

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

A Full Report of the Bristol Conference of the National Secular Society, with Mr. Putnam's message from Colonel Ingersoll, will appear in our next issue.

PRICE HUGHES ON ATHEISM.

THE editor of the *Methodist Times* has been doing a sensible thing. He has been reading the *Freethinker*. We hope he will continue this policy of self-improvement. It is too much to hope for any considerable change in his mental constitution, but a regular course of the *Freethinker* will produce some effect in time. And in such a bad case we must welcome the very smallest mercies.

Mr. Price Hughes does not at present show any signs of reformation; in fact, the medicine he has taken has made him a trifle worse; but we believe that this is a common occurrence in the early stages of medical treatment.

We noticed the following paragraph in the last number of the *Methodist Times* :—

"Mr. Coulson Kernahan's last striking book, *God and the Ant*, recently reviewed in these columns, has created quite a storm in Atheistic circles. They rage furiously against the author and his brilliant book. But they are out of date. Atheism is a long-exploded piece of antediluvianism. These people, as we have often remarked, are two thousand years behind the time. They had better waken up and get acquainted with the facts of the last two thousand years."

It is difficult for Mr. Hughes to be accurate. We charitably assume that he sometimes tries to be. Perhaps he tried in this instance, but was betrayed by his unhappy preference for misstatement. At any rate, there is no truth in the observation that Mr. Coulson Kernahan's *God and the Ant* has "created quite a storm in atheistic circles." Our review of the booklet was perhaps sarcastic; it certainly was not "furious." And as for "raging," why the editor of the *Methodist Times* could give us fifty in a hundred at any time, and beat us easily.

Why, indeed, should we "rage" against Mr. Kernahan or his book? He is turning an honest penny by writing up Christian platitudes. Merely this and nothing more. There is not an argument in all his pages which any one of our open-air lecturers would not make mincemeat of in five minutes. Nor is there any particular grandeur or beauty in the way in which he presents his plea for God. It is a sign of the decadence of Christianity that such a volume should be praised at all. Cudworth and Charnock and Leighton lie neglected upon the library shelves while this feeble little apologist flutters round the arena, and all the Christians cry: "Bravo! Magnificent! Kernahan for No.723.]

ever!" We could almost drop a tear over the wretched degradation of our old enemy.

Mr. Hughes tells Atheists that they are out of date. But does he really think so? Will he meet one of them in public discussion? Has he *faith* enough to try the experiment?

Atheism is "a long-exploded piece of antediluvianism." This is a good mouthful, but we defy any man to realise its meaning.

We cheerfully admit that Atheism has survived many floods. It survived floods of persecution, floods of "confutation," and floods of calumny; and we dare say it will survive the flood of Mr. Hughes's flashy rhetoric.

Cardinal Newman was a far wiser man than Mr. Hughes. He did not regard Atheism as "exploded." He dreaded it as the natural and logical conclusion of "reason" when divorced from "faith."

Mr. Hughes says that Atheists are two thousand years behind the time. We presume he means that they are not Christians. If he means anything else, he is talking nonsense. Christianity does not pretend to prove God's existence. It starts with that assumption. Revelation does not precede, it follows Natural Religion, and is based upon its conclusions. Every text in the New Testament is addressed to believers; and it is noteworthy that Jesus Christ was too discreet to get into a discussion with the Sadducees—the men who denied the soul, the resurrection, and a future life; that is, nearly all that flatters the vanity and sentimentalism of the average religionist.

What new evidence of God's existence, of his wisdom or his goodness, has appeared during the last two thousand years? The problem is just where it was before the Christian era. New illustrations may be adduced, but it is impossible to invent a new argument. The human mind exhausted its capacity in that direction before the advent of Jesus Christ.

Atheists are acquainted with the facts of the last two thousand years. They know the arts by which Christianity rose to power; they know with what weapons it defended its privileges; they know the secret of its long usurpation. Atheists do not need to "waken up," as Mr. Hughes says in defiance of grammar. Christianity is waking up—to the fact that it is found out; and in its extremity it is following the tactics of the ostrich, as though that will prevent its destruction.

Atheism is not out of date. It is up to date. It uses to-day's science, to-day's history, to-day's humanity, and to-day's common sense. It challenges Theism in the light of the newest Evolution. And when to-morrow's truth comes, Atheism will be the first to welcome it; for truth is the natural enemy of lies, and the greatest lie in the world is the one that is preached from Christian pulpits. It is a lie that has eaten away manliness and integrity, and manufactured dastards and hypocrites.

G. W. FOOTE.

"A CONFESSION OF FAITH."

A NEAT little volume, choice both in appearance and contents, has this year been issued by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. It is entitled *A Confession of Faith*, by An Unorthodox Believer, and has as its motto a couplet from A. H. Clough:—

Enough that in our soul and heart
Thou, whatsoever Thou mayst be, art.

The author is a Theist of the school of Martineau and Professor Francis William Newman. His volume bears the stamp of thought, sincerity, and fine feeling. Love of truth and love of humanity are evident characteristics of the author, and, finding these in a book, I am little concerned at absence of agreement in matters of opinion. Only in confessions of faith learnt by rote, and coming, as Carlyle said, "from the teeth outwards," can there be unanimity of statement. When men set down what they really think with regard to themselves and the universe by which they are surrounded, their differences of faculty, of training, and of experience are sure to show themselves, and even when ideas are similar the terminology in which they are expressed is bound to vary. "Define your terms" is a mandate which the critic has constantly to lay before the author.

The writer of the book in question sets out by saying: "I believe that Nature is all-in-all, and that there is nothing above it or beyond it." In other words, he does not believe in the supernatural. He says: "The evidence of miracles—evidence which the believer in the supernatural regards as conclusive—leaves me where it finds me. Experience has proved that nine miracles out of ten are cases either of imposture or of illusion. For the tenth there may be a place amid the mysteries and infinities of Nature." He observes: "I hold myself free to deny the supernatural, without attempting to disprove it. The burden of proof rests on those who affirm it. If such persons refuse to argue for it, they put themselves, so far as I am concerned, out of court. If they consent to argue for it, they give judgment against themselves. For every argument that appeals to the reason bases itself on an implicit belief in the validity and sufficiency of Nature; and to ask Nature to sanction the supernatural is to ask it to discredit itself, and in so doing to falsify the faith that we repose in it, to stultify the appeal that we make to it, and to nullify the verdict that we profess to regard as final." He holds further that knowledge of ultimate realities is unattainable by man. Yet he follows this by saying: "I believe in God—i.e., I believe that there is a real object of human worship and a supreme end and centre of existence." Is this a definition? Most people would think that any definition of God which excluded the supernatural resulted in no God at all. For there is probably no word used with more various meanings, or more needing accurate definition, than this word "God." Truly, there be gods many. They are of all kinds, and many of them—the Christian owner of hell, no less than the Mexican god of war—are very ugly devils. What one man regards as the real object of human worship is a very different ideal from that of another. Our author says: "When I say that I believe in God, I do not necessarily mean that I believe in a Supernatural Being, or in a Personal First Cause, or in a Moral and Intelligent Governor of the Universe, or in a Great Unknowable. What I do mean is that I believe in the naturalness of the instinct that leads men to worship, and in the reality of its object." His God, if I read him rightly, is *in* Nature. Yet he believes in evolution. Does, then, God grow and develop? This seems the logical outcome of his position; yet I am not sure that I should ascribe it to him rightly. His reasons for believing in God, he says, are two: (1) "I believe in God because it is my nature, my private and personal nature, to do so." On this I have only to remark that the author admits that his nature is fallible. We all inherit superstitions, and most of us are trained in them also. (2) "I believe in God because it is my generic nature, my nature as a man to do so." He goes on to say: "A belief so widespread and so enduring as the belief in God must needs have a real object." Will he say so if you substitute for "God" the word "ghosts," from whom man's early gods probably sprung?

The writer says, "God is love;" and to the question, "How shall I know what is true?" as to the kindred

question, "What shall I do to be saved?" says there is but one answer—namely, "Love." Will he then accept the converse of his proposition, and put it that "Love is God"? The real basis of his belief appears to be sentiment, and the "scunner" with which he writes of Atheists and Materialism seems to indicate that, despite considerable candor of mind, he is still the victim of prejudices about words. He says: "Feeling is all-in-all." Need I remind him of the succeeding lines in Faust?—

Name ist Schall und Rauch
Umnebelnd Himmelsgluth.

Like Kant, who, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, shows the illusiveness and illogicality of all demonstrations of deity, yet brings God back in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, in order, according to Heine, to console his servant, old Lampe, our author appears to bring the supernatural in, with prostrations, immediately after having dismissed it, without any blessing. So with the doctrine of immortality. He says: "I believe that I shall live hereafter, and that I shall be happy or unhappy in the next life according as I have done well or ill in this"; but he allows that "the arguments for immortality are doubtless inconclusive." Here again we appear to have a feeling that "spiritual" life is real and unending. His heaven and hell, he tells us, are states of the soul. But these are realities here now, irrespective of permanent continuance, and our author sees the absurdity of supposing we merit either unending happiness or unending misery.

With very much that the confessor has to say on duty and the conduct of life I am in hearty sympathy, while totally disagreeing with his terminology. He insists on what Matthew Arnold called "the secret of Jesus," but which I should call the open secret of life—a secret openly taught by Buddha ere Jesus was born—viz., that to live for higher aims, the lower must be resigned. What our author calls aiming at spiritual perfection I should prefer simply to name self-culture. And to this all who desire to get the best out of this life are bound to attend, whether they believe in any life to follow or not. Our author thus expresses the final article of his short Confession of Faith: "I believe that Love, as the triumph of self-sacrifice, is the supreme end of existence, the fulfilment of the law, the first and last of duties, the way and the goal of life, the real presence of the eternal God." Here, too, I feel that our differences are mainly of terminology, and "name is but sound and smoke." In reason and nature there is common ground for the devout Theist and the irreverent Atheist.

What, however, the orthodox believer will find notable in this *Confession of Faith* is, not its affirmations, but its omissions. There is nothing of the creeds and dogmas which have occupied so much attention in the past, and which, however dry and dead now, were vital points of Christian belief when it was flourishing. The *Confession* might have been written by a Jew, Moslem, or Buddhist, save that it contains nothing distinctive of any of them. It is faith whittled down by reason to the point of mere feeling, and with some slight alteration of terminology would be acceptable to the Secularist.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT.

TAKING a retrospect of the history of the last hundred years, it is exceedingly gratifying to all friends of progress to contemplate the advancement Freethought has made. To the disgrace of the Church, be it said, the Statute-Book of England still contains enactments against free speech, and against the legal right of Secular Societies to receive bequests for the promulgation of their principles. But, notwithstanding this injustice, which is the legacy of a bigoted theology, we recognise that the efforts of the brave Freethought pioneers of the past have not been in vain. All honor is due to them for their persistent and heroic struggles in tilling and preparing the soil for the reception of the seed of freedom, which the toil of subsequent ages has caused to yield most prolific results. True liberty is not the offshoot of a day, but rather the growth of years. It has been truly said: "Our Eliots, our Hampdens, and our Cromwells, a couple of centuries ago, hewed with their

broad-swords a rough pathway for the people. But it was reserved for the present century to complete the triumph which the Commonwealth began." When in 1662 the two thousand clergymen resigned their benefices, and gave up the national religion of the time, because they could not submit to the pet doctrine of the Church, which was "passive submission," they adopted the basis of Freethought principles. It is worthy of note that every reform that has taken place in connection with theology has been the result of adopting the principle of Freethought.

Freethought is, at the present time, making its impress upon all classes of society, and is exercising its influence in every section of the community. Glance at what phase of life we may, move in what circle we will, we shall find that Freethought confronts us more or less. It is prominent in our politics, in our poesy, in our philosophy, and in the various scientific expositions of the present day, and even in novels. It dominates the press, it agitates the pulpit, and it permeates our national seats of learning. As the Rev. W. Binns remarks: "Scientific men pursue their studies and proclaim their discoveries as if the old theology were non-existent. Owen extolled the serpent as perfectly formed, notwithstanding the curse pronounced; Lyell said there were men before Adam; ethnologists found races distinct in spite of original sin and the federal headship; philologists spoke of varieties of language long before the supposed time of Babel; and science everywhere asserted the universality and unfallingness of law, spite of traditionary miracles. General literature breathed the same healthy spirit, at once free, reverent, and inquiring. What natural depravity was taught in the muscular Christianity of Kingsley's novels? Dickens condemned cant, Sabbatarianism, and narrowness wherever found; and Thackeray, in the 'Newcomes,' looked for the salvation of honest James Binnie, though James was a disciple of that extremest of heretics, David Hume. As to poetry, it could only flourish where genius was unfettered by creeds. It needed to live in freedom, and when freedom was lost it sank into nursery imbecilities." The agitation of thought has proved to be the beginning of knowledge, and, when entirely unfettered, it is the surest guarantee for the perpetuation of wisdom.

A remarkable instance of the progress of Freethought occurred during the reign of Charles II., when the Royal Society was instituted in London. The object of this association was the promotion of science by experiment. According to its charter, it was "established for the improvement of natural science." The term natural was intended to imply a meaning that few persons to-day fully realise. In the *Life of Davy* we read: "At the period of the establishment of the society, the arts of witchcraft and divination were very extensively encouraged; and the word 'natural' was therefore introduced in contradistinction to 'supernatural'" (vol. ii., p. 178). It is related that this new movement drew to it most of the principal intellects of the nation, and that the clergy were so alarmed at its progress that they almost unanimously worked to bring science into contempt and to discredit its study. This attempt upon the part of the "servants of the Lord" recorded in history. For, in spite of all theological machinations, science has triumphed, and now its truths can be no longer successfully opposed. It is to be deplored that, during the advancement of science, it has had to encounter a continual conflict with religious fanaticism and priestly intolerance, and many of its evidences have been tortured and made to deny the "Theology of their own senses. As Colonel Ingersoll says: "Theology has always been in the way of the advance of the human race. There is this difference between science and theology—science is modest and merciful, while theology is arrogant and cruel. The hope of science is the perfection of the human race. The hope of theology is the salvation of a few and the damnation of almost everybody."

In the seventeenth century Freethought made considerable advancement in the form of Deism. The belief in the Bible God received at that time a blow from which it has never recovered. From 1646 to the end of the century, writers mention that heretics were growing greater and greater in numbers and in importance, that "sectaries began to swarm." Boyle, writing at that period, said, if anyone wanted a new religion, let him come to London, and if he had one already he would soon lose

it. Men became indifferent to the authority of the Church, and they put forth the claims of reason, instead of adhering to the demands of the orthodox faith. The late Dr. Newman referred to the "melancholy" fact that the only English ecclesiastical historian "is the infidel Gibbon." It was about this period that the battle for the freedom of the press was begun. This noble Freethought struggle cost such heroes as Paine, Hone, Wright, Carlile, Williams, Hetherington, Watson, and many others, their liberty, and imposed upon them privations which were keen to endure. For selling the *Poor Man's Guardian* upwards of five hundred persons were thrown into prison. For publishing the *Age of Reason*, in 1797, Williams suffered twelve months' imprisonment in Coldbath Prison. In 1812 Daniel Isaac Eaton was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment and the pillory for the same grave offence; and the following year Mr. Houston was sentenced to be imprisoned for two years in Newgate, and fined £200, for publishing his book called *Ecce Homo*. In October, 1819, Carlile was tried for publishing Paine's *Theological Works* and Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, and condemned for the first to Dorchester Gaol and a fine of £1,000, and for the second to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £500; and he had to find security for good behavior for himself in £1,000, and two securities in £100 each. His wife and sister were afterwards convicted of similar acts, and suffered heavy sentences.

Archbishop Whately points out that before the last half of the eighteenth century neither attacks upon religion, nor evidence in its support, were to any great extent brought forward in a "popular form." This, no doubt, was one of the reasons why Paine's *Age of Reason* and *Rights of Man* met with such signal success. He wrote for the people in a tone of common sense to which they had not been accustomed. These works caused a complete revolution in the theological and political world. Writers of that time described the situation as alarming, and the prospects dreadful. Even the philosophical Priestley dreaded a physical revolution as inevitable, and he thought a peaceful reform beyond all hope. In 1795 Fox declared that the laws proposed for stopping free inquiry and general reforms were such as to justify the people in forcibly resisting them. Still, theology was then strong enough to enact, and, as we have shown, to enforce, such laws. From that period to the present it has been necessary for Freethinkers to devote much of their time and energy to the task of securing that freedom and those rights which the Church destroyed and took from the people. That to a large extent we have succeeded in our work is an unanswerable proof of the progress of Freethought.

CHARLES WATTS.

REPLY TO MR. ENGSTRÖM.

I DESIRE to answer Mr. Engström in the shortest possible space, and, therefore, I shall not take up all his matter in detail.

He affirms that I am wrong on four general points as to definitions. First, my affirmation that the Christian religion is not *essentially* a moral system; secondly, that its belief is total depravity; thirdly, vicarious atonement; fourthly, eternal hell-fire.

I propose to show that on all these points I am correct. In the first place, however, as to authority. I deny the right of Mr. Engström, or Henry Ward Beecher, or Phillips Brooks, or Dean Farrar, to give an *individual* definition of Christianity. I define Christianity by the Bible and the authorised creeds of the Christian Church. If Mr. Engström will not accept these, there can be no debate with him; for I do not concern myself with his individual definition of Christianity, but with the universal, world-wide, historic definition.

Mr. Engström tries to dodge the question by confining the definition of Christianity to the Apostles' Creed. As an Episcopalian, he cannot do this; for the Thirty-nine Articles distinctly declare: "The three creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, *ought thoroughly to be received and believed.*"

As a member of the Episcopalian Church, Mr. Engström cannot make the Apostles' Creed the sole definition of

Christianity. He must take the Nicene, the Athanasian, and the Thirty-nine Articles. I take these creeds for my definition, together with the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism.

Now, on the point, Is morality essential to the Christian religion—that is, will the morality of a man save his soul? does it count for anything?

The Thirty-nine Articles say: "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our works or deservings."

The Confession of Faith says: "Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others, yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith they are therefore sinful."

One may be absolutely perfect in moral conduct, and yet be eternally condemned simply because he does not believe.

The Athanasian Creed says: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith, except one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he will perish everlastingly."

The Christian Creeds thus teach that morality, simply as such, counts for nothing. Morality is insisted upon merely as an accompaniment of religion, but not as its essence. The essence is faith, and not morality; and it is faith only that saves a man.

As to total depravity, the Thirty-nine Articles say: "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man; and, therefore, in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." "Wherefore we have no power to do good works without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

The Confession of Faith says: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin is not able by his own strength to convert himself to prepare himself thereunto."

As to salvation only through the merits of Christ—the doctrine of Atonement—the Thirty-nine Articles I again quote: "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

And again in the eighteenth Article: "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

The Confession of Faith says: "They who, having never heard the Gospel, know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature."

As to eternal hell, or punishment of unbelievers, says the Athanasian Creed: "And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

Says the Confession: "By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

There is no need of further reference. I could quote from all the creeds of the Churches to the same effect. The question between Mr. Engström and myself is simply this: Will he accept the creeds of the Churches or not? If he does not accept them, then, of course, we have no quarrel; for I did not undertake to define Christianity according to Mr. Engström's notion. I know not, and I care not, what his notion may be. I take historic Christianity; I take the Church's own words. How can one define Christianity except by its own authoritative documents?

Now let Mr. Engström say whether or not he accepts the documents. Will he deny the Thirty-nine Articles? Will he go back on his own Church and trample its creed in the dust? If so, then Mr. Engström is an Infidel; he is

an unbeliever, and he will be damned. He is in the same boat with me, and where I go there will he be also; for Infidelity is not a set of opinions, but unbelief of authoritative creeds. If Mr. Engström won't accept these creeds, if he throws them to the wind, if he says: I'll think for myself, I'll define Christianity to suit myself, I'll take what I please and reject what I please, then he commits the unpardonable sin of heresy; and if it were not for Free-thought, he would be burned at the stake. Mr. Engström has a right to be a heretic, but he has no right to sail under false colors. He is not an orthodox Christian if he makes the Apostles' Creed the sole definition of Christianity. If he is an Episcopalian, he must also accept, as part of that definition, the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and also the Thirty-nine Articles. If a Presbyterian, he must accept the Confession of Faith and Catechisms. If a Methodist, he must accept the Book of Discipline. If a Churchman of any kind, he must accept the Church's documents. If he is a non-Churchman, if he rejects the Church's authority, its definitions and declarations, let him say so; but the issue between us then ceases, for he is simply one kind of an Infidel and I am another kind. He is a Christian Infidel, a Christian unbeliever, and not a Christian orthodox, or Christian believer.

If Mr. Engström does accept the authority of the Church's declarations, then he must admit that I am right; that I have not given a travesty of Christianity, but the Church's own definition. I know that Mr. Engström does not want this skeleton of the Christian religion brought forth to the light of the nineteenth century. He is ashamed of it. He wants to cover it up with flowers of rhetoric, and sentimental poetry and pious gush. He is dodging the question. Like the devil fish, he makes the waters so muddy that you can't see the devil fish that is in it. But it won't do. History is history, and it can't be changed. The meaning of Christianity is written all along in blood and fire on the pages of time. It can't be blotted out or covered up. I ask Mr. Engström to take his stand fairly, and not ride two horses at once. If he does, he will get an awful wrench, and perhaps a broken neck. If you reject these old creeds, say so like a man. Be honest; don't shuffle and wriggle. I have defined Christianity by its public, universal, and historic documents. That is the true critical and scientific method. You would make Christianity merely sentimentality; I make it a body of doctrine as defined by the greatest intellects of the Church, who had the courage to say what they meant.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

As an example of utter inconsistency, probably nothing can be found to-day or in the history of the past which can equal the institution known as the Christian Sabbath. It cannot claim the respect commonly paid to antiquity. It is a modern invention, not yet three centuries old. It does not come to us recommended by the general acceptance of even Christian people. To the great majority of them it is unknown. Only in Great Britain and her colonies, and in the United States of America, can it be found in the form in which we have it. The Protestants of these countries have selected a day appointed by the Church of Rome for a weekly festival, have bestowed upon it a name essentially Jewish, and endeavor to compel all who will submit to the compulsion to observe it in the manner which they judge to be most proper and becoming.

These Protestants claim that the Bible is their sole rule of faith and practice. Let us see what this Bible has to say upon the subject.

In all other matters they tell us that the ceremonial law of the Old Testament has been entirely abolished under the new dispensation. This they assert at least in one case, in which the New Testament repeats and confirms the more ancient law. The eating of the blood of animals was forbidden by Moses. In the New Testament it is just as strictly prohibited. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That you abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from

fornication" (Acts xv. 28, 29). According to the only possible sense of this passage, the obligation of keeping the Sabbath is not included among "necessary things," but the duty of abstaining from blood was re-enforced. Yet Christians all over the world eat the blood with the flesh of the beast, and Protestants in English-speaking countries insist upon keeping a Sabbath, although the day they keep is not that called Sabbath in their Scriptures, and the hours at which they commence and terminate the day are altogether different.

"The evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis i. 5). And so with all the other days. No one doubts that the Biblical day was from sunset until sunset recurred again. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Genesis ii. 3). The original Sabbath, if we accept the Bible for our authority, was from sunset Friday until sunset Saturday, and during these hours our more consistent Hebrew friends still observe it.

In Exodus xx. 10, 11, we read: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son nor thy daughter, thy man servant nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." Here we have the time appointed, the manner of observance prescribed, and the reason given for both. This reason has no application whatever to any other day of the week. Yet, if the Protestant be asked why he makes a special observance of the hours between Saturday midnight and Sunday midnight, this is the text to which he always refers, and in most cases it appears to be the only one with which he is acquainted as having any bearing upon the subject.

Another and totally different reason for this institution is given in Deuteronomy v. 15. "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." This may be because a Bible text, without another contradicting it, might feel lonely and out of place. It still, however, refers to the same day, for in the preceding verse we read: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

In the New Testament there is not, any more than in the Old, one sentence ordering or advising special practices for the first day of the week. That day is never mentioned in its pages except where the resurrection of Jesus is said to have occurred on it, and in one or two places where it is incidentally stated that the apostles were "together on the first day of the week," which might equally well have been the case on the second, third, or fourth. When Christianity had obtained sufficient influence in certain parts of the earth, and had become thoroughly organised as an ecclesiastical system, the Church authorities, recognising that all their power was derived from the belief of the people in the resurrection of Jesus, instituted a weekly festival in memory of that supposed event. The idea was as far removed from the Jewish Sabbath as possible. The one was a day of enforced rest from labor, out of sympathy with an over-worked God, who had exhausted his omnipotence in creating a world with a man and woman to inhabit it. The other was for the purpose of worshipping a man-God, who had triumphed over death and the grave, and for indulging in sports and general festivities appropriate to a season of rejoicing. Rejoicing did not suit the grim old Calvinist, with whom fear was the beginning and the end of religious worship, and in whose mind piety and gloom were identical; so he went back to the Old Testament, where he found in the terrible Jehovah a God after his own heart, and in his Sabbath a day exactly suited to his mind.

He restored the Jewish observance, with some added horrors; but he forgot that the time he was keeping was not the Bible time. It altogether escaped his notice that it was the time appointed by his great enemy, the Roman Church. This hybrid monster is now presented to us under the name of the American Sabbath. The Protestants will compel us to accept it, if we will submit to their compulsion; and the Catholics, who have already ridiculed its absurdity, will lend them their aid in order that, by their united efforts, freedom may be created out of the land and ecclesiastical dominion established. This once accomplished, they will feel at liberty to crush out the Protestants.

The observance of Sunday as an Old Testament Sabbath has no foundation in history, in policy, in general acceptance, even among Christian people, nor in the Bible from which they profess to derive their law. It is a mere tool for the tyrant bigot, to whom oppression of his fellow man is a ruling passion. To call it the American Sabbath is worse than blasphemy against a million gods; it is blasphemy against a free people.

It is the Sabbath which has made England and Scotland one day in every seven the laughing-stock of nations. Americans, it is begging for admission into your constitution. Once there, it will clutch your liberty by the throat. It dares already to parade before the world under your name. For the preservation alike of your national honor and of your personal freedom, disown it.

—*Boston Investigator*.

E. J. BOWTELL.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—VIII.

JULIAN HIBBERT.

ON the 28th of November, 1833, a scene was enacted at the Old Bailey which may serve to measure the distance from that time to this. It was deemed worthy of some prominence in the papers, and is thus reported in the *Annual Register* for that year (p. 159). It was in the case of a young man named Berthold, who was tried for stealing a boar:—

The first witness who presented himself for the prisoner gave his name Julian Hibbert, but, on being tendered the book to be sworn, he said he had no belief in its contents. The Recorder: "Is it the Old or New Testament?" Witness: "It does not matter; I have no belief in either. I made the same objection here two years ago, and was rejected." Mr. Phillips: "Then, sir, why do you come here now?" Witness: "Because I was subpoenaed." Mr. Phillips: "Are you of any creed at all, sir?" Witness: "No, sir." Mr. Phillips: "Are you a Deist?" Witness: "No, sir." Mr. Phillips: "Are you an Atheist?" Witness: "Yes, sir, I am." (Strong marks of disapprobation and disgust from all parts of the court followed this declaration.) Mr. Phillips (to witness): "Go down, sir; I will not ask you a single question." Witness, with the most perfect nonchalance, replied, "Very well, sir," and descended from the witness-box amidst loud hisses. Mr. C. Phillips, however, called him back, and, addressing him, said: "Perhaps, sir, you misunderstand the question, or we have mistaken or misunderstood you; I hope you did not mean to say that you are an Atheist?" Witness: "Yes, sir, I do." Mr. Phillips: "Do you know what an Atheist is?" Witness: "It is a negative term." Mr. Phillips: "What does it mean, sir?" Witness: "It means a man that does not believe in the existence of a God." Mr. Phillips: "And do you mean to say, sir, that you are such a person?" Witness: "Yes, sir." (Disapprobation manifested by every individual in court.) Mr. Phillips: "Witness, I will not disgrace myself by asking you another question." The witness then retired amidst the strongest manifestation of disgust and execration from all present.

Within two months of this scene, on January 23, 1834, the execrated Atheist was dead. He was but thirty-three years of age. Richard Carlile, who knew him well, and who at that time did not call himself an Atheist, wrote of him in the *Gauntlet*: "Though avowedly an Atheist, he was the best specimen of human nature that I have seen, read, heard, or thought of." Julian Hibbert came of a wealthy family, whose fortune had been made in the West Indies. He was a second son. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, he closely pursued studies all his life. This, possibly, acting on a delicate constitution, may have contributed to his early death.

Hibbert probably was attracted to Freethought by the prosecutions of Richard Carlile and his shopmen. Of Carlile he was a munificent supporter. Learning that a distinguished political prisoner had received a gift of £1,000, he remarked that a Freethinking prisoner should not want equal friends, and gave Carlile a cheque for the same amount. Julian Hibbert also spent nearly £1,000 in fitting up Carlile's shop in Fleet-street. Mr. G. J. Holyoake says: "Mr. Carlile said to us on one occasion, that Mr. Hibbert, from first to last, gave £7,000 in furtherance of his advocacy of free discussion in religion." He contributed "Theological Dialogues" to the *Republican*, and of these articles I possess the original MSS. In some sort also I may, perhaps, consider myself as having inherited his work, inasmuch as he commenced and published in 1826 a *Dictionary of Modern Anti-Superstitionists*, or "an account, arranged alphabetically, of those who, whether called Atheists, Scoptics, Latitudinarians, Religious Reformers, etc., have

during the last ten centuries, contributed towards the diminution of superstition. Compiled by a searcher after truth." He refrained from giving his name through modesty, and the philosophy which loses the individual in his work; for we have seen he was ready enough to expose himself to execration when he thought the interests of justice demanded it. The Dictionary evinced great scholarship and research. It was, however, conceived on too extensive a scale, and in 128 pages, all that was issued, it only reached to the name of Annet.

Julian Hibbert also compiled "Chronological Tables of English Freethinkers," which were published in the *Reasoner* for 1855. In my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations* I have expressed my acknowledgments to Hibbert, whose idea I carried out on a more modest scale, and I only hope that in another fifty years my own work will be superseded by a better. Julian Hibbert set up a private printing-press at No. 1 Fitzroy-place, Kentish Town, and had, at great trouble and expense, special founts of type cast in uncial Greek, with which he was never satisfied. He was, indeed, as Carlyle wrote, "as scrupulous and accurate as a classical scholar as he was noble in nature, punctual in morals, and amiable in manners." In his preface to *The Book of the Orphic Hymns*, the first work published in this type, he thus humorously defends his fad, not only as a matter of taste, but also as a matter of religion: "If orthodox or heterodox (salvation or perdition) depend upon the appearance of part of a single Greek character* in the faded writing of some half-a-dozen mutilated old books, surely every true believer ought to devote a considerable portion of his mortal existence to the study of those letters, the right or wrong understanding of which will, no doubt, equally open to him the gates of Heaven or of Hades."

We may be quite sure the book of Orphic hymns, though now valuable, never paid for the type-founding. His next work in uncial Greek was of more general interest, being the treatises of *Plutarch and Theophrastus on Superstition*, which he edited with notes, a life of Plutarch, and learned appendices "On the Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar," "Of Persons Falsely entitled Atheists," "Various Definitions of an Important Word"—viz., the word "God," and a catalogue of the principal modern works against Atheism.

In 1831 Julian Hibbert, being in ill-health, gave his press and types to James Watson, who had been his printer. James Watson, while working on Carlyle's *Republicans*, was attacked by cholera, which terminated in typhus and brain fever. He said: "I owe my life to the late Julian Hibbert. He took me from my lodgings to his own house at Kentish Town, nursed me and doctored me for eight weeks, and made a man of me again. After my recovery Mr. Hibbert got a printing-press put up in his house and employed me in composing, under his directions, two volumes, one in Greek, the other in Greek and English" (*Memoir*, by W. J. Linton, p. 31).

Hibbert also wrote in, and helped to sustain, Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian*, taking much interest in the fight for an unstamped free press up to the month of his untimely death. His will was proved, and the personal effects sworn under £8,000 by his executors, two good Freethinkers—William Devonshire Saul, of Aldersgate-street, wine merchant; and J. Brooks, of Oxford-street, bookseller. He directed his body to be given to an anatomical school, and requested that no person should wear mourning for him, or take any further notice of his memory. He bequeathed £492 to Carlyle's printers, being the sum Carlyle was indebted to them, in place of a legacy. To Henry Hetherington and James Watson he left £500. He had bequeathed a like sum to the Rev. Robert Taylor, but this he revoked by a codicil, in consequence, as he states, of Taylor having married a lady of large fortune.

The obituary notice in the *Annual Register* (p. 217) says: "Hibbert never partook of animal food, but lived in a rigid and abstemious manner. He had some landed property, and the residue of his estates becomes the property of his sister." A portrait of him is extant, and was engraved in the *Reasoner* for July 1, 1855. His face is a very attractive and sweet one, closely resembling that of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

J. M. WHEELER.

A Yankee tells us of a man who went to church on one of the days when souls may be bought out of purgatory for a trifling fee. As the priest came round he deposited his dollar on the plate. "Is my friend's soul out of purgatory now?" "Yes," replied the ghostly man. "Are you quite sure?" repeated the affectionate inquirer. "Quite sure," answered the priest. "Wal, then, they won't be able to put him back again?" responded the relieved friend. "Certainly not." "Wal, in that case I may as well tell you, reverend friend, that that there dollar is a bad one."

* A note refers to the controversy whether it is *os* or *θs* in 1 Timothy iii. 16.

ACID DROPS.

"LORD, how the world is given to lying," said Jack Falstaff. Yes, it is given to lying. It is also given to romancing. If you listen to any ordinary person narrating a conversation or an experience, you will find that he (or even she) puts in a lot of dramatic touches, and unconsciously rounds the thing off after the fashion of a born story-teller; for the fact is, we are all more or less novelists whether we know it or not. And if you only take this key in your hand, you will be able to unlock many a secret in history, ay, and even in religion. A great deal of the New Testament was written by conscious or unconscious novelists. They felt what would make a good story, or round off an incomplete one, and they put it in without hesitation.

We cannot check the ancient novelists who wrote what has come down the ages as history, but we can see how the same sort of thing is done now-a-days; and done, too, before the very eyes of people who are in a position to check the narrator, only they are too lazy, or too much lovers of a good story, to do so.

Here is a case in point. Mr. Hall Caine, the novelist, was recently "dined" by the Vagabond Club, and in the course of his speech he told a dramatic story of the death of James Thomson—the Freethought poet who wrote as "B. V." in the house of the blind poet, Philip Bourke Marston. Mr. Caine stated that the two poets were alone all night in the house, and the blind poet was unable to see what was the matter, or to tell whether his friend was really dead or alive. This was a highly dramatic situation, and Mr. Caine told it well, and the gentlemen of the Vagabond Club listened to him with rapt attention.

But the story was untrue. Thomson was taken ill in Marston's rooms, but he did not die there. He was removed to University College Hospital, where he died two days afterwards, from loss of blood through the breaking of an internal blood-vessel. These facts were long ago given to the world authoritatively by Thomson's editor, Mr. Bertram Dobell, and subsequently by his biographer, Mr. H. S. Salt. Yet the dramatic (and false) story told by Mr. Hall Caine crept into the newspapers without a word of contradiction, and perhaps it will figure in literary anecdote books for several generations.

And now comes something still more surprising. Turning over the pages of that excellent little monthly, the *Literary Guide*, we noticed a paragraph on Mr. Hall Caine's death in to the "Vagabonds." After narrating Thomson's death in Marston's rooms, Mr. Caine added, "I do not know if ever that story has been told." Whereupon the writer in the *Literary Guide* remarks that "Mr. Bertram Dobell and Mr. H. S. Salt, as well as other cultured liberals, will afford to smile." Not a word of denial is given; even this writer less the false story pass unchallenged, and only sneers at Mr. Caine for reading nobody's books but his own.

Really, it is a question whether anyone can "afford to smile" when history is written in this fashion. The world still swallows what satisfies its imagination. Science has not purged it of this weakness, and perhaps it will never do so. And in the face of it we can understand why history, and especially religious history, which is so concerned with the emotions, should be called "a Mississippi of falsehood."

One hundred and fifty-three thousand copies are stated to have already been published of a "Protest" by the Rev. Archibald G. Brown, of the East London Tabernacle, which bears the rather alarming title of *The Devil's Missions for Amusement* (Banks and Son). Mr. Brown charges the Church with having "gradually toned down her testimony, instead of 'speaking out as the Puritans did,' and with having then 'winked at and excused the frivolities of the day.'" "There is," he tells us, "little, if anything, to choose between church, chapel, or mission hall. However these may differ in some respects, they bear a striking likeness to the posters that figure upon and disfigure their notice boards. . . . 'Amusement,' he adds, 'is ousting the preaching of the Gospel as the great attraction. . . . 'Concerts, entertainments,' 'fancy fairs,' 'smoking conferences,' 'dramatic performances,' are the words honored with the biggest type and most startling colors."

It is not generally known that Scripture is one of the strictest subjects of examination for admission to the Navy. A gentleman, whose son is a candidate, only learned this fact at the last hour. He had spent a good deal of money "coaching" the young man in algebra, French, and such like, but had omitted the Scriptures. When he was informed that this was really the most important of all the lapses in the others being passed over lightly, but lapses in

Scriptural knowledge never—he telegraphed at once to the lad to “read up” in all haste for this most important department, and to secure the best ecclesiastical coach possible. He was much gratified and relieved to receive next evening a letter from the young hopeful to the following effect: “Dear Dad,—Don’t worry. Had heard about the Scriptures from a chum. Know all about them. Have been reading up the ‘Burning Bush,’ which is the favorite here. Am sure to pass.” It was a curious subject for a nautical examination; but there is no accounting for the idiosyncrasies of examiners.—*Liverpool Echo*.

A correspondent writes to the *Vossische Zeitung*, from Jaffa, that at the Easter festival in Jerusalem, during the ceremony of unsealing the Holy Tomb, two Armenian priests were attacked and thrown to the ground by Orthodox Greek popes, and a scene of violent conflict took place. The Armenian priests, on the intervention of the Turkish police, were carried senseless from the spot. These quarrels of rival Christian sects at the “holy places” have long been familiar all over the world, and afford matter of serene satisfaction to the Moslem, who not only possess the Holy Land, but keep the peace there. It is a beautiful illustration of how these Christians love one another.

The Religious Tract Society publish a good story of how, in some nameless place in Japan, a shop was discovered papered with leaves of the Bible. The woman who owned the shop had picked up a pile of waste paper thrown aside as useless, and papered her walls with it. This was not the most extraordinary part, for it had converted and made a Christian of her. The story does not say what parts of the Bible were pasted up, but if it had been such portions of the precious volume as the story of Lot and his daughters we should imagine it would disgust the Japanese with the fetish book of the Christians.

Sometimes the Bible gets put to very strange uses. The Chinese obtain copies of the holy Scriptures to wrap up their small groceries, and some have been known to use the paper as wadding for their guns.

Mr. John Haffenden, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the Straits, said that up to last year 140,000,000 Bibles, or portions thereof, had been distributed; but what was this amongst the 1,400,000,000 of the world’s population? “Millions must still be entirely without that Gospel which our Lord more than 1800 years ago commanded to be preached to every creature.”—If Jesus Christ had only invented printing, it would not have taken so long to distribute Bibles to all the world’s inhabitants. But just fancy the state of mind of those who consider this the one thing needful!

We should fancy that, if Jesus knew the result of Christian conversions among the heathen, he would repeat to the British and Foreign Bible Society the very unpolite language he used towards the Pharisees of his own day: “Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

A friend just over from South Africa, to whom we mentioned the case of the Christianised native of Pretoria who outraged and murdered a girl and then asked for his Bible, said it was the universal opinion out there that a Christianised native was a native spoil. The one doctrine of Christianity which lays hold on their minds is that Jesus pays for all. He says that they never make collections for missions at the churches in South Africa, all the money coming from fools at home, who would do better to look after their own heathen population.

The Rev. E. E. Jenkins, ex-president of the Wesleyan Conference, and hon. secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, went down to Audley to officiate at a memorial service in connection with the recent colliery disaster at Diglake. He took for his text, “Be still, and know that I am God”; but, instead of being still, he proceeded to vindicate the Almighty at considerable length. He said: “Those marvellous escapes, which are familiar to the narratives of the mine, of the railway, of the city, of the ocean, reveal the interventions of the Unseen Arm which is always present mighty to save. And in addition to single acts of deliverance, God takes the calamity itself and uses it for his glory.” So God’s goodness is proved both by his saving some and by his killing others. For, Mr. Jenkins will often yield to the argument of misfortune, especially when they are in the presence of a catastrophe like the Diglake disaster; revealing the touching spectacle of absolute helplessness, the wisdom, foresight, and strength of men cast to the ground, and swept aside like the vilest refuse. Then the despised prayer for help rises to lips that never uttered prayer before, and those who would never have discovered it on the Mount of teaching, or in the Temple of

Worship, find Him in Gethsemane.” What a charming Deity Mr. Jenkins has got. He kills peoples wholesale, leaving widows and orphans, just to get a prayer for help from lips that never uttered prayer before. We doubt if one of the entombed miners would have behaved like this to a dog.

Of course, Mr. Jenkins falls back at last on the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. But what if the miners died cursing instead of praying? And what reasonable assurance could they have that a God, who acted in that demoniac fashion to them in this world, would act any differently in any other? Mr. Jenkins tries to clear up one mystery by another. Preaching “Be still, and know that I am God,” is offering a drug for consolation, instead of the real help which springs from human sympathy.

A valet out of employment was charged at the Westminster police-court with stealing two pieces of old Mechlin lace, valued at £50, from an altar at the Brompton Oratory. The poor devil tried to pawn the articles for four shillings, and was “nabbed” in the attempt; so that all he got by his enterprise was an introduction to a magistrate.

Cardinal Manning declared, in a magazine article during the great “unemployed” agitation in London, that according to Catholic teaching it was no crime for a starving man to steal to satisfy his hunger. Why, then, was this wretched and destitute valet prosecuted? Was it because he stole from the Church? Is Catholic teaching only to be carried out at the expense of the laity?

Surely, if a man must steal out of mere self-preservation, he had better steal from the Church than from elsewhere. Church property belongs to God, and what does God want with £50 worth of Mechlin lace? He cannot wear it, nor should it decorate his altars while his children are in want of bread. What should we think of a human father who wore costly jewellery while his children were crying for food?

A writer in the *Church Times* says that the Archbishop of Canterbury does not take £15,000 a year; he is merely “entrusted by the Church with £15,000 a year to spend in its service and the service of the nation.” Surely this alters matters very much. Only it is not the Church which entrusts him, but the State through its ecclesiastical commissioners. No doubt he has to pay a good deal for working expenses, but the nation has no control over him if he refused to spend a single farthing. As a matter of fact, the archbishops have contrived to save goodly fortunes out of their salaries.

Three weeks ago the *Guardian* proclaimed that “the law of the Church of England knows nothing of dissolution of marriage except by death.” Now it says: “If anyone says that the living voice of the Church of England gives no certain sound on the question whether marriage is indissoluble, we cannot deny it.” The explanation is simple. The bishops know on which side their bread is buttered, and that they must not come into collision with the State on such a ticklish question as Sir F. Jeune putting asunder those whom God has joined together. When divorce was first permitted by law, the so-called divine law of the Church became effete.

Christian Re-union has so far advanced that the Protestant Bishop of Derry has refused to allow the Church Congress to be held there, not because it might be offensive to the Romanists, but because the Protestants of Derry do not wish Ritualistic Anglicans among them. They do love one another.

The *Weekly Register* says it has been prophesied that the Pope will reign twenty years. As he has already occupied the papacy over seventeen years, they can safely say that any way he is not very far short of fulfilling the prophecy. But how is it we only learn of it just now?

The log-rolling *British Weekly* declares: “The infidel camp is much disturbed by the challenge in defence of the Christian faith which Mr. Coulson Kernahan has thrown down in his booklet, *God and the Ant*.” It mentions Mr. Foote’s article in the *Freethinker*; but if it takes this as a sign that the infidel camp is much disturbed it is amusingly mistaken.

The *Church Times* never allows its loyalty to overcome its Churchism. It boldly says that her Majesty, in relinquishing her rights of patronage in the Welsh Church, violates her solemn Coronation Oath, taken in response to the Archbishop’s questions, the last of which was this: “And will you preserve unto the Bishops and clergy of England and Ireland, and to the Churches thus committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?” The *C. T.* does not notice that

the oath says nothing about the law being altered. It was altered in the case of the Church of Ireland, and it may be in regard to the Church in Wales and England also.

The *Church Times* is horrified at the appointment of Ascension Day for the polling at Warwick and Leamington. It says this arrangement is greatly to be deplored. For people to exercise their rights of citizenship when they ought to be contemplating how a dead Jew overcame the laws of gravitation is really too awful.

The Archbishop of Canterbury stated at the meeting of the S.P.C.K. that the ancient Assyrian Church was almost on the verge of extinction, and, without help from the English Church, the Assyrians might join the American Presbyterians, the Roman Catholics, and might even become Mohammedans. Apparently this ancient Church, like other ancient Churches, is in want of cash, and the authorities are prepared to transfer themselves to the body offering the most dollars. Why don't the Jews make a bid to incorporate the ancient Assyrian Church?

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge also claims to have issued eight millions of volumes, 500,000 Bibles and Prayer Books, and four millions of tracts. A small per cent. of these may be of some value, but, on the whole, what a deluge of waste paper to be sure.

The B. and F. Bible Society and the S.P.C.K., having much wealth, prevent the circulation of erroneous copies of the Scriptures. But in early days some curious mistakes happened. Thus John i. 1 was made to confirm Buddhism, being translated "In the beginning was the Buddha, and the Buddha was with God, and the Buddha was God." In one of the South Seas the words, "where the wild asses quench their thirst," were rendered, "where pigs that eat men drink against their hiccoughs."

Samuel Letters, a laborer, of Charles, North Devon, has been fined 2s. 6d. and costs for ploughing a field on Sunday. He pleaded that he did not know it was Sunday, and was let off lightly. If, however, only half-a-crown was taken from all the people who work in their own gardens on Sunday, a very considerable income might be raised. We commend the project to the Lord's Day Observance Society.

Wicked Jessie Ireland, a Dundee lassie of sixteen, pursued her minister, the Rev. J. A. Simpson, for £500 for an indecent assault while on a pastoral visit. The judge left it to the jury to decide if a girl who worked in a factory was as innocent as Jessie pretended to be, and the defendant was acquitted. He has had a narrow escape from the toils of the wicked one who is always going about seeking to devour the men of God.

In Robertson County, North Carolina, an extensive underground whiskey still has been unearthed on the land of the Rev. Bayliss Hamrick, a Baptist minister of fifty years' standing. The Excise officers have been baffled for many years, ever since the time of the war, but a few weeks ago were successful in discovering the still. Preacher Hamrick, a great exponent of faith in regeneration by water, has been one of the most successful whiskey smugglers of modern times.

Macaulay said that the Puritans objected to bear-baiting, not so much on account of the pain given to the bear as for the pleasure of the spectators. Something of this feeling may have animated the men of God who went to the race-course near Birmingham to publicly pray against the iniquity they are not inclined to.

Mr. W. J. Courthope, in his *History of English Poetry*, says that the legend of Robin Hood's piety was suggested by the tale of a knight in the *Legenda Aurea*, who was in the habit of robbing everybody who passed by his castle, but never allowed any business to come in the way of his devotions. But the union of religion with disregard of other people's rights has been a common observation from the days of David to those of the latest swindling director.

Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Sociology*, § 646, says: "Robbery as well as murder has had, and has still in some places, a religious sanctification." Says Burton of the Beloochis: "These pious thieves never rob, save in the name of Allah." Of a robber tribe among the Chibchas, Piedrahita writes: "They regard as the most acceptable sacrifice that which they offer up out of the robbery to certain idols of gold, clay, and wood, whom they worship. And at the present time in India we have freebooters like the Domras, among whom 'a successful theft is always celebrated by a sacrifice' to their chief god, Gandak." The modern method is to build a church and subscribe to missionary funds out of the proceeds of iniquity.

The *Dublin Evening Herald* says that the teacher in the

National Schools, while they are ruled over by clericals, "can be little better than a sort of superior flunkey, whose politics and opinions—and not unfrequently even domestic affairs—are determined by another mind than his own. This state of things, it is needless to say, is not only prejudicial to the teacher, but also to the best interests of the country. Apart from the injustice inflicted on a large body of public servants, there are higher and broader grounds on which the country should demand a radical and a sweeping modification of present arrangements."

The Rev. W. M. Barrow, vicar of St. Clement's, Liverpool, runs some Church schools, and evidently with a keen eye to business. On May 20 he sent a circular to the parents of his school-children, stating that "the Managers have decided to charge no School Fees next week." But the vicar did not mean to let the parents have the benefit, if he could help it; so he asked them to send the amount of the weekly fee "at least" to his Mission Hall on the Monday. Surely this sort of thing is not one to be encouraged by the Education Department.

The *English Churchman* gives the following list of places where the Confessional is at work:—Amphill; St. Andrew's, Worthing; St. Andrew's, Newcastle; Chittlehampton; Holy Trinity, Leytonstone; St. Stephen's, Dorchester; Deal; St. Catherine's, Liverpool; Shernanbury; St. Andrew's, Plaistow; St. Margaret's, Liverpool; Stroud Green; All Souls, Harlesden; Holy Cross, St. Pancras. The *E. C.* hopes that Protestant parents in these parishes will make careful inquiries as to whether any children are admitted to Confession without the knowledge of their parents. It points out that the party urging confession also urge a celibate priesthood, and says: "In some cases clergymen have brought the utmost possible pressure on young people to induce them to go to Confession before, or immediately after, Confirmation."

Mr. Gladstone is an old-fashioned theologian. In a recent letter to the Rev. W. Spiers, who has written a volume on the Pentateuch, the G.O.M. says that he views with "special satisfaction" every effort to "abate the pride and rashness" of the Higher Criticism. Once upon a time these proud and rash gentlemen would have shared the fate of Uzzah; now they have only to dread the anger of Mr. Gladstone, and we guess they can smile at that.

Buddhists, as well as Christians, are capable of economy in religion. It is reported that they are getting into the habit of offering hollow candles on the altars to earn remission of punishment hereafter. The candles look all right, but they weigh badly. And as Buddha hasn't found out the fraud, the trade in make-believe candles is flourishing; indeed, says a correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News*, two or three millions have been contracted for within the last few weeks. But let the pious economists beware when the Boss wakes up to the imposition. To stint him of wax may make him waxy.

Satan was always a scapegoat. All the sins of the saints fall on his head, and he is now credited even with those of his divine protagonist. A Mr. Thomas Young, of Birmingham, has put out a pamphlet, *Christ or Satan*, in which he contends that hell is a work of the Devil, and as such must be destroyed. To make Satan the builder of the prison in which God punishes him is really too bad.

The Printing Trades Federation organised a demonstration in Trafalgar-square last Sunday afternoon to protest against "the tyranny of the Salvation Army, in discharging wholesale efficient Trade Union workmen in the printing department, because they would not join the Army, and supplanting them by underpaid Salvationists." Several Trade Unions were represented at the meeting; the speeches were tolerably warm, and the resolution that was carried wound up by stigmatising "the Salvation Army as only another name for a gigantic trading concern, conducted on a sweating system."

The Army, through "Colonel" Bremner, denies all the charges of sweating, but it denies them generally, and does not venture to contradict specific statements. Miss Morell, of the Hammersmith Branch of the Independent Labor Party, referred to an advertisement in the *War Cry* offering from six to eight shillings per week for "young girls used to tea-packing." At such a low wage some of these young girls would be tempted to join the class that Booth is "rescuing." The Salvation Army ought to pay higher wages to tea-packers; and it can afford to do so, for the tea it sells at two shillings a pound can be beaten in any shop in London for eighteenpence.

The name of God is spelled with four letters in almost every known language.—*Yonker's Gazette*. Including the American language. It is usually spelled with an "l".—*Brockton Times*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9 and 16, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—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. FRENCH.—We do not believe a word of it. James Thomson was too proud to claim the authorship of another man's writing; and he was well aware who wrote that article in the *Secularist*. The author was a personal friend of his, and is still living, though no longer connected with the Secular party. With the exception of paragraphs, Thomson never wrote anything in the *Secularist* which he did not sign. It was a point on which he was extremely punctilious.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for your genial letter. Mr. W. T. Lee must have improved immensely since the time when he proposed to debate with you at Bermondsey. A man of faculty does improve in twelve years, especially when they are the prime years of his life.

H. MALBON (Longton).—Thanks for paper. See paragraph.

L. LEVISE (Charleston).—Many thanks for papers. Mr. Foote will write on the existence of Jesus when he can find time.

S. HATTEN (New York).—We are always pleased to receive American papers.

L. PECK.—You should read the work of M. Solovyoff before replying to his statements.

T. E. M.—The Inniscarra desecration case does not call for any comment in our columns. Thanks all the same for the cuttings.

G. NIDD writes: "I am receiving subscriptions towards the purchase of sixteen shares. That number you can depend upon. I have also promises of some more." This correspondent has our heartiest thanks.

W. H. HARRAP.—Glad to learn you were so pleased with our criticism on Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did*.

E. G. TAYLOR.—See paragraph.

We have received, too late for insertion, a letter from the Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, in reference to our last week's leading article. Mr. Engström does not deal with the points we raised as to the legal disabilities of Secularism and the legal privileges of Christianity. He only deals with the question we put to him: "If an honest unbeliever may go to heaven, what is the use of taking the trouble to be a Christian?" Upon this question he expends a good deal of what we cannot help calling verbiage; the sum of which is that, apart from heaven and hell (a very big *apart*), the man who is not a Christian loses the greatest inspiration to self-sacrifice. In reply to this argument, we venture to say that there are Secularists who work as hard for their cause as Mr. Engström does for his, and for a much smaller "consideration."

J. DEXON.—Thanks for your good wishes. See paragraph. Glad to know you were "delighted" with Mr. Putnam's lectures at Liverpool.

C. W. POTTER.—Pleased to hear you had such a good meeting at Edmonton. If you send us full particulars of the Teetotalism lecture, including time and place, we will give it a paragraph next week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Builder's Journal—Referee—Nya Sanningar—Truthseeker—Open Court—Derby Times—Twentieth Century—Dublin Evening Telegraph—Crescent—Liverpool Mercury—Western Figaro—Liberator—Straits Times—New York Sun—Isle of Man Times—Liverpool Echo—Staffordshire Sentinel—Boston Investigator—Las Dominicales—Freidenkor—Liberty—Secular Thought.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 25 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

DURING the past week I have received very few responses to my appeal. It is impossible to say just now what will be the upshot of this business, but some decision must be taken immediately after the Bristol Conference.

According to my promise, and to avoid future misunderstanding, I proceed to give a succinct history of this affair. My space is limited, and perhaps that is fortunate.

Some time ago I gave a partial explanation, and I will endeavor not to repeat, at least unnecessarily, what is already in the mind of attentive readers.

I am obliged to go back to the very beginning; that is, a few months after the starting of the Bradlaugh Memorial

Hall Company, of whose original Board of Directors I was chairman. Mr. R. O. Smith proposed that the Company should acquire the lease of the Hall of Science for £2,000, this sum to include the fixtures and furniture. I laid his proposal before the Board, and I could have carried it by using my casting vote, which I refrained from doing. At the shareholders' meeting, in August, 1891, I plainly stated that in my judgment it was impossible to raise sufficient money to build a Bradlaugh Memorial unless the project was immediately connected with the life and work of the National Secular Society. This view was flouted by those who were bent on opposing me at any hazard, but subsequent events have proved that I was right. The Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company has made no real headway since I left it in the control of those who defeated my policy. According to its last annual report, which was not sent me, although I am a shareholder, I see that the Company allotted one fresh share in 1894.

When I turned my attention to a fresh method of acquiring the Hall of Science, I found that Mr. Smith's terms had risen. He said he was annoyed at his treatment by the Memorial Company, but I and my closest colleagues were not responsible for that. At any rate he wanted £3,000 instead of £2,000. I never could understand this increase, though Mr. Smith has since given an explanation which he thinks sufficient. Had he kept to his original offer, which he now sees to have been just enough to himself, he would long ago have had his £2,000, and we should have been in full possession of the premises.

It was reported by my enemies, who were very reckless, that I had a private arrangement with Mr. Smith, by which I was to receive a handsome slice of the purchase money. Some of them specified the precise amount. Well, I should imagine that the silliest and most malignant of them must now perceive the gross folly of their accusations.

My principal reason for closing with Mr. Smith was the impossibility of doing anything else. In a certain sense we were cornered. Those who talk glibly about getting another hall do not understand the difficulties. I know not where we could go, with money in our hands, to hire a suitable hall for pronounced Freethought lectures in the heart of London.

There was another reason. I never liked the Club at the Hall, but it was tolerated in Bradlaugh's time, and I believed it would at least pay a large share of the ground rent and other expenses. Unfortunately it declined steadily. The first year it contributed less than half the estimated amount, the second year a good deal less than that, and the third year a ridiculously small figure. Meanwhile the N.S.S. had been paying its contracted rent for its partial use of the building, although this was done with considerable difficulty, and partly by the many free lectures I gave on Sundays and on Wednesday evenings.

I am not blaming the Club committee in any way for this state of things, although perhaps some economies might have been effected in the management. But that, of course, is a matter of opinion. Anyhow, it was obvious that such a state of things would have to terminate; and what I have to complain of is, that when this did become obvious, the Club committee assumed an attitude of hostility to the Board of Directors and to the N.S.S. Executive. During the bother over the letting of the hall for an entertainment which, whether rightly or wrongly, the Directors and the Executive regarded as highly discreditable to the institution, the Club committee was simply defiant. It stood upon its technical right as tenant, without recognising any corresponding obligation in regard to rent; and as this was a difficulty that had not been foreseen, the Directors were obliged to give the Committee three months' notice to quit.

Constant friction followed, and it culminated one Wednesday evening when I went down to lecture and found the hall closed, owing to an alleged "misunderstanding."

Before the expiration of the notice to quit, Mr. R. O. Smith, himself a member of the Club committee, served it with a notice to pay *him* any rent, and to give *him* possession. I learnt of this by sheer accident, and I had much trouble in convincing the Committee that Mr. Smith's notice was perfectly illegal; indeed, I could only do it by the aid of the Hall Society's solicitors.

Some other incidents I would rather bury. I do not wish to relate them unless I am compelled.

I must now go back to the early part of the year, when Mr. Smith first agreed to take £525 in cash and £75 in shares to extinguish his claim as vendor and mortgagee. Mr. Smith stuck out for the odd £25 beyond the £500 that was first offered him, and the prolonged negotiation gave the friend who was to advance the money an opportunity of changing his mind. I then saw Mr. Smith, and offered to raise the money in another way, if he would say whether he would accept it, and what time he would allow. Instead of answering these questions, he sent us a lawyer's letter, stating that he meant to take steps to obtain what was owing to him and to realise his security.

I told Mr. Smith that this was an extraordinary way of treating his colleagues (for he was a Director) and the party generally (for he was an N.S.S. vice-president). But he was stubborn, and I came to the conclusion that he had private views as to the future of the Hall of Science; a conclusion which was strengthened by the fact that nearly three months elapsed before he condescended to renew his offer.

This state of uncertainty was a great hindrance to us. We could not go on building on what might turn out to be a quicksand. And as the Club had ceased to be a source of income, while still hanging on to its technical right as tenant, we fell into financial embarrassments, which it was useless to contend against without a clear understanding with Mr. Smith.

What I have now to state I should prefer to leave unsaid, but so many people know of it, some of whom report it in a peculiar fashion, that I think it best to publish the facts.

The superior landlord put in a distraint for rent; and knowing that this was coming, I authorised Miss Vance to remove the National Secular Society's library, which she did. The London Branch, of which several of the Club committee are members, have been very anxious to know where the books are; but the Executive is satisfied, and the Branch will know in good time.

We kept the distraint going in order that the Hall might at least be fit for Mr. Putnam's reception; and, having lived through that, we let the landlord take his course. The sale took place, and persons who should have known better were there running up the prices of the very things we wanted to secure for our own use. One of them even told the auctioneer that the platform could be removed, and was therefore saleable. However, a friend bought from the bailiff, at his own risk, the articles necessary to the Hall as a meeting-place, and the audiences have perceived little, if any, difference in the aspect of the institute.

It was in the midst of all these troubles that Mr. Smith told us he was ready to listen to an offer when we had the money in our hands.

This story is a brief one to tell, but it covers many months, and the whole time has been one of great anxiety, and full of unpleasant incidents.

Personally, I am very tired of this business; and I sympathise with Miss Vance, upon whom it has entailed much extra labor, which, however, she has borne cheerfully. A meeting of the Directors will be held next week, and the result will be duly announced.

Fresh Donations.—A. Beadle, £1; A. Clarke, £1; W. W., 2s. 6d.; W. H. Harrup, £1.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

IN spite of the hot weather, there was a good audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Flight of the Jerusalem Ghost." Mr. George Ward, who is so assiduous in his voluntary attention to the bookstall, was pressed into acting as chairman for once. He invited discussion, and some was forthcoming; but the speaker was young and inexperienced, and his remarks had little to do with the lecture.

Mr. Harry Snell, who is coming up from Nottingham, will lecture at the London Hall of Science this evening (June 2), his subject being "Christ and Socialism." Whit-

Sunday is not the best time for a good audience, but we hope the London friends who are *not* out of town will drop in at the Hall as an encouragement to one of the most promising of our younger lecturers.

Notwithstanding many counter attractions, Mr. Charles Watts had good audiences last Sunday at Manchester. In the evening all the seats were filled. The lectures were enthusiastically received.

Mr. S. P. Putnam delivered three lectures at Liverpool on Sunday to first-rate audiences, the hall being crowded in the evening. The Liverpool friends are delighted with him and he appears to be delighted with them. He writes us that he had "a fine time." Mr. George Wise, of the local Christian Evidence Society, offered opposition to Mr. Putnam's lectures; and we understand that a debate on something or other (we are not informed what) is to take place between these gentlemen during the summer.

Mr. Putnam has been "doing" North Wales since his Liverpool lectures. He will attend the National Secular Society's Conference at Bristol to-day (June 2), being billed to speak with Messrs. Foote, Watts, and others, at the evening (public) meeting.

Bristol Christians have been going about saying that Secularism was dead, and there is naturally some astonishment at the placards announcing the N.S.S. Conference and the public meeting, which is to be addressed by such a variety of speakers. The Rev. J. M. Logan, who debated with Mr. Foote, has engaged the St. James's Hall for his Sunday afternoon Bible Class while his chapel is undergoing alteration. But *this* afternoon (June 2) the Bible Class has to stand aside for the Secular Conference, which is a curious commentary on "the death of Secularism."

The Bristol friends will be happy to meet delegates at the station and take them to their hotels. All they require is to be informed of the time of arrivals. Delegates, or other visitors, who have not yet written to secure accommodation should communicate at once with Mr. J. Keast, 32 Morgan-street, St. Paul's, Bristol, who will be pleased to attend to their requirements.

It is customary for the delegates and visitors from a distance to sit down to a common dinner at one o'clock, between the morning and afternoon sessions of the Conference. This year's dinner will be at the "Crown and Dove," in Bridwell-street. The whole expense will be defrayed by one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, Mr. George Anderson, who does not attend Conferences himself, but likes to be hospitable to those who do.

A cheap excursion runs from Paddington to Bristol on Saturday at 12.35 noon. Fares, 9s. to return June 3, 10s. to return June 4, and 11s. to return June 10 or 17. If a sufficient number will notify their intention to avail themselves of this excursion to Miss Vance, a saloon carriage will be provided. There are also excursions from Swindon, Reading, and Bath by the same train. There is likewise an excursion at the same prices leaving Paddington at 11.10 p.m.

Mr. A. B. Moss, who is a member of the Camberwell Vestry, has been defending the right of open air meetings. He was supported by Mr. Dobson, another Secularist, but the "Moderate" majority carried the day. It appears that the tradesmen had complained of a "nuisance" caused by the "obscene language" in connection with the business of costermongers, and "political, atheistical, and other speakers," on the Triangle, at the juncture of Rye-lane and Heaton-road; and the Vestry Committee had placed the matter in the hands of the police. Mr. Moss naturally objected to political and atheistical speakers being made responsible for the language of costermongers; but the majority of the Vestry seemed to think that they were properly lumped together.

The Lambeth Branch commences a series of Sunday afternoon lectures in Kennington Park on Sunday, when Mr. Jones will lecture on "The Soul and Science."

Mr. E. G. Taylor, of Manchester, has for a considerable time been deeply interested in the Blasphemy Laws. An article from his pen upon this subject appeared in the February number of the *Westminster Review*. This article is now abridged and issued as a penny pamphlet by the Liberty of Bequest Committee, under the title *Should Thought be Fettered in England?* Copies can be obtained of Messrs. Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C. Mr. Taylor's statement of the law is done with knowledge, care, and self-restraint. In some instances, perhaps, it might be improved; but even as it is we heartily recommend it for circulation by N.S.S. Branches, and also by individual Freethinkers who wish to see the odious Blasphemy Laws swept out of our jurisprudence.

SECULARISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

THE GLASGOW DEBATE.

(Continued from p. 324.)

On the third night Dr. JAMIESON affirmed "That Christianity is superior to Secularism." In spite of all his opponent's protestations to the contrary, it was quite clear that Secularism was negative and iconoclastic, and nothing more. Its pretence to satisfy all the needs of mankind, and in particular their religious aspirations, was farcical. G. J. Romanes, for long a Freethinker, but who returned to the bosom of the Church some years before his recent lamented death, had left it on record that the loss of religious belief left the world desolate for him, so that nothing in the creed of Science could reclaim the waste. Secularism, then, was a gospel of despair. He had already demonstrated that the New Testament forestalled all the so-called principles of Secularism, so that it was useless to maintain that the latter was superior to Christianity. Mr. Watts had painted for them a roseate picture of the idyllic home-life cherished by the Secularist theory of marriage and social purity. At the best, that was an impudent travesty of Christian prescription. Besides, Christianity inculcated purity of thought not less than of action, whereas Secularism was silent upon that all-important aspect of the subject. It was now his duty to disclose the real doctrine of Secularism respecting sexual morals. He regretted to see ladies present. By an inadvertence he had failed on the previous evening to warn them to stay away from this meeting. As it was, he should have to omit the vilest and most damning counts in his indictment, as utterly unfit for a mixed audience; but even with this limitation they would gain some idea of the hideousness of it all. His chief authority would call "The Beggary Elements." If Mr. Watts insisted on having its actual title, then (with a melodramatic flourish) he would divulge it. This infamous production, he was ashamed to say, was written by a member of his own profession. Having read passages from it, which he construed as meaning that universal prostitution would be preferable to the present system of sexual relations, and added extracts from Owen, Harte, and "Dr. Agate," Dr. Jamieson declared that it must now be plain to all of them that the sexual morals of Secularism were those of the poultry-yard and the pig-sty. For let them mark well the fact: Bradlaugh, Holyoake, Foote, and all the Secularist leaders, had set their *imprimatur* upon the beastly "Beggary Elements."

Mr. WATTS again commented on the failure of his opponent to deal with the case for Secularism. There had been no attempt to countermine his positions. It had been said that Christianity built hospitals, whereas Secularism had none; but they had overwhelming historic proof that there were systems of medical aid long before Christ. In answer to the chronic demand, "What had cold scepticism done for mankind?" it could easily be shown that scepticism was the precursor of progress. Thus the scepticism of Bacon opened up a new world for Science, and that of Hume the boundless field in which modern thought expatiates. He must recur to the Christian dogma of exclusive salvation, with its correlative of persecution. Dr. Jamieson had not even parried that thrust. Then what of the anti-social effect of the commandments of Jesus, who called upon his disciples to forsake all—kindred, home, and property—to follow him; of the injunction that they should shake the dust from off their feet against the cities that would not receive them, with the doom pronounced against such cities in the Day of Judgment; and what of the awful announcement that a man's foes would be those of his own household? The only pertinent question addressed to him during the debate had been, "Whether anyone who acted up to the teachings of the New Testament could be a bad man?" and he had now proved that that teaching incited to persecution, and tended to subvert the whole fabric of social order and happiness. Again, they had the witness of history for it that, when Christianity was primitive, and therefore pure, presumably Christians did literally carry out the behest of Jesus and renounce all worldly ties. His opponent ridiculed the notion that Secularists should posit the principle that Progress sprang from Liberty, because Secularists did not believe in free-will. He wanted to know whether Dr. Jamieson meant absolute or partial free-will; but, in any event, the New Testament specifically denied free-will, and he now proceeded to give chapter and verse to verify this.

For the rest of the evening the controversy raged round the centres thus indicated. Dr. Jamieson continued to bore diligently into the muck-heap of nastiness, from which the itinerant Christian Evidencer draws his chief inspiration, with spasmodic allusions to his opponent's arguments. Thus he gravely asserted that, although there had been pre-

Christian hospitals, they were not for indoor patients, and that, at any rate, an unnamed "infidel" writer had admitted that the earliest mention of a hospital was to be found in the leper-houses spoken of in the Old Testament. Thus, it seemed that hospitals arose under the religion out of which Christianity emerged. The fact that Christianity could constrain a man to leave all for its sake struck him as a manifestation of its power. Why, he even admired Secularists who had gone to prison for conscience sake! When Mr. Foote went to prison had he not to forsake his wife and kindred? (Shouts of ironical laughter.) It was not true that the New Testament begat persecution. The shaking of the dust from off the feet was merely a symbolical act, and all the threats of vengeance referred to the end of the world. The fact is that the persecuting spirit is in human nature. When Jesus said that he came to bring not peace, but a sword, and that every household would be divided against itself, he meant no more than that the apparent apostacy of those who became Christians would give offence to the non-Christian members of the family; just as when in a Christian family one of its members turns Secularist there is certain to be some friction and unpleasantness.

Mr. WATTS said he was quite satisfied with the concession that hospitals were pre-Christian; the character of the institution was a mere detail. He gave the lie direct to the assertion that *The Elements of Social Science* ever received the official or unqualified recommendation of Messrs. Bradlaugh, Holyoake, and Foote; and it was a wicked calumny to say that it represented the Secularist teaching on sexual questions. There were portions of the work of which he heartily approved; but there were others that he categorically repudiated. It had been alleged that in its positive form the Golden Rule was the exclusive property of Christianity; but he would now produce three Christian authorities of the first rank—namely, Sir William Jones, Mr. George Matheson, and Mr. Grant—who concurred in avowing that the Golden Rule of Confucius was word for word the same as that attributed to Jesus of Nazareth, and that the ordinary negative form into which the Confucian aphorism is Englished is a mistranslation. It was charged against Secularism that it had done nothing for education; but what in its palmy days had Christianity done in the same regard? Absolutely nothing. And when the march of civilisation forced learning to leave the cloister and enter the university, and later the public school, the Church still insidiously or openly sought to taint and drug the springs of knowledge. They had heard it said that the Bible moralised society; but that was not always so. Statistics which he now placed before them indicated that crime had actually risen in some cases *pari passu* with an increased circulation of the Bible, and in proportion to the number of churches. His opponent talked of science as if Christianity had a monopoly of it; but, in truth, science was non-Christian, if not anti-Christian, as when it substituted a pathological theory for the Jesuine belief in demoniacal possession. It might be that the persecuting spirit did inhere in human nature; but that was not the point. Christianity stood condemned because, so far from eradicating or even controlling this spirit, it had, in the main, fomented and propagated it. Uniformity of belief was morally impossible, and yet Christianity insisted upon it in theory, and endeavored to force it in practice. Over and over again he had been mockingly called upon to produce the documentary standards of Secularism, and to point to its Bible. Secularists did not tie themselves down to any Bible-fetish; they gathered the treasures of wisdom and goodness and beauty from all ages and all sources, adding fondly to their store from the Book of Nature as well as of life, and leaving blank pages to be inscribed by the wiser and greater generations that are to come.

On the fourth night the proceedings came to little more than a rehash of what had gone before. Dr. JAMIESON again clamored for the production of the Secularist Bible. Mr. Watts's silly hypercriticism, that Jesus encouraged im-providence when he said "Take no thought for the morrow," sprang from a misconception, from which he might have been saved by consulting *Nuttall's Dictionary*, where one of the meanings of the word "thought" was given as "not to be anxious." Mr. Watts denounced predestination as an abominable doctrine, but that it had the reverse of a demoralising influence on its votaries appeared from the fact that three of the world's greatest benefactors—Knox, Howard, and Spurgeon—were uncompromising Predestinarians. Let his opponent give three names of unbelievers to match them. Galileo—a Christian, by the way—was molested more by his fellow philosophers than by the Church, since the former hounded on the theologians against him. Christ had been described to them as a bitter persecutor. What a monstrous aspersion on the character of him who bade Peter put up his sword, and exclaimed upon the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"! Freethinkers far more distinguished than Mr. Watts had expressed the warmest admiration for the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Dr. Jamieson then read a series of well-known tributes to Christ from Rousseau, Paine, etc.

Mr. WATTS, in response to the challenge that he should name three Freethinkers whose benefactions could compare with those of Knox, Howard, and Spurgeon, went over a long list of British and American Freethinking testators to various benevolent objects, beginning with Girard, Smithson, and Lick. He did so under protest, for this process of counting heads and weighing purses was childish in the extreme. Benevolence was not the exclusive property of any sect, but an universal human instinct. The personality of Christ was depicted under two aspects in the New Testament—the gentle and the severe. The first was naturally the choice of the sentimentalist; but they could not reasonably take the one and leave the other. Both aspects were correlated to the same subject. As for the tributes of sceptics to Christ, the homage was paid not to the god, but to the man Christ Jesus; and on these terms Dr. Jamieson was welcome to them. He (the speaker) was not alone in thinking of the Jesus of the Gospels as a vindictive dogmatist; the Rev. Charles Voysey also thought so—seeking to explain the rancorous language and insensate conduct of Jesus by the hypothesis that latterly he became insane; and M. Renan also animadverts on the unlovely side of the character of his hero.

Of the many whimsical or surprising assertions made by Dr. JAMIESON, towards the close of the debate, it will suffice to select the following: Benevolence is a distinctively Christian virtue, since non-Christian races generally are addicted to every form of cruelty. It is quite true that Christ could be stern as well as mild and loving, for it behoves every good man to be austere towards vice, not less than to be gracious towards suffering virtue or the repentant sinner. If Secularists lead the van of Progress, where are their representatives in science, etc.? Here was a galaxy of illustrious names in natural science, literature, art, etc. Where were the Secularists to set against them? Speaking of the practice of charity, while Christians had charities innumerable, Secularism had not a solitary one. A few years ago the total contribution of the Secularists of London to the Metropolitan Hospital Fund reached the magnificent sum of 30s. Christians went into the slums to carry succor to the needy, the sick, and the dying. Could Secularists point to their missions of comfort and mercy? Tennant in his work on Ceylon, and Darwin in *The Voyage of the Beagle*, acknowledged the marvellous change wrought by Christian missions in the minds and morals of races whose improvement had been despaired of by the most competent anthropologists. Finally, if Secularism satisfied all the needs of mankind, how came it that in the hour of death Christianity could often administer consolation, when Secularism was dumb and impotent? Joseph Barker had described a death-bed scene at which this helplessness was vividly impressed upon him, and "Saladin" had made a similarly abject confession.

Having dealt with most of these statements and exposed their inaccuracy, Mr. WATTS, in his final speech, summed up and gave his impressions of the debate. Strictly speaking, as it required two to make a debate, there had not been any real encounter at all. His opponent had spent most of his time in picking up the filth collected by scoundrels with which to bespatter Secularism, and if ever a man was disgusted with this mode of controversy, he (Mr. Watts) was that man. Indeed, he felt obliged to stigmatise the debate as nothing short of a fraud upon the public. Not one of the theses which he advanced had been so much as touched. If this was the entire result of twelve months' preparation on the part of a man who did not believe in taking anxious thought for the morrow, it was evident his course of study would require to be indefinitely extended. In conclusion, Mr. Watts made a rapid survey of the whole field of the debate to show that all his positions remained unshaken, briefly recounted the services of Secularism to the freedom of the press and of speech, and, in a brilliant peroration, adjured his hearers to cleave to the truth, to be just and fear not; since, God or no God, heaven or no heaven, the consciousness of duty well done, and the assurance that the world had been bettered, even in an infinitesimal degree, by our presence in it, was the highest satisfaction which we could attain.

The perusal of the preceding report will give a better idea of the character of the debate than any systematic appraisal could convey. Mr. Watts exhibited characteristic amenity of temper, handled his material skilfully, and exercised all that alertness of apprehension and swiftness and directness of execution which great natural aptitude for polemic and long practice alone confer. We are sorry we cannot congratulate Dr. Jamieson upon any refinement, either in method or manner, since his first meeting with Mr. Watts a year ago. Probably his infirmity of temper is incurable, but he might, at least, have made some effort to rise above the combined bluster and chicanery of an Old Bailey lawyer, united to the gentle art of the "baser sort" of sewage-vending Christian Evidence emissary. Although the debate as such must be described as a miscarriage, there is room for hope that Mr. Watts's well-digested and forcible exposition of the case for Secularism may not prove altogether unfruitful.

J. P. GILMOUR.

A BIBLICAL BALLAD.

It wuz in the land uv Shinar thet this happened long ago,
Whan the water thet hed drowned the world hed gone off
like the snow
Thet thaws upon the mountain side whan warmer days
come round,
An' trickles to the valley with a ripplin', laughin' sound.

It wuz then the sons uv Noah journey'd westward wi' the
suri,
An' lit upon a valley, whar they thought a rest they'd won,
For they'd done a bit uv trampin', an' their wives war gettin'
cross,
So they reckoned they'd just stop an' hev a game at pitch
an' toss.

Whan they'd done a bit uv loafin', an' as things war gettin'
slow,
One feller casually remarked thet Jahveh played it low
Whan he soused the blessed world wi' a ruther longish
shower,
An' he moved thet they in self-defence should start an' build
a tower.

They called a gen'ral meetin', an' they gave the crowd the
plan,
An' every mother's son uv them went for it to a man;
But es this story's gospel ye hed better understan'
Thet thar wuz jest one language to express the thoughts uv
man.

Wall! they started on their contract, an' were doing fairly
well
Till the Lord one day went walkin', an' wuz tickled wi' the
smell
Uv the bricks thet they war firin'; so he hed a look around
At what the crowd wuz doin', an' wuz skeered at what he
found.

"This kinder thing won't do," he said, "fer if they pull it
through
They'll get too high an' mighty; no, this kinder thing won't
do!"
Fer he wuz a trifle jealous uv the men he'd made from dust,
An' reckoned ef they built thet tower his bossin' job wuz
bust.

He squatted down upon a rock, an' slowly scratched his
wool
While thinkin' how to stop their game, an' bring them under
rule.
He did a lot uv scratchin', but he figured out a plan:
He made them chin in different tongues instead uv only
one.

This kinder played the devil wi' the job they hed on hand,
Fer every feller chucked it up, an' bust the blessed band;
And it's this way thet they 'count fer all the languages men
speak—
Fer Roosian, French, an' Turkish, fer Fijian and Greek.

But it looks a trifle limpy to my unbelievin' eyes,
An' ef I wuz to tell the truth, I'd call it whoppin' lies.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

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

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 10 and 11, Aberdeen; 13 and 14, Dundee; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 24, Derby; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street; 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, 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.

This Decoration Day (May 30) a party of American Freethinkers have an excursion to the monument of Thomas Paine at New Rochelle, where they will orate and decorate the monument.

MURDER IN A CHURCH.

Two murders have recently been committed in a San Francisco church, the victims being girls who were lured into the edifice, assaulted, and killed. A young man named Durrant, the librarian and assistant Sunday-school superintendent, is under arrest, and the pastor is under suspicion. The ministers of San Francisco have been officious in agitating for the passage of an ordinance to close the side doors or family entrances to the saloons, and now the saloon keepers are getting back at them. They have laid before the supervisors a petition, in which they set forth that, in view of the heinous crimes just committed in a church of that city, it is high time to call the attention of the authorities to the use to which buildings occupied as churches are put, and to suggest a remedy. While there are many such edifices in which no immoralities or murders are known to occur, yet for the general public safety the petitioners are of opinion that an ordinance should be passed closing all side and rear entrances to all churches in the city and county, and forbidding therein partitions, separate rooms, bedrooms, or bed-lounges; that no person and that he shall be at all times under the immediate supervision of the police; that no church shall be opened without the consent of adjacent property owners; that no licence shall be granted to any minister who has not a good moral character, and that the signatures of at least twelve citizens and taxpayers shall be attached to the application for such licence. In this way, it is hoped, the church quickened public conscience shall abolish it altogether. The petitioners add that their memorial is not conceived in malice, but with the honorable and lofty purpose of protecting the lives of young girls, and to prevent the turning of church edifices into shambles, brothels, or houses of assignation. And the petitioners will ever pray.

It is a soberly-written document, its points are well sustained, and it was gravely argued before the supervisors by the attorney for the signers. The prompt squelch it got from the board was to be foreseen, but it reached the public through the newspapers, and has therefore done the work it was intended to do. It travesties with fine irony the slap-dash hit-or-miss, dragnet methods of a big lot of reformers who have not been able to view themselves in the clear light in which they stand before others.

—“*Truthseeker*” (*New York*).

GEORGE MACDONALD.

BABYLON AND PROPHECY.

In Judge Strange's work on *The Light of Prophecy*, written when he was a Christian, there are some observations on the prophecies concerning Babylon, which are of interest because Judge Strange personally visited the site of Babylon. He says: “The desolation of Babylon, as foretold by Isaiah and Jeremiah, has not yet been accomplished.” It is written: “The burden of Babylon. . . . Behold, the day cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate” (Isaiah xiii. 1-9). “The word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet.” “*It shall no more be inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.*” “As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities thereof, saith the Lord, so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell there” (Jeremiah l. 1-14). “Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness where no man dwelleth” (Jeremiah li. 43). Babylon is at present inhabited by some seven thousands of people, dwelling in a town called Hillah, situated on a part of the very site of Babylon. There are also some villages. Neither has Babylon been overthrown, like Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is prophesied: “Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there” (Isaiah xiii. 20); but they do. Again: “Behold, the day cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners out of it” (Isaiah xiii. 9). This has not yet been done. *Rich.* p. 12, says: “The inhabitants of Hillah bear a very bad character.” Another prediction is, that Babylon is to be “a land where no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man, journey through Babylon and described it. Again: They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations” (Jeremiah li. 26); but this has very freely been done.

Nya Sanningar, the new organ of the Swedish Freethinkers, continues its illustrations from the French Comic Bible. It also has given portraits and biographies of Darwin and of Voltaire in its recent issues.

GOD'S DAY v. MAN'S DAY.

DREARY and dull the morning breaks;
And why, we pertinently ask?
Why comes this day in sombre guise,
Whereon in gladness we should bask?

Traffic is o'er, the streets are void
Of careless throngs on pleasure bent;
And in their stead, *en route* to church,
In stiff puritanism pent,

A motley crowd of sober souls
Plod steadily with ne'er a smile:
For mirth perchance is sinful, and
May be but Satan's deadly wile

To draw our thoughts to earthly things:
Instead of harps and viols above,
We may be led to much prefer
The joys and sweets of human love.

The great Museum's door is closed;
On this day none can enter in:
Church and hotel together vie,
Dispensing sanctity and gin.

Now rouse, ye men! and protest make;
Let not your leisure thus be lost.
This day was set apart for you:
Take ye it then, nor count the cost.

Go, seek fair Nature on this day;
There, far from priestly sophistry,
Fraternise with all other life
Beneath the azure canopy.

Return ye, then, to town again,
Body and mind rejuvenated;
Welcome the advent of that morn
Which formerly ye almost hated.

THOR.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NEWSAGENTS AND THE FREETHINKER.

TO THE EDITOR OF “THE FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—Permit me to say a word in apology for the much-bullied newsagent. I agree that “it is annoying, and often disgusting, to see how certain newsagents try and damn the circulation of the *Freethinker*,” when such is the case. But is all the blame due to the newsagents? Do Freethinkers do their duty? Do they, as a rule, make it a point to deal with a newsagent, who supplies them with the *Freethinker*, for other literature than Freethought? I have a personal friend who has been established thirty years, and for over twenty years he has made it a point to expose contents bills of Freethought journals, and always has exposed the pamphlet literature. Yet during the whole of that time there has not been a dozen Freethinkers who have taken the slightest trouble to go to him for morning, evening, or weekly papers or serials. And, while Freethinkers will thus starve those who sacrifice themselves to serve them, they must not be surprised if newsagents, whose only desire is to do business, refuse to do that which will result in absolute ruin.

Often have I seen the advice in your columns for Freethinkers to get their newsagents to take an additional copy and expose it in their window, engaging to pay for it if not sold. But this very act will probably lose them six or more customers, so you see the inducement is not good enough.—
Yours truly,
J. F. HAINES.

Obituary.

By the death of Professor Karl Vogt, Switzerland and Germany have lost one of the foremost Freethinking scientists. Karl Vogt was born at Giessen in 1817, and came into notice as a collaborator of Agassiz. In 1848 he was elected as Radical deputy, but was afterwards deprived of his chair at the university of his native town; and in 1852 was appointed Professor of Natural History at Geneva. His bold *Lectures on Man* made a sensation by their endorsement of Darwinism and their attacks on theology, which had a further thrust in his work on *Blind Faith and Science*. He also wrote *Investigations into Animal Communities*, *A Manual of Geology*, and several biological works.

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.O.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Harry Snell, "Christ and Socialism."
BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible."
ISLINGTON (19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury): 3, quarterly meeting.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Milton and Liberty."
WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. H. Smith, "Land and Ocean: Are they Morally Governed?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Our Home Above."
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution."
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. James, "God at the Bar of Humanity."
DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James, "The Brain or the Bible?" Thursday, at 8, C. James, "By their Fruits ye shall Know Them."
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Our Gospels."
FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, T. Thurlow, "Jesus v. Home"; 3.15, St. John, "Miracles."
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?" Thursday, at 8, St. John will lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?" 3, "Prayer." Wednesday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "Christ's Teachings."
ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, H. Courtney, "If Christ Came to London?"
KILBURN (High-road): 7, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible."
LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, St. John, "Christianity and Progress."
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Mohammed and his Koran."
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Mr. Spiller will lecture; 3.15, W. H. Vining, "The Great French Revolution"—part iii.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, a lecture; 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Antiquity of Man."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, entertainment.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Hall Nicholson will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—June 2, m. Kingsland; 9, m. Pimlico, e. Camberwell; 13, Wood Green; 13, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 20, Hammersmith; 23, m. Victoria Park; 26, Hyde Park; 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 2, Camberwell; 9, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Tottenham; 16, m. Mile End; 23, m. Wood Green, e. Tottenham; 30, Clerkenwell, a. Finsbury Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 9, m. Kingsland; 23, Chatham. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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