution*, says: "Natural law is simply a phrase that we use to express the relations in which persons, things, forces stand to each other, or the mutual influences which they exert upon each other, by virtue of what they are. It means the constant universal relations between persons, things, and forces. Take, for example, ourselves as members of society. Certain men, women, and children are what they are; and they are together, in certain relations in society. What we mean by the natural law of society, then, are the duties and responsibilities that spring out of these natural and necessary relations. Take it into the region of things to make it clearer. Suppose I have here, in some jar or vessel, the chemical ingredients which, brought together in certain proportions, will result in forming a crystal. What I mean by the natural law of crystallisation is that, if I bring these chemical ingredients together after this fashion, a crystal will always be the result. They stand in such a relation to each other that, being what they are, they must crystallise. They cannot help doing so. . . . It is a law of my body that, if I am to live, I must keep my body at a certain temperature. It must have food; it must be preserved from hurtful influences of all kinds. The laws of life, in other words, must be obeyed. If I break these laws and become diseased, that is the first step towards death. If I carry the breach of these laws beyond a certain point, death itself ensues, and must ensue. Take it in regard to intelligence; for it holds true in these higher realms of life, just as well as in the lower. If a man is to grow up an intelligent, instructed, educated being, there must be a certain amount of development of his brain; if that fails, he is an idiot. If, after he has become an intelligent being, these laws of the brain are broken, he is insane. There are laws of thought, of study, of the pursuit of intelligence in this department of the world or that; and if a man fails to keep these, his brain as a physical organ may be perfect, but he will be ignorant. There are vast realms of truth and beauty, the threshold of which his foot will never cross. Bring it up into the realm of the moral nature. Precisely the same thing holds true. There are moral laws that a man, if he is to be a moral being, must keep. If he ceases to keep these, he ceases to be a moral being; his moral nature is dead; he is an immoral man" (pp. 165-167).

We presume it will now be seen, even by the most superficial reader, that what is meant by law (when the term is used in its proper sense) is not that it is a command from some being "who rules and regulates the destinies of men," but that it refers to the order of natural operations, the method of cause and effect. Theologians have corrupted the correct signification of this, as they have of many other words; and one of the many useful services now being rendered by science and secular philosophy is that of rescuing language from the misinterpretation so often given to it by theology. The old notion, that events are produced by some power higher than the ordinary law of cause and effect, is being rapidly given up by men of science. The self-potency of nature is becoming more and more recognised as our knowledge of its power increases. There is less inclination to-day than there was to rob nature of those capabilities to which it is justly entitled. As Mr. Moncreu D. Conway observes: "What we need is harmony with nature—harmony with its laws, that we may have health; sympathy with its beauty, that we may be pure; obedience to its conditions, that we may command its forces and inspire them with human purpose. In nature is the constancy which is our dependence and our development; in it the potentiality, reason, which is our only source of wisdom; in it the love which attends the living from the cradle to the grave. Ignorance can see it only as chaos in one age, accursed in another; superstition can find but terror in its laws, and hope only in their fancied overthrow by arbitrary thaumaturgy of omnipotence; but wherever the mind of man flowers, nature flowers in response, filling every sense with beauty, giving mind and heart their deeper satisfaction, steadily incarnating every pure ideal."

Among the less informed believers in theology two conceptions of law and nature still obtain. The one is, that the universe was created by a supreme being, who, having made it, set it going, and keeps it in order, like a

watchmaker does a watch that he has manufactured. The other conception is that God, having made the world and set it in motion, leaves it to regulate itself by general laws, which he has endowed nature with. The latter view is taken even by some men of science who belong to the old school; they think this idea of Providence enables them to get over the difficulties attending the belief in God's special interference with the operations of nature. Thus they jump at the conclusion that there is a law-maker, and an intelligent producer of life. They further assume that intelligence can only come from intelligence, and that life can only proceed from life. This is about as scientific a statement as that of the man who is reported to have said that he who drives fat oxen must himself be fat. Scientifically, when we speak of life, motion, and intelligence, we do not mean that they are things, any more than the laws are which record their action. What might have existed before, or what may exist beyond nature, it is not the function of science to attempt to determine. The laws of nature are not in any way affected by what may or may not be exterior to nature. At the same time, to us it appears obvious that science, as a foreteller of events, would be impossible if there existed any power outside nature that could interfere with the operations upon which the calculations are based. If God constantly interfered in nature, nothing would be certain; and if the speculations of theology could be verified, science would be impossible.

We believe, then, to use Tyndall's phrase, in the "stability of natural law," and we learn that incessant change is the "order" of nature; and as these changes are interminable, so likewise are cause and effect, which are names that record the operations of all existing things.

CHARLES WATTS.

## A MISSIONARY DISGRACE.

(From the "New York Post.")

MR. THOMAS G. SHEARMAN made the result of missionary work in Hawaii the subject of some remarks at the last Friday night's prayer-meeting in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. He began by saying that more than a year ago he told Dr. Abbott that, in his opinion, the proceedings in Hawaii reflected great discredit, not only upon the American name generally, but especially upon our American missionaries and the Congregational Church which had sent them there, and seemed generally disposed to sustain the actions of the missionaries' sons, and that, "had Mr. Becker been still alive, I felt perfectly certain that he would long ago have expressed from Plymouth pulpit most emphatic opinions upon this subject; that he would never have allowed a weaker race to be practically enslaved by white Americans—especially Congregationalists and sons of Congregational missionaries—without making a protest which would have been heard all over the land."

Mr. Shearman continued: "I then said in substance that seventy years ago the American Board of Foreign Missions sent a few Congregational missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, who were received by the people with enthusiasm. They did not really have to convert the people, for they were all ready for conversion. The chiefs and the people threw away their idols, and embraced Christianity with all their hearts. So complete was their trust in the missionaries that, practically, all government was placed under missionary control, and the missionaries and their sons or their nephews had ever since had the practical government of the islands.

"What had been the result? They found 130,000 people there, and now they report that there are only 34,000. But of these 34,000 they recently reported that 18,000 were members of the Congregational Churches—a larger proportion of Church members than can be found in any other Protestant country in the world. The missionaries boasted that those natives were better educated, better behaved, and more peaceable, orderly, and religious, in proportion to their numbers, than the people of many parts of the United States. The triumph of religion, and especially of Congregationalism, in Hawaii, was made the subject of endless boasts by missionaries and managers of missions, and was made the ground of appeals to American Christians for fresh subscriptions and aid for missionary work.

"Suddenly their whole tone changed. The missionaries' sons and some returned missionaries vehemently asserted that the native Hawaiians were filthy and ignorant, and a debased, licentious, and idolatrous race, utterly unfit to be trusted with liberty, but must be kept under the control of a firm and unscrupulous, but pious, Congregational despotism.

"Assuming this to be true, then, the result of between fifty and sixty years' unbroken missionary government in these islands has been that the population has been reduced in numbers by three-quarters, and that these three-quarters are as debased, licentious, and brutal as they were when the missionaries began their labors, and that the whole missionary enterprise has been a disgraceful failure.

"Meanwhile, there are some other facts which the missionaries do not mention, but which cannot be disputed. During the fifty years the government of these islands was under missionary influence most of the natives were deprived of their rights in the land, excepting about 27,000 acres, and all the rest was divided among the king, the chiefs, and the families and friends of the missionaries.

"The missionaries' sons and their associates boast that they own four-fifths of all the property of the islands. Nearly all the rest is owned by the descendants of the former chiefs. The great mass of the people own nothing. The missionary government, finding that the natives would not work for less than 25 cents a day, complained of the want of labor, and insisted on the importation of scores of thousands of the scum of the human race, including Chinese and what are called Portuguese, a mongrel race, who never saw Portugal, but who speak something resembling the language of that country. In this manner the missionaries' sons cut down the wages of the native Hawaiians, and compelled them to work on their sugar plantations at such rates as seemed good to their masters.

"Before the missionaries gained control of the islands leprosy was unknown. But with the introduction of strange races leprosy established itself and rapidly increased. An entire island was very properly devoted to the lepers. No Protestant missionary would venture among them. For this I do not blame them, as, no doubt, I should not have had the courage to go myself. But a noble Catholic priest consecrated his life to the service of the lepers, lived among them, baptised them, educated them, and brought some light and happiness into their wretched lives.

"Stung by the contrast of his example, the one remaining missionary, a recognised and paid agent of the American Board, spread broadcast the vilest slanders against Father Damien. He said that Father Damien was dirty. Much good missionaries can do among a wretched and degraded people if they hold themselves aloof from those who are dirty! Did the apostles take care never to touch the dirty hands or sit against the dirty clothes of their early converts? He accused the good father of vile practices. But the vileness was in the Congregational missionary's mouth, not in the Catholic missionary's life; and under threats of exposure and legal punishment the Congregational missionary sneaked out of the accusation. Yet, after he had degraded himself in the eyes of every decent man, he remains, if I am correctly informed, still a well-paid, well-housed, comfortably-cared-for agent of the American Board in Hawaii. Of course, he is an ardent annexationist.

"And now the very same men who by hundreds and thousands have protested with pious indignation against the Southern States for their practical disfranchisement of the Southern negroes, who are, by the confession of their own best men, vastly below the moral standard which the Hawaiian missionaries have, until lately, boasted as the peculiar attribute of the converts, are full of enthusiasm over what, with bitter irony, is called the Hawaiian Republic. A Republic, forsooth, in which no man can vote unless he has property which would be equivalent to the possession of \$5,000 in Brooklyn, and in which no one can vote for senator who is not worth \$3,000, which is equivalent to \$20,000 in Brooklyn.

"But even with this restriction of the suffrage our Republican missionaries are afraid to trust their Republican voters. Accordingly they did not dare to allow the people, under any limitations whatever, to elect the president; but, having got possession of the constitutional convention, they appointed Mr. Dole president, to hold office for six years, and just so much longer as the senate and assembly should

fail to agree on a successor; restricting the choice, even then, to such persons as should be agreeable to a majority of the senate, which will be elected by about two hundred of the richest men on the island.

"Nor do they stop here. They passed laws, severely punishing anyone who dares to speak disrespectfully of any of their High Mightinesses. Anyone, whether a native or an American, who dares to say that this Republican Government is not Republican, or that any of the missionaries' sons who deign to govern the barbarous Christians of Hawaii are not well fitted for the post, is liable to a long term of imprisonment and a heavy fine.

"And yet, after all, though they have the government and the laws and the courts and the juries all in their own hands, they are afraid to trust any of them, and on the first sign of alarm, and before a blow was struck, they shut up all the courts and proclaimed martial law. And this is our pious Congregational missionary Republic. This is the fruit of seventy years of Congregational teaching and missionary government.

"And now it is proposed to annex this island, with its barbarous, idolatrous, dirty, debased Congregational heathen, Christian idolaters, and the one hundred thousand Mongolians and half-bred Portuguese to boot, and to bring it into our Republic as one of the States of our union to help govern us! Already one branch of Congress has voted to expend \$500,000 in beginning to lay a cable for this purpose, which, of course, will involve us in about \$3,000,000 more, in addition to that already incurred to enable Hawaiians to plant sugar at a cost to this country of \$50,000,000, taken out of the public treasury and put into the pockets of the planters to enable them to employ Mongolians and half-bred Portuguese."

### FREE WILL.

ASSERTIONS are ever made by Christians to the effect that we have a free will to believe or disbelieve as we please, and that that is the chief reason why we actually deserve eternal damnation if we do not accept the Gospels as the truth. So that the question of free will is, so to speak, the foundation of Christianity; for, if we have no free will to choose, a just and a good God will not punish us with everlasting torment for rejecting it. If, then, there be no hell, we need no Savior to save us from it, and Christianity is gone. To illustrate their theory, however, the religionists instance our power of reflection and capability of choosing in every-day life.

Now, it will not be denied that we, in common with the lower animals, have a will; without it we could not perform a single conscious action. But is it free? In other words, is there nothing stronger? It is the will which bids me take up my pen and write. But behind the will is the feeling, whether it be ambition, desire for remuneration, or love to my fellow men. It is the will that bids me fetch water, but behind the will is the feeling of thirst. The will bids my tongue to speak, but behind is the desire or necessity, as the case may be, to impart my thoughts to others. The will is not the cause of all causes, but only an effect of a cause. It is not the primary and predominating, but the secondary and executive, force of our mind.

We have the power of reflection. But have you not been out with a dog, in company with a friend, and observed how, as you part with your companion, the animal will remain on the spot for several minutes, looking from one to the other, and finally take his choice, and follow one of you? Is the dog not reflecting? At the time his will is suspended; at last it yields to the greatest influence, and bids his legs carry him in the direction he has decided to take.

It is precisely the same with the will of man. It submits to the strongest influence. For instance, I am sitting in my room reading. I begin to feel fidgety, and the more I try to control my feelings the more my uneasiness increases, and at last I make up my mind to go for a walk. Still I hesitate. There are two contending forces in my mind. One strives to bind me to the book, the other seeks to beckon me out into the free air. Finally the latter, at the moment being the stronger thought, conquers. Having got outside, another mental struggle begins as to which

road to take. At first I think of road No. 1, but another influence steps in and reminds me of the fact that it is full of people, and therefore affords an unpleasant walk. Accordingly I select another and more quiet route. But presently I remember that this road is blocked on account of a fire. I walk towards a third direction; but all at once another objection enters my mind. I see a person whom I know standing at the corner; I know that he is a talkative man, I am in a thoughtful mood, and I don't wish to be disturbed nor detained. I stop and consider about another route, when suddenly it begins to rain, which circumstance results in a final turn of mind and prevents me from going altogether.

Thoughts originate like the seeds of a flower. They are formed of nature; appear and disappear. Whence they come and whither they go, we know not. They arise, like bubbles of the sea, linger for a time, struggle and conquer, or submit to others, and the final victor we superficially term "the will," although, had the ensuing action been delayed, and the fight been prolonged for another second, perchance a final shock of thought-electricity might have weighed down the scale; then that would have been called "the will," the reasoner would have been judged differently, and the act would have been omitted or have been a different one. And, moreover, it is the grossest violation of logic to say that man *has* a free will, for "will" is thought, and thought is the man himself. Without it he is a dead lump of flesh, on a level with other "dead" matter. How can the will be free when it is subjected to natural laws in the moral, intellectual, and material spheres, of which we know nothing? To my mind, it is as clear as daylight that it is nothing of the kind, and it is well nigh time that this nonsensical talk about free will ceased.

If the will of man is psychologically not the strongest power, still less has it the supreme control over the mind at the time the character is being moulded. Every Christian knows—although few will admit it—if not steeped in ignorance or entirely spell-bound with the lies of prejudice, that the origin of man's character can be traced back to certain causes—viz., heredity, education, environment, and circumstances in later life; and I shall not here take the trouble to analyse it in its details: partly because the space is valuable, and partly because anyone can select piles of verification thereof for himself, if he will take pains to think and look around.

It is useless to point out men who have risen above their surroundings, and say: "Lo, it can be done!" Perhaps they have had more favorable opportunities; maybe even that they have been furnished by nature with a stronger will. The utterance itself is an admission of the fact that what I have stated is the rule. Rules which always will follow the same order we have accustomed ourselves to consider as laws of nature, and as such they cannot be broken. When I hold up my hand the law of gravitation is not broken, only other forces are in operation as well. When a man here and there rises above his environment or education a "law" is not broken, but other circumstances counteract it. But these circumstances rarely step in.

Now, we are told that, when we reach the age of maturity, a free will is developed, which we are to exercise to discriminate between good and evil. But the same folks who tell us this admit that they continually sin every day, despite that they will not, and St. Paul himself says: "The good which I will, I do not, and the evil which I will not, that I do." Further, if you inquire into the life of the blackest criminal, behind whom the doors of the prison have closed, or whose neck has been stretched by the hangman's rope, you will always find natural causes in his nature, environment, or surroundings that drove him to be what he became.

The process of rejecting Christianity is regarded by Christians as the act of a man who voluntarily stands up to defy a God whom he believes in. A more silly idea cannot be conceived. The process of thinking is no subject of volition at all. The belief that it was has, for centuries, been the cause of much persecution, massacre, and bloodshed. It was the father of the rack, the stake, the thumbscrew, and all the other terrible instruments of the Inquisition. None but the man who has undergone the change of passing from faith to reason can realise what a heartrending and prolonged struggle it is. None but he who has passed from Christianity to scepticism can com-

prehend how many tears it costs, how many sleepless nights it claims, and how much courage is required, before all the prejudices, which have been implanted into the pliable, juvenile mind, are worn off, before all the fondly-cherished illusions are broken, before all the ghastly fears of eternal torment as a punishment for doubt are expelled, and before all the long-nourished errors are exploded. Bit by bit they go, impelled by the light of reason, or, if you will, the thoughts continually force their way irresistibly into one direction, volition being entirely out of the question. The thinker thinks himself into Freethought, but he cannot think himself out of it again.

It is true that some persons pass through the ordeal of scepticism, but return to the old faith; and they will tell you that it was through exercising the will to pray, and that the prayer helped them. This is untrue. It is because prejudice and fear ultimately proved to be stronger than the element of originality, reason, and mental independence. Nay, more; what shall we say about the many millions who are born, live, and die in non-Christian countries, and who never hear, through no fault of their own, of the Christian religion? Are they, too, to be judged according to the Biblical injunction: "He who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned"? Have they a will of their own to accept or reject Christianity without being introduced to it? What about the little innocent children who die before they are baptised, and before they are capable of believing anything? Will an all-good God turn his back upon them? Are they also to be subjected to eternal damnation? Have we not heard enough of this fiendish and monstrous doctrine to be sick and tired to the very core of our hearts?

J. K. MAAGAARD.

(To be concluded.)

## ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. J. Moffat Logan gained a good deal of local notoriety by his debate with Mr. Foote. It was a fantastic debate from one point of view, for Mr. Logan would not discuss whether Jesus Christ *did* rise from the dead, but only how the Christians came to *believe* he did. Mr. Logan said he would be a child of folly—that is, a fool—if he discussed the *fact* of the Resurrection; and we quite agreed with him.

Since that debate Mr. Logan has been holding "popular" meetings, with a certain allowance of discussion, in his chapel. By this means, without knowing it, he is undermining the faith of a good many young people.

Mr. Logan makes a great pretence of fairness, but we are afraid that this quality in his case is but superficial. We remember the satisfied smile upon his face, during the debate, when his followers brutally interrupted Mr. Foote. We also remember some other things that need not be mentioned. And it does not surprise us to learn that Mr. Logan has taken advantage of the Oscar Wilde case to strike an unfair blow at Secularism.

This is what we are informed Mr. Logan said from his pulpit on Sunday, April 8: "Oscar Wilde! . . . I wonder the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah did not fall and devour him! . . . There's a specimen of Secular culture! . . . Only Christianity can keep us moral."

Now we have to remark, first of all, that this is a damnable thing to say about a man who is awaiting his trial. It is a plain statement, though in indirect language, that the man is guilty. Mr. Logan plays the part of judge and jury in anticipation, and almost calls upon God Almighty to execute the sinner.

Only Christianity can make us moral! Well, it takes something more than Christianity to make us just.

Mr. Logan assumes that Oscar Wilde is an Agnostic. Many of his poems, however, display an opposite tendency. We do not say he is a Christian, we only say that we should like to have Mr. Logan's reason for assuming him to be a Freethinker.

But the Marquis of Queensberry is an Agnostic. He was actually excluded from the House of Lords on that account. Mr. Logan should therefore explain whether it was Agnosticism or Christianity that made Lord Queensberry so honorably anxious about the morality of his son.

Oscar Wilde is not yet proved guilty of the charges brought against him. Mr. De Cobain, however, ex-member for Belfast, was found guilty of unnatural offences and sentenced to imprisonment. He was a shining light in Belfast religious circles, and actually held a young men's Bible Class at his own house. Was *this* man "a specimen of Secular culture"?

Mr. Logan would do well to reflect that most young people in this country first learn of the crime committed by De Cobain *from the Bible*. Some of the references to it in Scripture are unspeakably disgusting. What an irony! The very book which *alone* can make children grow up virtuous is the book which too often gives them their first suggestions of beastliness.

Only Christianity can keep us moral! Why the biggest rogues in this country are all Christians. The great "Liberator" fraud was perpetrated by pious scoundrels, with the active assistance of hundreds of Christian ministers in all parts of the kingdom. "Jabez" himself is a Christian.

The *Parnellite* speaks out on the witch-burning case at Clonmell in a way which the priests will little relish. It asks: "What has Christianity accomplished when cruel superstition can stalk abroad like this, and when a revolting crime can be perpetrated upon a sick woman by those who, by all the laws of God and nature, were most bound to love and cherish her? Are the priests too busy looking after the registration of votes and the collection of Whig Funds to stamp out such barbarous ignorance?" We would tell the *Parnellite* that Christianity, by its doctrine of possession of devils, distinctly countenances the barbarous ignorance and cruel superstition that led to Bridget Cleary's death.

During the last four years the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has added 2,000 churches to her number, and increased her communicants by 1,243,568. Irish and South German emigration only partly account for this. The Church preaches in the confessional and in public, "Increase and multiply," as a means of eventually attaining to power.

The Rev. Mr. Jessop, a Baptist minister at Mobile, in Alabama, fell to the floor in spasms, while in the midst of his sermon, and died in a few minutes. He had in one pocket bread poisoned with strychnine, to destroy the sparrows in his garden, and in the other sugar with which he cleared his throat during the sermon. By mistake he swallowed the poisoned bread instead of the sugar.

Prince Kropotkin points out in the *Times* that Jew-baiting is as severe in Russia as ever. Not only are the Jews not allowed to attend the public hospitals, but a recent decree prohibits them resorting to the provinces of Don, Kuban, and Terek to use the mineral waters there.

In the January number of the *Theosophist* a writer argues that Mrs. Besant is a reincarnation of Hypatia. The similarities in the two characters, it is sagely asserted, are too striking to belong to two different personages. Hypatia was beautiful, and so is Mrs. Besant; Hypatia was eloquent, and so is Mrs. Besant; Hypatia was persecuted by her enemies, and so has been Mrs. Besant; what more, it is triumphantly asked, can be wanted to complete the identification? There is, however, one small hitch that appears to have given a little trouble to the complacent writer. Hypatia was unmarried, while Mrs. Besant, unfortunately, is not. But this is easily and gracefully explained away for Mrs. Besant, on the same authority, though she allowed herself to be led to the matrimonial altar, and to pronounce the sacred formula, never loved her husband. The lady will surely cry, "Save me from my friends."

H. B. Foulke, who claims that Blavatsky made him her successor, calls W. Q. Judge "an exposed fraud," and says Mrs. Besant has been in delusion and error.

An American paper says: "Mrs. Jessie Timko, who recently threw herself upon a railroad track, and, with a Bible clutched in each hand, called upon God to take her to heaven, has been adjudged insane, and will be taken to an asylum." If orthodoxy be true, and the Christian at death goes to a heaven of bliss, we can't see why the above should be an evidence of insanity. It only shows she was a real believer in the creed."

Ananias has been caught again. A writer in *Christian Life* reports him as saying the old English Universities were "so slow and bigoted that they never conferred a degree upon a Nonconformist." The writer points out that the Rev. Gwengfryn Evans, a Unitarian minister, received from the University the honorary degree of M.A. in recognition of his eminent services to Welsh literature. And the Rev. James Martineau, the veteran leader of

advanced thought among the Unitarians, received some years back the complimentary degree of D.C.L. from the same University. A long list may be drawn up of eminent Nonconformists whom the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have delighted to honor."

Emory Boyd, in the New York *Truthseeker*, gives a translation of the first chapter of Genesis, rendering the word Elohim by "the gods." He says: "The Bible is full of polytheism, in spite of the efforts of ancient and modern priests to establish monotheism."

The Bishop of Worcester has found out that the proper method of marking the Easter season is the ancient practice of making offerings to the clergy. The bishops, of course, have no duties towards their poorer brethren, but they are always calling on the laity to shell out.

Bishop Potter has advised young men who would succeed in business to be regular at church. In that way, according to this New York ecclesiastic, they can win the favor of their employers and expect to outstrip, in the race for wealth, those who are irregular at church or regular in absenting themselves. This is a very lofty motive indeed for going to church. It is, moreover, we fancy, very similar to the motives that do animate attendants.

In the *Two Worlds* Mr. A. F. Colborne trots out "The Strange Story of Mrs. Veal" as a proof of Spiritism. Now this strange story was written by that eminent romancer, Daniel Defoe, as a preface to, and in order to sell, a number of copies of *Drelincourt on Death*, which the publisher could not get off his hands. One would think bogus stories of apparitions were scarce to fall back on this old stuff, whereas the Spookical Society offers an abundant supply.

Dr. and Mrs. Halten, Christian scientists, have been arrested at Dayton, Ohio, on a charge of manslaughter in connection with the death of Lila Mead, granddaughter of Congressman Honk. They pretended, and the parents believed, that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick."

The Bishop of London has been called upon to uphold the law of God, and prevent the re-marriage of a divorced person which takes place on April 27. The minister of St. Mark's, North Audley-street, refused to perform the ceremony, but the bishop has advised him to lend the church to the Rev. G. H. Smith, who is willing to do so.

The *Record of Christian Work* (New York) says: "Forty cents was all that the average church member in the United States could spare last year out of his abundance to send the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth! It took 7,802 church members to support one ordained foreign missionary last year!" Yet the heathen are going to hell headlong for want of a chance of rejecting the gospel.

The *Baptist Journal*, of Cincinnati, says: "For each convert made in the foreign field during the past year it has cost the American Board (Congregational) \$260; the Baptist Union, \$85; the M. E. Church, \$235; the Protestant Episcopal Church, \$1,834; and the Presbyterian Board, \$278." It is a question if the converts are worth it.

The *Truth*, of New York, asks: "What is Higher Criticism?" and answers, "Baptised Infidelity."

In 1890 the Legislature of the province of Manitoba, Canada, ordered that no public support should be given to sectarian schools. All the Catholics of Canada have been kicking up a dust ever since, and at length they have induced the Dominion Government to declare that the school law must be modified in favor of Catholic schools. The Catholics, not satisfied with ruling the roost in Quebec, are thus fighting for, and determined to have, the control of education in the entire Dominion. The Manitobians refuse to obey the Dominion order, and an interesting conflict of powers is the result.

Talmage says that three-fourths of the population of heaven are women. Of course he has been there and knows. Our information, derived from an old fetich book, is quite different. That book represents all the angels as males. When the sons of God wanted children, they came to earth for females, and when they did come, children generally followed. This old book says nothing about heaven being made for women, or women for heaven; but it has a significant passage that "there was silence in heaven" for half-an-hour, whence also conclusions may be drawn unfavorable to the contention of Dr. Talmage.

An attempt was made on March 19, at the Baltimore Methodist Conference, to prohibit the use of "individual cups" when sipping, or bibbing, or drinking wine in church. A very heated wrangle occurred, and Dr. Harcourt was prevented by the Methodist "Bishop" who presided from

reading medical testimony on the subject, but he said: "There was a time when it was said that everybody should go clean-shaven, like the bishop of this Conference—when there was no dipping of the moustache into the cup, with perhaps tobacco-juice on it; when there was no offensive suffering from the grip after having left the handkerchief at home. (Groans.) I tell you, Mr. President, that from these causes, at the table of the Lord and at his communion, I have administered slops!" A regular tumult now ensued, Dr. Harcourt was cautioned, and at last he said he would refrain on account of the presence of ladies from giving further unpleasant facts. A non-committal resolution was finally passed.—*Secular Thought*.

"Peter Lombard" tells in the *Church Times* how it was the custom in the good old days, in the Cathedral of Toulouse, to whip a Jew on Good Friday round the interior of the building. Of course Mrs. Glasse's principle had to be carried out, "First catch your Jew," and every poor Israelite made haste to hide himself from the searchers. The hunt for a victim, therefore, must have been on one side an exhibition of uproarious savagery, on the other of terror and despair.

The Rev. James Clark writes a tract to show that vegetarianism is taught in the Bible. Will he tell us what God wanted with the holocausts of burnt-offerings of oxen, rams, lambs, and does, whose sacrifices were required in the Bible? We should also like to know if Jesus took vegetarian lamb at Passover, and what he meant by saying to Peter from heaven, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

The tender sensibilities of sweet Jesus for animal life are hardly displayed in the last chapter of John. Jesus, after his resurrection, and presumably in his glorified body, asks his disciples, "Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No." He causes a miraculous draught of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three; and when the disciples came to him they saw a fire of coals there and fish laid thereon, in true savage-Indian style. After eating, they left the fish to fry further, and went on talking of love and feeding sheep.

An enterprising Italian purveyor advertises "Sardines from the Lake of Galilee." Perhaps they are some of the original miraculous draught of fishes.

No wonder Italy is poor. It has 77,128 priests, not to mention monks and nuns—also, for the most part, non-producers—who bring the number up to 100,000. As the intelligent Italians of the towns are Freethinkers, the priests have for the most part to get their living out of the ignorant peasant. The majority of Italian priests come from South Italy. Piedmont, with 3,700,000 inhabitants, has only 6,842 priests. Sicily has no fewer than 8,415.

Since Mormonism has been compelled to resign its Bible institution of polygamy it has lost its chief attraction, and the Mormon Church is now said to be in debt to upwards of one million dollars. The "tithes" are the Church's only source of revenue, and orthodox Christians are looking forward to the sale of the big temple in the sweet by and bye.

Our readers will remember what a fuss was made because Mr. Foote branded Price Hughes's story of the converted Atheist Shoemaker as "a lie." The man of God put on airs of dignity, and declined even the arbitration of a Committee of Honor. No one, he said in substance, has the right to question my veracity; and on this paltry plea, such as every thief in the dock puts in when he pleads "Not Guilty," the man of God evaded the full measure of his retribution. He had the discretion, though, to discontinue the sale of his lying story, which is no longer to be obtained for love or money. And as he pretended that the story of "Herbert's" conversion was powerful in the saving of souls, the withdrawal of the book is an admission that Hughes doesn't care whether souls are saved or not, or else that he knows the story is false and wants to let it die out of the public recollection.

Considering this man of God's objection to any doubt being thrown upon his veracity, it is amusing to open the *Methodist Times* and read what he has to say about the statement in the *New Age* that he will not accept a certain secretaryship unless he has Dr. Lunn for his colleague. "It is an absolute falsehood," cries Mr. Hughes. He complains that the metropolitan press is constantly printing "mischievous falsehoods" about him, that these falsehoods are dictated by "vicious spite," and that they are "not really believed even by the writers." And the worst of it is, as Moody said—though it was said before him—that "a lie rushes round the world before the contradicting truth has time to put its shoes on."

This language shows how much real sincerity there was in Hughes's evading his responsibility because Mr. Foote

called his story "a lie." He employs the very same word himself, and employs it in reference to a fellow Christian.

Mr. Holyoake, who came to Hughes's rescue, and without whom he would have been absolutely lost, stated that the man who used the word "lie" in America would probably be shot at sight. Mr. Holyoake has also expressed his high opinion of Colonel Ingersoll, not only as an orator, but as a gentleman. Well, what does Colonel Ingersoll say about the story that he funk'd in a storm on board the "Servia"? He calls it "an orthodox lie." How shocking! Mr. Holyoake should send the Colonel a letter of admonition, and would do well to get it endorsed by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

Does the *Daily Chronicle*, like the Hindus, believe in the power of ascetic austerities to move God? Reviewing the Rev. E. J. Newell's *History of the Welsh Church*, it mentions how Kentigern, at St. Asaph, would recite the Psalms standing naked in cold water, even in time of frost. Illtyd, at Llanwit, bathed at midnight before matins, staying in the cold water as long as it took him to say the Lord's Prayer thrice. The Irish monks went further. One would sleep with corpses and hang himself up on sickles placed under his armpits; another would keep a stone in his mouth during the whole of Lent; a third mixed his bread with sand; and a female saint, named Ite, let a stag-beetle eat away her side. St. Patrick himself is related by Tirechan to have fasted for forty days and forty nights on Cruachan Aigle.

The *Chronicle* says on this: "All highly irrational, of course, to a solid, sensible, English prelate in his palace; but somehow these devotees gained a spiritual power which is sorely needed in our flabby age." To suppose these are the means of gaining spiritual power is worthy of a Theosophist.

A young Anglo-Indian lady, Miss Oliva Francis, aged 23, has formally renounced Christianity and become a Muslim, adopting the Islamic name of Habiba, at Mozuffurpore, India.

'Rev.' Henry Powers addressed his Unitarian brethren, the other day, on "What do we Really Know about Jesus?" This is easy—simply nothing.

Mr. Joseph Dyson, the Labor representative on the Huddersfield School Board, seems very familiar with God's intentions. At the Fields Congregational Chapel, P.S.A., he said, "God never intended that there should be so much poverty," etc. Now, a truly pious Theist would hold that God intended whatever is, and take care he did not thwart these intentions, as, we are glad to say, Mr. Dyson wishes people to do.

Jesus Christ, it is said, washed his disciples' feet, and Simon Peter objected to the performance. Perhaps his feet wouldn't bear inspection.

Like another Jesus Christ, the Emperor of Austria washes the feet of twelve poor old men during "Holy Week." These old men are carefully selected, and no doubt their pedal extremities are well attended to before the Emperor goes to work upon them. The water is carried by a priest in a golden basin. After this ceremony, which is witnessed by a crowded Court, the Emperor places round each old man's neck a chain, to which is attached a little bag containing thirty pieces of silver—the number of coins received by Judas for "selling" his master. Then the twelve old men go home and have a good feed, which is sent on before them, and is some consolation for having their feet messed about in public.

Japan is on the winning side in the present quarrel with China, and the Christian proselytisers are naturally trying to convert the upper dog in the fight. The Bible and Tract Societies, aided by private donors, are distributing 12,000 New Testaments amongst the Japanese soldiers at Hiroshima, and twenty-six special missionaries are at work there. An urgent appeal is made in England for £200 at once, and one of the religious journals in this country hopes the appeal will be promptly responded to, as the "authorities" over there are watching to see "whether Christianity or Buddhism is doing more in the interests of higher morality during the present war." In other words, there is a brisk competition between rival religions, and the Christians are asked to back their own side. Such is the "higher morality" of this business.

*Northern Gossip*, of Newcastle, in its "Dramatic Notes," gives some attention to the performance of a Christian Evidence lecturer at the Olympia, whom "the Sightseer" says has "a marked genius for representing lunacy," and is unrivalled "for speaking bad English and sending his

fellow creatures to hell." This is the fellow who wrote to Mr. Holyoake concerning the Atheist Shoemaker.

Buena, Vista, Ga., March 14.—While C. S. Crawford, an Atheist, was denouncing God and the Bible yesterday, lightning struck his house. Several members of the household were stunned!—*Buffalo Courier*.

Here is another case of "bad markmanship," as Colonel Ingersoll said when a bolt of lightning struck the Y.M.C.A.'s office and destroyed it, adjoining the Colonel's office in Washington, D.C., and did not injure his office in the least.—*Freethought Magazine*.

Christians, who boast that their religion abolished the old gladiatorial shows, should explain why it has not abolished the Spanish bull-fights. Men went into the arena for the most part of their own free will, but the bulls are unwilling combatants, and are literally butchered to make a holiday. In this respect, a bull-fight is worse than a gladiatorial show.

There are people silly enough to imagine that cruelty fosters courage. This is a great mistake. Cruelty is more often allied with cowardice. When, at a bull-fight in Barcelona last Sunday afternoon, the third bull jumped over the barriers, the whole crowd was thrown into a panic. One of the civil guards shot the bull dead, and the bullet, passing through its body, also killed a spectator; in which accident there is a sort of poetical justice.

## A VISIT TO DARWIN.

PROFESSOR HAECKEL has given the following charming description of Darwin and his home surroundings in his later years:—

"In Darwin's own carriage, which he had thoughtfully sent for my convenience to the railway station, I drove, one sunny morning in October, through the graceful, hilly landscape of Kent, that, with the chequered foliage of its woods, with its stretches of purple heath, yellow broom, and evergreen oaks, was arrayed in its fairest autumnal dress. As the carriage drew up in front of Darwin's pleasant country house, clad in a vesture of ivy and embowered in elms, there stepped out to meet me from the shady porch, overgrown with creeping plants, the great naturalist himself; a tall and venerable figure, with the broad shoulders of an Atlas supporting a world of thought; his Jupiter-like forehead highly and broadly arched, as in the case of Goethe, and deeply furrowed with the plough of mental labor; his kindly, mild eyes looking forth under the shadow of prominent brows; his amiable mouth surrounded by a copious silver-white beard. The cordial prepossessing expression of the whole face, the gentle, mild voice, the slow, deliberate utterance, the natural and naive train of ideas which marked his conversation, captivated my whole heart in the first hour of our meeting, just as his great work had formerly, on my first reading it, taken my whole understanding by storm. I fancied a lofty world sage out of Hellenic antiquity—a Socrates or Aristotle—stood before me."

## MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

May 5, Hall of Science, London; 12, Camberwell; 14, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 30, Sheffield.

July 7, South Shields; 14, Bristol.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York in August, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Arrangements are being made for him to speak in Derby and Stockton-on-Tees during the weeks following his being at Manchester and South Shields. Dundee should be visited when he lectures in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The Republic of Man is the outcome of the logic of history; and to foresee that Republic, to begin to set in order, to live it beforehand, is the highest object of life, and the surest passport to all the heaven there can be on this earth or elsewhere.—*T. B. Wakeman*.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, April 21, Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow;—11.30, "The Romance of the Resurrection"; 2.30, "New Light on the Old Book"; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

April 23, Sunderland.

May 8 and 9, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 21, m. Walworth Radical Club, e. Hall of Science, London; 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow; 6, 7, 8, and 9, debate at Glasgow with Dr. Jamieson; 12, Dundee; 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. T. (Bristol).—It is impossible to insert such an article while the case is *sub judice*. We hope our comment in "Acid Drops" will meet with your approval.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) The "Goddess of Reason" was not a prostitute, and she was not naked. These are Christian inventions. She was a respectable woman, and she was decently clothed. Nor was she worshipped. She was only an emblematic figure. For our part, however, we would sooner worship a beautiful woman than an ugly old god. (2) Undoubtedly there are traces of sexual mutilation in the Bible—amongst them the passages to which you refer. (3) Christians don't know that witchcraft is a Bible doctrine simply because they don't read the Bible. We have often dealt with the subject in this journal.

J. HUGHES.—Thanks.

F. SHEPHERD.—By no means without merit, but hardly up to our mark.

E. L. GABBETT.—Such a discussion is more fit for a Christian than for a Freethought journal. We inserted Father Ignatius's letter in common fairness, because he had been mentioned in our paragraph to which he replied.

A. ANDERSON.—All right. Thanks.

W. O. HAWES.—Received. Next week.

A. HINDLEY.—We have not forgotten it. We took it as the subject of a Sunday morning lecture at the Hall of Science some months ago, but we have not yet found time to write upon it adequately in the *Freethinker*.

S. SMALL.—Thanks. Next week.

P. SHAUGHNESSY.—Shall appear.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Northern Gossip—Crescent—Islamic World—Christian Life—Freethought Magazine—Two Worlds—Chatham Observer—Church Reformer—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Echo—Freidenker—Fur Unser Jugend—Monist—Open Court—Truthseeker—Blyth News—Twentieth Century—Liberty—Isle of Man Times.

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

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

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

In being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is duo, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

**SPECIAL APPEAL.**

I ANNOUNCED in last week's *Freethinker* that the sum of £600 was required during the present month of April, in order to clear off, at a greatly-reduced figure, the mortgage upon the London Hall of Science.

I appealed to the Secular party to provide this amount, either by taking shares in the National Secular Hall Society, Limited, or by giving donations which will be invested in shares to be held by the N.S.S. Executive, or in the name of any person who may be indicated by the donor.

Probably in consequence of the holidays, the response up to the time of going to press has been extremely moderate. The remittances that have reached me will therefore be held over for acknowledgment until next week, when I hope I shall be able to publish an encouraging list.

One or two friends, who may do something handsome, are waiting to see what the general body of Secularists are going to do before coming to a definite decision.

A subscriber, who sends me a cheque for £1, expresses a hope that 1,000 others will send the same amount.

Perhaps there are not a thousand of my readers who can afford to give as much *immediately*. But a great many can do something, and I beg them to do it at once. Any sum, however small, will be acceptable.

My own subscription will amount to (say) £5, and there should be a hundred friends who can cover that.

If the Secular party in general, and the London Secularists in particular, do not want good headquarters, and are indifferent about a worthy memorial to Charles Bradlaugh, I must wash my hands of this affair, and go to work in another direction. It would be far more profitable to me to take life a little easier, and to attend to my own affairs, which have suffered from my devotion to the interests of the Society.

In any case I am resolved that *this* effort shall not be *wasted*. Shares will not be allotted unless the response is adequate, and donations will all be returned to the subscribers if there is not enough to meet the emergency. This will be a satisfaction to those who, like myself, have put down their mite at a venture.

I now wait to see what the Secular party will do.

G. W. FOOTE.

(Chairman, Board of Directors, National Secular Hall Society, Limited.)

(President, National Secular Society.)

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

THERE was a surprisingly good Easter Sunday audience at the London Hall of Science. Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Romance of the Resurrection" was followed with profound attention, and very warmly applauded, especially at the close, when the cheering amounted to an ovation. Mr. James Rowney, who makes a first-rate chairman, strongly invited questions and discussion; but the invitation met with no response, although one clerical gentleman had been industriously taking notes in the gallery.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (April 21) at Glasgow, and the following Sunday at Sunderland. It was his intention to take a little rest and change during the interval, but he finds himself obliged to return to London on Monday to attend to important business.

Mr. Watts occupies the London Hall of Science platform to-day (April 21), and will doubtless be welcomed by a capital audience after his absence in the country. His subject is an interesting one, and he himself is always interesting.

Easter Monday's *Pall Mall Gazette* contained a letter from Mr. Mortimer Granville, pointing out that the "hot cross bun" has really nothing to do with Christianity, the "cross" being "a symbol of the faith which existed long before Judaism." Mr. Granville also points out that Easter is a very ancient festival, and has nothing whatever to do with the Resurrection. Of course this information is no novelty to the readers of the *Freethinker*. We only mention Mr. Granville's letter to show how scepticism is invading the daily press.

Mr. W. Fraser Rae has unearthed a fresh "Junius" letter from the *London Evening Post* for August 24, 1773. It contains a caustic attack on priestcraft, and refers to the clergy as "that immaculate class" who receive such a "scanty allowance of tithes, which they possess in lieu of that 'daily bread' for which the most devout among them so fervently pray." With respect to their character, he asks: "To what regions of the habitable globe shall we go to find a set of men so detestable as our clergy, for their

pride, haughtiness, covetousness, voluptuousness, indolence, and self-conceit." "Such are the men," he continues, "who claim the distinguished name of *Ministers of the Gospel of Christ*; and take upon them to direct us in our way to heaven, in order to get from us the fruits of our labor on earth; but who, instead of having rendered any real service to mankind, have been a plague to human society from generation to generation." Those who would like to see the rest of this letter will find it in last week's *Athenæum*.

In Turin has recently been published some letters from Cavour in 1857 calling Mazzini "an infamous conspirator who has become the regular head of a band of murderers." Thirty years later the Italian Parliament decreed that a monument should be erected to Mazzini, and King Humbert gave one hundred thousand lire towards it. The "head of a band of murderers" has become recognised as a noble-minded patriot.

Captain Otto Thomson sends us his Swedish translation to Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on "The Old and the New Religion." We hope it will have a good circulation, for it is well calculated to spread Freethought wherever it is read.

Soon after this number of the *Freethinker* goes to press Mr. Foote will be debating at New Brompton, Kent, with the Rev. A. J. Waldron. This gentleman, in a recent lecture at New Brompton, is reported in the local *News* to have said that "Mr. Foote had stated that he (Mr. Waldron) was the fairest and frankest opponent he had had to deal with." No doubt Mr. Waldron is reported inaccurately. Mr. Foote cordially admits the fairness and frankness displayed in the negotiations for the debate by Mr. Waldron, but he found perfect fairness and frankness years ago in Dr. A. J. Harrison and Dr. James McCann. There are gentlemen on the Christian side, though unfortunately Freethinkers see too much of the other sort.

On Sunday, the 14th inst., the discussion class of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. held their annual social meeting. Considering the early hour (12 a.m.) at which the proceedings began, there was a good attendance. After a short address by Mr. W. Gilmour anent the work of the class, a varied musical program was submitted. Messrs. Turnbull and Gilmour rendered some violin duets in a tasteful manner, followed by songs from Miss Reid and Mr. Crawford, which were much appreciated. After tea was served the second part of the program was gone through, and the proceedings terminated by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

Mr. Symes, in reprinting "Some Little-Known Freethinkers," says: "I am right glad my friend Wheeler is disinterring some of the obscure heroes of our movement. What a book a record of them would make! The heroes who do battle in private, with no public applause or notoriety to encourage them, are the greatest and truest heroes in most cases." Mr. Wheeler will continue these articles shortly. He has recently been engaged on a new pamphlet dealing with Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible.

Mrs. Katie Kelm Smith, Miss Nettie Olds, and Mrs. Barker, of the Oregon Secular Union, have established Freethought Churches, with large Sunday-schools, with kindergarten classes, in Portland, Forest Grove, and McMillsville.

The *Freethought Magazine* gives three portraits in its April number. As frontispiece appears Mr. C. C. Moore, editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, who was threatened with a prosecution for blasphemy. The other portraits are of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who writes on "The Woman's Bible Revised by Woman," and of Miss Mary Proctor, daughter of the late Richard A. Proctor, who follows her father's work in popularising astronomy.

The Camberwell Branch held its quarterly general meeting on Sunday, and decided to hold such a meeting once a year in future, in October. Mr. P. Sabine was elected president, and Mr. Egan vice-president. Other officers remain as before. After the meeting came a tea and soiree, which was attended by Secularists from distant parts of London.

The Bristol Branch has appointed a strong committee to look after the arrangements for the N.S.S. Conference on Whit-Sunday. The membership of this Branch is increasing, the accessories consisting principally of young men and women who are sick and tired of Christianity. It has been decided to carry on a Sunday evening open-air propaganda in Eastville Park during the summer.

Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Brutal Atheists" has been reprinted from our columns into the *Independent Pulpit* of Waco, Texas, and also into the *Liberator* of Melbourne.

A student at Beuchtel College attended a revival effort, and the preacher took it upon himself to show how inadequate everything short of orthodox religion is in times of trouble and emergency. It was shortly after the "Servia" came so near going down. He said that "Bob" Ingersoll was aboard her in that hour of perilous extremity, and that he fell on his knees and implored God to save him. The student thought the story improbable, and wrote to the great infidel about it, receiving the following reply:—"Dear Sir,—I was not on the 'Servia.' I have not crossed the ocean in twelve years, and the whole story is an orthodox lie.—Yours truly, ROBERT G. INGERSOLL."

## THE DYING INFIDEL.

ANYONE who walks through the ethnographic gallery of the British Museum, or any similar institution, will notice how frequent a feature in the collections illustrating the manners and customs of savage life are masks. These masks are to represent bogies—gods or devils; for, philosophically and ethnographically, as well as etymologically, bogies, gods, and devils are of the same species. The earliest gods are all ugly devils. The uglier the bogies, and the more hideous the masks used to represent them, the better, for they are used by the medicine men to frighten away the profane from penetrating the secrets of the godly. They have only a faint semblance to humanity; for the more horrible and unnatural the mask the better it fulfils its purpose.

A similar dreadful bogie stalks through the pages of religious magazines, pious tracts, pulpit sermons, and Sunday-school stories. He also occasionally turns up in goody-goody novels. It is the horrid "infidel." The "infidel" is unlike any being on earth. He is an impossible villain, ready to sharpen a knife on his mother's grave to cut his father's throat, and revels in the wildest rascality; or else a maundering imbecile or nincompoop like *Paul Nugent, Materialist*. Such beings were never met in real life. They are masks to frighten people from thinking for themselves in religion.

If the living "infidel" is strange, the dying infidel is a still greater wonder. The Atheist is terrified by a God whose existence he does not believe in. The unbeliever cries out for mercy, sees hell before him, and rends the sky with shrieks of despair. To those who know what infidel death-beds really are, such bugaboos are as impudent impostures as the painted devils of the savage medicine man.

A pair of pictures, well known in all Catholic countries, represent the imaginary death-beds of saint and sinner. The former, attended by his family, the priest, and all signs of religion, clasps a crucifix and looks ceilingwards, where angels are floating, and the Holy Family, in gorgeously colored garments, beam down benignantly. The "infidel," writhing on his bed, turns from priest and crucifix and gazes fondly at a girl's picture held before him by a devil with horns and tail. Other demons are in attendance, and Satan, surrounded by the flames of hell, is prepared to give the sinner a warm reception.

The wide circulation of these pictures shows they are excellent weapons in the hands of the priests. The Protestants are giving up such pictures, and here is our old friend, the *Christian Herald* and *Signs of the Times*, on which we relied for a continuance of these stories, actually, in its issue for March 28, sending an infidel off to hell without first making him shriek with despair, or having any foretaste of the horrors of his final doom. It will be a thousand pities if, after all, we lose our old friend, the dying infidel. We like these stories. They show what a sickly, debilitated thing religion is, and how, at bottom, it depends on fear. A man in vigorous health and robust intellect becomes a sceptic. In sickness, when the physical powers are declining, he sees what he could never discover when in health. What better illustration could we have that faith depends on malady, and that, as Pascal said, "sickness is the natural state of a Christian."

J. K. Fowler, in his *Recollections of Old Country Life*, tells a story of an aspirant to holy orders who was plucked at college in divinity. On being asked, "Who was the mediator between God and man?" he replied at once, with much complacency, "The Archbishop of Canterbury."

## THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE.

DR. PARKHURST has been saying: "The intention of Scripture (concerning women) is clear, also, from the method in which it handles representatives of the womanly sex. Those women upon whom it put the stamp of divine distinction and approval are women, with scarcely an exception, whose womanhood is realised to be a pervasive ingredient, entering into all their capacities, faculties, experiences, and activities."

To this Ellen Battelle Dietrick retorts in the *Twentieth Century*: "Wonderful! wonderful! Now, here I, a poor, weak female being, have been grinding away in the study of the Scriptures for thirty-five years (having begun when I was twelve), and I have never been able even to guess what women of the Bible do have 'the stamp of divine distinction and approval.' . . ."

She looks them over a little, continuing: "I have always found that one of the most important duties of a human being is the duty of doubting. First let us consider Sarah, a woman who does seem to bear a special stamp of Scriptural distinction, for we are told by the Scriptures that God himself commanded Abraham, the husband, to render unquestioning obedience to Sarah, the wife (Genesis xxi. 12). What evidence of intrinsic superiority does Sarah present in contrast with Abraham? I confess I can discern not a jot or tittle of superior fineness of texture, or of superior refinement of organisation, in either of that precious pair; and yet there is no room to doubt the 'pervasive ingredient' of Sarah's womanhood, any more than of Abraham's manhood. Speaking dispassionately, I should pronounce their moral fibre pretty much of a muchness."

"Then take Rebekah, another of Dr. Parkhurst's heroines. Where is there any proof of her 'intrinsic superiority'? Or Rachel—where is her moral superiority? She seemed to find thieving and lying quite as easy as Jacob did cheating. Or reflect upon the character of Deborah, a woman upon whom the Scriptures undoubtedly put the stamp of divine distinction and approval, for they tell us that she was an inspired prophetess, speaking authoritatively as to the Lord's commands. Was Deborah less ready to lead her troops to battle than Barak? What peculiarity of moral power, of tenderness, gentleness, or 'intrinsic superiority' of womanly fibre do we find in that Great Mother of Israel? Read her war-song—the poem composed when intoxicated with the sight of the blood of her dead enemies. Who is that other womanly woman whom she pronounces 'Blessed above all women'? It is Jael; and here is the reason why Jael is exalted in that Scriptural song: 'She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera; she smote off his head when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he laid down; where he bowed, there he fell down dead. The mother of Sisera looked out at a window and cried through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming?' And the womanly Deborah exults, 'So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord.'"

"Then there is Ruth, the gentle Ruth, whose song is sung by sweet choristers in all our modern churches. Does Dr. Parkhurst mean to intimate that he considers Ruth an example in morality for young women of the present day? In what does her intrinsic superiority over man's refinement consist? How does the womanly fibre of Ruth surpass that of those New York sisters of hers whom Dr. Parkhurst has just scattered? Ruth stood high in Scriptural times, however."

"Another Scriptural favorite is Esther. We are told in these days that Esther is womanly *par excellence*, for the reason that she submitted to the will of her uncle, Mordecai, who made her one of the inmates of a harem, with beneficial results to the Jews. Esther used her power to defeat the man who contemplated the death of her uncle, and had him put to death. On the next day, after five hundred of the dead man's followers and his ten sons had been murdered in cold blood, the king asked the womanly Esther what further he could do to please her, and she replied: 'Let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow, also, according unto this day's decree (to bring the slain into the palace), and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.'"

"Now, as we review these 'womanly' women of the Old Testament, does it not become very clear that if women

have now developed a higher morality, a gentler, sweeter spirit than men, it is indubitably not due to any intrinsic superiority at the outset? I find this conclusion very encouraging to men, for it is evident that, with a little perseverance, they may attain to every present moral excellence that they find admirable in women."

## "SLUDGE THE MEDIUM."

MR. FREDERICK GREENWOOD, in his personal recollections written for the *Realm*, tells the following story: "Everybody who lives with books has heard that Robert Browning's 'Sludge the Medium' reflected upon Home; and most people have also heard that the celebrated creature succeeded in bringing Mrs. Browning under his influence completely. But the trick that undeceived her (we must suppose) is not so well known. It may have got into print, but, if so, I for one have never seen it, and tell the story as it was told by Browning himself. Home had been about the Browning's a good deal; knew many people known to them; was in his tea-party way an agreeable sort of person; and there were *séances* here and *séances* there; 'and,' said the poet, casting a vague look about the room to express his bewilderment, 'I don't know how it was, I did my best, but little by little he gained her over to believing in him; how much to my distress, imagine! After a while Home found a yet more excellent way of working on the poor lady's mind. She had lost a little child by death, and her own wishes running out to embrace the promise, he began to hint that some day he would bring the little one's spirit into her presence. But he was slow in performing this promise—naturally; for otherwise he would have lost the advantage of an excited expectation, often stimulated and as often baffled. At last an evening was named when the mother's yearning should be satisfied. In the customary way, light was shut out of the room when the three sat down, and the usual rappings, and questionings, and invocations went on for a time, and then—then the child's spirit was to appear. And sure enough there did arise above the edge of the table something that was whiter than the dark, that seemed to have a motion of its own and the luminousness of a living thing, and that might veritably be what poor Mrs. Browning fancied it. But, conscious of her trembling state of mind, her husband was in another guess sort of passion. 'I suddenly sprang up, dashed my arm across the table, and took hold of—what do you think? The scoundrel's obscene foot!—naked!' The flaming anger in which Browning finished the story—after so many years, too—left no doubt about what happened next to the celebrated medium—Home. He was instantly and literally kicked out of the house, his shoe and stocking after him no doubt."

## Greek Atheists.

Thales and the other Ionics are, as Hylo-zoists, nothing but Atheists; while to call the Eleatus and Heraclitus pantheists is tantamount for all that to an admission, as their doctrines were, that they were Atheists. Empedocles was no better. Democritus could point to the superhuman powers he believed in, as it were, in the air; but still a nature built up of atoms was his god. Then Anaxagoras, with the principal Sophists, even Socrates himself, had been publicly arraigned as Atheists. Diagoras, in the time of Aristotle, became an Atheist in consequence of a real or supposed wrong unrequited by the gods, and was known and named, and is still familiar to us in our books, as Diagoras the Atheist. Aristotle himself hardly escaped a similar imputation; which, besides, his own school in the end would only have justified; for almost every member of it, at least in the second generation, gave more and more breadth to what naturalistic doctrine had taken birth in it. Aristoxenus, for example, held that "the soul was but a certain tension or intension of the body itself, like what is called music on the part of string cords." While Dicaearchus, another Aristotelian, declared the soul to be "only an idle name, and nothing but the body, which one, single and simple, acts and feels by organisation of nature."—*Dr. J. H. Stirling, "Philosophy and Theology," pp. 219-220.*

## Obituary.

PROFESSOR GEORG VON GIZYCKI, one of the most prominent leaders of the Ethical Culture movement in Germany, died from influenza in Berlin last month.

MR. W. F. JAMIESON, one of the veteran American Free-thought advocates, has lost his wife, with whom he had lived nearly forty years.

## BOOK CHAT.

AN interview with Mr. John Davidson, whose Ballads and Poems were recently noticed, appears in the New York *Bookman*. Mr. Davidson was born at Barrhead, Renfrewshire, April 11, 1857. He became a pupil teacher, and came to London in 1890. Asked if any one has a right to claim that he "discovered" him, he said: "Well, no. I discovered myself; but I may say that I have never met a more sympathetic and appreciative man than Mr. Grant Allen. He has an open mind for everything new, and does not, like some critics, keep back his kind words till an author no longer requires them."

We are pleased to notice in *De Dageraud* that the works of Spinoza are very appropriately published in Dutch, edited by Dr. J. P. N. Land, who has already brought out an edition of the great Pantheist philosopher's Latin works, in conjunction with J. van Vloten.

A German translation of Giordano Bruno's *Io Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante* has been published at Brunswick, edited by Dr. L. Kuhlbeck.

The following story is cited from a book on Rural Bengal: "In a Mussulman village, whose inhabitants nearly all made a living as pedlars, there was faction. The leader of one faction was given to the use of ganja, an intoxicating drug. So the leaders of the other faction decided to lay a trap for him. They called a meeting of the village together, and said: 'Let us all become very holy. Let us all sign a covenant that we will keep the Koran, and use no intoxicating drugs.' They hoped that the ganja-eater would refuse to sign, and lose influence in the village. But he met them on their ground, and said: 'I am ready to sign, but let us, in our covenant, include the whole Koran, and not a part only. Let us enter a clause that we will take no interest on money.' 'But that is what we live by; how can we do that?' said the others. 'I can't help that. It is forbidden by the Koran, as well as the use of intoxicating drugs,' said he. So there was a good deal of discussion and bargaining, and, as a result, a covenant was drawn up, which contained no mention of intoxicating drugs or of interest on money, and which all were able cheerfully to sign." These Mohammedans used the Koran pretty much as Christians use the Bible. Everywhere we find that religionists, in the words of Butler,

Compound for sins they are inclined to  
By damning those they have no mind to.

Appropriately to the Easter season comes *Our Sun God; or, Christianity before Christ*, written and published by Mr. J. D. Parsons, 7 Crawshay-road, S.E. (3s. 6d.). The work is announced as the first of a contemplated series of six, each to be complete in itself. We shall give Mr. Parsons's work a fuller examination shortly.

The Norwegian author and Freethinker, Kristofer Janson, has published four new Freethought lectures, which are said to be among the best extant. Freethought literature is certainly needed in both Norway and Denmark, and we hope that Mr. Janson's latest book will have a sale equal to his other works—but not as a certain one which was bought up, plates and all, by the pious Danish Government, so that it should not destroy the innocence of the Danish people.

Mr. F. Espinasse, who has a life of Voltaire in the "Great Writers" series, has prepared a life of Renan which is announced as "in the press." It is said that he will lay particular emphasis upon Renan's love of truth.

The *Daily Chronicle*, in noticing *Gain or Loss* by the Rev. Bernard J. Snell, of Brixton, cites the following as an instance of how far Congregationalists have got: "I do not consider that I am bound, as minister of Christ, to defend Abram's cruel treatment of Hagar, the duplicity of Jacob, or the treachery of Jael; it is not my duty to apologise for the sins of the 'man after God's own heart'; I do not hold a brief for Elisha, who called out bears to devour the children who gave him a nickname; I have nothing to say in favor of the making of a woman from a man's rib, or the abnormally low specific gravity of iron axes, or the temporary stoppage of the sun in the heavens, or any other miracles to which neither my intellect nor my conscience responds. Neither you nor I are bound to acquiesce in all the sentiments of Ecclesiastes, or to believe Micaiah when he said, 'The Lord sent a lying spirit.' What do we lose by relegating to legendary folklore Samson's slaying of thousands with the jaw of an ass, or his tying brands to the tails of three hundred foxes?" Mr. Snell is, we hear, one of the writers on the *Christian World* who helps to liberalise that journal.

*Comte, Mill, and Spencer*, an outline of philosophy, by John Watson, LL.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Queen's College, Kingston, Canada, has just been published by Maclehose, of Glasgow.

The *Harbinger of Light*, a Spiritist paper published at Melbourne, in its March number, under "Occasional Notes," by X., notices the *Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh*. It says: "It is now nearly four years since death seemingly closed the all-too-short life, which was an all-too-long fight, of this tribune of the plebs; Atheist, Materialist, Radical, Republican, yet one of the greatest Englishmen since Cromwell, and one of Nature's realest gentlemen." It continues: "As regards Spiritualism, Mr. Bradlaugh had devoted some attention to the subject, reading its literature and investigating its phenomena. He attended séances held by Mrs. Marshall, by the Davenport Brothers, and by D. D. Home. He was one of the committee appointed by the Dialectical Society to inquire into the phenomena, and he publicly debated Spiritualism with the late Mr. James Burns, editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*. Nothing, however, that he read, saw, or heard sufficed to satisfy his sceptical mind that the 'phenomena' were of other than mundane origin. But Charles Bradlaugh knows to-day." The efforts of the Spiritists to make Bradlaugh a Spiritist after his death have been among the most ridiculous of their proceedings. The spirit of Voltaire unable to speak French has been paralleled by the "spirit" of Charles Bradlaugh drivelling pitiable rubbish.

Mr. L. C. Smithers, of Effingham House, sends us a book catalogue in which the complete works of Voltaire, in seventy volumes, is marked at £300. It is, of course, a special copy. The edition is that of Kehl, 1784-1785, for which the types of the Freethinker Baskerville were used. There are inserted a large number of illustrations and portraits, over five hundred plates, and the whole magnificently bound in blue morocco. This copy was collected together and bound by Prince Jerome Napoleon, who, it is well known, was a Freethinker.

## THE RELIGION OF BLOOD.

HUSH, Christian! speak in bated tones  
Of Druids' worship round their gory stones!  
The founder of thy creed  
Died with despairing groans.  
Within thy book we read  
God bade his own Son bleed—  
A human sacrifice! But blood might plead  
With the Omnipotent for sinners' need.

Years rolled away; again the pious priest  
Spread for his Moloch the Satanic feast;  
Fires mantled round the quailing, quivering frame,  
Fierce scorching God's true Son e'en in his Father's  
name!  
Christian, thine idol 'twas whose feted fane  
Reeked with the blood of innocents; their pain  
Gave a fresh thrill of rapture to the hells  
Where, bloated with his bliss, thy brain-born image  
dwells.

Come, brother men, together let us weep  
That men can be so cruel to their kin;  
Love gives all vengeance an eternal sleep,  
And damns not erring as a mortal sin.

—Robert B. Holt.

## A Christian Method to Get at Truth.

The Rev. Lem Penrod, who preaches at Vanceburgh, Ky., has decided opinions on infant baptism, and one of his church members, John Slate, has opinions equally decided. Unfortunately their opinions are diametrically opposed, and the Bible, to which they appealed, deals a flush hand of texts for both. The other day they met and waxed hot and furious in argument, and the layman got the better of Preacher Penrod, whereupon the spirit of the old church fathers, and of Calvin, came to the latter's rescue, and inflamed him until he drew a revolver and put a bullet through Slate's bootleg. Thereupon Slate rushed upon him, and the preacher drew a butcher's knife and slashed away at him. But the layman had the reverend in the dust, and although his clothes were cut, received no wound. How it would have been decided, whether infants are damned if baptised or not, is difficult to tell, for the Church militant were parted by bystanders. Thereby Rev. Penrod will be taught a lesson, and that is to be silent, except when behind his pulpit, when no one dare to dispute him.

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL.

The Christian priest and preacher have but little or anything to say about hell or a place of endless future punishment for the wicked of this world. Their sermons, like much of their religion, are becoming greatly modified on all such subjects, and are much more in line with common sense and rational ideas than they once were. Even hell, with a cooling apparatus attached to keep down its hot temperature, has been abandoned as a pulpit theme by a majority of Christian ministers. In fact, a place of torment, eternal, and where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, is seldom, if ever, heard of any more in a Christian sermon. Thanks to science and human progress, all such doctrines as that of a hell, even for the vilest sinner, after death, have been about relegated to the dead past.

How long, may we ask, would any Christian minister in either Boston, New York City, or Chicago hold sway as a popular pulpit orator to-day who should follow in the footsteps of a John Wesley, a Richard Baxter, or a Jonathan Edwards, by reiterating and preaching the doctrines they advocated and proclaimed in favor of a hell? The answer is plain why ministers no longer now preach and promulgate the doctrine. It is because even the pulpit, as well as the majority of Christians, have at last evolved out of it.

But who, we ask, have been the great instruments, more than all others, in forcing the pulpit to abandon teaching and preaching this damnable doctrine of a hell? We answer, most emphatically, Infidels. It has been the Voltaires, the Paines, and the Volneys, together with the Spencers, the Darwins, and the Huxleys, who have stood as valiant soldiers upon the ramparts of Freethought and proclaimed boldly and fearlessly another and a more rational doctrine. Such gallant souls as these—heralds of a new religion and a better gospel—are the ones who have driven gradually and slowly, but yet surely, much, if not about all, the belief in a hell out of the minds of millions in the world. All praise to them for their great and noble labors.

The words, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," as a text, are no longer heard from the lips of the advanced and educated Christian minister. The things of this life, the subjects of this world, the ones of beauty and grandeur, as well as those of pain and sorrow found here and now, are more, in this age of human investigation and progress, engaging the thoughts of Christian ministers than is the question of an endless hell of torment, or even the one of an everlasting heaven of fruition and joy.

Christian priests and ministers are beginning to study the wants and the desires of their patrons. A religious doctrine, like everything else in the world, in order that it may be acceptable and relished, craved and paid for, must be not only up to date, but a staple article in the market. Therefore, it is not a matter of wonder that Christian ministers are ceasing to burden their hearers' ears with the meaningless and unsavory admonition to "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do, but fear him who, after he hath killed, hath the power to cast into hell."—*Boston Investigator.*

An Unexpected Solution.

At a Sunday-school service a clergyman was explaining to a number of smart little urchins the necessity of Christian profession in order properly to enjoy the blessings of Providence in this world, and to make it apparent to the youthful mind he said:—

"For instance, I want to introduce water into my house. I turn it on. The pipes and every convenience are in good order, but I get no water. Can any of you tell me why I don't get any water?"

He expected the children to see that it was because he had not made a connection with the main in the street. The boys looked perplexed. They could not see why the water should refuse to run into his premises after such faultless plumbing.

"Can no one tell me what I have neglected?" reiterated the good man, looking at the many wondering faces bowed down by the weight of the problem.

"I know," squeaked a little five-year-old. "You don't pay up!"

We still pray for a fine harvest, but we really consult the barometer, and believe more in the prophecies of meteorologists than in an answer to our prayers. *Te Deum* for victories excite more ridicule than sympathy, and we encounter the cholera by improved systems of drainage without attributing much value to fastings and processions. In other words, the old belief in the supernatural is so far extinct that it could not be restored without encountering some of the most vigorous beliefs of the time.—*Leslie Stephen.*

A COMMON MAN'S CONCLUSION.

He's a wonderfu', wonderfu' body, the Lord,  
If what the Claith tell us be true;  
But auld Nicky Ben is his maister whan dune—  
To him the maist honor is due.  
It's said that the wonderfu' Jahveh, the Lord,  
Kens aforehand ilk' thing that's to be;  
But he fairly was diddled whan Adam an' Eve  
Took a taste o' the wisdom-fruit tree.

Of course, Nicky Ben got the blame o' the ploy—  
E'en till noo he is blamed for the deed;  
Still, I'm thinkin' he did the best thing for the race,  
Tho' o' praise he gets mair than his meed.  
Gif the mighty Jehovah had gotten his will,  
We'd ha'e been little ither than brutes;  
Eatin' roots like the swine, wi' a cockle at times—  
We'd ha'e scarceely haen sense to catch troots.

We wadna haen bogus directors nor priests,  
Nor wad we haen shoddy for breeks;  
We wadna haen mansions wi' muckle deer-parks,  
Nor slums whar the very air reeks  
Wi' disease an' the vilest o' stinks bred frae dirt;  
Whar despair clinks along beside want;  
Whar maudlin hymn-ranters deliver their tracts,  
An' yowl oot their havers an' cant.

An' we'd maybe been best, for tho' auld Nicky Ben  
Has been banned wi' fu' mony a curse,  
Still, they only are wirds; the folks praise him wi' deeds,  
An' the deeds are a mighty piece worse  
Than the warst o' ill wirds. But juist crack as ye will,  
This war' is a heaven an' a hell  
Whar man is baith blessed an' tortured by turns:  
Whar his god an' his deevil's himsel'.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

PROFANE JOKES.

Good Man—"My son, is your father a professional man?"  
Boy—"Yes'r; professes conversion at every revival."

"Do you know much about that horse you bought from the deacon?" "I know more about the deacon than I did."

A clergyman looked in at a Salvationist meeting just as the captain bawled out: "Who is present? who is not among the saved?" and a voice was heard, "Our vicar is here."

The following notice was read from a country pulpit on a recent Sunday: "The pastor will preach his last sermon this evening, and the choir have arranged a special praise service for the occasion."

Fond Mother—"Clarence, didn't I overhear you praying at bed-time for God to keep Willie Wiggles from harm during the night?" Little Clarence—"Yep! I wanted him spared, so's I could lick the stuffin' out of him to-day."

"Just my blame luck," sadly soliloquised Noah, looking out o'er the vast waste of mud that spread as far as the eye could reach, "Here I've gone and got together the greatest animal show on earth, and there isn't a soul left to come and see it." No wonder Noah got drunk.

"John," said Mrs. Hawkins, as they were going home from church, "why did the minister call the dove that brought back a green twig to the ark 'he'?" "I don't know," replied John, "unless it was that if the dove had been a female she couldn't have kept her mouth closed long enough to get the bough to the ark"; and there was ill-feeling in that household all the rest of the day.

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- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

## LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.) : 7, musical selections ; 7.30 Charles Watts, "The Theological Free-Will Puzzle." (Admission free ; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station) : 7.45, J. H. Woods, "The Independent Labor Party." (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road) : 7.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-fold."

ISLINGTON : 3, Special business meeting at secretary's, 19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly) : 11.15, Moncure D. Conway, "The Gardens of the Gods under the Culture of Science."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane) : 7, Stephen H. Alison, "The Soul and Anthropology."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES : 11.30, A. Guest, "The Infinite."  
CAMBERWELL (Station-road) : 11.30, S. E. Easton, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"

DEPTFORD BROADWAY : 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side) : 7, A. B. Moss, "The Ascent of Man." Thursday, at 8.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch) : 11.30, A. B. Moss, "What do Christians Believe?" 3.30, "Two Revelations."

MILE END WASTE : 11.30, F. Haslam, "Secularism and Social Problems."

OLD PIMLICO PIER : 11.30, W. Heaford, "God and the Problem of Evil."

VICTORIA PARK : 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture ; 3, W. Heaford will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill) : 11.30, C. James, "Buddha, Confucius, and Christ" ; 7, "Still it Moves."

## COUNTRY.

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

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street) : 7, social gathering.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton) : 7, F. Swan will lecture.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street) : 11.30, G. W. Foote, "The Romance of the Resurrection" ; 2.30, "New Light on the Old Book" ; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street) : 2.30, Greevz Fisher, "Law in a Free State" ; 7, "Evolution v. Creation"

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street) : 11, Tontine Society ; 7, Mr. Hill, "Some Eccentricities of the Law." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints) : 6.30, J. Hammond, "Spiritualism and its Claims." (Free.)

NEWCASTLE ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street) : 3, C. Cohen, "Why are Men Religious?" 7, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street) : 6.30, Sam Standing, "How Margaret Marie Saw the Blessed Virgin."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street) : 3, Robert Law, F.G.S., "The Wonders of the Sun" ; 7, "Is the Interior of the Earth Red-hot? If yes, whence did it Derive its Heat?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street) : 7, Social evening.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite Echo office) : 7, Robert Weightman, "What is Infidelity, and who are the Infidels?"

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

DERBY (Market-place) : 6.45, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting) : 11, C. Cohen will lecture.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square) : 11, Sam Standing, "Some Events of the Week" ; 3, "The Pagan Origin of Sunday."

## Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—April 21, West Ham ; 28, Manchester. May 5, Sheffield.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 21, 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green ; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton ; 9, Wood Green ; 12, Sheffield ; 19, Manchester ; 23, Wood Green ; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green ; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—April 21, m. Victoria Park, a. Tottenham, e. Deptford ; 25, Hammersmith ; 28, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park. May 5, m. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea ; 12, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton ; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford ; 22, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith ; 23, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park ; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park ; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith ; 26, Olerkenwell.

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