

# The Free Thinker

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## A JOLLY JAPANESE RELIGION.

INTEREST in Japan and things Japanese has grown immensely since the war, and occidentals are beginning to discover that they may perhaps learn something, if not in science, at any rate in art and the arts of life, from the land of the Rising Sun. Possibly it may be so in religion. I, at any rate, have been much interested in Shintoism, the old religion of Japan, ever since I visited M. Guimet's "Musée des Religions" at Paris, and Monsieur Guimet pointed out that a piece of white shaving or paper was their symbol of deity. That, I thought, will just express my creed. Keep it white. Others may write on it what they like and call it God, which is what those who utilise deity always do.

Everybody knows that Shintoism is older than Buddhism in Japan. The Japanese call Buddhism "the way of the Buddhas," but Shinto means "the way of the gods." At the best, Buddhas are only godlings or god-germs on their way, after long processes of reincarnation, to become Buddhas, merely maintaining a vague kind of personality by manifesting themselves for the redemption of inferiors ere evaporating into everlasting Nirvana. The process is wearisome, and the result disappointing. Buddhism attracted me once. But charlatan Theosophists, with their esoteric nonsense, have discounted its attractions. It is too like Christianity to retain permanent interest. Doubtless it is more philosophical than Christianity in taking account of other manifestations of animal life besides the human. But it is, after all, like Christianity, a miserable sort of faith, and devils as naturally belong to both as fairies to Paganism. Like Christianity, Buddhism grew up among outcasts, and is founded on a sort of despair of this world. The vaunted morality of both these systems is essentially self-effacement. Both Christianity and Buddhism look down on women and marriage, for both are monkish in their origin, and are better fitted for unmasculated monks than for men.

But Shintoism, "the way of the gods," is a creed of jollity, a system of health and happiness for life here and now. It believes, says Mr. Nobuta Kishimoto, M.A., who describes his faith in the *Popular Science Monthly*, in "enjoying this life to the utmost extent." He defines it, indeed, as "a religion of merry-making." In this it resembles Paganism ere the man of sorrows brought the worship of agony into fashion among women and slaves, already too acquainted with grief. In the Bible records we can see that the Jews were a jollier race when they were polytheists, and, prophetically, danced round the Golden Calf. Austere Phariseism followed in the wake of dogmatic Monotheism. Yet is there a secular make-the-best-of-this-world element in Judaism entirely wanting in the genuine old brands of Christianity, though since the advent of Secularism the school of Kingsley has tried pouring the new wine into the old theological bottles.

Shintoism is not altogether a do-as-you-like religion. It utters the supreme mandate, "Be happy"; but it also says, "Obey the conditions of happiness." Chief among these it places purity—physical and intellectual. The pure, white paper shaving, or white mark, is its symbol. It urges the utmost physical purity and cleanliness upon its adherents. The dirt no less that the cant of a Christian always disgusts a Japanese, who has learnt to be scrupulously clean. This regard for purity has led to a

number of superstitions, very similar to those among the Jews, as, for instance, the uncleanness of blood, of touching a dead body, etc. No doubt the idea of danger originally led to a *taboo*, which has got to be considered, as with the Jews, a main point of religion. So, too, purifications with water, salt, or fire are held to be of religious efficacy. But the main thing is health as a means of happiness, and rites and ceremonies are subordinate thereto. This elevation of the secular side of conduct above creed is well expressed in some lines of a Shinto poet, who is now, indeed, one of the Shinto gods:—

Only if our inner heart is  
In harmony with the true way,  
The gods will protect us,  
Even though we do not pray.

These lines are as well known among the Japanese as "He that believeth not shall be damned" are among the Christians.

The Shintos, says Mr. Nobuta Kishimoto, strive to be happy with gods and men, by eating, drinking, singing, and dancing, and cherishing cheerfulness and courtesy. The Japanese *sake*, or rice beer, that cheereth the hearts of gods and men, flows at their religious festivals as wine evidently did at those held at Shiloh (1 Samuel i. 14). Music, too, is religious. They say the gods or spirits are fond of music, and even delight in wrestling matches. This is not curious, when we remember their gods are much like Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, Caractacus, King Alfred, Robin Hood, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Shakespeare are to us.

Just as monkish Christianity, in displacing Paganism, had to keep up some of the old merry festivals like Christmas and Easter, so monkish Buddhism has not been able to displace the rites and festivals of the old Shinto nature worship. Shintoism and Buddhism, being both tolerant, exist side by side, members of the same household being often of various creeds, in which temperament probably counts for something; optimists naturally turning to Shintoism, while pessimists gravitate towards Buddhism. The joyous faith of old Japan has always held its own as the national religion, though Buddhism is allowed to be more philosophical; and when the Mikado, or Spiritual Emperor, was restored to temporal power in 1865 Buddhism was practically "disestablished," and Shinto worship reinstated as the State religion.

Shintoism has over 3,700 gods with shrines, and each of these gods or saints has an annual festival or merry-making. These gods are not revered like Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but are regarded as national heroes. Indeed, for the most part, they are deified men. The Mikado pretends descent from the gods. Some, however, are nature gods, the chief being Amaterasse, the "sun goddess," in whose worship flowers abound. A round steel mirror, the only object in some temples, is her symbol, or rather the emblem of nature herself deified and personified in the sun-goddess.

There are about a hundred thousand Shinto shrines in Japan. The priests are married, and do not shave their heads like the Buddhists. The traveller in Japan meets continually bands of pilgrims on their way to Isé, the centre of Shinto worship. Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop says: "Dismiss from your minds the idea of austerity, penance, privation, worship, sanctity, and vows which the word pilgrimage conjures up. 'A pilgrimage' to Isé is the greatest frolic and holiday of the year or the lifetime, a prolonged picnic, a vast merry-making. In spring the roads are thronged with bands of girls and companies of

men in holiday costume, singing and laughing; bowing to every high hill and every large tree, visiting theatres and shows; and, after throwing their coins on the white cloth in front of the Isé temples, surrendering themselves to the pleasures of Jamada, a city abounding in vicious attractions."

Shintoism is less a religion than a bundle of old customs. But in the East ancient custom is religion. Though it has a Valhalla of deified heroes, it has, properly speaking, no heaven, no hell, no purgatory, no organised worship, no sacrifices, and no priestcraft. No doubt it has faults like other faiths; but in its cardinal doctrine it hits the bull's eye. It recognises that joy is the magnet to which human lives naturally turn. Perhaps, when we have got rid of a religion which has for its basis human depravity, bloody atonement, and infernal damnation, we shall recognise this also. J. M. WHEELER.

## TACTICS OF SOME CHRISTIAN DISPUTANTS.

(Concluded from page 292.)

DR. JAMIESON persists in his contention that "the effect can never be superior to the cause," and upon this assumption he gives what he terms "a fatal blow to the Atheistic hypothesis." In the debate I quoted J. S. Mill, who said: "How vastly nobler and more precious, for instance, are the vegetables and animals than the soil and manure out of which they are raised up." "But," says the Doctor, "the soil and the manure are not the cause either of vegetables or animals," but the cause is "a living germ" which is there. Granted; yet surely it will not be urged that this simple unicellular germ is greater than the oak tree which springs from it, or the animal—perhaps man—into which it develops. That germ has no intelligence, yet from it comes a Milton, a Bacon, or a Shakespeare. Was not the effect greater than the cause in such a case? A man and woman are surely the cause of their offspring, yet the parents may both be ignorant blockheads, and the child an embryonic genius. What about the effect always being superior to the cause here? Or take another case of an opposite character. A bacillus, almost inconceivable in its minuteness, several millions of which could pass at the same time through the eye of an ordinary sewing-needle, enters the body of a strong man and sets up an action which stops all the vital forces of the powerful and well-knit organism. The cause here was this tiny thing, composed of just a single cell; the result, the death of a man of great vigor of body and strength of mind. Surely no one out of a lunatic asylum will maintain in such a case as this that the effect was inferior to the cause.

Dr. Jamieson's statement, that life precedes organisation, is so startling that one can hardly imagine it possible for anyone to make it who is acquainted with the merest rudiments of biology. Can we even imagine life apart from organisation? Will the Doctor tell us where it is to be found, and what it is like? That organisation and life are always found associated no one, we presume, will deny, just as force is always found in connection with matter. But it would be no less absurd to say that force was the cause of matter than that life was the cause of organisation. Most of the quotations given by Dr. Jamieson from men of science are quite beside the question, and only show that the writers held life to be something distinct from organisation, which no more proves life to have been the cause of organisation than the holding that electricity is something distinct from the battery proves it to have been the cause of the combination of metals and acids employed. However, the quotations themselves are from books written long ago. The one most in harmony with the views under consideration is that from the "Reign of Law" by the Duke of Argyll. And this book was written nearly thirty years since, and its author was certainly never considered an authority upon questions of biology. Huxley most assuredly holds a view diametrically opposed to this, as anyone can see who will take the trouble to read his "Physical Basis of Life." In that discourse he ridicules the notion that life is anything more than a result of organisation, by comparing it with the old theory that acuosity was something added to the hydrogen and oxygen in the formation of water. For instance, the Professor says: "It will be

observed that the existence of the matter of life depends on the pre-existence of certain compounds—namely, carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. Withdraw any one of these three from the world, and all vital phenomena come to an end. They are related to the protoplasm of the plant, as the protoplasm of the plant is to that of the animal. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen are all lifeless bodies. Of these, carbon and oxygen unite in certain proportions, and under certain conditions, to give rise to carbonic acid; hydrogen and oxygen produce water; nitrogen and hydrogen give rise to ammonia. These new compounds, like the elementary bodies of which they are composed, are lifeless. But when they are brought together under certain conditions they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, and this protoplasm exhibits the phenomena of life" ("Physical Basis of Life," *Loy Sermons*, p. 135).

In my debate with Dr. Jamieson upon the soul question I said, "Diseased brain impaired thought." In reply to this the Doctor, in his Appendix, gives a long string of authorities to prove the contrary. But they do nothing of the kind. I am reminded that Professor Ferrier said that "the half of the brain has been diseased, and that the intellectual powers of the patient have not been interfered with." Well, what of it? So a man may have a disease in one eye or one ear, and yet see or hear very well with the other. The brain is double, like the eye or the ear. There are two hemispheres, and if one is affected with disease the other can act healthily. And it was to illustrate this very fact that Dr. Ferrier introduced the case. Then there is a reference to cases in which mental derangement has occurred, and after death no lesion of the brain has been found. Doubtless; yet I suppose there is no physiologist who does not believe but that there was some brain disease which escaped detection, in consequence probably of its minute character. But if the Doctor thinks differently, will he kindly inform us what was diseased if the brain was not? Can the immortal soul suffer from derangement? Is the immaterial spirit liable to disease and decay? For, if so, would it not be a fair deduction that death also might be the culminating point of such an abnormal condition? Then, what would become of the supposed immortality?

Dr. T. Cromwell, in his work upon *The Soul and a Future Life*, says: "Immaterialists have dwelt much on cases of considerable, though always partial, injury to the brain, with which no perceptible mental disorder was associated. But to this there are adequate replies. 'Many instances are on record in which extensive disease has occurred in one hemisphere (of the cerebrum) so as almost entirely to destroy it, without any obvious injury to the mental powers, or any interruption of the influence of the mind upon the body. But there is no case on record of any severe lesion of both hemispheres, in which morbid phenomena were not evident during life' (Carpenter's *Human Physiology*, p. 775). 'In every instance where there exists any corresponding lesion or disease on each side of the brain, there we are sure to find some express injury or impairment of the mental functions' (Sir H. Holland's *Chapters on Mental Physiology*, p. 184). 'There are no cases on record in which the mental faculties have remained undisturbed when the disorganisation has extended to both sides of the brain' (Sully on *The Human Brain*, p. 349; 1836). Dr. Maudsley, in his *Physiology of Mind*, p. 126, observes that he has come to the assured conviction that mind does not exist in nature apart from brain; all his experience of it is in connection with brain. Lawrence, in his *Lectures on Comparative Anatomy*, p. 112, says: 'I firmly believe that the various forms of insanity, that all the affections comprehended under the general term of mental derangement, are only evidences of cerebral affections, disordered manifestations of those organs whose healthy action produces the phenomena called mental—in short, symptoms of diseased brain' (quoted by Cromwell, p. 97).

The Doctor accuses me of ignorance because I spoke of scars in connection with anatomy, which, he says, belong to the province of physiology. Let me tell my learned opponent, who informs me that he has "successfully passed examinations in two universities," that it would have been still more correct to have relegated scars to the region of pathology, or the wound which caused the scar to the domain of surgery. Anatomy is a general term applied to the human body, and is not always limited to a cut-and-dried description of the bones, muscles, nerves, etc.

Strictly speaking, the word anatomy is derived from a Greek word which signifies to cut up; but it is used by all persons—except, perhaps, first-year students in a medical school—in a much broader sense. And no man who is not bent on hair-splitting would have accused me of ignorance in consequence of my applying it to scars. Then we are told that sometimes scars disappear. That is true, but not always, for I have now a scar upon my forehead that has been visible for over forty years. In my debate with the Doctor I gave scientific reasons why scars could remain, notwithstanding the many changes the body undergoes. But the disappearance of some scars does not in any way prove the Doctor's contention. Ideas sometimes disappear, especially late in life. Memory fails almost invariably at advanced age, and even childishness supervenes. If that be not due to brain decay, then to what is it due?

CHARLES WATTS.

### LYING FOR JESUS.

"Blessed are ye when all men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."—*Jesus.*

If Jesus had the gift of prophecy, no doubt this blessing was intended for the infidels, who for Jesus' sake have been reviled, persecuted, and had all manner of evil said against them falsely, by Christian ministers, who do it all for Christ's sake, as they say, though it is evident that their main motive is the money they can make by it. Jesus must have foreseen that this class of preachers would arise, that they would have no scruples about making false assertions for his sake; and, being an infidel himself to the religion of his country, he knew how it was: he knew that the scribes and pharisees were a class that belonged to no time or people, but sprung like weeds from the soil, the natural product of human creeds and human selfishness.

One of this class of preachers lately held forth in a Christian church—commonly called Campbellite—in Austin, as the star evangelist of a week's revival meeting. I know an infidel who attended that meeting. As he is sufficiently ashamed of the act, I will not mention his name; but he was persuaded to attend by a pious brother of the church, who assured him that he would hear a very able preacher, one of the ablest in that church, and that he would consider it a personal favor to him if the said infidel would go.

The sermon was largely devoted to infidelity, but there was no statement of the infidel's argument, nor was there argument on the other side. It was just another case of reviling and saying all manner of evil against the infidel, falsely, for Jesus' sake. There was a rehash of all the old lies about the horrors of the infidel's death-bed, and a story about an infidel who carried a rabbit's foot in his pocket for luck. The story may or may not be true—most likely the latter; but the superstitious infidel had, at least, a tangible object upon which to hang his superstition, while the preacher hung his upon spooks that have no existence whatever. I never knew an infidel who believed in the occult virtue of a rabbit's foot, but when I look around the world and see the crowds of people who give credence to the silly stories of the Bible, and the efficacy of lamb's blood to wash out the stain of evil deeds, I can easily conceive it possible that there may be a man who has outgrown the latter superstition, but has not yet evolved so far as to give up his rabbit's foot. The last seems to be only a silly superstition, harmless, at least; but the Christian religion is not only as silly as the other, but it is also the most malignant scourge that has ever afflicted mankind.

The preacher declared that he could tell an infidel as far as he could see him, that he could go through the audience and pick out any infidel that might be there, by the droop of his lip, and the drawing down of the corners of his mouth; he could walk the streets of Austin and tell every man he met, whether he was an infidel, by the same signs.

The infidel looked around the audience, and mentally concluded that, if that sign was true, he must have gotten into an infidel meeting. Four-fifths of the crowd bore the marks, and those in the amen corner all had it in

what might be called an excessive degree. "It may be true," he said, "and these people are just ready to weep over the ignorance and folly of the preacher, as exhibited in his speech. I can imagine a sensible, level-headed infidel feeling very sad over such an exhibition, though ordinarily a cheerful man with a smile upon his face."

When the infidel got home from the meeting, the corners of his mouth were all right, as usual; but there was a mild look of disgust on his face, and when asked by his friends about the meeting his answer was: "Sold again!"

Anybody may be fooled once, but he is a fool, indeed, if he allows himself to be taken in the second time by the same trick; what, then, shall I think of myself when I have been fooled over and over again, at least half-a-dozen times, by itinerant, mountebank evangelists, who come to town, advertising that they have a special mission to convert infidels, who are specially invited to attend their meetings. Then comes some pious, calf-faced youth—who knows no more about infidelity than my puppy does about conic sections—with an urgent personal appeal to attend the meeting. Remembering former experiences, I mildly suggest to the young man that he is deluded by the blustering advertisement of the evangelist; that he don't want any real infidels at his meetings; that he is only talking for the effect it may have upon green Christians, who swallow it all, fully believing that he will convert all the infidels in the world if they will only listen to him. But, the young man says, this preacher is not an ordinary man. His fame is as wide as the country, as an eloquent speaker, a deeply learned man, and a profound reasoner.

It is not necessary to repeat the whole of the conversation. Having no engagement for the evening, I allow myself to be led "like a lamb to the slaughter," and placed in a conspicuous place among the sheep in the pews. I hear the same old whining prayers, and the same out-of-tune-and-time singing that I can remember so well in the days of my childhood, that even then, when my ears were uncultivated, used to grate harshly upon them. And then I heard the same old pulpit lies over again that I had heard so many times before: the awful deaths of infidels; the despair of Voltaire, and his declaration that he was going to hell; though, if there is any truth in the Christian religion, he needn't go there without he wanted to—a few words of assent to the hocus-pocus of the priest and a little holy water would have atoned for all the wit and wisdom he had uttered for the benefit of poor, abused humanity. But, perhaps, he meant to say it was his choice to go to hell; many a wise man would make that choice, rather than go with the crowd of rascals and imbeciles that are wearing crowns of glory in "Kingdom Come."

It is not necessary to repeat the whole nauseous dose of ignorance and superstition; suffice it to say, it was the regular stereotyped display of malice and mendacity. Everybody who has gone to church half-a-dozen times has heard it. It is not intended for infidels, but for those Christians who do not know what infidelity is. It is to show them how easy it is to demolish infidels when they are not allowed to reply to the dunderhead preacher who abuses them.

I noticed in the newspaper this morning that a certain preacher in Houston was going to preach upon the subject of "Lying, in all its Varieties." I do not know the preacher, nor what are his particular hobbies; but it is safe to say that his sermon will contain no reference to pulpit lies about infidels. It would be worth a trip to Houston to hear him, if he would tell the truth about his professional brethren. Upon that subject he might preach for a week without exhausting the subject. A full account of the lies of the clergy about infidelity would make a work as voluminous as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or the *Lives of the Saints*—which last work might, perhaps, be largely included in it.

The more I think of it the larger grows the subject that the Rev. ———, Houston gentleman, has taken to preach upon—"Lying, in all its Varieties." Surely the one variety of lies, those that are told for Jesus' sake, would be enough to occupy all his time. St. Paul congratulated himself that the grace of God abounded through his lies; and he thought nobody had any right to call him a sinner on account of his lies. This example of the great founder of Christianity has been followed by the clergy from his day to the present time, and every little whipper-snapper of

a preacher seems to think he is making the grace of God to abound by lying about infidels. Lying comes easy and natural to him, but whether the grace of God abounds in consequence of it is problematical; the grace of God cannot be a very desirable thing to have if it is promoted by such means.

What a blessing it would be if the grace of God would only make ministers truthful, honest, and chaste; if it would so fill their hearts as to crowd the Devil out of them; but, unfortunately, such is not the case. To a worldly man it would seem that as soon as a person gets the grace of God in him he begins to act like the devil; and this leads one to suspect that either God and the Devil are acting in co-partnership, or that the Christians have, by mistake, substituted one for the other. The co-partnership would seem to be the most probable, otherwise why should God tell us that we might serve the Devil all our lives, and then, by believing and being baptised, make ourselves acceptable to God, who would give the saints a special holiday in heaven in honor of our arrival in that blessed mansion in the sky? Jesus tells us that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

But, seriously, why don't these ministers of grace try to find out something about Infidelity? Why don't theological institutes teach something of the scientific discoveries of the last two hundred years? Why don't Christians study geography, geology, astronomy, physiology, and all the modern sciences, and thoughtfully compare all they find in them with the Bible and the teachings of the old dogmatists of the dark ages of the world? Why don't they read what the Infidels have to say for themselves, and the reasons they have to give for the faith that is not in them? But no; they are afraid to do anything of that sort. They confess that they are afraid it may "weaken their faith" (and bless their souls, so it will), and they have been taught that their faith is to be kept as much more precious than the truth, and shut their eyes to all the evidences of it, as the ostrich hides his head in the sand so that he may not be convinced that the hunter is after him.

The greatest sin a Christian can commit—in the estimation of the priests—is to examine candidly the grounds of his faith, with a conscientious desire to know the truth. The saddest thing that can be said of human nature is, that so many people do not see the absurdity of priestly imposition.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—Independent Pulpit.

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

(Concluded from page 293.)

THE "design argument" fails also when we examine it in the light of reason. The fundamental axiom of Theism is that the universe is finite. If this be so, the existence of God cannot be established. For the universe is finite, and from a finite we cannot deduce an "Infinite." If God exists, why did he create the universe? Why did the unchangeable God change his mind and become a "creator" six thousand years ago? If the existence of the universe was necessary, why was it created so recently? If it was unnecessary, why was it created at all? The creation of the universe either added to goodness or it did not. If it added to goodness, then God could not be all-good before he created it. If it did not add to goodness, then God could not be all-wise in creating that which did not add to goodness. The very manner in which the "design argument" is often stated clearly shows its fallacy. It is said that God "adapts means to an end." But this is a sign of weakness, not of power. Why do we use means to an end? The answer is, Because we cannot accomplish the end without the means. If we could, we would not be troubled with them. Will any Theist say this of God? If God be all-powerful, he could have realised his ends without the means. If this be so, where was the wisdom in employing them?

The metaphysical arguments in favor of Theism are almost as various as the minds of theologians. This fact alone is a sufficient reason for doubting their validity. It is argued that the universe is composed of parts; and as "composition is limitation," therefore the universe is limited in extent. It is further maintained that, if the

universe be finite in extent, it must also be finite in duration, and therefore must have had a beginning, and, consequently, a "Creator." This argument, under the garb of logical precision, does nothing more than fill the ears with words for which the mind has no corresponding ideas. It proceeds upon the assumption that a finite mind can know the infinite. It also assumes that the mind can form an idea of infinite duration. The infinite, if it exist, cannot be an object of thought. A fundamental law of all thought is distinction. Whatever we think of we distinguish from ourselves. If this be true, the "Infinite" is beyond the sphere of human cognition. For, if we distinguish the "Infinite," we limit it, and it consequently ceases to exist.

The creation of the universe is unthinkable. Something originating out of nothing is beyond our grasping power. If the universe was created out of something, then that something must have been material, else it could not give rise to a material existence like the universe. How could a *spiritual* God create a *material* universe? The more closely Theism is examined, the more difficult becomes its defence. Theism obliges us to believe that a deity existed everywhere before he created anywhere; that this deity eternally knew all things, which things only began to exist recently; that he occupied all space, and yet found room for the universe when he created it; that, being omnipotent, he can do all things, and that, being all-good, he can do no evil; that, being an intelligent existence, he possesses judgment, and that, being eternally all-wise, he does not require that faculty; that, being infinitely merciful, God must always forgive; and that, being infinitely just, he will always punish, and never forgive.

In conclusion, a philosophy the teachings of which this is a sample ought to be dismissed from men's minds as a rational solution of the material cosmos. The Atheist starts from the undeniable fact that the universe is. He believes that it is eternal in substance, varying in mode. He seeks to discover the laws of that nature of which he is a part. By investigating natural phenomena he knows that he will gain knowledge, the application of which to the affairs of life will make brighter, happier, and nobler men than all the inane speculations of theology, from St. Paul to Cardinal Newman, have succeeded in doing. Theism is chargeable with having darkened men's minds with the monstrous error that everything happens for the best. No statement could be more untrue or more dangerous. If God exists, the present condition of the world must be in accordance with his will; for, if he desired to alter it, nothing could withstand his omnipotence. It follows from this that every reformer who endeavors to change the unfair conditions of life is doing so in opposition to the will of the alleged deity. Every man who desires to clear the world of pain, misery, and crime gives the lie to the Theistic assertion that all things happen for the best. Though Atheism does not teach men to look beyond the skies for the abode of their future happiness, it takes their heaven from the clouds and places it in their midst, and says unto them: "The time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here." Not believing in God, what has the Atheist to fear at death? Instead of making men fear death, Atheism gives men a courage that even annihilation cannot rob them of. Nothing is surer than that all human kind are visited by death. The only manly course, then, is to submit to the inevitable. Far better at death to be resolved into the various chemical elements of which we are composed, and to mingle with the rippling waters, the tinted flowers, and the golden sunshine, than to twang a harp in praise of a being who has created a hell for the vast majority of our brothers.

P. SHAUGHNESSY.

This is philosophy: to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last.—W. S. LUNDOR.

Physics and metaphysics are the natural enemies of religion, and therefore she is the enemy of those sciences, always trying to suppress them, as they are ever trying to undermine her. It is ridiculous to talk of peace and concord between them; it is a *bellum ad internecionem*. Religions are children of ignorance, and do not long survive their mother.—Schopenhauer.

BIBLE FICTIONS.

II.—ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH.

In Genesis xx. we have a story of Abraham denying his wife. According to his account, that patriarch came to live in Gerar, where Abimelech was king, and, fearing that men might slay him in order to take his beloved Sarah, he asked that lady to call him her brother, and he himself spoke of her as his sister. The result was that Abimelech, believing Sarah to be an unmarried woman, sent and had her brought into his house. Abraham's God, however, watched over her, and warned Abimelech that night in a dream that the woman he had taken was another man's wife, and commanded him to restore her to her husband. Fortunately for Abimelech, though the lovely Sarah was sleeping under his roof, he had not come near her, so no harm was done. In the morning the king sent for Abraham, and reproved him for his lying and deceit, whereupon the latter, to justify his conduct, said that Sarah was his half-sister. Abimelech then, after restoring the wife, presented Abraham with sheep, oxen, men-servants, maid-servants, and a thousand pieces of silver.

Now, this occurrence is stated to have taken place after "the Lord" had promised a son to Abraham, on which occasion Sarah was ninety years of age (Genesis xvii. 17). Yet the writer of this veracious history represents this woman of ninety as so attractive in appearance that men who saw her were likely to be ensnared by her beauty, and he actually makes a king place her in his harem.

But we have not yet got to the end of the story. After receiving Abimelech's presents, Abraham, it is said, "prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maid-servants, and they bare children" (xx. 17). From this we are to understand that up to that time all the women-folk of Abimelech's household had been barren, and that Abraham, in gratitude for the return of his wife and the king's substantial gifts, prayed for the removal of this barrenness. The next verse, however, damns the whole story. Abraham prayed for the women of Abimelech's household, we are told, because "the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech *because of Sarah, Abraham's wife*" (xx. 18). Now, Sarah was only in Abimelech's house for one night, and was restored to her husband the next morning. Yet in these few hours all the women of Abimelech's house are represented as having become barren. It would seem that the writer of this narrative thought that women were in the habit of giving birth to children every hour, and that Sarah's coming into the house caused these interesting labors to cease. The inspired writer does not appear to have had the sense of a child. The writer also, it would seem, saw no injustice in punishing the females of Abimelech's house for what happened through Abraham's own falsehood.

The whole story, then, amounts to this: That in a country and climate where women reach maturity at an early age, and appear old and faded at middle age, the King of Gerar, who, if he desired another wife, had only to choose from amongst the most comely young women in his kingdom, was fascinated by the charms of a wrinkled old woman of ninety, and so sent and took her away from her so-called brother. The story was probably invented in order to show that the Jewish God protected Abraham in all his acts, however foolish or insane.

The conduct of Abraham in this affair does not, however, come out well. Both he and his wife knew perfectly well for what purpose Sarah was wanted; yet he allowed her to be conducted to Abimelech's house without speaking a single word to prevent what seemed certain dishonor. Sarah, too, does not appear to have been much concerned. She could not know that the king would keep aloof from her, or that he should be warned concerning her in a dream. She herself gave him no intimation that she was another man's wife. The author of the story evidently gave no thought to these matters. To him all was well that ended well.

Shortly after this occurrence Sarah gave birth to a son, and the day upon which the child was weaned was celebrated by a feast. Just after this feast, we are told, Abimelech came to Abraham to make a covenant with him. "And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the captain of his host, spake unto Abraham saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: now, therefore,

swear unto me by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me . . . . but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee. . . . And Abraham said, I will swear . . . . and they two made a covenant" (Genesis xxi. 22-27). Thus, instead of Abraham, who was a stranger in a strange land (inhabited by a fierce and warlike people), being in need of the protection of Abimelech, the writer represents the latter as believing that his welfare and prosperity were dependent upon his being on friendly terms with Abraham.

Time went on, and Abraham's son Isaac grew to manhood. When forty years of age, Isaac became the husband of Rebekah, and when he reached sixty his two sons, Esau and Jacob, were born (Genesis xxv. 20-26). In process of time these sons also grew to manhood, and shortly after the affair of the birth-right an event happened which is thus recorded: "And there was a famine in the land . . . . and Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar. . . . And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: and the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister; for he feared to say 'My wife,' lest, he said, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah: because she was fair to look upon" (Genesis xxvi. 1-7).

In this case Abimelech did not take Rebekah into his house, as he discovered in time that she was Isaac's wife. But he sent for her husband, and rebuked him in the same way as he did Abraham some ninety years before. Rebekah at this time had been a wife for half a century or more, and must have reached the allotted age of three-score and ten. There was, therefore, no occasion for fear that men who saw her might fall in love with her. But, as must be obvious to all, this story was suggested to the writer by that of Abraham's denial of his wife in the same place. The writer varies the narrative a little, that is all.

Thus, if we believe the inspired writers, Abraham, when at Gerar, called his ninety-years-old wife his sister because he feared her beauty might endanger his life. Nearly a century later his son Isaac visited the same place and did the same thing. Both were reproved for their falsehood by the same king, Abimelech, who thus enjoyed an extraordinarily long reign. Of course, Christian commentators and apologists tell us that there were two Abimelechs, one probably the son or grandson of the other. This, however, according to the Bible narrative, was not the case. The author of the history of Isaac copied not only the story of Abraham's denial of his wife, but also that of Abimelech making a covenant with that patriarch.

Says this veracious writer: "Then Abimelech went to him [*i.e.*, Isaac] from Gerar, and Ahuzzath his friend, and Phicol, the captain of his host. . . . And they said, We saw plainly that the Lord was with thee. . . . Let there be now an oath betwixt us. . . . and let us make a covenant with thee; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good. . . . And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another" (Genesis xxvi. 26-31).

There cannot be the smallest doubt that this event in the "history" of Isaac was taken from that already noticed in the life of Abraham, or *vice versa*. In both accounts Abimelech, king of Gerar, comes of his own accord to make a covenant. His reason for doing so is the same in both cases—"God is with thee in all that thou doest," "We saw plainly that the Lord was with thee." Abimelech is on both occasions accompanied by the same man—Phicol, the captain of his army. That there was nearly a century between the time of Abimelech's covenant with Abraham and that of his league with Isaac did not apparently occur to the writer of the second story, or, if it did, the fact did not trouble him. People were not critical in those days; they readily believed anything—as many Christians do now. In this narrative, as in that relating to Jacob, it will, I think, be admitted, we have had to do, not with history, but fable.

VERITAS.

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Tommy—"Paw, is worms worth more than sparrows?" Paw—"I guess not. Why?" Tommy—"Then what makes the Sunday-school teacher tell us that man was worth more than a hundred sparrows, and the preacher tell us that we was nothing but worms?"

## VANINI IN ENGLAND.

THOUGH decidedly inferior to Giordano Bruno, Giulio Cesare Vanini resembles that great hero and martyr in representing the spirit of revolt against Christian theology, in the wandering life he led, and in his tragic martyrdom. Their lives and deaths alike display the attitude of the Church to Freethought. Born at Taurisano, South-Eastern Italy, in 1585, he attended the University of Naples, and took a doctor's degree in 1606. Philosophy and the physical sciences were his favorite studies, and he acknowledged as his masters Baconthorpe and Pomponazzi, probably coming under the influence of these philosophers at Padua, where he graduated in theology. He became a Carmelite friar, but, like Bruno, soon outgrew the cloister, and entered on a wandering life, visiting Switzerland, France, Holland, and Germany. Father Garasse\* declared Vanini set out to convert the world to Atheism. But this is pure nonsense. He returned to Italy in 1611, but the Inquisition was on his track, and he took refuge at Venice, whence he came to England with a friend and an introduction from our Ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton, to Archbishop Abbot, as two Carmelite friars, whom, he understood, wished to be Protestants.

The visit of Vanini to England, mentioned in Vanini's works, was in 1878 elucidated by Signor Raffaele Palumbo† from State papers in our Record Office. Mr. Richard Copley Christie, whose work on *Etienne Dolet, the Martyr of the Renaissance*, is the standard biography of that great Freethinker, in the current number of the *English Historical Review* gives a fuller account of Vanini's English visit, from the correspondence between Sir Dudley Carleton and John Chamberlain, found in the *Court and Times of James I.*, and the correspondence of Archbishop Abbot.‡ It appears that Vanini and his friend were induced to publicly abjure Catholicism, and they were received into the Reformed Italian Church in the chapels of Mercers' Hall on July 5, 1612. The proceedings made some stir, and we may be sure were very distasteful to the authorities at Rome. Their movements were henceforth carefully watched. Vanini at first was located at Lambeth Palace, while his friend, Giovanni Maria de Franchis, was sent to York. Like Bruno, who visited England twenty-eight years previously, Vanini visited Oxford. Mr. Christie surmises that, had he obtained a benefice instead of perishing at the stake at Toulouse "he might have lived and died a member of the Church of England"! But he soon outgrew his welcome. The narrow-minded Archbishop discovered that Vanini read Aretin and Macchiavelli, and was considerably scandalised thereby. Both considered themselves deceived. Vanini discovered that the freedom he expected was not to be had in the Church of England. It was in the very year of his visit that Bartholomew Legate was burnt at Smithfield, and Edward Wightman at Lichfield, for anti-Trinitarianism. Vanini was kept an entire dependent, in very straitened circumstances. Small wonder if he desired to return, and accepted the offer of Catholics to obtain his pardon from Rome; and it was said of him, "The dog has returned to his vomit." The Archbishop not only withdrew his protection, but proceeded to deal with him after the methods of the English Inquisition, the Court of High Commission, in which Abbot presided, *ex officio*.

He was imprisoned in the Gatehouse at Lambeth for a fortnight, and then brought before the Ecclesiastical Commission. There he was censured, excommunicated, and sentenced to imprisonment during the King's pleasure; and the help of the temporal sword was implored "that he might be banished to the Bermudas, there to dig for his living." Fortunately for Vanini, or perhaps unfortunately, for the Bermudas might have been better than the flames at Toulouse, he made his escape, probably through the good offices of Morari, chaplain to the Venice Ambassador.

Mr. Christie says: "He was certainly disappointed with the result of his visit to England, but in neither of his printed works is there an unfriendly word relating to this country,

or to those with whom he came in contact here. On the few occasions that he mentions England in his writings it is always with goodwill, and sometimes with admiration. . . . Even when he speaks of his imprisonment he utters no word of complaint." Vanini went from England to France, where he published the works which drew attention to his heresy, and led to his martyrdom at Toulouse in his thirty-fourth year.

(To be concluded.)

## WHERE IS GOD?

WHEN early man, impelled by fate,  
Pursued his kind with savage hate,  
Made slaves of some, and others ate,  
Where wert thou, O God?

When devastating robber bands  
Invaded peaceful, fruitful lands,  
And steeped in blood their ruthless hands,  
Where wert thou, O God?

When priests and kings and other knaves  
Made human minds and bodies slaves,  
And gloated o'er their victims' graves,  
Where wert thou, O God?

When humbugs quote from lying books  
By Moses and by other "crooks,"  
And trade on fools' belief in spooks,  
Where art thou, O God?

When pious preachers loudly yell  
Of endless fires and tortures fell,  
And frighten feeble folk with hell,  
Where art thou, O God?

When British bullies send their might  
To foreign lands to steal and fight,  
And make their strength their only right,  
Where art thou, O God?

When starving children vainly cry  
Beneath a helpless mother's eye;  
When foodless sparrows fall and die,  
Where art thou, O God?

Though smiling fields and flow'rs are bright,  
And sunlit eyes express delight,  
If one poor wretch has lost his sight,  
Where art thou, O God?

Though hills and dales are decked in spring,  
And sighing woods prepare to sing,  
If pain has reached one living thing,  
Where art thou, O God?

When feathered songsters eat their fill  
And voice their joy with silv'ry trill,  
We ask, in name of those they kill,  
Where art thou, O God?

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## Obituary.

It is my painful duty to record the death of an old Bilston Freethinker, Charles Prince, who died on May 8, and was interred in Bilston Cemetery on May 11, in his 60th year. Knowing some days before of his certain death, he calmly awaited its arrival. Asked if he was afraid to die, he smilingly answered: "No, I have lived a man." The Secular Burial Service was well read by Mr. A. Holland. It caused two gentlemen to ask me for information about a party owning such a Service.—S. WALKER.

It is with deep sorrow that I record the death on Wednesday, the 8th inst., of my little son, Harold Ingersoll, at the age of one year and four months. The funeral, which took place on Saturday last, was attended, at my request, by Mr. C. Cohen, who delivered at the graveside an address remarkable for its quiet and unaffected eloquence.—W. PAYNE (Manchester).

\* In *La Doctrine Curieuse*, 1623.

† *Giulio Cesare Vanini e i suoi Tempi*. Napoli, 1878. My copy is inscribed: "To Charles Bradlaugh, with the author's kind regards."

‡ Nineteen letters in the Record Office refer to Vanini's visit, of which Signor Palumbo only refers to ten.

## ACID DROPS.

Dr. R. F. HORTON is one of the big wigs of Nonconformity in London. He preaches at Hampstead to what we understand is a well-to-do congregation; and of course he preaches without any liability to correction. In the course of his sermon on Sunday, May 5, he delivered himself as follows: "The love of money is the cause of Atheism. Atheism has never been accepted as a creed except in great wealthy societies, where men have allowed the love of money to be the rule of life—accepting it as a motive, praising it as a virtue. It is the love of money in England to-day which feeds all the unbelief."

Dr. Horton deserves a medal for this discovery. We see it all now. Wright and Hobbs and Jabez Balfour, and that sort of people, are Atheists. They would have been members of the National Secular Society, only they joined the Church by mistake. On the other hand, the poor men who labor at Free-thought propaganda are really Christians, only they have somehow got on the wrong label. We thank Dr. Horton for this luminous explanation. Yes, it is all clear now.

God is no respecter of persons, and Providence is no respecter of buildings. The beautiful chapel attached to All Hallows College, near Dublin, has just been completely destroyed by fire. The city fire brigade fought against the flames, but Providence was too many for them. The chapel's days were numbered, and it had to go. In future it would save fire brigades some trouble if Providence would furnish a list of places it is absolutely bent on destroying.

"General" Booth appeared at the annual May meeting of the Salvation Army and held forth on his Social Scheme, which he grandiloquently called "the most gigantic success of any voluntary beneficent scheme that had ever been propounded to the British public." There was no more likelihood of his Social Scheme stopping than there was of the Bank of England. Still, we guess the Bank of England won't stop first.

The great boss and the little bosses of the Salvation Army don't explain why they are so persistently accused of "sweating." Booth says it is the fundamental principle of his Social Scheme that those it is designed to benefit should earn the larger part of the cost of their own regeneration. But it is alleged that the Army often makes an unfair profit out of the labor of men in its Shelters; that they are kept working long hours for common food, poor accommodation, and the veriest trifle of pocket money. This allegation, of course, may be perfectly untrue; but, considering the frequency with which it is made, it deserves some other answer than absolute silence.

Robert Westguard, a painter, gives, in *London* for May 9, his experience at Booth's Farm Colony. He says: "I was there sixteen weeks, and worked for a fortnight for no wages at all. Then I received a grant of 1s. 6d. per week; two weeks after that I had my grant raised to 2s. per week; six weeks after this my grant was raised again to 2s. 6d. per week, and of this sum I received one-third in cash weekly, the other being placed to my account. I think this proves that I am not a lazy man. If I had worked for a man outside, I should have earned about £20; but at Hadleigh Colony I only earned £1 10s., and out of that I had to pay 1d. weekly out of every shilling I earned; for washing and for soap 1d. per week, whether I got the soap or not, and for the sixteen weeks I was there I only received 2½d. worth of soap, and 1½d. worth of blacking, although I was stopped a 1d. each week for the sixteen weeks."

All this time the Guardians of Camberwell were paying Booth 5s. a week for him. Thus Booth had £4 down, out of which he paid less than £1 10s., getting for it £20 worth of work. William Booth is as much entitled to the designation, Napoleon of Finance, as Jabez Balfour.

This farm colonist also complains that he had to sleep in a dirty bed, and was compelled to leave through vermin. And this is the scheme that was to redeem darkest England. It looks more like a contrivance to further exploit the workers for the benefit of Booth.

The dangers of Spiritualistic séances to weak-minded people have been shown by a sad occurrence at Gubbio, in Italy. A lady named Manolava, the wife of a professor in a public school in the town, was persuaded that she could, by attending a séance, communicate with the spirit of her deceased son. The "medium" made certain preparations, and when the moment came for the spirit to appear flames and sulphurous fumes were seen issuing from a black cabinet. The lady felt so persuaded that her son was suffering for his sins in the lower regions that she became

stark, staring mad, and it is thought she will not recover. The medium is to be prosecuted.—*Daily News* (May 10).

The Hindoos of Poona have petitioned the Government against the prohibition of music in the streets of that city after certain hours. Noticing the immunity of the Salvation Army, they say that theirs is religious music, and ordinary rules should not apply to them.

Mrs. Besant, like Mr. Judge, has a Mahatma of her own, called "Master Morya." A gentleman writes to the *Westminster Gazette* from Dublin, under the appropriate signature of "Fudge," stating that "Morya" is an Irish word, meaning something like "Tell that to the marines."

The *Rangoon Times* appears to be a very liberal paper. It inserts freethinking articles on such subjects as Christianity in Japan, the Revolt of Christian Karens in Burmah, Religious Revivals, Religious Lunacy, etc., and it even copies from our paper—it says "from a London weekly"—some lines on Mrs. Besant's transformations, entitled "Transmigration Up to Date."

One writer in the *Rangoon Times* calls attention to the fact that the pastor of one church could get no congregation because the curate's wife organised a picnic to a pagoda to witness the heathen festivities of a Burmese feast.

Another writer, commenting on this, says: "Why, Mr. Editor, on a certain Friday in Advent, the very Venerable Archdeacon Chard himself was among the audience at the Assembly Rooms to witness the high kicking and listen to the comic song-singing of the Snow White Minstrels. This, doubtless, was the lady's precedent."

Yet another writer in the *Rangoon Times* declares "that the Church of England clergy will not sit at the same table with Eurasians. The natives they cherish; they are our 'brothers.' It is the poor *Cousins* whom they will not see as fellow men. Why not? Because they themselves would lose caste with the high and mighty few who, under no circumstances whatever, would associate with Eurasians though these few have, as regards their men, no objection to keeping up the supply of that much-abused community."

The Rev. H. T. Biscoe, rector of Great Greenford, Middlesex, has been charged at the Brentford Police-court with having appropriated to his own use £493, being charity money of which he was trustee. The money was left by Mr. S. Bennett, of Ealing, in 1856, and invested in consols, the dividends of which were to be distributed every Christmas among twelve poor families. It is alleged that Parson Biscoe, who became sole trustee in 1892, regarded himself as twelve poor families rolled into one, and sold the stock and paid the proceeds into his own bank account, which is now overdrawn. Prisoner was undefended, but the case was adjourned, as the prosecutor on behalf of the Treasury stated that other charges might be preferred. The case will be tried at the June Sessions at the Central Criminal Court.

The Rev. Dr. A. G. McAuley, Presbyterian pastor at Philadelphia for forty-one years, has been proved to have been living a double life, visiting resorts of an unsavory character in disguise.

At the Liverpool Assizes William Browne, described as a Baptist minister, was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for bigamy. Browne pleaded guilty to two charges. In one case prisoner married a Miss Marchant at Acton, on the representation that he was a clergyman of the Church of England. She had £500, with which they went to New York, where prisoner abandoned her, taking the bulk of the money. She had since become insane in consequence.

The Rev. H. G. B. Lemoine has been committed to prison, in default of bail, on a charge of obtaining fish and game under false pretences from dealers at Norwich.

The girl Emma Hall, who belonged to Birmingham, and disappeared in company with the Rev. Jonathan Bell of the Blackheath district, Worcestershire, has come to a mysterious death, and the persons arrested in connection therewith have a number of letters signed "Jon."

The Rockford court has given judgment against Christ Schweinfurth in favor of G. W. Coudrey, who pursued the prophet and imitator of Jesus for alienation of his wife's affections. No defence was made, the reason given being, "Christians should not defend the attacks of men, but should go like the lamb to the slaughter." This, without doubt, will be followed by a long term of imprisonment, and the probable closing of the Rockford religious harem forever.

Converting the Jews appears to be a very good line of business. We believe there are several Societies on the job. One of them held its annual meeting on Monday evening. Its name is the Barbican Mission to the Jews, and its secretary is Mr. Christlieb T. Lipshytz. Its income was reported to have increased, and there was much blowing of trumpets by Archdeacon Sinclair, who presided, and who made the funny observation that "Jews already went two-thirds of the way with Christians." But what we do not see anything about in the report is the number of converts. The money is spent, the secretary is satisfied, the trumpets are blown, but where are the converted Jews?

The Church claims that its opposition to divorce is all on account of its *protégés*, the women. But, despite the difficulty of having to prove cruelty as well as adultery, the majority of cases for divorce are brought by women; and in America, where divorce is easier, 65.8 per cent. of all the divorces in the United States during twenty years were asked for by women who found their husbands unendurable. Thus women's interests appear to lie in the direction of easier, freer divorce. If the Church really holds otherwise, let the women themselves have a voice in the matter.

The Rev. Mr. Matley, a Brooklyn Baptist, is reported as asking: "Did you ever read in the Bible of a woman being in heaven?" Certainly the angels were all males. But Mr. Matley must have forgotten Rev. xii. 1: "There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun." She must have been a mighty woman, and warmly clad. Yet we grant that, according to the account, the appearance of this solitary big woman was a great wonder.

Mr. Matley went on to say: "I don't believe there is a woman there now, or ever shall be. They will go back into their original state, whence they were taken by the Creator. When Christ said that there were no marriages in heaven, but that all should be as the angels, I believe he meant that there were no such creatures as women in that world of blessedness and song. Women are made for the glory of man, and man for the glory of God." Mr. Matley seems to suppose that women will all become spare ribs again. His heaven crowded with male murderers and no women must be a delightful place.

An Australian poet, who has been pondering the proceedings of Providence, bursts out as under:—

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders none can tell;  
Sometimes he makes a silent move,  
Sometimes he raises hell.

The Lord has been again riding on a storm in South Dakota, with the result of destroying three schools, at each of which a number of children were killed and injured. Two of the children, just as they left the school-house, were caught by the wind and dashed with such violence against a wire fence that they were killed on the spot. Fifty-two persons are now known to have been killed in Iowa alone, and the loss of life is estimated by some to be far greater.

Thirteen hundred Japanese were swept off by the outbreak of cholera at the Pescadores Islands. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

The Puritans have long quoted against fashionable ladies the text in that dirty old prophet, Ezekiel, xiii. 18: "Thus saith the Lord, woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes." Ladies, however, do not sew their own sleeves, and they are as wide as ever. They are not new, however, and in 1639 the authorities of the town of Dedham, Massachusetts, enacted that no one should wear sleeves more than half an ell in the widest part.

The Rev. Father Stick, of Pana, Illinois, is reported as saying: "There are members of my congregation who allow their daughters to go to high-toned balls and dance in full dress—no dress at all. Only indecent Roman Catholics, Protestants, and heretics go to such places. . . . I wish from the bottom of my heart that the girls who attend these places may be ruined. I hope that every boy and man who attends them will become diseased and rot, and that the generation will soon be exterminated." Who says the pulpit has lost its vigor, the old serpent its venom?

A Fort Worth telegram says that Moody's congregation were singing "All hail the power of Jesu's name!" when the roof crashed down upon them. They had prayed for rain, and were rejoicing over its coming. Only one woman is dead so far as the result of the accident, but a large number are seriously injured.

Mr. Symes wants to know why the Jews do not unite with Freethinkers in the work of exposing Christian superstition. He says: "The Jews do not need to be told that

they never got the least justice from Christians so long as Christians could refuse it. No, nor will their brethren in Russia and other lands. It is impossible for a Christian to grant justice to an opponent. It must be wrung out of him. And the Jews in free countries are very remiss in their duty not to help to break up the horrible superstition which persecutes their race wherever that is possible. The only cure for persecution is the exposure of religion and the destruction of its social and political power. True, many Jews are as superstitious as their neighbors; and thousands who are as free from superstition as I am keep up the form of religion and fall in with the old senseless practices, just as if they believed in them. How is it enlightened Jews fail to see that by keeping up their old superstitions they encourage Christians to continue theirs? If they properly respected their own race, they would openly renounce all superstition, make war upon the monster that persecutes and insults them, and help to destroy all persecution by destroying the root of it—religion."

In *Light* Mr. Arthur Lillie really does throw light on the proceedings of the Luciferans of France by showing that it represents a remnant of Manicheism. The parody of Catholic rites he compares to the "Feast of Fools," which in the old days was carried on even with episcopal sanction.

Count Paul von Hoensbronck, the Prussian Jesuit, who has been converted to Lutheranism, writes in the *Preussische Jahrbucher*, of Berlin, to show that Catholicism is unable to stem the tide against Socialism and Atheistic Liberalism. He points to Belgium, "the land of cloister and the clergy," as an instance that where Catholicism has had most play there the forces of social revolution are also most rampant.

Colonel Olcott, in the current *Theosophist*, unequivocally gives up, not only the infallibility, but the credibility, of "H. P. B." He says that it is a "monstrous pretence" to say that she was "the transmitter of only genuine messages from the Masters." On the contrary, she was "as human and fallible as either one of us." Of course, he goes on to say, "it does not follow that H. P. B. consciously falsified." Such a statement might involve Colonel Olcott himself in a graver charge than that of credulity. He falls back on "evil influences" and "hypnotic science." For *Theosophists* to write like this of H. P. B. is like Christians admitting the charge of the Jews, that Jesus had a devil.

An evangelist was at Hucknall Torkard on a mission. He came from London. Speaking at an open-air meeting, he said he had been on the road to heaven for twenty years. A voice was heard to say: "Good God! and only got as far as Hucknall!"

According to the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* (May 11), the mind of the Free Presbytery of Inverness is sorely exercised by a relapse into Paganism which is apparent within their bounds. Last Sunday—the first Sunday of May—three thousand persons visited a well on Culloden field, threw a coin into the water, took a drink, and then hung a bit of rag to a tree!

The writer of "Chit Chat," in the same paper, says: "A London correspondent tells me that a Scotch divine, who is up for the 'May meetings,' having got tired of what Macaulay named the 'bray' of Exeter Hall, turned into the Empire Theatre one night about half-past ten, and, whilst walking in the swell promenade, stumbled against his ruling elder. After the first shock of embarrassment, the minister said: 'It's no' for the sake o' the entertainment I've come, or to look at the women, but just to see what this Chant business really means.' 'That's exactly my case,' replied the elder. They adjourned to Gatti's, and were mutually sympathetic on the way."

Sabbath desecration has extended as far north as the Granite City, and the Aberdeen *Evening Gazette* gives a cut representing the astonishment of the Links overseer at an enthusiastic golfer daring to play on Sunday.

Joseph Canning, who murdered Jane Youall in Bermondsey, in his statement made in the dock said: "God is good and merciful, and perhaps I will meet her in the next world, and may the Lord in heaven have mercy on her soul."

The blackguard who uttered that filthy libel on the London Hall of Science, for which the printer and publisher have had to pay damages and costs amounting to £250—of which he has not paid a single *halfpenny*—is circulating a leaflet which states that he has "heard and read much of Atheistic bombast, and their challenges to Almighty God to strike them dead in a given time." This, of course, is another lie. The fellow has never read any such "challenges" in his life. It is really not a case of bad memory; the fellow is simply an unscrupulous liar.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 19, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C. : 7.30, "Riddles of the Sphinx."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 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.

A. DEMPSTER (Glasgow).—The man is an inveterate and reckless liar. It is utterly untrue that he asked Mr. Foote what was the origin of life, and that Mr. Foote said it probably came from some other planet. Mr. Foote has always declared that this idea, which was mooted by a well-known scientist, only puts the problem a step further back.

A. ADAMS (Hull).—Lecture notices should be addressed to the editor.

ALBERT BROADBENT, 9 Peter-street, Manchester, will send our readers vegetarian recipes and literature upon application.

T. G. (Carlisle).—Mr. Forder will attend to your letter. It is annoying, and often disgusting, to see how certain newspapers try to damn the circulation of the *Freethinker*. At one time they objected to our illustrations. We have not printed any for several months, yet they still do us every possible injury. It is nonsense to say they cannot obtain it. What they mean is that they won't supply it. Customers who are treated in this way should change their newspapers. What right has a paltry little ignorant tradesman to set up as a censor of the press? If he does so, he should (if possible) be taught a salutary lesson, in the only way that reaches his feelings.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Duly to hand. We note your instruction, and thank you for your expression of confidence.

J. F.—We have not printed a list of applications for shares. It would have taken too much of our space. We saw your name in the secretary's list, and were glad to observe it there. Mr. Foote will write to you shortly.

F. JONES.—Pleased to learn that you were so delighted with Mr. Putnam's lecture at Camberwell, and that you thought it worth double the cost of your journey of seventy miles to hear him. We note your reference to a certain enterprise. It is easy to do nothing successfully.

T. E. M.—Canon Wilberforce's *Trinity of Evil* is not a new book. We criticised it on its first appearance, several years ago. It is hardly worth a second criticism.

E. T. B.—Thanks for your offer to take up five shares if the effort is successful.

DUBLIN friends, or others who happen to be visiting that city, can obtain the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature at Mrs. Kavanagh's, 1 Cottage-place, Belvedere-avenue, North Circular-road.

P. KAVANAGH.—Glad to hear from you again, and hope your prospects will soon improve. If all did their fair share, our movement would make more headway.

G. DIXON.—Kindly fill in an application form, which you will find in our advertisement columns, for the two shares you will take.

RECHUTT.—Thanks for cuttings. No one knows who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Assertions on this point are all guess-work. Egyptian records do not corroborate any part of the Exodus story. There is really no historical trace of the Jews, as a separate people, ever inhabiting any part of the Nile valley.

T. CLARK.—There is no Branch near South Streatham. Certainly there should be one at Croydon. Mr. Foote will soon make an important announcement concerning the whole matter of propaganda. Thanks for your appreciation and good wishes. The verses shall appear.

H. FLEMING would like to know if there are any Freethinkers in Barnstaple, North Devon; if so, will they communicate with him at 23 Aisen-road, Holloway, London, N.?

W. PAYNE.—All communications for the *Freethinker* should be sent to Mr. Foote, not to Mr. Forder. There is no charge for such insertions. We much regret to hear of your loss.

J. G. BARTHAM.—We do not see that the corrections amount to much. Still, we note what you say as to the Newcastle rumpus—namely, (1) that Mr. Cohen had not the larger meeting, but it was rapidly increasing by desertions from the other side; (2) that it was not the libeller who made the whip up, but his satellites, who pressed him to come.—Thanks for the leaflet. We have seen it before. The fellow has not a gleam of humor. He even lies with solemnity.

J. G. DOBSON.—Your letter is melancholy reading. Glad to see, however, that you retain all your old interest in the movement. We note your promise to take two more shares on the same conditions as the South Shields Branch.

W. J. HEATH.—We never saw or heard of the pamphlet you mention. Those who have read Mrs. Bonner's "Life" of her father, and the Hall of Science Libel case, will naturally disbelieve anything that W. R. Bradlaugh says about his dead brother. In any case, we are unable to say what it has to do with Robert Cooper's pamphlet on the Soul. Arguments are independent of personalities. They stand or fall on grounds of fact and reason.

A. FRENCH.—The article on "The Inimitable" in the *Secularist* was not written by James Thomson, but by another regular contributor, whose name cannot be mentioned without his consent. The writer is still living.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Vegetarian Messenger—Liberty—Solidarity—Light—Progressive Thinker—Land and Labor—Freidenker—World's Advance Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Two Worlds—Rangoon Times—Homœopathic Review—Homœopathic World—Newcastle Daily Leader—Pearson's Weekly—Public Opinion—Church Monthly—St. George's Parish Magazine—Ironclad Age—Isle of Man Times—Liverpool Weekly Post—Twentieth Century—London—Echo—Secular Thought—Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Open Court.

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.

LECTURE 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.

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

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.

I AM writing this on Wednesday morning, in a brief time snatched from other business; and in an hour or so I shall be off to Derby to debate with Mr. W. T. Lee.

The sudden hot weather, on the top of too much work and anxiety, has somewhat impaired my general elasticity of mind and body; and I take this as a warning that I had better be careful for a few days. I shall therefore leave what I have to say about the *history* of this Hall of Science affair until next week. There is really no desperate hurry, and I want to be perfectly accurate.

Mr. R. O. Smith's answer to my further query, whether he would extend the time of his offer to the end of May, reached me this morning. "I adhere," he says, "to the terms of my last letter published by you in the *Freethinker*." I think I know what Mr. Smith has in his mind, and I will deal with the situation accordingly.

Meanwhile I have to thank the few friends who have applied for fresh shares during the past week. Mr. S. Seal, who early sent me a cheque for thirty shares, writes that he will increase the number to one hundred if the full amount can be made up. Mr. George Anderson, who has been waiting to see what the party in general were prepared to do, writes that he is not inclined to assist unless there is a complete revolution in our policy at the Hall. "If the management," he says, "were in your own hands, you employing your assistants, I would be inclined to help, but under committee management I fear it is too cumbersome." With regard to this, I may say that it is my intention to take all power and responsibility—at least for a considerable time—or else to have nothing to do with the enterprise; and I intend to pursue this policy whether we settle down at the Hall of Science or have to go elsewhere.

I have received the following fresh subscriptions: J. Hayes, 1s.; Dundee Friend, per C. Watts, 10s.; J. Hume 2s. 6d.; J. Close, 2s. 6d.; T. E. M., 1s.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote is overwhelmed with other work, and is unable to write his usual article for this week's *Freethinker*. Fortunately there is a good supply of interesting matter from other pens.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (May 19) at the London Hall of Science, from which he has been absent for some time, except on the occasion of his taking the chair for Mr. Putnam. His subject will be "Riddles of the Sphinx." After the lecture Mr. Foote will have something to say of great importance to London Secularists.

Mr. Charles Watts has held another four nights' debate with Dr. Jamieson at Glasgow. We hear that the Christians became fewer at each meeting, which is a poor compliment to their champion, who seems to have more self-conceit than capacity. Mr. J. P. Gilmour sends us a long report of this debate, but it did not arrive until our arrangements for this week's *Freethinker* were completed. It will appear in our next issue. Mr. Watts lectures this evening (May 19) at Camberwell.

Mr. Touzeau Parris, who has for some time been absent from the platform through illness, lectured at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. There was an excellent audience for the time of the year, and Mr. Parris delivered a fine discourse, which was much applauded.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, our American visitor, lectured on Sunday evening at Camberwell. Mr. R. Forder presided, and there was a large attendance. Of course the lecturer had an enthusiastic reception. He was opposed by the Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. Mr. Putnam lectures three times to-day (May 19) at Bradford, in the Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road. We hope there will be a strong rally of Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Bingley friends on this occasion.

The Rev. C. Lloyd Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, was present at Mr. Putnam's lecture at the Hall of Science. He did not, however, offer any opposition; and he appears to have been under the impression that Mr. Foote "deprecated" discussion. Mr. Engström has just sent us a long letter in reply to Mr. Putnam. We are unable to find room for it this week, but it will appear in full in our next issue. Mr. Engström is going to reprint the letter in pamphlet form, and distribute it in places visited by leading Freethought lecturers. We are glad to hear it.

Our friends in London have prosecuted certain nasty Christians for an extremely nasty libel, and won, the defendants being fined £30 and costs. The latter will amount to over £250, it appears. Christians are extremely nasty and violent just now in England. Probably they have received a fresh assignment of Holy Ghost—the genuine, fiery, furious article. Just as the Catholics cover Luther and Co. with loads of their own filth, so do the Christians endeavor to cover Freethinkers with their garbage. My own experience tells me that nothing can beat a genuine Christian for nastiness and undiluted spite. I have the right to say that—a right arising from over eighteen years' experience—an experience that must have been bitter indeed if my own nature and employments had not made me more than oblivious to most of it. A man who is going to attack the popular superstition needs to be of a philosophic turn of mind, and of a capacity to enjoy life in spite of its awful drawbacks. We congratulate our friends on their victory.—*Liberator*.

We publish in another column the business Agenda of the National Secular Society's annual Conference, which takes place at Bristol on Whit-Sunday. A special item, which is not included, is the letter which Mr. S. P. Putnam will read from Colonel Ingersoll. This will be taken at some stage of the proceedings, where it will be most refreshing. A Conference gets jaded occasionally, and at such a moment a message from Ingersoll will be like an Atlantic breeze blowing in upon a crowded assembly.

Mr. Foote has put nothing upon the Agenda himself this year. Should he be re-elected as President, he will take the opportunity of having a straight talk on some matters of considerable interest to the movement, which have been occupying a good deal of his attention.

We hope the N.S.S. Branches will all do their best to be represented at this Conference. Mr. J. P. Gilmour is coming all the way from Glasgow to represent the premier Scottish Branch of our Society, and this should put the English Branches upon their mettle. Individual members will also be very welcome at the Conference. We should like to see

two or three hundred, at least. They are just as much entitled as delegates to take part in the discussions. The difference between an individual member and a delegate comes in only on the question of voting. A delegate, of course, votes for all the members in his Branch.

Branches that positively cannot send delegates are at liberty to entrust their votes to any member of the Society in whom they have confidence. The President does not hold any proxies, but other persons are available. Mr. Charles Watts will attend the Conference. We understand, also, that Messrs. A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, and C. Cohen will be present. There is some doubt about Mr. Touzeau Parris. He has not yet fully recovered from a severe illness, and the sight of one of his eyes is still affected.

The Manchester Branch commences its open-air propaganda in Stevenson-square this afternoon at 3 o'clock, when Mr. C. Cohen will lecture on "Why are Men Religious?" The local Branch of the C.E.S. has recently occupied the Square on Sunday afternoons, and it is requested that as many of our friends as possible will make it convenient to attend. Mr. Cohen will lecture in the hall morning and evening.

The German Parliament has thrown out the Government Coercion Bill, one clause of which provided that any person who attacked "religion" should be liable to fine and imprisonment. "King-deluded Germany" has taught pious Emperor William a much-needed lesson. It will probably not make him less of a religious bigot, but it will show him the unwisdom of expecting the people's representatives to join him in a crusade against Freethought.

Dr. Martineau, replying to the congratulations from South Place on his ninetieth birthday, made the following very just observations upon orthodox religion: "The attempt to find infallible records in canonical books, and permanent standards of truth in ecclesiastical votes, has so hopelessly failed that honest persistence in it has become impossible to instructed persons; and, therefore, in all competent guides and teachers of men a continual sanction and profession of it is not simply an intellectual error, but a breach of veracity. And this tampering with sincerity on the part of instructors who know better than they choose to say, not only arrests the advance to higher truth, but eats, like a canker, into the morals of our time."

The *Freethought Magazine* for May gives a portrait of Mrs. Josephine K. Henry, a leading Freethinker and woman's advocate, who is known as the "woman Henry Clay of the South." Mrs. Henry is a granddaughter of John Kirby, of Leeds, who, with James Watson, became a salesman in the shop of Richard Carlile when the English Government tried to suppress the sale of Paine's *Age of Reason*.

The *Boston Investigator* for March 16, which only now reaches us, has a symposium on the Bible, to which Judge Waite, Lucy Colman, Rabbi Schindler, J. R. Charlesworth, E. J. Bowtell, J. H. Cook, and other writers, contribute.

The question of the mythical character of the Jewish patriarchs, which is being ably dealt with by "Veritas" in another column, is exciting much attention in Germany, where theologians feel themselves somewhat more free in dealing with the myths of the Old Testament than with those of the New. The recent work of Professor Stade, who questions all the early Jewish stories and doubts if ever the Jews were in Egypt, has been followed by the publication of a lecture to his students, by Professor Meinhold, on *The Origin of Israel's History of Religion*. He declares that, "In order to furnish an historical sketch of the beginning of Israel's religion and history, we must discard the age of the patriarchs altogether." That age merely represents "Ideal Israel."

Professor Meinhold says: "It is beyond belief that we can give a picture of the religious development of Israel in a period the documentary evidences for which are removed at least one thousand years from the events they profess to record. What would we say of an historian who would give a picture of Charlemagne on the basis of a document on that ruler written in our own age, and would know nothing of the contemporaneous sources? Still more out of place is it to base a history on a mosaic of contradictory sources such as we have in the records of the Patriarchs."

"Nobody among scientific scholars now-a-days ventures to assert that we have any literary remains from the period before Moses; and between Abraham and Moses, according to the statements of the Pentateuch, there is a chasm of 400 years, a period which, even for the most determined prominence given to oral tradition, does not suffice to awaken a spark of confidence in these reports."

Professor Meinhold also argues, while the neighboring peoples in Babylonia, Syria, and Assyria, at this period, 2200 B.C., already exhibited a marked degree of culture, Canaan, "the bridge between Egypt and Babylonia," could not have been, with its many cities and settled population, open for a nomadic family or tribe, as is claimed in Patriarchal history.

Again, he argues that the names of the Patriarchs are not those of individuals, but collective terms for tribes. He says: "If we must, as is done in the case of Ishmael, the collective name for the different Arabic tribes, take 'Edom' collectively, why must we not do so in the case of his brother Jacob?"

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE AT BRISTOL.

JUNE 2, 1895.

### AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.  
Notice of Motion by Finsbury Park Branch: "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1895-6."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.  
(a) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: Dr. T. R. Allinson, G. Anderson, D. Baker, N. B. Billany, J. E. Brumage, Prof. L. Buchner, M.D., W. W. Collins, R. Forder, S. Hartmann, Wm. Heaford, G. J. Holyoake, P. A. V. Le Lubez, A. B. Moss, T. Parris, S. M. Peacock, W. Pratt, J. H. Ridgway, V. Roger, J. Samson, Dr. E. Schlaeger, Robert Owen Smith, Mrs. T. Smith, J. Swaagmann, J. Symes, E. Truelove, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler.  
(b) The following are nominated by the Executive for election: E. Bater (London); J. F. Dewar (Edinburgh); J. P. Gilmour (Glasgow); S. P. Putnam (America).
7. Election of Honorary Secretary.  
(a) Motion by Rochdale Branch: "That the office of Honorary Secretary be abolished."  
(b) Motion by Executive: "That Mr. Robert Forder be re-elected Honorary Secretary."
8. Election of Auditors.
9. Motion by Rochdale Branch re Presidency:—"That on and after Whit-Sunday, 1896, no member shall be eligible for re-election as President until three years have elapsed from his vacating such office, provided always that in the event of the office becoming vacant at any period between two Conferences the member chosen to fill that office for the remainder of the year shall be deemed eligible for re-election at the Conference next ensuing."
10. Motion by West London Branch:—"That no person be eligible as Vice-President who has not been a member for five years."
11. Motion by Rochdale Branch:—"That from this date no member shall be permitted to take part in and vote at the meetings of the Executive Council but the properly-appointed delegates from the Branches, the President, Treasurer, and Secretary alone excepted."
12. Motion by Rochdale Branch:—"That this Conference instructs the Secretary to issue monthly to the Branches an official document stating the numerical and financial position of the Society, full details of all resolutions carried by the Organisation and other Committees, a nominal roll of persons receiving grants from the Benevolent Fund, with the amount granted, and all other matters concerning the Society; such paper to be issued during the first week of each month."
13. Motion by Finsbury Branch:—"That no Vice-President shall henceforth hold any paid office in the Society."
14. Motion by Finsbury Park Branch:—"That an Organising Secretary be appointed by the Society, who shall devote his time to interviewing persons known to be in sympathy with Secular principles, with a view to securing their adhesion to the Society or their financial support, obtaining, as

far as possible, the renewed support of lapsed members, and furthering the interests of the Society in any other manner the Executive may deem expedient."

15. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen:—"That properly-qualified speakers be sent by the Council of the N.S.S. into different districts for organising and lecturing purposes, and that a Committee be appointed by this Conference to draw up a scheme to that end, and submit the same to the Executive Council."
16. Motion by Islington Branch:—"That a Total Abstinence section be formed in connection with the Society."
17. Motion by Nottingham Branch:—"To add the following to the Society's 'Immediate Practical Objects':—(a) The promotion of the fullest inquiry into all matters affecting the well-being of Humanity, especially in regard to topics (e.g., the Population Question) which it may commonly be the fashion to evade or suppress. (b) The encouragement of a more general interest in social and political problems."
18. Motion by Battersea Branch:—"That the N.S.S. shall engage in real Secular work by advocating political and social reforms, with a special view to ameliorating the wretched condition of our fellow men."
19. Motion by the Executive:—"That in all elections to public bodies Secularists should endeavor to put forward candidates in distinct sympathy with Secular principles."
20. Motion by Mr. A. R. Moss:—"That strenuous efforts be made to get the Education Department to change the code so that the three quarters of an hour now devoted to Scripture instruction in Board schools be utilised in teaching elementary science."
21. Motions by Manchester Branch:—  
(a) "That this Conference take energetic measures for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws."  
(b) "That this Society cease to issue members' certificates."  
(c) "That no place for the holding of the Annual Conference be included in the list sent round to the Branches for voting upon, unless it first complies with all the necessary conditions."

### MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

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

May 19, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 10 and 11, Aberdeen; 13 and 14, Dundee; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street; 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.

Sceptic—"You have given me many messages from departed friends, but not one of them has told me anything I didn't know." Medium (with dignity)—"I would have you understand, sir, that the spirits of the dead have something better to do than to come back to earth and teach school."—*New York Weekly*.

An old negro minister was preaching from the text that "the Lord Jesus Christ walked abroad, curing divers diseases." In the course of his sermon he said: "Yes, bretheren and sisteren, you git sick and you send for Dr. Whitehead or Dr. Wilson, and they can cure 'most any disease that flesh is heir to, but when it comes to these here *divers*, 'tain't nobody but God a'mighty hisself kin cure 'em."

## INGERSOLL AND SAM JONES.

THE visit of Colonel Ingersoll to St. Louis on the concluding day of the Sam Jones revival was a coincidence which suggested to the *Globe-Democrat* the interest which would attach to an interchange of views as to the motives and influences of the two men, each of whom possesses in so marked a degree the power of attracting and interesting large crowds. That each is sincere in his belief is generally admitted, and it is worthy of note that, while each criticises the other freely, neither attributes to the other any but the best of motives. The idea was to present both sides of the question fairly, and to reflect the opinions of the exponents of theories so diametrically opposed; and this has been accomplished with the co-operation of the two gentlemen. Mr. Jones was seen first. He was unwilling to say anything calculated to hurt the feelings of a man against whom, personally, he had no grievance. When it was explained that the *Globe-Democrat* wanted a review of Colonel Ingersoll's lectures and their influence on the community, rather than the lecturer himself, Mr. Jones submitted cheerfully, leant back in his chair, and told the reporter to "fire away." His argument that Ingersoll's teachings are calamitous because they are apt to encourage utter recklessness is given in his own words, some few of which were subsequently quoted to the lecturer whose reply was desired.

To interview Colonel Ingersoll at length was less easy. The Colonel is known to have an occasional antipathy to interviewers, claiming that in more than one instance he has been incorrectly reported. It was also ascertained that he would not reach St. Louis before Sunday morning. He has so many old friends in St. Louis that he holds a series of receptions all day when in the city, and it would obviously be impossible to secure his undivided attention for an hour. Hence it was resolved to intercept him on the way to St. Louis, and a telegram was sent to Cincinnati as to his route, it being his custom to visit that city when on a lecturing tour and map out his route from that point. The only reply was a reference to New York, and from the lecturer's home it was learned that he was due at Springfield, Ill., Saturday evening. A reporter was accordingly sent on to the Illinois State capital to await Colonel Ingersoll's arrival and obtain the desired interview.

## JONES ON INGERSOLL.

"What do you think of Ingersoll and of the influence of his lectures?" asked a reporter of the Rev. Sam Jones as he sat in his room at the Southern Hotel, evidently only partially recovered from the exertions of preaching to 6,000 people the preceding evening.

Mr. Jones thought for a moment and then said: "The question is a very broad one, and cannot be answered in two or three words. Personally, Mr. Ingersoll is no doubt a genial gentleman. Physically he is fat, intellectually he is bright, morally there may be worse men; but theologically he is a bad egg."

"You have seen the picture of Ingersoll nursing his grandchild?"

"Yes, and I could not help feeling mighty sorry for the grandchild."

"Apart from his personality, what do you think is the moral influence of Mr. Ingersoll's lectures?"

"That is very easily answered. A visit of Mr. Ingersoll to any community is calamitous to all whom he reaches, and the worst of it is he generally reaches the very class of people upon whom his teachings have the most baneful effect. No God, no Bible, no heaven, no hell, catches the masses of non-church-goers, and turns them over to recklessness. The lecturer forgets that they were not all reared in Christian homes, and brought up under the cultivating influences which he himself enjoyed. They were not trained up in the virtues as he was by his godly father and mother. Whatever virtue Mr. Ingersoll possesses is a gift of grace or Christianity. Many parade his charity, his liberality, and his love for home. He never got these elements as the gift of Infidelity. They are but the expressions of Christian elements that live in his character in spite of his Infidelity, and when he throws his teaching of no God, no Bible, no heaven, and no hell into the hearts and lives of others who have not been blessed by the help which Christianity gives us, he turns the whole human life into utter rot."

"How do you account for Mr. Ingersoll's power to attract large audiences?" was a question which the above criticism naturally suggested.

"His power to attract lies in his ability to shock," replied Mr. Jones, with more force and earnestness than he had hitherto displayed. "He is the devil's dynamo, and when a man stands upon the damp soil of a sinful life old Bob can turn a current on him that will almost make him leap out of his hide. Men love to be shocked. I have often thought of Colonel Ingersoll in his disclaimer of Christian virtues and his disbelief in God and the Bible as putting him pretty much in the attitude of a drummer's little girl, of whom a commercial traveller once told me. He said he found his

little girl, on one of his visits home, sitting on the floor playing with her kitten. While loving and caressing it she said: 'Kitty, you are a sweet little kitty. I love you, and I know who your mommer is. Old pussy is your mommer. She's a good old cat, and I love her too. But, kitty, I don't know who your popper is, 'cause I never saw him. I 'spect your popper is a travelling man.' We all know from Mr. Ingersoll's doctrine who his mother is, morally speaking. Earth is his mother. I expect his father is a travelling man. Certainly nobody has ever seen him in these parts. They all say that Colonel Ingersoll is a jolly fellow. I don't know him personally, but I don't doubt that he is."

"How about Mr. Ingersoll's arguments?"

"He hasn't any. He is an orator of the first water. I know no man alive to-day who can put English together like he can. His words put into sentences look like streams of pearls; but they are merely bracelets and necklaces for swine. His philosophy and his religion do not build colleges, almshouses, or asylums. Neither do they take care of the poor, the maimed, and the halt. They are powerless to reform the drunkard and the outlaw. They do not make a man more kind in his home, or more respected in the community where he lives. He clamors for free thought and moral liberty. Establish the fact that men can think as they please, and with that you establish the fact that they can act as they please. There are boundary lines to thought, just as there are boundary lines to actions. With his wit and intellectual cunning, aided by his illogical reasoning, he may play upon the weaknesses of religion, and by his flights of eloquence upon the duties of life which he steals from Christianity; but, after all, a thoughtful, substantial man sees the cunning of his method and detects the direful effect his words have upon the gang that flock to hear him. Lord Salisbury said that, but for the Salvation Army in the streets of London, the police force would have to be increased four thousand in number in a single day. Remove Infidelity from the world, and you lessen the police force by one-half. Christianity is the great conserving and preserving force of the age. Anarchism and outlawism are legitimate children of Infidelity, and whatever and whoever contributes to these dangerous elements in society should be fought and outlawed by every true American citizen, whatever his creed may be."

"In other words, you mean that the influence of Mr. Ingersoll's lectures is, from your standpoint, entirely bad?"

"I see no good that can possibly come from his lectures on Infidelity. I see much harm that may result from them. I also see why Mr. Ingersoll delivers his lectures. There may be \$1,000 a night to him in the job; but why a Christian community will suffer such a thing, and why men will pay for the privilege of hearing him abuse their mother's God and their father's Bible at a dollar a head, and then turn out and be Infidels like him for nothing, and board themselves, is one of the mysteries I never could solve. Personally, I have never met Colonel Ingersoll. He may have many charming characteristics; in fact, he must have. Reared, as he was, in a Christian home, he cannot be utterly depraved. The question is often asked as to whether Ingersoll is sincere in his denials, and in his negations, and in his Infidelity. Suppose we give him credit for all sincerity; he may be in that class of whom the Bible speaks when it says: 'Given over to a delusion that he may believe a lie and be damned.'

"I believe a man can reach such a condition and attitude that, in the moral world, a lie is to him the truth, and the truth a lie. As to whether Colonel Ingersoll is sincere or not makes no difference when you look at the tendencies of his lecture. I see no reason why a profane swearer, or a liar, or a drunkard, or a whoremonger, or a voluptuary should find fault with Mr. Ingersoll, just as I see no reason why the good and true and beautiful and noble should champion his cause or approve his lectures. A man who starts out from the storm centres of Infidelity would become a cyclone in the moral world. The orator we are talking about is a cyclone, funnel-shaped and full of wind. I suppose he will die as he lived. But after death he will no longer be a disbeliever or an unbeliever. My Bible tells me that the devils believe and tremble."

"Do I understand you to say that Colonel Ingersoll really uses no argument?"

Mr. Jones tilted his chair back, deliberated longer than is usual with such a remarkably good conversationalist as he is known to be, and finally said: "That is about so. I have never thought that Mr. Ingersoll treats the subject in hand fairly. He starts in by making his own statement as to what Christianity is, and he then proceeds to demolish the man of straw which he himself has set up. He would burn down my cabin, and then offer me no shelter for myself and wife and children. He would destroy the old ford and build no bridge in its place. He would extinguish what he calls my tallow candle of hope, and leave me in despair and darkness. He would make me what he calls a free man by giving me licence of thought and action, when any sensible man knows that licence is simply power to do wrong. True liberty, on the other hand, is simply the privilege of doing right. The Ten Commandments make the boundary lines

within which liberty is given. Infidelity would change these so that they would read: 'Thou shalt not steal—if there is any probability of being caught.' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery—but you may find two or three wives more convenient than one.' 'Thou shalt not break the Sabbath—but bend it double as occasion offers.' 'Thou shalt not covet—but get all you can and keep all you get.' 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me—but if you don't like the God of heaven, be one yourself and run things to suit yourself.' What a man does is at least a test of what he is. Will Mr. Ingersoll show us what he has done to make the world better or happier; where he has reformed a single drunkard, reclaimed a single reprobate, purified a single life, or elevated a single community? Mr. Ingersoll seems to be the product of hyper-Calvinism, for Infidelity is nothing more nor less than hyper-Calvinism gone to seed. God will reign, heaven will endure, the ministry will live, the churches will flourish, morality will be taught and practised, and Christian virtues will be embodied in men long after Mr. Ingersoll and his company have passed from earth, and received the reward of their doing."

(Next week we shall give Colonel Ingersoll's opinion of Sam Jones.)

### HOW TO USE THE BIBLE.

To prove a given thesis on the lines of Holy Writ  
You've but to search the Scriptures till you find a text to fit;  
A very little practice will enable you to quote  
A verse or two for any view you're anxious to promote.  
But bear in mind this golden rule—if you a text descry  
That proves the very opposite, then quietly pass it by  
And choose another.

To take a few examples: If to children you would give  
Advice to love their parents all the days that they may live,  
To honor and to trust them, be submissive to their will,  
To cite the Great Authority requires but little skill.  
But if you stumble on the place where Jesus says to win  
The title of disciple we must hate our nearest kin—  
Why, choose another.

Suppose, again, you wish to show that slavery is wrong,  
And want a godly platitude to help your case along,  
You easily may find one that will suit you to a t,  
And may freely quote the Scriptures, but you mustn't be  
too free.  
So if you find the verse in which God let his people know  
That they might beat a slave to death if but his death were  
slow—  
Why, choose another.

Perhaps you are opposed to war, and hold that strife should  
cease;  
You can work the Holy Bible in the interests of peace,  
But be careful how you do it, or you'll carry it too far.  
So when you find Jehovah boast himself a man of war,  
Or come across a passage where the offspring of the Lord  
Avows he came on earth to send division or a sword,  
Why, choose another.

If with cruelty to animals you fain would do away  
By claiming God for patron of the R.S.P.C.A.,  
You've a choice of pretty sentiments that never seem to pall,  
Say the eight-a-penny sparrow that he watches in its fall.  
But if you strike a chapter that refers to Pharaoh's cattle,  
Or God's command to Joshua to hough the horse in battle—  
Why, choose another.

If you'd proselyte a little in the theologic line,  
And want to prove conclusively that Jesus was divine,  
You readily can manage it; but if you chance to see  
A narrative relating to an isolated tree  
On which in vain he sought for figs, and cursed it for that  
reason,  
Since, being God, he didn't know that figs were not in season—  
Why, choose another.

If at cruel vivisection you would have a pious prod,  
By maintaining that the practice is detestable to God,  
There are many charming verses you may turn to good  
account—  
E.g., a gentle precept from the Sermon on the Mount.  
But if you meet the doctrine as to God Almighty's hell  
And its everlasting torments, it perhaps would be as well  
To choose another.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

A country churchwarden, on wishing to inform a visitor  
that the vicar was a loving shepherd, only succeeded in  
saying that he was "a shoving leopard."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE DEVIL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have read Mr. J. M. Wheeler's interesting pamphlet entitled *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*. I believe in a personal devil and witches. The belief in a devil not only prevails among orthodox Christians, taught by a pious and disinterested clergy, but also exists among savages at the present day. When travelling in Western Equatorial Africa, I received an invitation from a trader to spend a few days with him up the river Rokelle, where, beyond the pale of civilisation, he occupied an advanced station, *in partibus infidelium*—the only white man among sable heathens. I arrived in my six-oared gig just before midnight. The moon shone bright, and several negroes, who greeted my kroomen, caught a glimpse of me, dressed in a blue serge suit and wearing a tropical felt helmet. After a smoke and a glass of grog I retired to rest in a humble negro cottage which my friend occupied in the small village. I rose at daybreak and strolled towards a well, where two negro women were about to fill their gourds. As soon as they perceived me they yelled and fled into the bush, followed by several men. My friend came up and asked what had happened. I could not tell. He went in search of the fugitives, and, after a long palaver, gave the following explanation: "One of the head men who saw you arrive last night says that you are the Devil (*sic*). Asked for his reason, he said that you were like him.\* In a dream he saw you walk to the well, lie down on your belly, and drink all the water. *A la bonne heure!*" "What did you say?" "Oh, you damned fool, this is the only white man I know, who never drinks water." True, the water in West Africa contains the *tania solium*, or tapeworm—a nice devil that to have in one's entrails. That is one of my devils. I have been frequently called the Devil, and begin to fancy that I am a relative; but I do not go about roaring and devouring. I leave that to my Christian *confrères*, who often prey upon their fellows. Among my French acquaintances I was generally addressed as "Diable de Laporte," and I dare say they were quite right. My belief in witches is restricted to Lancashire witches, one of whom I married. I have never regretted it, for she made me very comfortable.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

### PROFANE JOKES.

Evangelist—"Young man, do you really want to go to hell?" Hardened Sinner—"Why, do you want me to go with you?"

Rhoades (as he and Mrs. Rhoades are leaving church)—"What a refreshing sermon that was, wasn't it?" Mrs. Rhoades (sharply)—"I don't know; I didn't get to sleep."

Millicent—"Did you enjoy the services to-day?" Mildred—"Immensely! The minister wore a new lace surplice, with the most stylish puffed sleeves I have ever seen."

Nurse—"Bertie, you naughty boy, leave off playing with your soldiers directly! Haven't I told you that you mustn't play with them on Sunday?" Bertie—"Yes, nurse, but this is a religious war."

"Madam, would you kindly subscribe something for the missions in Africa? The money will be used for the conversion of heathen children." "Very well; you may have a few Christian children converted, and send the bill to me."

Tommy—"Do you say your prayers every night?" Jimmy—"Yep." Tommy—"And does your maw say hers?" Jimmy—"Yep." Tommy—"And does your paw?" Jimmy—"Naw. Paw don't need to. It's almost daylight when he gets to bed."

Little Jack prays every night for all the different members of his family. His father had been away at one time for a short journey, and that night Jack was praying for him as usual. "Bless papa and take care of him," he was beginning as usual, when suddenly he raised his head and listened. "Never mind about it now, Lord," ended the little fellow; "I hear him down in the hall."

New York *Life* gives the following: The deacon (to the cowboy, who has just dropped in to see what a revival was like)—"Young man, have you made your peace with your Creator?" The Cowboy—"I ain't never had no trouble with him." This is another version of the true story told of Thoreau, who, when asked if he had made his peace with God, replied: "I did not know that we had quarrelled."

\* The black man's devil is white. How true! Have we not reduced the negroes to bondage and cruelly tortured them?

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

## LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.) : 7, musical selections ; 7.30. G. W. Foote, "Riddles of the Sphinx."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station) : 7.45, debate between R. Shaw and E. Smith, "The Liberal Party versus the Independent Labor Party." Monday, at 8, entertainment and dance. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, members' meeting to discuss Conference agenda and elect delegates.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road) : 7.30, Charles Watts, "Theism Tested and Found Wanting."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly) : 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Sir Thomas More and the New Spirit."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES : 11.30, F. Haslam, "Secularism and Social Problems."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road) : 11.30, A. G. Herzfeldt, "The Holy Book Dissected."

CLERKENWELL GREEN : 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed" Members' meeting after lecture to consider Conference agenda, etc.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY : 6.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand) : 11.15, C. James, "The Brain or the Bible" ; 3.15, "God at the Bar of Humanity."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side) : 7, Arthur B. Moss, "Two Revelations." Thursday, at 8, W. J. Ramsey, "Our Home Above."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch) : 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "Ancient Saints and Modern Sinners" ; 3.30, "Ancient and Modern Prophets." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible."

KILBURN (High-road) : 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Where Angels Dwell."

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

MILE END WASTE : 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Curse of the Cross."

OLD PIMLICO PIER : 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Social Implication of Secularism."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate) : 3, S. E. Easton will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain) : 11.15, St. John will lecture ; 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill) : 11.30, George Standing, "Christianity versus Humanity" ; 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, O. Cohen, "Sixty Minutes with the Devil."

## COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road) : 11, S. P. Putnam, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century" ; 3, "Evolution and Creation" ; 7, "Freethought and Morality."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton) : 11, A. Guest, "The Attitude of the Bible towards Woman" ; 7, "Prayer: What and Why?"

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street) : 7, Gustav Smith, "How the Workers are Slandered, Pooled, Robbed, and Murdered."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street) : 11, Tontine Society ; 7, Mr. Miller, "The Sun." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints) : 11, C. Cohen, "Science and Man" ; 3, "Why are Men Religious?" (Stevenson-square—if weather unfavorable, in the hall) ; 6.30, "Scepticism: Its Meaning and Value."

NOTTINGHAM (Woodland Hall, Woodland-place, Parliament-street) : 7, Robert J. Murray will lecture ; committee meeting after lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street) : 7, Willie Dyson, "The New Secularism: A Defence of the Old."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street) : 7, W. Cook, "The History of Nationalism—A Review."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end) : 7, J. Keast, "Was Christ a Reformer?"

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

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—May 19, Manchester ; 23, Wood Green ; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green ; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—May 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 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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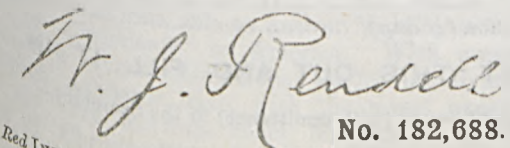
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