

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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OUR AMERICAN VISITOR.

Mr. S. P. PUTNAM, the President of the American Secular Union, set foot on the shores of Albion on Friday morning, May 2. It was the dream of his life to visit this old country; the land of his forefathers, the land of Shakespeare and Shelley, and of Scott and Burns, the land of Thomas Paine and Charles Bradlaugh. He longed to see the Freethinkers of Britain, and to clasp hands with the men he had read of, who were over there—across the wide Atlantic—fighting the great battle of liberty. So one day he made up his mind to go, and now he is here in wonderland. It is not the vastness of our country that rouses his enthusiasm; for our island is ridiculously small to Americans, who say that we have to be careful after dark lest we should fall off it into the water. The only big thing here is London, and that is big; colossal, stupendous, overpowering. No, it is the great historic memories that appeal to a man like Mr. Putnam; not only what is, but what has been; the long past of a great present, and (let us hope) a mightier future.

When I heard that Mr. Putnam was coming I resolved that he should have a hearty welcome. Mr. Watts told me that he was a genial, earnest, hard-working "Liberal"—as they call Freethinkers in America; I knew myself that he was an able writer; and, beyond all that, he was the elected chief officer of the American Secularists. Apart, therefore, from any promptings of my own heart, I was bound to hold out the right hand of good fellowship.

Mr. Putnam came over on the "City of Berlin." She was due at Southampton some time on Friday morning; and as she might be in early in such fine weather, and we did not like the thought of his waiting on board the ship, with no one to greet him as she touched the shore, Mr. Watts and I ran down from London on the Thursday evening, so as to be in readiness at the moment of her arrival. It was lovely weather when we walked down to the dock, and we rejoiced that our American visitor would have a good introduction to our climate. When the "Berlin" arrived we were soon on board, and I welcomed Mr. Putnam in the name of the Secularists of this country.

There is nothing of the legendary Yankee—long, thin, and taciturn—about Mr. Putnam. Were it not for his mustache, he might be taken for a jolly little Irish priest. He positively bubbles over with geniality. Of course he does a little "guessing," but his American accent is not aggressive. It is just enough to give spice to his speech in the ears of an Englishman.

Yankees are somehow thought to be boastful. Why, I could never understand. Perhaps I have met with picked specimens, but I have always found them at least as modest as Englishmen. I remember the late Dr. Garrison, of Chicago, and how fine, manly, and unassuming he was. And there is really not the slightest flavor of "uppishness" about Mr. Putnam. He is sincere, open, and unaffected; and I was thoroughly at home with him in a few minutes.

We were a merry trio as we sped along to London by the boat train. We chatted about English and American Freethought, and I was surprised to see how well Mr. Putnam was posted up in the history of our movement on this side of the Atlantic. Every now and then, as he caught sight of an idyllic landscape in the Lotus-land we were passing through, he exclaimed, "That's fine!" America

was younger and more unkempt; here the hand of man had been at work for ever so many centuries, giving the land an air of orderliness and good breeding.

From Waterloc station we drove to Charing-Cross over Westminster-bridge, giving our American visitor a view of the Thames, St. Thomas's Hospital, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, and Trafalgar-square. After a good dinner—for all three of us were in excellent health and appetite—we parted; Mr. Putnam going home with Mr. Watts for a day or two, before taking up quarters at an hotel. The next day I saw Mr. Watts off to Glasgow, and took Mr. Putnam in charge until dusk. We visited the Zoological Gardens, which he much enjoyed; and he was much struck with Regent's-park.

I was able to show our American visitor the front of Holloway Gaol, where I spent a year of my life in a brick vault. Naturally he was much interested in that establishment. I was sorry I could not take him inside, and show him the apartment that was provided me, rent free, by generous Christians.

The Hall of Science was crowded on Sunday evening, when Mr. Putnam stood for the first time on an English platform, and heard for the first time in his life a ringing English cheer. Several ladies were upon the platform, including Mrs. Foote and Mrs. Watts. Among the more ungainly sex I noted Messrs. Wheeler, Forder, Parris, Moss, Samson, and Roger. Miss Vance and Miss Brown were busy, and alas! perspiring, over their work in the hall. I had given up my own Sunday to do our visitor honor, and through him the whole Secular party in America. My words as chairman were few. Mr. Putnam's rising was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm that fairly startled him, and for a few minutes he was a little nervous. But he soon warmed to his work, and carried the audience with him to the end of his lecture. Mr. Putnam's style is what the Americans most appreciate; easy, colloquial, and abounding in anecdotes, which are always telling and illuminative. His spring-chicken story fairly convulsed the house. Of course it was at the expense of a minister. Mr. Engström, one of the secretaries of the Christian Evidence Society, who was busy taking notes, could hardly have relished this sally.

Mr. Putnam resumed his seat amidst a tempest of applause. One gentleman asked a question and offered a little opposition, which was well answered. Then an irrepressible lady took an innings. What she said was mostly unintelligible. But two points were clear enough. First, she said she was not religious; afterwards, she said she was a Catholic. This was too rich for anything. The audience exploded, and lecturer and chairman joined in the merriment.

Colonel Ingersoll had sent Mr. Putnam a brief letter before the latter left America. It was short and sharp; a kind of telegram from the front; for the Colonel is on a very active lecturing tour, with little time for correspondence. Mr. Putnam read this letter, and it immensely delighted the audience. After a handsome compliment to the English Freethinkers, who were described as honest, brave, tenacious, lovers of truth and haters of cant and hypocrisy; the Colonel told Mr. Putnam to "be a good boy," to "enjoy himself," and to "tell the truth and shame the clergy." Mr. Putnam will read a longer letter from Colonel Ingersoll at the National Secular Society's Conference.

Mr. Putnam was delighted with his reception, which, he says, far exceeded all his anticipations; and no doubt he

has sent a glowing report to the New York *Truthseeker*, for which he is to write descriptive articles during his stay in England.

Mr. Putnam will be made as happy as possible while he is in London. When he goes into the provinces, I have no doubt he will meet with similar treatment. It should be a point of honor to give him large meetings as well as a hearty welcome. Mr. Putnam is a soldier of Freethought. His life is dedicated to her service. He subsists on soldier's wages—when there are any. We must see that he goes back to America with good reason to say that British Freethinkers are cordial, brotherly, and generous. And we want him to say all this, and as much more as his heart may prompt, to Colonel Ingersoll. We want him to tell the Colonel that the Freethinkers of this country are dying to see him, and that if he will only come he may be sure of a grand and loving reception.

G. W. FOOTE.

CRUELTY: HUMAN AND DIVINE.

HUMANITY is the measure of civilisation. If we wish to judge how far a nation or an epoch can be considered civilised, we should inquire its attitude with regard to women, to children, slaves, serfs, or underlings, to criminals, and to animals. We may adopt a similar standard in judging men. I know no better test of character than behavior to subordinates. "Power will show the man," said the early Greek sage, Bias, and the longer I live the more I see how few are fit to have power over their fellow beings. Professor F. W. Newman, a fervent Theist, confessed that his greatest difficulty was in God having created a being at once so powerful and so malignant as man.

Theologians ascribe cruelty to "our fallen nature." It would be more correct to say that it is an evidence of our brutish ancestry. And it is fearfully deep-seated. If any doubt this, let them watch the sports of boys, or read the reports of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. General Hamley, an observant writer as well as a brilliant soldier, noticed the ferocity engendered by war, and the absolute thirst for blood and slaughter which, in the heat of battle, came over even cultured soldiers. He did not doubt the stories of Chengis Khan delighting in pyramids of skulls, ninety thousand of which he is said to have had piled together on the ruins of Bagdad. The records of war, of slavery, and of insatiable "sport" are woeful reading to the tender-hearted. Human history is a long, red record of blood and tears.

Man's inhumanity to man must, on the Theistic hypothesis, be referred to his Maker. He has made him as he is. Nay, the cruelty of man is insignificant to that of his Creator. No tyrant would torture his enemy for ever. And human cruelty finds its defence in the remorseless cruelty which it sees everywhere in nature, from the tiger to the tapeworm.*

Herbert Spencer remarks: "Throughout the animal kingdom high organisations habitually serve to aid destruction or to escape destruction." The wasp has its sting, as man has his dynamite, his ironclads, and Krupp guns. What sign of benevolence can there be in one animal having been designed to eat another? Will you say that the pleasure of the one eater compensates the pain of the many eaten? What possible pleasure or profit can a deity derive from this world-wide and incessant slaughter? Darwin might well ask: "Did He cause the frame and mental quality of the dog to vary that a breed might be formed of indomitable ferocity, with jaws fitted to pin down the bull for man's brutal sport?" Professor H. D. Garrison says: "Every second of time records the dying agonies of thousands of animals to whom life was, apparently, as sweet as it is to us. Indeed, this universal

butchery and murder seen on every hand throughout the animal kingdom is one of the chief hindrances to the refinement of men. It is impossible to learn mercy from nature, and yet without mercy man is a brutal savage." As John Stuart Mill remarks: "In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances." If nature is ascribed to a deity, then is he responsible for the recklessness and cruelty exhibited in his handiwork. If, indeed, God is credited with omnipotence, then the slightest pang that is suffered by any animal is wanton cruelty, since omnipotence could have achieved its purposes otherwise.

The late Professor Romanes felt this difficulty. In his essay on "The Influence of Science upon Religion," after speaking of the agonies of a rabbit panting in the iron jaws of a spring trap, he says: "What are we to think of a Being who, with yet higher faculties of thought and knowledge, and with an unlimited choice of means to secure His ends, has contrived untold thousands of mechanisms no less diabolical?" What instances of "providential design" are the serrated jaws of the shark, the talons of the tiger, and the fangs of the rattlesnake? Mr. A. R. Wallace, in his work on Darwinism, has sought to mitigate this objection by representing deaths, however apparently cruel, as usually sudden and unconscious. But is this always so? The abominable barbarity of the "sportsman," who shoots birds and lets the wounded ones flutter away to a lingering death, is paralleled by the wolf, who will rend more sheep than he can possibly eat, and the cat, who, having disabled the mouse, will delight in apparently giving it a chance of escape that it may once more have the pleasure of pouncing upon it. Even monkeys have been noticed at the Zoological Gardens to sport with spiders before swallowing them, allowing them to descend by a thread attached to their fingers, and then suddenly jerking them back into their hands.

Professor Henry Drummond, in his *Ascent of Man*, has an even jauntier way of dealing with the long, remorseless process of the struggle for existence, a struggle in which the many are absolutely crushed out for the benefit of the few. Because the unprotected infancy of man has necessitated the evolution of love for the preservation of the race, he calls the story of evolution "a love story."

Belief in Evolution, coupled with Theism, is responsible for one of the most immoral theories ever put forward in the guise of a philosophy. Those who accept evolution, and at the same time seek to justify the ways of God to man, say that the remorseless crushing out of the unfit made room for the fit. The countless species that have passed away since "dragons in their prime tore each other in their slime," all prepared the earth for man, the heir of all the ages and crown of creation. What of the misery of the many when it results in the benefit of the few? It is notable that optimist defenders of Theism and advocates of vivisection take the same ground. The sufferings of A, B, and C are to be compensated by the happiness of X, Y, and Z. This cheerful optimism I characterise as villainously immoral. Logically carried out, it would justify any crime. Who shall estimate whether the happiness of Jack the Ripper in putting unfortunates out of their misery is a compensation for the brief agony of finding a knife at their throats? The view that the suffering of one living creature is compensated for by the delight of another is as immoral as the police-magistrate's theory of God's government, which represents all suffering as punishment for sin, and which, consequently, makes all efforts to relieve suffering but attempts to thwart the purposes of deity. J. M. WHEELER.

"I went to Sunday-school yesterday," said a little girl to her aunt, "and the teacher asked me who made me. So I just told her nobody made me. I wonder if she thought I was a rag doll!"

Miss Kitty—"Mamma, will we know folks in heaven, same as we do here?" Mamma—"I think there is no doubt of that, my dear." "Will I know Jane Gopplins?" "Who is Jane Gopplins?" "She's the big freckled girl that lives over the grocery store down the street." "If you are both good enough to go to heaven, my dear, you will certainly know her." (After some moments of profound cogitation)—"I won't have to speak to her, will I, mamma?"

* Sir John Lubbock, in his *Prehistoric Times*, relates that E'honqui (a New Zealander) evidently considered that the whole analogy of nature was in favor of cannibalism. He was surprised at the horror of it felt by D'Urville. "Big fish," he said, "eat little fish; insects devour insects; large birds feed on small ones; it is in accordance with the whole analogy of nature that men should eat their enemies."

TACTICS OF SOME CHRISTIAN DISPUTANTS.

DURING the past thirty years I have met in public discussion many Christian disputants who were fair in controversy; such as the Rev. A. J. Harrison, Dr. McCann, and Dr. Sexton. But I have also met opponents who appeared to have peculiar views as to what is right and honorable in their dealings with Secularists. In 1872 I held a four nights' debate with the Rev. A. Stewart, of Aberdeen, who, not content with publishing the debate as it was taken down, added to the printed report a long list of notes, either explaining his own statements which he had made during the discussion, or answering points that I had urged upon the platform, and which the rev. gentleman had failed to answer. On ascertaining that he was doing this, I requested the same privilege for myself; but it was not granted, upon the ground that the Christian Committee, who were issuing the debate, could not publish new sceptical matter." The result was that the readers of the debate had a one-sided report presented to them. Such is the love of justice and fair play that is sometimes inspired by Christianity. Truly, "the tree is known by its fruits." Mr. Foote was treated in the same dishonest manner by the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, who adopted similar tactics in reporting a debate he had with my colleague. Such Christian disputants evidently recognise, after the debate is over, their controversial shortcomings, and then they try to cover their defects by replying to their opponents when no rejoinder is allowed.

The same kind of tactics has been resorted to by Dr. A. Jamieson, of Glasgow, with whom I debated last year. Several months after the discussion took place the Doctor published a report of it, accompanied by an Appendix of sixteen pages, wherein he manifests a sad bitterness of temper, and indicates his disappointment at the part he played upon the platform. In the Appendix he urges several petty charges against me, and adds considerable matter to his side of the discussion. His foolish personal attacks upon me I shall deal with elsewhere; but his supplementary replies to the positions I laid down in the debate, and his boasted "new argument" for the existence of God, are given with such an air of confidence and defiance that readers of the *Freethinker* will no doubt be interested in seeing the Doctor's fallacies exposed. Here are a few specimens of how he deals with my arguments after having had months of study to consider what he should say.

In reply to my statement, that I believed in one existence which I called the universe, the Doctor says: "The universe is not one, but is composed of a multiplicity of different existences, as the sun, moon, stars, animals, plants, gold, silver, etc., each of which has an existence of its own." Now, the Doctor must be reminded that the composition does not affect the unity. Its forms and appearances—in other words, its phenomena—are numerous; but its noumenon, which underlies all external aspects, is one, hence its name. Why is it called the universe? Surely every one knows that this name is derived from *unus*, one. The very word itself, therefore, implies all that I contend for. The separate existences referred to by Dr. Jamieson, such as suns, stars, animals, plants, etc., are simply different modes of the one existence. They are all phenomenal, and will pass away by changing their forms; but the one existence, of which all things are simply modes, must remain to all eternity, as it has been from all eternity. Besides this there can be no other. This is the doctrine of Monism, which is now every day becoming more and more widely accepted by men of the profoundest intellect. His quibble about the impossibility of an infinite whole being made up of finite parts just goes to show what Sir William Hamilton so clearly pointed out, that no human conception can be formed of the infinite at all, and hence any attempt to theorise about it will involve one in a contradiction.

During the debate I used the following argument, which the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh frequently employed, with the view of showing that the universe could not have been created by an intelligent power extraneous to itself:—

"The fact I start from is the fact that something exists. Now, this existence is either infinite in duration—that is, unlimited in duration; that is, eternal—or else it has been created or brought into existence. If created, then

it must have been by some existence the same as itself, or different from it; but it cannot have been created by any existence the same as itself, because that would have been but a continuation of the same existence; and it cannot have been created by any existence differing from itself, because things which have nothing in common with each other cannot be conceived in relation to each other, and cannot be the cause of or affect one another."

Not once throughout the discussion did Dr. Jamieson notice this, but in his Appendix he elegantly remarks:—

"This argument (!) is not only *weak*, but it is *supremely silly*, and by it it could be easily proved that Mr. Watts himself is infinite, both in extent and duration, and, consequently, that *he himself* is the 'one existence.' If we substitute the words, *Mr. Watts exists*, for the phrase '*something exists*,' throughout the argument, we will at once see the absurdity of which both Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Watts are guilty. The argument would then read thus: The fact I start from is, that Mr. Watts exists. This existence (Mr. Watts) is either infinite in duration, which is unlimited in duration—that is, eternal—or else he has been created or brought into existence. If created, then it must have been by some existence the same as himself, or different from himself; but he cannot have been created by an existence the same as himself, because that would have been but a continuation of the same existence; and he cannot have been created by any existence different from himself, because things which have nothing in common with each other cannot be conceived as having any relation to each other, and cannot be either the cause or effect of each other. The argument carried out in the same way with regard to *extent* would prove Mr. Watts to be infinite in that respect as well. An argument that leads to such an absurdity must itself be the very essence of absurdity. In face of the statement quoted, I think I may safely say that Mr. Watts's position is 'gone.'"

This is another of those sophisms which play so conspicuous a part in the Doctor's reasoning. Can he not see that Mr. Watts was not, and does not pretend to have been, "created," but to have been formed out of pre-existent material of the same nature as himself? What possible analogy is there between this process of moulding or forming and the calling into existence of a material universe from nothing? Mr. Watts was formed out of an existence the same as himself, and which existence, in one of its phases, is continued in him. The argument which I employed is irrefutable when applied to a supposed creation as I applied it; but, of course, it has no bearing upon the mere modification of things out of pre-existent material. It remains, therefore, in full force, and will remain until a better reason than Dr. Jamieson has furnished is forthcoming to set it aside.

Dr. Jamieson prides himself on having produced a "new argument," and no doubt he hopes to attain to a sort of immortality as its inventor. Strange that so many centuries should have passed before this marvellous proof of God's existence was made known to the benighted world. Paley may now hide his diminished head, and all the Bridgewater Treatises be consigned to oblivion, since a new natural theologian has arisen with a brand new argument, which must silence all Atheists, Agnostics, and doubters of the Divine. Here is this wonderful argument (!): "It is admitted that the universe in whole or in part is *cooling*. It is also admitted that *cooling* bodies *contract*. That which has *contracted* occupies *less space* than it once did. The material universe, in whole or in part, has contracted, consequently it *now* occupies *less space* than it *once* did. It must then be *finite* in *extent*. If finite in *one* way, it must be finite in *all* ways, and, consequently, in *duration*. If finite in *duration*, it must have had a *beginning*, and consequently a *Cause*. There must, then, be a Powerful Being distinct from the material universe upon whom it depends for its existence."

Such is this new argument (!), which the Doctor invites me to answer. I do so by pronouncing it as being the very essence of sophistry. The whole "argument" is based upon a mistake, and, upon this mistake, certain "ifs" are stated, and then the imperative there "must" have been "a powerful Being," etc., is *assumed*. This is a fair sample of the Doctor's metaphysics. Now, what are the facts? It is not true that cooling bodies *always* contract, for snow and ice occupy more space than water, although the temperature of the former is much lower than that of the latter. Cooling in this case expands, instead of contracting. Here is another sophism of the Doctor's. Thus it is

stated, says he, "the material universe in whole or in part has contracted; consequently it [what?—the whole or the part?] occupies less space than it once did." If the whole has contracted, no doubt that is so. But the Doctor does not venture to assert that the whole has contracted, but that the contraction may have been in part only. Yet the conclusion drawn is on the supposition that there has been contraction of the entire mass. This is manifestly illogical. What do we know of distant parts of the universe as to whether the matter in existence there is cooling or not? In one part the temperature falls, and in another it rises, leaving probably the same amount of heat on the whole. No one can assert that the entire universe is cooling, and, therefore, undergoing contraction; hence the "new argument" that was to revolutionise the Theistic philosophy is not worth the paper it is written on.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

BIBLE FICTIONS.

THAT the Hebrew scriptures contain some small amount of historical matter cannot now be denied. The cuneiform inscriptions place this fact beyond a doubt. We know, for instance, from the latter source, that there were kings of Israel named Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Pekah, and Hosea; that Azariah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh were kings of Judah; and that these sovereigns reigned in the order in which they are placed in the book of Kings. It is unquestionable, then, that some very ancient historical records have been preserved in the Hebrew books. But we have at the same time proof that the stories of supernatural interposition of the Jewish God on behalf of his people—such as the destruction of the army of Sennacherib and the preservation of the three men in a furnace, as recorded in the Hebrew writings—are pure fiction. All the stories of Yahveh directing or controlling the affairs of the Jewish nation are, wherever it is possible to test them, found to be fabrications. In fact, the early history of the Israelites before the period of the kings, and much in later times, is, for the most part, nothing but fable. Many of the stories are, on the face of them, fictitious. No unprejudiced person who allows himself to be guided by reason can read the Biblical accounts of the Fall, the Deluge, or the Exodus without experiencing a feeling that these stories are mythical.

Many Christian apologists have expended a considerable amount of ingenuity in endeavoring to reconcile Bible contradictions, and only succeed in doing so by twisting the passages into meaning something which the context plainly shows was not that intended by the writer. But even with the advantage of this mode of treatment we find that only some oft-cited and comparatively insignificant passages are selected for reconciliation. The most incredible stories—those which most clearly prove the Biblical narratives to be fictitious—are ignored.

I will now briefly examine some of these stories, which show, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the narratives composing the early history of the Israelites are fabrications.

I.—THE PATRIARCH JACOB.

On the temple walls of Karmak is inscribed a list of towns in Syria and Palestine which submitted to the arms of Thothmes III. Among these we find *Jacob-el* ("the god Jacob") and *Joseph-el* ("the god Joseph"). The first of these also appears on the inscriptions of Ramses II. and Ramses III. In the latter reign we also find the record of a Canaanitish town named *Levi-el*. In other words, we learn from these ancient monuments that between B.C. 1600 and B.C. 1200 there were cities in Canaan in which Jacob, Joseph, and Levi were worshipped as gods. In this fact we have a clear intimation that the Biblical account of the reputed ancestors of the Jews is not history, but mythology. To obtain confirmatory evidence of this, we have but to examine the Bible stories for any indications which show them to be of a mythical character. These we find in plenty.

Now, with regard to the city *Jacob-el*, it is significant that, though this was undoubtedly a town in Canaan, the name is nowhere mentioned in the Hebrew books. Yet,

strangely, the name of Jacob is associated with a city having the same termination, whose name he is represented as changing. This is the city of *Bethel* ("the house of God").

In Genesis xxviii. it is related that Jacob, when a single man and on his way to Padan-aram, "lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night. . . . and he took of the stones of that place, and set them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep." Here, it is stated, he had a dream, in which he saw a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven, with Yahveh on the top, and angels ascending and descending. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place. . . . and he called the name of that place *Bethel*; but the name of that city was called *Luz* at the first." Here it is to be noted that it is plainly implied in the narrative that Jacob slept in the open air in some uninhabited place; yet this place is (probably by inadvertence) called a *city*. It was, of course, a city when the account was written.

Twenty years later, so runs the story, Jacob returned to Canaan a married man with four wives and eleven children. Upon entering the land, we are told, "Jacob came to *Luz*, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, *Bethel*, he and all the people that were with him. . . . And God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. . . . And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him. . . . and Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him *Bethel*" (Genesis xxxv. 6-13).

Here we have two contradictory versions of the naming of *Bethel*. According to one account, Jacob called the place "*Bethel*" when unmarried and on his way to his uncle *Laban's*; according to the other, he so named it twenty years later when he returned with wives, children, and large flocks and herds. According to the first account, he called the place "the house of God" because he saw in a dream angels going up and down a gigantic ladder; according to the other, he named it "the house of God" because there "the Lord" appeared to him, blessed him, and conversed with him (of course in the form of a man) face to face. Which version are we to receive?

But both stories are, on the face of them, unhistorical. Jacob was but a stranger and a sojourner in the land, and had no power or authority to change the name of any place in it; neither would his saying, "Such a place shall henceforth be called so-and-so," effect any change in the name. We know from the Tell-el-Amarna and other inscriptions that the inhabitants of Canaan were both numerous and warlike. They would not be likely to alter the ancient names of places because a stranger chose to call them by another name. There is, however, evidence in the Hebrew books themselves that Jacob did not change the name "*Luz*" into "*Bethel*."

Two or three centuries after the time of Jacob, Joshua, we are told, divided the land among the twelve tribes. Now, the boundaries of one of the allotments is described as "going up from *Jericho* through the hill country to *Bethel*; and it went from *Bethel* to *Luz*, and passed along into the border of the *Archites* to *Ataroth*" (Joshua xvi. 1, 2). *Bethel* and *Luz* were, therefore, separate places, and were doubtless in existence when the book of Joshua was written—viz., some time after the exile. We have also in the Book of Judges (i. 22, 23) a story to account for the fact that, notwithstanding Jacob's changing the name *Luz* into *Bethel*, a city named *Luz* still existed. According to this veracious account, when the Israelites captured *Bethel*, a man who escaped from the city built another, and named it *Luz*.

Thus far we have evidence only of fiction. I turn now to another event in the life of Jacob. In order to account for the reputed descendants of this patriarch being called "Israelites," a story is invented of the name "*Jacob*" being changed into "*Israel*."

In Genesis xxxii. 27, 28, we have an account of a wrestling match between Jacob and an angel. This interesting event took place at night, on the eastern side of Jordan, near the river *Jabbok*. When day was about to break the angel desired to get away, but Jacob held him fast, and refused to let him go until the latter had blessed him. "And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more *Jacob*, but *Israel*; for thou hast striven with God and man, and hast prevailed."

After this change of name Jacob crossed the Jordan, and took up his residence at Succoth and Shalem; then, some years later, came to the place which he is said to have renamed. Here an incident occurred which is thus described: "So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Bethel). . . . And God appeared unto Jacob again . . . and God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel" (Genesis xxxv. 6-10).

Thus, again, we have two versions of the same story, each independent of the other, in which the change of name is stated to have taken place at two different times, and in two places many miles apart. Both stories were, of course, invented to account for the name. As a matter of fact, we know from critical examination that the book of Genesis is composed of a number of stories, by at least three different hands, which a later editor has pieced together. This fact adds nothing to the credibility of the narratives. It must, at any rate, be obvious to the reader that the stories we have examined are pure fictions.

VERITAS.

(To be continued.)

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

HUMAN life cannot be occupied with a more important contemplation than the meaning of the universe. Recognising that human existence is but a tiny point, on each side of which stretch out immeasurable ages, it may well be doubted whether the longest life would suffice for a bare presentment, much less a solution of the enigma of the cosmos. But man is an inquiring animal. We are so constituted that our knowledge and our inquiries are never equal.

Knowledge solves a question only to give birth to another. In a certain sense it may be said that knowledge as well as ignorance prompts inquiry. But knowledge does not affect the primary question of the origin of the universe. The ever-abiding presence of nature, its continual persistence in human consciousness, compels the scientific and the ignorant alike to seek an explanation of its being. Science may widen the sphere to be explained, but it does not shift it. Methodised observation may dispel the crude and erroneous ideas of the ignorant man as to the vastness of the universe, but the universe is still the problem to be solved.

We are born into this world, and live a few short years without being able to realise our surroundings; but when we come to the use of reason, human science and philosophy claim our attention. Some men are born into conditions where everything is present that ministers to their mental and moral development. Other less fortunate individuals are placed in surroundings where they know nothing but filth, disease, and crime. But still, it does not matter whether we are born in the palace of a king or the hovel of a peasant, it is our duty to examine the ideas which we have been taught, and to see if they have any foundation in fact.

The vast majority of mankind feel in no way disposed to question the theory of things which they have imbibed "with their mother's milk." This is why Theism is so widely accepted in the present age.

That hypothesis conceives the universe as the production of an "Infinite Mind." Theistic philosophers have studied the various departments of nature, and have endeavored to extract from them the evidence of a "Creator." Theologians have accepted these hazy conjectures, and have pretended that their clearness and force compel every honest mind to acknowledge an "Infinite, Intelligent Being" as the "Author" of the universe.

But what are the evidences upon which this theory rests? The variegated beauties which adorn the face of nature, though they fill the mind with a strange sense of wonder, do not reveal any other forces at work than material ones. When I throw my mind back upon itself, and contemplate the inscrutable modes of my own consciousness, I am unable to perceive any evidence that there is a God. Granted that we cannot give an ultimate explanation of the phenomena of matter and mind, does it

necessarily follow from this that we are bound to accept Theism?

All the arguments which have hitherto been brought forward in favor of that hypothesis have not been able to stand the test of science and criticism. Many modern Theistic advocates recognise this. Dr. W. L. Davidson's *Burnett Lectures* and Professor Knight's *Aspects of Theism* are conclusive on this point. These writers have perceived the fallacies of the *à priori* and *à posteriori* arguments. Much discussion has taken place among theologians as to what position these two methods ought to occupy. The consequence has been that the "Design Argument," as presented by such apologists as Ray, Derhem, and Paley, has been completely ruled out of court. It will not do to say that the exquisite adaptations which we observe in nature indicate the existence of a deity.

The Materialistic explanation of the harmonious manner in which our earth revolves round the sun satisfies the mind equally as well as the Theistic view does. Nay, it is far more intelligible; for we can comprehend what is meant when it is said that the rotation of the earth is the necessary result of the action of two antagonistic forces; but we cannot grasp what is meant by saying it is the "handiwork of God." It is a scientific canon that any explanation of phenomena must be couched in terms of the known. The forces of attraction and repulsion are known, but "God," if he exist, is absolutely *unknown*. There is no analogy between the adaptation seen in man's works and that we observe in nature. In the one case we see the adaptation and its author, but it is not so in the other case.

It is quite true that the adaptation in man's works is the only proof we have of his intelligence. But it does not follow from this that adaptation is *always* proof of intelligence. A river always adapts itself to its bed; but this is the result of the law that water always seeks its own level, and not the contrivance of any intelligence.

I cannot agree with the late Dr. Romanes when he writes that with the "negation of God" "the universe has lost its soul of loveliness." On the contrary, viewing the universe from an Atheistic standpoint, its "loveliness" is increased a hundred fold. Though the universe be godless, the Atheist is not impervious to its beauties. While it is true that the rolling orbs which bespangle the boundless sky are subject to the same mechanical law as the swing of a pendulum, their grandeur is none the less for that. Born on a twinkling point called earth, Atheism enables me to realise the fulness of life; therefore, the theological assertion that God is necessary in order to retain the beauties of nature is untrue.

In dealing with the question of design, Theists have been extremely shortsighted. They select all the good and beneficial arrangements of nature as proofs of the intelligence and goodness of the deity. The Atheist does not deny that certain conditions are good and beautiful. Water is beneficial for man, but it was not made for him. If it was, how do Theists account for the sad fact that millions have died of thirst? It is the same with every other thing in nature. Man makes use of many things because experience has taught him that they are useful; but where is the proof that they were designed for the uses they are put to? Theism cannot give any rational explanation of the moral and physical evil which everywhere abounds. If there be "a something not ourselves that makes for righteousness," there is also a something not ourselves that makes for unrighteousness. How can the Theist explain that fact? How account for the unqualified indifference of nature? The earth cares as much for a parasite as it does for a Newton or a Darwin. In the physical world pain and suffering are often visited upon the innocent. In the moral world things seem chance directed. Honesty and truthfulness often go to the wall in the struggle for existence, while the sneakish and unscrupulous live in luxury. How can these things be harmonised with the belief in an almighty God who carefully governs the world? The state of the moral and physical worlds to-day does not speak of an "Infinite, Intelligent Mind" ruling all. Such is the argument of experience against Theism.

P. SHAUGHNESSY.

(To be concluded.)

Freddy—"Why do they have those big eagles in the church?" Tom—"Cause they're birds of pray, of course."

ACID DROPS.

MRS. BESANT has given the faithful Theosophists a full, and of course true, account of her experience of Mahatmas. Some extracts from this curious address were printed in the *London Star*. As luck (or the printer's devil) would have it, the extracts were interrupted by the space reserved for the "Latest" sporting news; so that in the very middle of the sublime Mahatma business there was a list of horses running at Warwick races. And some of the names were devilishly *appropos*. There were Mother Shipton, and May Mischief, and Conjuror, and Sophism. Really the imps of laughter were on Mrs. Besant's track that day.

Madame Blavatsky's successor states that her experience of the Mahatma world began in 1889, early in the year, before she joined the Theosophical Society. Mrs. Besant may believe this. There is no limit to some people's self-delusion. But it is utterly irreconcilable with her former accounts of how she became a Theosophist.

It appears that she was "making desperate efforts to pierce the darkness," and "seeking with passionate earnestness to obtain some direct evidence of the existence of the soul and of the superphysical world." Here again she may believe she is telling the truth—"Such tricks hath strong imagination." All we can say is that she was then writing every week in the *National Reformer*, and her readers were not vouchsafed a single hint of all that "passionate earnestness" and all those "desperate efforts."

One evening Mrs. Besant was sitting alone, concentrating her mind on this longing, when she "heard the Master's voice," telling her that she should soon find the light. She did not know Who spoke to her (the printer must please mind the capitals), but it was something to go on with.

This sort of thing is familiar to the students of superstition. Enthusiasts, whether Catholics or Methodists, have always been prone to hear voices. Ears, and especially long ones (no offence to the lady), are handy organs for superstition to play upon. They are generally abused first, and the eyes afterwards; the hearing of voices being followed, unless the patient gets better, by the seeing of visions.

Mrs. Besant did not get better. She got worse. And in due course she had her vision. It appeared to her at Fontainebleau in the summer of 1889. She was sleeping in a small room "by herself" (why, of course!), and the Master paid her a visit, just as J. C. visited the eleven in that upper chamber in Jerusalem. "I was waked suddenly," says Mrs. Besant, in defiance of grammar. And then, she says, the "air of the room was thrown into pulsing electrical waves"—which is very curious physics; and there "appeared the radiant astral Figure of the Master (capitals, please), visible to my physical eyes." And after that she often saw the Master. Why, certainly.

"Sight, hearing, and touch," all shared in these "experiences"; so we assume that Mrs. Besant shook hands with the Master, unless he gave her a "superphysical" embrace. Nor was this all. A fourth sense gave its attestation. Mrs. Besant speaks of "the exquisite fragrance" which generally accompanies such manifestations. So that the Master is something like old Polonius: "You shall nose him as you go."

Now, it is noteworthy that the Catholic and Methodist enthusiasts not only heard voices and saw visions, but smelt an exquisite fragrance. Many instances are given by Bishop Lavington in his minute and racy study of these wondermongers; and some day or other we may give our readers a few samples in this line of delusion. Let it suffice for the present to say that Mrs. Besant is suffering from an ancient malady. It doesn't matter whether the enthusiasts are Pagans, Catholics, or Methodists; they all go through the same experiences, for they all suffer from the same disease. And when they are skilful and fluent of speech they all go the same way to work in practising upon the credulity of others. They trade under different names, but they are all in the same business, and their wares are all alike, though bearing a variety of labels.

Our readers will note Mrs. Besant's use of capitals. The Master has one, and his very pronoun takes one too, just as the Christians print "Him" and "He" of Jesus Christ. It is a common trick to impose upon the groundlings, and we recollect the rage the pious got into when the late Professor Clifford took to writing "god" with a small g.

But the funniest part of the affair is, that the Mahatmas are quarreling amongst themselves. Mrs. Besant has her Mahatma, and Mr. Judge has his. Mrs. Besant's "Master"

tells her to turn out Mr. Judge. Mr. Judge's "Master" tells him to cut off Mrs. Besant. As the Irishman said, 'tis a pretty quarrel as it stands, and a pity to spoil it.

Paul's "Master," in the same way, was in opposition to Peter's "Master," and the two inspired Apostles had an open quarrel. There is no "unity of spirit" even in the realm of inspiration.

For our part, we have not the slightest doubt that Mrs. Besant will go on with this business, and get convenient tips from her Mahatma, to serve her own interest and frustrate the designs of her enemies. When you dabble in mystery, unless you are a born fool, you soon come to this alternative: you must either denounce the swindle or take a part in it. Mrs. Besant has not chosen the better part.

The Italian poet, Olindo Guerrini, who writes with the pseudonym of "Lorenzo Stecchetti," has written his *Credo* which he begins with the words, *Primo di tutto non Credo in Dio*—"First of all, I do not believe in God." Had he lived a century ago, the creed would have brought him trouble. In the last century an Italian musician named Porpora was brought before the Inquisition for having composed a *Credo*, the beginning of which he was alleged to have lengthened, in order to suit his measure, by adding a "non." He was only let off on proving that he did not understand Latin.

The *Railway Signal*, "A Journal of Evangelistic and Temperance Work on all Railways," has a choice story about a nameless "Stratford infidel" who was ill and visited by the writer. He was converted by the evangelist taking him a basket of strawberries, which he had wished for on the morning of that day. The infidel said it was the hand of God, and burnt all his infidel books and papers. "A few weeks later he passed peacefully away." The hand of God, it appears, brought him strawberries, but did not preserve him to tell his conversion, or even his name, to any fellow "infidels."

In the case of Mr. J. B. Wise, of Kansas, prosecuted for obscenity for writing the words of Isaiah xxxvi. 12 on a postcard addressed to the Rev. Mr. Vennum, Judge Foster has reserved his decision, which will be made known some time during the present term. Should it be adverse to Mr. Wise, an appeal will be entered, so that the United States Supreme Court shall also have an opportunity of declaring that the Bible is obscene. The case will act as a rare eye-opener, and we are glad to see that our American friends are fully alive to its importance.

The Bible Society report having given a copy of their fetish book to every officer in the Japanese army and navy, "a better bound edition being at the same time handed to the Royal Body Guard." We should like to hear the opinions of the Japanese upon their reading.

A Shanghai correspondent of *Modern Society* has a tale to tell of missionaries in China. He says: "I have taken a great interest in mission work, and have made many inquiries, having asked the people engaged in that work to take me to the meeting places of their Chinese converts; the answer has been, 'Oh, we have no converts here, they are inland: only a few rice Christians, who say they are converted for their food.' I have been up the Yang-tze Kiang River as far as Tchang, which is approximately 1,000 miles; the same tale is told at every place: it is only labor in vain to try and convert these people in large towns. I would like to ask why it requires fifty people of different denominations engaged in mission work in a place like Hankow."

The missionaries, says this correspondent, live in luxury and almost idleness. "Nearly all these gentlemen holding these splendid appointments are related to the headquarters staff in London." He says in conclusion: "I would advise all poor men who have an ambition to become gentlemen to come to China as missionaries. I think it is a cruel shame that there are thousands of children in a state of semi-starvation who, when they go to Sunday-school, which helps squeeze out their pence for the missionary box, which helps to support these people in idleness and luxury. I strongly condemn the practice of sending young girls out here on mission work. The result of such has lately developed in Shanghai. The defendant was tried and acquitted; he objected to marry her on the ground that the poor girl was a loose character. When this good man saw her weakness would it not have been more to his credit to protect her than to take advantage?"

The London Aquarium people have got hold of a clock "made by a pious Scotchman." The peculiarity of the timepiece is that at midnight on Saturday it stops short, never to go again till Monday morning. In the old days the

maker would have been held inspired, if not burnt for witchcraft.

This clock is as nothing to the famous Sabbath river, which, according to the voracious Jewish historian, Josephus, flowed six days, and entirely ceased to run on the Sabbath.

The London City Mission Meeting passed a resolution of regret at the neglect of public worship of the majority of the working classes in London. Resolutions are of little avail now; the days are gone when the injunction could be followed, "Compel them to come in."

The Governors of the Worcester Infirmary would make fit denizens of heaven. They declined to receive the proceeds of a cricket match played on Good Friday. Of course the governors did not themselves suffer by this display of piety. Had the offer been made to the inmates of the infirmary, it would probably have been accepted gratefully.

The Hungarian Government has demanded explanations from the Vatican on account of Mgr. Agliardi, the Papal Nuncio, having exceeded his functions by going on tour denouncing the Civil Marriage Bill. This statement, made to the Lower House of the Hungarian Diet by Baron Banffy, the Premier, was greeted with enthusiastic cheers by the Liberals, while the Clericals loudly expressed their indignation.

The twentieth-century woman is a girl to-day. She will be pretty sceptical if like a four-year-old girl of whom we read lately. After saying her evening prayer, she added: "Now, God, I have talked to you often enough. If you hear me, why don't you talk back?" Her question was to the point, and all the men of God in the world could not explain why, if God was so familiar and communicative two thousand years ago, he is not equally so to-day.

A church in course of repair in the little mountainous town of Buonalberger partly fell in the other day. The people who ran to ascertain what had happened found the statue of St. Donato intact and erect on the causeway of the street, with its face turned to the ruins. The glass case under which the figure had stood was smashed to pieces. Immediately the people cried out that a miracle had happened, and the day after the saint was carried in procession through the streets.

According to a report of the Kasan Consistorium just issued at St. Petersburg, no fewer than 11,034 heathens, among whom were 5,690 women, last year relapsed from the orthodox faith into their original idolatrous beliefs and practices. During the same period, and in the same government of Kasan, 12,188 Tartars, including 5,767 women, abandoned the State Church for Islam. These are official figures. The Eparchial authorities further state that a large section of the proselytised orthodox Christians are at heart either Mohammedans or heathens.

All Christians are called on at their baptism and confirmation to renounce the devil and all his works. They have done so most effectually, for they keep him and all pertaining to him most carefully out of sight. Satan is superannuated or looked on as an allegory, even while his divine antagonist and the nebulous Holy Ghost are warranted to be persons. "We cannot so much as believe in a devil," says Thomas Carlyle. Mr. Wheeler, in his pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*, shows that Christians cannot so easily escape from the evil one. To get rid of the devil is to pull down the whole fabric of Christian theology.

Light, the "journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research," remarks that "the truly awful case of 'witch-burning' in Ireland will do some good if it helps to still further open the eyes of people to the possible effects of pinning their faith to the past and its so-called 'revelations.' It is time for plain speaking about this matter. The Bible explicitly says (Exodus xxii. 18), 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch (or sorceress) to live'; and that atrocious command has been responsible for thousands—perhaps millions—of cruel murders. Will the good people who quote the Bible against Spiritualists look this matter squarely in the face? Are they prepared to put into practice the supposed divine commands they so glibly quote?"

The sainted Jabez has returned just in time for the May meetings. At Bow-street he must remember the good old times in the nearly adjacent and more congenial building of Exeter Hall.

The Dean of Norwich, speaking at the Exeter Hall meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, said: "We are asked now to think of the possibility of the first chapter of Genesis being mythical. My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot regard as mythical what Christ

regarded as fact." So we must credit that Moses wrote the account of his own death, the story of Jonah and the whale, and the possession of devils, because they were believed in by a Jew of a long bygone generation.

The Pioneer of Wisdom is "a newspaper devoted to the Ingathering of Israel." Its conductors believe in the revelation of the Flying Roll made to James White, otherwise known as Jezreel. They also hold, if we apprehend rightly, that the English are Jews and should be circumcised, and that God is feminine, and about to put in a speedy reappearance to gather the faithful circumcised ones together. A number of the *Pioneer* sent to us has "A Message to the Welsh," printed in the Welsh language. We found this portion almost as intelligible as the rest of the paper.

Christian apologists often tell us that evil exists in the world because man is a sinner. If he were not infected with original sin, he would be perfectly happy, and the world would be a paradise. Reason, however, shows it would be nothing of the kind, unless nature were altered as well as human nature. Volcanoes would still belch their fires, earthquakes would shake and shatter cities, storms would destroy ships and men, disease would bring agony, and death inflict sorrow. Even the pests of life would remain. Snakes would bite and mosquitoes sting, and fleas would worry saints as well as sinners.

What do our Christian friends make of a cyclone such as the recent one at West Sioux Falls? How do they reconcile it with Providence? Houses and trees were whirled about like straws; men were lifted off the ground and carried for half a mile; and little children, hurled against wire fences, were reduced to bloody masses of dead flesh. There are millions of men on this planet who would have risked their own lives to save those little ones. Providence did not save them; in fact, Providence murdered them; that is, if there be a Providence—which we very much doubt.

The Rev. Llewellyn Howard Davies, Vicar of Steeple Claydon, Bucks, was brought before the Chancellor of the Diocese of Oxford, at Aylesbury, charged with acts of incontinence with his female servant, and other offences. He was found guilty of four out of five counts, and the case, in accordance with the Clergy Discipline Act, will be reported to the Bishop, who may or may not suspend him.

An article on "Chaldean Magic" in the *Echo* strongly suggests that baptism was originally a form of exorcising devils. It says: "We find the phrase, 'The witchcraft of the witch may it not approach, may it disappear before the lustrous water from my hands.' This expression would almost point to the ceremony of sprinkling, a custom which we know was in use in Assyria at a very early date."

A spring van proprietor in Kentish Town has painted up the inscription: "Gods removed in town or country." We hope this iconoclast will soon cart away all the defunct deities whose putrefaction has become offensive.

The Bolton dissenters have been much enraged at the Rev. T. T. Verger, vicar of St. James's Church, and with some cause. The scholars of the Primitive Methodist Church were on their annual procession, when the man of God drove up in his carriage. He could easily have taken another road, but drove through the crowd, which opened to let his vehicle pass. When among the children they were alarmed, and two young men sprang at the horse's head and swerved it out of the way. The man of God lashed out with his whip, and struck several of the children. A *mêlée* ensued. The whip was taken from the reverend gentleman, while some attempted to drag him from the vehicle. He has since been hissed all over the town.

The Spiritists do not agree in their descriptions of the world of spirits. Swedenborg tells one tale, Allan Kardec an entirely different one; while A. J. Davis and Hudson Tuttle differ from both, and from one another. This difference is not on trivialities, but on such root questions as Is there sex among spirits? Are they re-incarnated or not? etc.

There is as much difference among them religiously. Some believe in Satan, a personal chief of evil spirits. The majority do not. A writer in *Light* declares a high spirit says: "Christ is your Savior. He gave himself a ransom for many." Most American Spiritists consider Christ a myth, and regard the doctrine of the Atonement as immoral. This *Light* writer contradicts Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, who says: "The Evangelical Dissenter, who died in the firm conviction that he should certainly 'go to Jesus,' never describes himself as being with Christ or having seen him." He declares: "My guide says: 'Jesus is always present; I long for you to be here, and to feel that you are with Jesus.'" He says: "As a rule, the Roman Catholic is a

Roman-Catholic still, and the Unitarian and the Churchman retain the same views they held on earth." We have even heard of some spirits who are Atheists. But these are very advanced spirits. Quite in the seventh sphere, we should say.

Of course these differences as to the spirit world come from having different "mejums." And the trouble is, that no information comes except through the "mejums," who are usually such a shady lot that they attract all kinds of lying spirits, who delight in befooling their dupes. The person who looks to Spiritism for a solution of all mysteries finds he has "got no forrader."

The Royal Academy Banquet omitted "Literature" from the toast-list. However, the Duke of Cambridge spoke for the Army—the umbrella speaking for the sword; and the Archbishops of York and Canterbury took a turn on behalf of the Church. We did not know these gentlemen had anything to do with Art, in the ordinary sense of the term. They practise an art, but it is the art of bamboozling.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw was one of the speakers at the May Day Demonstration in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon. As usual, he indulged in some plain speaking. For instance, he said that the average working man cared for little else beyond party politics and religion. There is too much truth in the observation; but that is partly Mr. Shaw's own fault. He confesses himself an Atheist, but his brilliant powers are not at the service of Freethought. Surely it would be possible for him, without deserting his social propaganda, to do a little towards extirpating that "religion" with which so many of the workers are besotted.

The *Boston Sunday Globe* has had a symposium on the subject, "Is Christianity Practicable To-day?" A lot of sky-pilots contribute. The Rev. John Cuckson says: "It is practicable, but not practised." Father Bodfish says it is a strange question to put before a Catholic. The Rev. Septimus Hanna, a Christian scientist, says Christianity is practicable, but requires to be studied in the light of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy's *Key to the Scriptures*. The Rev. C. Eliot says Christianity is an ideal, and an ideal should not be called impracticable because unrealised. The only discordant voice is that of C. W. Mowbray, the Anarchist, who says: "Let us have done with cant and hypocrisy; let us recognise that, if mankind are to fill their proper places in human society, we shall have to rely, not upon Christianity, but on changing the whole basis of society, by abolishing private ownership in the means of life, together with the abolition of government of man by man."

The Rev. I. J. Lansing, D.D., pastor of the Park-street Congregational Church, Boston, has drawn upon himself the odium of all parties in America by falsely charging President Cleveland with having been intoxicated at the Naval Review in New York. A lying spirit from the Lord seems to have afflicted the man of God, who is an intemperate temperance fanatic.

The *Boston Transcript*, an Independent Republican paper, opposed to Cleveland in politics, says: "Deplorable as is the passionate prejudice which blurs out such charges as the Rev. Mr. Lansing's, it is infinitely less degrading and less pernicious than is the whispering of scandals concerning domestic life at the White House, such as have been at times circulated by clergymen behind the back of the hand with express instructions to the listener to avoid getting them into the newspapers, where they might be run to earth and refuted."

Catholics call May the month of Mary. They do not tell the reason. May was by the old Pagans consecrated to Cybele, the mother of the gods. When Pope Boniface IV. dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the martyrs the Pantheon at Rome, which had previously been dedicated to Cybele and the gods, he held the feast of All Saints in May, as of old; but Gregory IV. transferred this feast to the first of November, because its celebration was so similar to that of the Pagans. May Day festivals, however, preserved the ancient Floralia of the Romans, and the month of the Mother of God has appropriately taken the place of that of the Mother of the gods.

Pope Sixtus V. built a superb chapel in honor of the cradle of J. C. in the Church of St. Marie Maggiore at Rome. The historian who relates this says it was for the honor the Pope had for this cradle, which has been preserved for ages in a spot adjacent to the chapel. Jerome says he saw it at Bethlehem, but how it got to Rome is a mystery.

In Ontario, Canada, there were committed to the various prisons in 1891: Catholics, 3,744; Episcopalians, 3,134; Presbyterians, 1,368; Methodists, 1,413; other denominations, 770; Infidels, 0. In 1892 the figures were: Roman

Catholics, 4,359; Church of England, 3,631; Methodists, 1,624; Presbyterians, 1,498; other denominations, 698; Infidels, 0.

At Lavant, near Chichester, Charles Richard Lever was found in his bedroom with his throat cut. He had been regularly attending chapel, and reading the Bible and religious works. Just before his suicide he said: "I have found the Light, and was never happier." A verdict of suicide during temporary insanity was recorded.

When a Bishop has £4,500 a year, he ought not to grasp at perquisites. So thought the Wigton Burial Board, which entered a protest on its minutes against the Bishop's exacting £12 15s. 10d. for consecrating the new cemetery. We would undertake a job like that for a guinea when we happened to be in the neighborhood. We would also give a written guarantee that the corpses would never detect the difference. No extra charge for that.

Dean Farrar has "gone up higher." The Holy Ghost has called him to Canterbury. Somebody else will have to say prayers in the House of Commons, but we dare say it will be all the same. One humbug will procure the House as great a blessing as another.

At a recent Exeter Hall missionary meeting Dean Farrar remarked (unless the *Christian World* misreports him) that "three centuries after Christ only one in every 150 of the world's population were nominally Christian; now they were one in three." And this was "a complete answer to those who affirmed that missions had been a failure." Well, it may be a complete answer at Exeter Hall, but it is no answer anywhere else. Christianity converted one in 150 in three hundred years by the power of the Holy Ghost; it has converted all the others in its fold by the unscrupulous use of authority and oppression. "Missions" have had no practical effect upon its statistics.

Dean Farrar should explain why the Holy Ghost is such a bad missionary. Even at the very best, it is a poor achievement for God Almighty to spend nearly two thousand years in converting a third of the world's inhabitants. If conversion is any good to them, he should convert them all immediately; if it is no good to them, he should stop the missionary business altogether.

The secretary of the Printers' Laborers' Union calls attention in another column to some of the methods of that great trading establishment of which William Booth is proprietor. We understand that it is not compositors that Booth wants, but workers of the Linotype machine, which is displacing "compositing" in his establishment.

Booth now sells everything, from bicycles to biscuits, and, moreover, pressure is put on all converts to buy all their goods only from the Army.

The Rev. H. T. Briscoe, formerly chaplain of King's College, Cambridge, has been remanded on a charge of appropriating to his own use £493, charity money, of which he was trustee.

The Rev. Walter Hind, of St. Peter's Clergy House, London Dock, is also remanded on a charge of indecent behavior with two little girls in the recreation ground, Stepney Green.

The wanderings of Mrs. Besant's daughter, Mabel Besant Scott, appear to have been early ended, for it is announced that she has been baptised and received into the Roman Catholic Church. Oh, the pity of it!

The Archbishop of Canterbury recommends a general prayer for the unity of Christendom to all the members of the Church of England on Whit-Sunday. This is the official answer to the Pope's letter, *ad Anglos*, asking them to pray to the Virgin for re-union. Mr. Athelstan Riley also writes to the *Church Times* urging associated prayer for crushing out all dissentients. When it only relies on prayer, verily its days of power are over. Could its prayer be answered, it would doubtless, as of old, maintain unity by other means than prayer.

Dr. John Clifford's sermon on the Bible was reported at some length in Monday's *Daily Chronicle*. The sum of it all may be expressed in a quotation from Hamlet—"Words, words, words." There is the "infinite" this, and the "infinite" that; in short, the infinite slush of modern Christianity. Dr. Clifford says that "the Bible survives." Of course it does. And why? Simply because you force it into the hands of little children, and tell them lies about it before they are able to think for themselves. Dr. Clifford is as keen on this imposition as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Wednesday and Thursday, May 15 and 16, Temperance Hall, Derby: Debate with Mr. W. T. Lee, of the Christian Evidence Society, on "Atheism or Theism: Which is the More Reasonable?"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 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.
T. E. M.—Received.

ALPHA.—You are quite right; it has been a hard time with many.
J. M. JONES.—Balance paid to Mr. Forder. Glad to have your sympathy. We tender you ours in return. It is unpleasant to be cut off from contact with persons of similar views and sentiments.
J. H. W.—Cannot see what your note refers to.

T. HOPKINS.—We never "lose heart." If one street is closed to us, we walk down another.
S. E. EASTON has removed to 49 WALTERTON-road, Harrow-road, W.

J. ORAM.—Many thanks. See paragraph.
H. HUGHES.—Never believe what Christian Evidence lecturers say about Colonel Ingersoll or any other leader of Freethought. We really cannot stoop to contradict such rubbish. The reverend gentleman who would like to hear Moses on the mistakes of Ingersoll has an easy way of gratifying his desire. Let him go off to kingdom-come and hunt up that ancient Jew. We don't suppose the world at large has any great objection to his going. We haven't, anyhow.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Chatham Branch, 7s. 2d.; East London Branch, 3s.; T. Carne, 6s.; F. Sneatts, 1s. 6d.; Henley Branch, 2s. 6d.

E. H.—(1) You are quite wrong about Calvin. He hunted Servetus down; went out of his way to do so, out of sheer malignity; and had him handed over to his enemies, to be burnt to death at a slow fire. (2) You are wasting your time over that metaphysical juggle about "finite" parts of an "infinite" universe. To man, at any rate, infinite is not a positive, but a negative term; simply meaning without known bounds. As a poetical expression it may pass; as an assertion in theology or metaphysics, it is simply unrealisable. When a man asserts that there cannot be finite parts of an infinite whole, he asserts what, from the very nature of the case, he cannot know; and what wise man will argue about conjectures?

MR. SAM STANDING, who writes from a hydropathic establishment in Yorkshire, informs us that his health has completely broken down, after five months' lingering illness. His doctor orders him to cancel all engagements, and neither to study nor write letters for some time. Mr. Standing adds that his brain and heart are both affected. We hope he will obey his doctor's orders, and give himself a thorough rest for several months.

S. LEESON.—Duly received. Only holding to see the issue.
A. HURREN.—Miss Vance showed us your letter. Pleased to hear that you are helping, though farming prospects are so bad.
C. H.—The secretary has received your application.

V. ROGER.—See paragraph. Delighted to see you are going to resume the outdoor propaganda in Kennington-park.
OBSERVER.—We have not yet published an Index to the *Freethinker*. Thanks for the cutting.
M. CHRISTOPHER.—Acknowledged this week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Derbyshire Courier—Remarks—Do Dageraad—Church Reformer—Western Mail—Der Lichtfreund—Reading Observer—Two Worlds—Islamic World—Crescent—Post-Morning Observer—Light—Public Opinion—Literary Digest—Mercury—Railway Signal—Pioneer of Wisdom—Hobart Mercury—Gravesend Reporter—Boston Guardian—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Ironclad Age—Secular Thought—Twentieth Century—Open Court—Liberty—Liberator—Pearson's Weekly Progressive Thinker.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.
LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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

SALE 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.

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

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

MR. R. O. SMITH did not think it worth while to answer my letter, asking whether the time of his offer could be extended to the end of May, by which time there was a reasonable prospect of raising the £600. I was therefore obliged to wire him on Monday that if I did not hear from him on Tuesday I should regard his answer as a negative. This brought me a reply. "When you have the money," Mr. Smith says, "I am willing to consider your offer. I do not intend to bind myself again after the two failures."

I once waited twelve months for a door to open, and I have been patient ever since; so I refrain from saying what I think of Mr. Smith's communication. It is quite possible, however, that I may have a good deal to say in next week's *Freethinker*. There comes a time when the only wise method is one of open publicity. When I disclose all, it will be seen what a trouble I have had in this matter.

Meanwhile I have to say that I (at any rate) do not "intend"—that is Mr. Smith's word—to go on indefinitely without an understanding. I will keep this matter open, so far as I am concerned, until next Tuesday, and not a minute longer. The *Freethinker* goes to press on Wednesday, and on that morning I will write what I may think necessary. I will only add that I am prepared for whatever can happen, and am remaining in London so as to be ready to deal with any emergency.

Apart from conditional promises, which are considerable, applications and donations have been received for about 330 shares. Those who intend to help in this crisis must do so, if at all, by next Tuesday. I have already stated that all money received will be returned unless the matter is carried to a successful issue.

The South Shields Branch writes that it will take ten shares on condition that the other shares are taken up. I shall be glad to hear from other Branches, or from individual friends, to a similar effect.

I have received the following fresh donations: R. Richards, £3 3s.; T. E. M., 1s.; Alpha, 1s. 6d.; J. M. Jones, 2s.; T. Hopkins, 1s.; T. Almond, 1s.; A. W. Marks, £1; Mrs. B. E. Marks, £1; Edaw, 5s.

The following subscriptions have been received by Miss E. M. Vance: B., 5s.; M. Christopher, 10s.; Mrs. Penny, 10s.; E. Self, 2s. 6d.; G. Tabum, 2s. 6d.; E. H., 1s.; E. Brighten, 5s.; Bath Friend, 2s. 6d.; Annie Embleton, 2s. 6d.; Florence Embleton, 4s.; G. B., 5s.; Collection at the Hall of Science, 10s. Shares for N.S.S.: Le Diable, £1; J. Proctor, £1.

There is no need to dwell any longer upon the general subject of this appeal. I have said all that I wish, and all that is necessary. The Secular party are in possession of the facts; I must leave them to decide what they will do, and to decide it by next Tuesday.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Bible God.

"Moreh Nebuchim," whose name shows he is a Hebrew scholar, if not a Hebrew, has the following in the *Truthseeker*: "Can I worship him? No! They have made a God who is less good, less moral, and less intelligent than the average man. Can I love him? No! They have a God who likes blood, who incited a pack of brickmakers to plunder and rob nations on whom they had not the least claim, to kill the men, slaughter their innocent babes, and take the surviving wives home—a God who favored the bad and condemned the good. He despised the innocent offering of Cain, fruits of the earth, and respected that of Abel because there was blood! A God who made a patriarch of that tricky, defrauding, cheating, rascally Jacob, and ignored the manly, generous, and forgiving Esau! A God who punished the gentle and noble King Saul, and chose that adulterer, murderer, and hypocritical fiddler, David, the son of Boaz and Ruth, of cornfield fame, descendant of Judah and Tamar, who struck a bargain on the road to Timnath. He is the David who begot Solomon, the licentious, both masters of the art, and the God of the Bible set them aside for the purpose of making himself a son! This is the Bible's God, who is father of Jeshu ben Joseph Pandra, the carpenter, fool and knave of Jerusalem, redeemer of the world. Selah."

SUGAR PLUMS.

WHIT-SUNDAY is drawing near, and Freethinkers all over the kingdom should be making preparations for the Bristol Conference. We hope the Branches—even the smallest and poorest of them—will make an effort to be represented this year. Individual members, too, will find Bristol a nice city to visit. There is some fine scenery in the neighborhood. Our next issue will contain the Conference Agenda.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, the President of the American Secular Union, who is now on a visit to England, lectures this evening (May 12) at the Secular Hall, Camberwell. Mr. Robert Forder will preside. South London friends, who could not hear Mr. Putnam at the Hall of Science, should make a strong rally on this occasion. They should also tell their Christian friends, who might be tempted to see a wild Atheist from America.

The Hall of Science Libel pamphlet is now on sale at threepence. When the present edition is exhausted, it may be issued in a cheaper form for more general distribution. Several friends have expressed a wish that it could be circulated like the Atheist Shoemaker pamphlet. Mr. Foote will be glad to hear from Branches and individual Freethinkers on this point. He is prepared to spend some money on a cheap edition if it is really desirable.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow last Sunday. He had good audiences, although the Labor Demonstrations were held on that day. In the evening eight professors from the University attended to hear Mr. Watts, whom they highly complimented at the close of the meeting. This week our colleague is busy debating in Glasgow with Dr. Jamieson.

To-day, Sunday, May 12, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Dundee.

An article on Charles Bradlaugh in the *May Westminster Review*, by Clarence Waterer, opens by saying: "For Charles Bradlaugh the Atheist every one who values religious equality and liberty of conscience must feel that gratitude and admiration which are due to the man who, casting himself into the breach, bears the brunt of the struggle, and leaves the path clearer and easier for those who follow." A sympathetic account of his life is given, and Mr. Waterer concludes with the remark: "Whatever his contemporaries may have thought of him, posterity will assuredly recognise in Charles Bradlaugh one of the foremost champions of liberty, and his life will ever remain a sad object-lesson of the evils that spring from bigotry, intolerance, and injustice."

We notice in the *Hobart Mercury* that at the Tasmanian International Exhibition the "Artisans' Section" contains a "Charles Bradlaugh" musical cabinet, contributed by Mr. James Hall.

We commented in "Acid Drops" last week on the Birmingham coroner who remarked that a man who could not find God must be mad. Mr. Stephen Urquhart writes a letter, to much the same effect as our paragraph, in the *Daily Gazette*. It is well to see this foolish coroner rapped over the knuckles in his own city.

Imitation is the sincerest flattery. The title of Mr. Foote's essay on war, "The Shadow of the Sword," is borrowed by Mr. W. Evans Derby, LL.D., secretary of the Peace Society, who has been advertising "a popular and striking lecture" under that heading at Spitalfields. Mr. Foote's essay, which has been revised, is now in the hands of the Humanitarian League, and will shortly be issued as one of the League's propagandist pamphlets.

Mr. C. Cohen had a warm experience before leaving Newcastle-on-Tyne. He was announced to give an outdoor address on the Quayside, and a whip-up was made for opposition by the blackguard who uttered that filthy libel at Leeds upon the London Hall of Science. This fellow and his supporters had a van of their own, and finding that Mr. Cohen had a better meeting than theirs, they deliberately pushed their vehicle right into the Secularists' meeting. This caused a serious disturbance, and at one moment it looked as though the Christian Evidence van would go over into the liquid that engulfed the Gadarene swine. Mr. Cohen was invited to ascend that van, but he replied that he would not stand amidst filth. He went on with his lecture, and held the field long after the aforesaid blackguard had bawled himself hoarse. The Newcastle friends are delighted with the way in which Mr. Cohen acquitted himself on this occasion.

The *Christian World* devotes an article to Canon Choyne's

new work on Isaiah. Our contemporary says that his conclusions "will be sufficiently startling to the average reader." Hitherto the Higher Criticism has taught that two writers were concerned in the book of Isaiah, but Canon Choyne declares it to be the work of several hands in collaboration, and that the original writing of the real Isaiah is not larger than that of Haggai. Much of the contents of the book is post-exilic, and it received its final form in the second half of the third century before Christ.

The Presbyterian Synod at Newcastle-on-Tyne listened to a committee report, which was read by the Rev. W. Hutton, of Birkenhead, on the State of Religion and Morals. This document confesses that "the tone of religious life is at present very low, that there is a painful lack of interest in ordinances, and a general feeling of weariness and languor pervading the Church." It is also admitted that "the numbers outside of the Church are on the increase," that "our young men are not being drawn to the fellowship of the Church," and that political movements and popular sports are playing the very devil with religion. All which is excellent good news. There is real hope for the world when Presbyterianism is dying.

In the *Islamic World* Salah-ud-Deen, writing on "Mohammed and His Conquests," says that the early Kaliphs of Islam always inculcated toleration. He declares: "No dogma was enforced, no edicts prohibiting religious practices were issued, no church or synagogue was demolished, but throughout freedom and liberty were in eminence. Mr. Buckle lays great stress on the word 'scepticism' in his *History of Civilisation*, and remarks that it was the chief and vital agent which overthrew the miserable fetters of religious fanaticism, and which taught the people to march a little way out from the camp of old and antiquated ideas which for a long time dwarfed into insignificance the growth of the civilisation. Assuredly such has been the case, and both the European and Mohammedan histories amply testify its truth. In the golden period of Mohammedan history the society was infected with scepticism."

The *Islamic World* will do a real service to literature if it induces competent Arabic scholars to give us Arabian accounts of history which may be compared with the Christian accounts, mostly derived from ignorant or unscrupulous monkish chroniclers.

Mr. Frederic Harrison severely criticises Mr. A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* in the *May Positivist Review*. He complains of misconceptions and ambiguity, and declares that, as far as Positivism is concerned, Mr. Balfour's criticism of Naturalism, which he says is another term for Positivism, "has not the slightest application or meaning, because his so-called Naturalism and true Positivism have not a single belief in common." He describes Mr. Balfour's book as pervaded with the spirit of universal scepticism, a kind of despairing quietism. "It is a prose and *fin de siècle* version of Omar Khayyam, that all we do and think vanishes into air like the wind. And so, since Man is a bubble and *Life a jest*, let us—doubtfully and mockingly—put up with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Thirty-nine Articles; for these can hardly be greater shams and fallacies than anything else in heaven and earth."

The Humanitarian League has issued a telling leaflet by Edward Carpenter on the humanising of our prisons. The present system of treating criminals is simply damnable, and Edward Carpenter's burning words ought to be widely circulated. Copies of the leaflet can be obtained of the Humanitarian League at its new office, 79a Great Queen-street, London, W.C.

Through the efforts of Mr. A. F. Bullock, the *Freethinker* is now included in the literature taken by the Tiverton Liberal Club. At a recent meeting the Committee decided by 14 to 2 to place it in the reading-room. Mr. Oran, the Bath Branch secretary, informs us that efforts will now be made to get the *Freethinker* introduced in the Walcot and Larkhall Liberal Clubs.

The Bristol Branch opened its outdoor lecture campaign on Sunday evening in Eastville Park. Mr. Treasure presided, and the lecture was delivered by Mr. Keast. There was an excellent meeting, but no discussion, though it was strongly invited. Several lady members were present, and busied themselves in distributing copies of the *Freethinker* and other literature.

Lambeth Freethinkers willing to assist in conducting an open-air lecture-station in Kennington Park on Sunday evenings during the summer are invited to meet at Mr. Victor Roger's, 114 Kennington-road, to-day (May 12) at 4 o'clock.

Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, noticing in *Science* the paper of Dr. Eugene Dubois describing his discovery in Java of three skeletons which form missing links between man and the

higher apes, says: "The material is sufficient for a close osteological comparison. The cubical capacity of the skull is about two-thirds that of the human average. It is distinctly dolichocephalic—about 70°—and its *norma verticalis* astonishingly like that of the famous Neanderthal skull. The dental apparatus is still of the simian type, but less markedly so than in other apes. The femora are singularly human. They prove beyond doubt that this creature walked constantly on two legs, and when erect was quite equal in height to the average human male. Of the various differences which separate it from the highest apes and the lowest men, it may be said that they bring it closer to the latter than to the former."

When Christ Ruled.

The literature of Europe, shortly before the final dissolution of the Roman Empire, fell entirely into the hands of the clergy, who were long venerated as the sole instructors of mankind. For several centuries it was extremely rare to meet with a layman who could read or write; and, of course, it was still rarer to meet with one able to compose a work. Literature, being thus monopolised by a single class, assumed the peculiarities natural to its new masters. And as the clergy, taken as a body, looked on it as their business to enforce belief rather than to encourage inquiry, it is no wonder that they displayed in their writings the spirit incidental to the habits of their profession. Hence literature, during many ages, instead of benefiting society, injured it by increasing credulity, and thus stopping the progress of knowledge. Indeed, the aptitude for falsehood became so great that there was nothing men were unwilling to believe. Nothing came amiss to their greedy and credulous ears. Histories of omens, prodigies, apparitions, strange portents, monstrous appearances in the heavens, the wildest and most incoherent absurdities, were repeated from mouth to mouth, and copied from book to book, with as much care as if they were the choicest treasures of human wisdom. That Europe should have ever emerged from such a state is the most decisive proof of the extraordinary energy of man, since we cannot even conceive a condition of society more unfavorable to his progress.—Buckle, "*History of Civilisation*," i. 222.

The Ritualistic disturbance at the re-marriage of a divorced person is likely to have several good results. It is accentuating the differences of opinion among Churchmen themselves on a most important point. It has shown the secular world how priests will brawl in church and interfere scandalously to prevent people doing what they have a legal right to do. It shows that the Canon law of the Church is in conflict with the State, and emphasises the fact that what "God" has joined together Sir Francis Joune can, and does, put asunder. It will probably lead to the repeal of the Canon law, and possibly to the general rule of civil marriage for all, and extra Church ceremonies for those who want them, which is already the practice of most civilised States.

Viscount Halifax, the head of the English Church Union, has already brought a Bill into the House of Lords to repeal clause 58 of the Divorce Act, and not allow any marriage for divorced persons, innocent or otherwise, except by the civil registrar. The Duke of Newcastle also has written to the *Church Times* announcing, like a monarch, that, if the bishops do not support the Canon law of marriage, "I shall change my attitude towards Disestablishment."

The bishops, however, know on which side their bread is buttered. They may brag about the authority of the Church, but when it comes to a real conflict with the State they will quietly give in. The Church has only to consent to Disendowment, and, of course, it can do as it pleases about marriage; but while it is a State institution it must do as the State orders. The Ritualistic clergy all want the wages without acknowledging the mastership of the State.

It is not generally known that, by the Church Building Acts, it is illegal to let pews in churches to other than parishioners. In London, however, this very often is done, and the churches derive funds absolutely prohibited by law.

The Reports of the Commissioners on the subject of the Aged Poor show that the Commissioners were all at loggerheads for want of a workable scheme of pensions. It looks as if the question would remain in abeyance until some statesman discovers that tithes appropriated to this purpose will be fulfilling the most important of their original functions.

BOOK CHAT.

THOSE who regard the Puritans as pioneers of liberty should read *The Emancipation of Massachusetts*, by Brooks Adams. The book is one long indictment of the bigotry and barbarism of the early settlers who sought to found a kingdom of God near Massachusetts Bay. Mr. Adams shows that their men of God were responsible for persecutions, punishments, and executions as iniquitous and abominable as those of the Inquisition. Under the reign of Christ, free thought of any kind had no chance. Antinomians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and alleged witches were ruthlessly crushed by imprisonment, scourgings, tortures, and hangings. Mr. Adams quotes some of the contemporary denunciations of the Quakers. Thus the Rev. John Wilson said he "would carry fire in one hand and faggots in the other to burn all the Quakers in the world." These Puritan protesters against Popery and Church of England tyranny would have made model Popes and tyrants themselves.

The account of Robert Owen in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 42, is written by Leslie Stephen, who carefully digests the chief sources of information. He says: "His system at New Lanark showed much sense and benevolence. . . . His infant school was imitated by Lord Lansdowne, Brougham, and others." He thus relates Owen's famous declaration at the City of London Tavern, August 21, 1817: "Owen had been challenged to give his religious views. He had discovered that the religions of the world were the great obstacle to progress, and he resolved to announce this piece of news to the meeting, though expecting to be 'torn in pieces.' He made the statement in the most dramatic fashion, and thereby, he thought, struck the death-blow of bigotry and superstition. A pause was followed by a few hisses, when an 'electric shock' seemed to pass through the audience, and a burst of 'heartfelt applause' drowned all dissent."

Mr. Stephen makes the following remarks on Owen's social experiments: "Owen's schemes had failed, as might have been expected, even upon his own principles. He had laid the greatest stress at New Lanark upon the necessity of 'forming character' in infancy, and he might have inferred that miscellaneous collections of unprepared people would not have the necessary qualities for success in new undertakings."

Mr. Stephen smartly describes Owen as "one of those intolerable bores who are the salt of the earth." . . . "Personally, according to Robert Dale Owen, who no doubt speaks the truth, he was most amiable. His ruling passion was benevolence; he was exceedingly fond of children; spent a fortune to promote the welfare of his race, and had a command of temper which enabled him to conciliate opponents. He had, apparently, all the obstinacy without the irritability generally attributed to his countrymen."

The *Westminster Review*, noticing Dr. Wildeboer's *Origins of the Canon of the Old Testament*, regards it as "finally disposing of the traditional theory of the supernatural origin and unity of the Old Testament."

The Life of Adam Smith, by John Rae, published by Macmillan, is got up with a care and minuteness which will probably render it the standard biography of that great political economist and moralist, the friend of Hume and one of the most typical Scotsmen that ever lived.

M. Alfred Fouillée, the distinguished French exponent of the philosophy of *idées-forces*, has selected extensive extracts from the writings of his able nephew, J. M. Guyau, the author of *The Irreligion of the Future*, whose early death in 1889 was a loss to philosophy and Freethought. They are issued in a volume entitled *Pages Choieses de J. M. Guyau*. The volume forms part of a collection of "Choice Pages from Great French Authors." It will add to the fame and influence of a noble writer, who is too little known in England.

Sir Henry Tyler, the pious "guinea pig" and instigator of the prosecution of the *Freethinker*, has resigned, or, it would be more correct to say, been kicked out of, his presidency of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.

The *Western Mail* gives an illustration of the Nonconformist Conscience in the fact that the "Lucky Sportsman" at Neath who netted £4,000 at a coup has been solicited for donations and investments by various chapels in his vicinity.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

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

May 12, Camberwell, 19, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

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

July 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth.

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 Newcastle-on-Tyne. Dundee should be visited when he lectures in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

AN INTERVIEW WITH INGERSOLL.

THESE are a few among a list of questions submitted to Colonel Ingersoll by a recent interviewer, with the Colonel's answers:—

Q. Considering Sunday simply as a day of rest and quiet, aside from its religious significance, do you think the saloons should be open all that day, part of that day, or not at all that day?

A. I do not think that Sunday is better than the other days. I do not believe in prohibition. Lots of reformers in New York care but little about murder and crimes of that kind, provided no beer is sold on Sunday. All the temperance legislation has done harm.

Q. Granting that the Christian religion is faulty and deficient, is not the world indebted to it for much of the enlightenment and beneficence which characterise the nineteenth century?

A. No. Orthodox Christianity has done harm, and only harm. It has poisoned the foundation of learning, and misdirected the energies of the world.

Q. In your estimation, what percentage of Christians are, or try to be, good for the sake of reward in the next world?

A. I have never known one.

Q. What percentage because of fear of punishment in the next world?

A. I have never known one.

Q. And what percentage are good for the sake of being good?

A. All that are really good are so without the hope of heaven or the fear of hell.

THE TRUE RELIGION.

"Religion is not of the brain."—*General Booth, speaking at Boston, U.S.A.*

Down on your marrows and pray to the Lord;
Whoop hallelujah and glory;
Bang with your Bible and call it the Word;
Rave on the old-fashioned story;

Out with your banjos, and tambos, and bones;
Don your red jerseys and bonnets;
Flout the philosophers living and dead;
Damn every writer of sonnets.

Down on your marrows, and do a knee drill;
Crawl up the stairs into glory,
For if you do not you'll land on the grill,
In spite of the gentle Lamb gory.

Blow like the Devil through brassy trombones;
Skip like a lunatic raving;
March with a dozen of Janets and Johns
If your ha'penny soul you'd be saving.

You ask why you should, for it goes 'gainst your grain.
Why, the "General's" just been a-saying
That his blessed "religion is not of the brain,"
So start to the whooping and praying.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

THE Council met at the Hall of Science, May 2; Mr. G. Ward in the chair. Present: R. Forder, G. Standing, J. Neate, F. Schaller, M. Loafer, A. Wheeler, W. Clogg, W. H. Baker, W. G. Renn, C. Durant, Miss Vance, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Treasurer's report received.

Grants were made to the Battersea and Westminster Branches, and a further payment made to Mr. G. Standing off the outstanding printing account. The date of the Annual Excursion was fixed for Sunday, July 14, and the hope expressed that all Branches will this year co-operate with the Federation. Clacton-on-Sea, Littlehampton, and Southend were each suggested, and the Secretary was instructed to make the necessary inquiries.

Branch secretaries are reminded that delegates' fees are much overdue, and that all matter for the monthly list must reach the undersigned not later than May 20.

ANNIE BROWN (*Hon. Sec.*)

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we learn of the sudden death, on April 21, of Lulie Monroe Power, the editress of the *Ironclad Age*, at her residence, 50 Fayette-street, Indianapolis. The *Indianapolis Sentinel* recently spoke of her as "the only woman in the world who edits a paper which has for its mission the denial of God's or a future existence." A daughter of Dr. Jasper Roland Monroe, the founder of the *Ironclad Age*, she worked at the case in her father's office, setting in type his Freethought articles, and sharing his opinions. Upon his death she bravely determined to carry on the paper, keeping its old proclamation of "Goodness without God," and the motto: "In the brief time of life, love; in the long night of death, oblivion." The *Freethinkers Magazine* said of her: "She loves humanity, even of the most degraded character. She goes further than that. She loves even the dumb animals. No horse, cat, or dog ever suffers at her hands, but she treats them with the greatest kindness. She abhors cruelty in gods or men, and if she could have her way, no child would ever receive a blow, but would be governed by love. She is a worthy wife, an affectionate mother, a noble woman in all the relations of life, was the tenderest and kindest of daughters to her parents when they were living, and nothing gives her so much pleasure as to say or do something that will honor their memory. She loves the flowers and the birds, and worships nature, and, above all else, loves the truth wherever found, on heathen or on Christian ground." Her portrait shows a woman of fine appearance, sharp-cut features, square chin, high forehead, and bright eyes. Her loss will be greatly felt by all the readers of the *Ironclad Age*.

LEONTINE NICOLLE, who died last week at Brévannes, was a Freethinking woman who devoted her life to the idiot children at the Salpêtrière Hospital. The Paris correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* says: "She retired four years ago at the age of sixty-eight, and was given an asylum for the rest of her days at Brévannes. She brought hundreds of her charges to health and relative intelligence. The Academy in 1887 gave her the Montyon prize and the palms of the Academy. President Carnot went to the idiot's hospital to fasten the Cross of the Legion of Honor on her breast in the presence of the whole of the staff. She was obliged by broken health to leave her idiots, but she had shown younger women how to treat them. Mademoiselle Nicolle was a Freethinker and an Altruist."

A DISTINGUISHED Italian Freethinker has passed away in the person of Professor Luigi Ferri, editor of the *Revista Italiana di Filosofia*, and author of *The Psychology of Pomponazzi* and a *History of Philosophy in Italy*.

Excommunicating Insects.

In 1479 the inhabitants of Lausanne were much vexed by the number of insects who completely spoiled their crops. The matter was brought before the bishop, Benedict de Montferrand, who solemnly issued a writ that they should appear before him and answer for their trespasses. He gave them an advocate to plead their cause, and, after hearing his plea, gravely pronounced anathema and sentence of excommunication against the insects. It is a pity that M. A. Ruchat, who, in his *Abregé de l'Histoire Ecclésiastique du Pays de Vaul*, p. 87, relates this interesting survival of an old superstition, did not also record what the advocate had to plead for the insects. Certainly he might have said that God, having given them life, also allowed them to sustain it, though at the expense of human kind.

THE JEW'S CONVERSION.

A JEU d'esprit.

(Founded, like Tennyson's "Voyage of Maeldune," on an Irish legend.)

A SAILOR at the hour of death
At last repented of his sins.
A priest is called, and in his ear
A long confession Jack begins.

A grievous tale it was to hear—
The priest he listened to the end.
"If one good deed thou hast done," he said,
"Perhaps the Church may still befriend."

"I have," said Jack. "My sins are great ;
My righteous acts are very few.
But once, my father, grace I had
To make a convert of a Jew.

"This cheating knave and usurer
Had plundered Christians many a year.
One day, when none beheld but I,
By chance he tumbled from a pier.

"I seized an oar, put off a boat,
And close beside old Moses brought her ;
Stretched out my hand, caught his grey hair,
And held his head above the water.

"I'll save your life ! O Jew, I cried,
'If your false creed you will forego ;
Become a Christian, be baptised.'
He shook his head ; I let him go.

"Twice he sank and rose again.
At length my argument prevailed—
The truth had dawned upon his mind,
Or else the rascal's courage failed.

"I am a Christian, Jack !" he cried ;
'My evil creed I have forsaken ;
Henceforth I'll feed on pork and ham,
Except in Lent. Pray save my bacon !"

"In name of Father and of Son,
And Holy Ghost, I—by immersion—
Baptised that wretch, who, but for me,
Had lived and died without conversion.

"Thus did I force an infidel
To take a pious resolution ;
And for this righteous deed I pray
That you will grant me absolution."

"How fared the Jew?" inquired the priest.
"O, holy father, do not frown ;
I feared, if saved, he might relapse ;
To save his soul I let him drown."

The priest has issued from the door,
And Jack, with all his sins forgiven,
First drank a dram, next sang a psalm ;
Then quickly died and went to heaven.

J. A. RICHARDSON.

Syriac Gospel comes to light and tells us Jesus was begotten by his mother's husband!—the most terrible calamity that ever befel the Church. Now, which is blasphemy, to say Jesus was the son of Mary by the Holy Ghost, who was *not* her husband, or to say he was her son by Joseph, who was her husband? We wish divines would answer us that question, for we have no wish to misrepresent anybody's family affairs.

And here another question starteth up. Only twenty-five years ago the unchangeable Church of Rome dogmatically affirmed the Immaculate conception ; and now this ancient Syriac Gospel comes to confound them. The Syriac Gospel, we presume, must go to the Index—that is, the Popish hell for honest books. But still the question is, Who is the blasphemer—he who says Mary was an honest woman, or he who says the contrary?

What is blasphemy? A cowardly cry raised by cowardly priests to frighten people away from their consecrated trumpery, to keep the public from investigating the holy mysteries and tricks of their trade ; a cry raised in defence of the most rascally conduct, the most rascally imposture and tyranny that could be conceived.—*Liberator.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

METHODS OF SALVATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Many of your readers have doubtless seen the advertisement in various papers for printers' laborers and other workmen, with a condition attached that "applicants must be Salvationists or willing to become such." On behalf of the organised printers' laborers, I recently interviewed Colonel Bremner, of the Salvation Army printing department, and learned from him that their printing office was not a business house, but a "religious" undertaking, and that it was their intention to discharge such hands as were not Salvationists.

That a wholesale reduction of wages is the real object sought appears to be established by the fact that a number of half-trained compositors, gathered from provincial towns, are at present engaged in the Army's packing warehouse awaiting the discharge of the present staff, who, to quote from Colonel Bremner, "will be got rid of one at a time."

There are, too, in the warehouse department men taken from the "Social Wing." For the heavy work of packing these men receive but 2s. 6d. per day. Cases where men profess Salvation at the behest of Colonel Bremner are frequent—its refusal means the loss of their bread.

One objection raised by Colonel Bremner was that the non-Salvationist laborers were apt to go into public-houses when their work was done—a thing he would not tolerate. Now, sir, these men frequently work forty-one hours at a stretch, from 6 a.m. on Monday morning till 11 o'clock on Tuesday evening. After that time their liberty to have a glass of beer is not admitted by Colonel Bremner, who, by-the-by, does not perform the work of a printers' laborer.

Those workmen who have recently been discharged to make room for inexperienced Salvationists have, for the most part, been in the Army employ for periods ranging from seven to thirteen years. Altogether, the present management of the Salvation Army printing office ill accords with the past traditions of the Army or the present professions of its founder.—Yours, etc.

T. O'GRADY
(Secretary, Printers' Laborers' Union)

PROFANE JOKES.

A clergyman at a wedding addressed the congregation—"If any here present can show just cause why this man and this woman may not lawfully be joined together in holy wedlock, let him now speak, or for ever after hold his peace." The groom casually laid a pair of revolvers on the railing in front of him, and the ceremony proceeded.

One Saturday morning two little boys were playing marbles on the steps of Trinity Church. The pastor, coming out and seeing them, said: "My little men, don't you know it is wrong to play marbles on the steps of the house of God?" One of the little fellows answered: "Oh, God isn't here to-day. He's over the way at the Jewish synagogue."

Dimbleby—"So you believe in the efficacy of prayer uncle. But suppose a neighbor's chicken should hop by your kitchen door, and you should get down on your knees and pray for that chicken to enter; do you think your prayer would be granted?" Uncle Ebon—"I mos' sartinly do, sah. But, o' course, I'd have to sprinkle a few grains o' co'n on de step, sah."

WHAT IS BLASPHEMY?

WHAT is blasphemy according to the latest authorities? We do not know. It used to be blasphemy to question the inspiration of any part of the Bible ; now you can question the inspiration or godly origin of the entire book, and not blaspheme. To doubt if Moses and others named in the Bible wrote as per appearances there was once blasphemy ; but it is nothing of the sort now. To call the prophecies in question was awful blasphemy in former days, and how many immortal souls were damned on that count it is impossible to tell ; now it is almost blasphemy to believe the prophecies. In former times he who doubted Hell and questioned the reality of Satan was not far from blazing, and within arm's length of the Devil ; but now it is a positive sign of grace to laugh at both Nick and his den.

When we were young it was rank blasphemy to deny the Trinity in Unity or the eternal sonship of Jesus ; but now the blasphemy is all on the other side, and people are growing ashamed of what was formerly most necessary to salvation.

The divine and adulterous birth of Jesus was once insisted upon with an unction not to be described ; now an ancient

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Resurrection: Fact and Fiction."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Harry Barnes, "The Independent Labor Party." Tuesday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.): 8, Dr. C. R. Drysdale, "Low Wages, Want of Work, and the Population Question."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Ball's Rhymes and Fourteenth-Century Socialism."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Aims and Claims of the Ethical Movement."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, a lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James will lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, F. Haslam, "How I became a Secularist."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Science."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, E. Calvert, "Christianity and Secularism: which is the Savior of Man?" 3.15, E. Calvert, "Religious and Scientific Hypotheses"; 6.30, A. Guest, "A Freethought Sermon from a Pious Text."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. Heaford, "God and the Problem of Evil." Thursday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "God and the Problem of Evil"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "Why we do Not Believe in Christianity." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "A Freethought Sermon from a Pious Text."

KILBURN (High-road): 6.30, S. E. Easton, "Under which Flag?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Brain and the Bible."

OLD FIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation by Proxy"—Part II.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, S. R. Thompson, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?"

COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN: 3, members' meeting at secretary's house.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Children's entertainment.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Business meeting; 6.30, social re-union.

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, A. Monro, "Christ and Ally Sloper."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Darwinism and Socialism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Leonard Hall, "Trade Unionism and Socialism"; 3, "The Irish Question and the I.L.P."; 6.30, "The Case for the I.L.P."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 3, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" 7, "Scepticism: its Meaning and its Value." Tea at 5.

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

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Yates, "God and the Bible."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Librarian, "The Delusion of Prayer."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, J. W. Treasure, "Christianity and Labor."

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

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—May 12, Sheffield; 13, Manchester; 23, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—May 12, m. Wood Green, a. Tottenham, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park; 26, m. Wood Green, a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 30, Hammersmith.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, m. Clerkenwell.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—May 19, m. Kingsland. June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 19, m. Kingsland. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL.

In order to provide Suitable Headquarters for the Secular Party in London, which shall also be a worthy Memorial of its late leader, CHARLES BRADLAUGH, the

NATIONAL SECULAR HALL SOCIETY (LIMITED)

has been formed under the Friendly Society's Acts. Of this Society Mr. G. W. FOOTE, *President of the N.S.S.*, is Chairman, and every one of the Directors is, and must be, also a member of the N.S.S. Party, who are hereby appealed to earnestly. This can only be done by the assistance of the whole Secular Party, who are hereby appealed to earnestly. The shares are £1 each, payable in easy instalments of 2s. 6d. on application, 2s. 6d. on allotment, and 2s. 6d. on each call, of which two months' notice must be given.

FORM OF APPLICATION.

GENTLEMEN,—

Please allot me.....Shares in the “National Secular Hall Society, Limited,” on account of which allotment I herewith hand you the sum of.....pounds.....shillings, being a deposit of.....pounds.....shillings per share thereon. And I hereby agree that, if admitted a Shareholder in the above-named Society, I will conform to its rules, and to such of its bye-laws as may be from time to time in force.

Name (in full).....

Postal address

Occupation (if any)

CUT THIS OUT AND FILL IT IN,

and forward (with remittance) to the Secretary—

MISS E. M. VANCE,

28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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