

# The Freethinker

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## LAWS AGAINST RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

### A Statement and an Appeal.

THE present age boasts of its freedom. Civil and religious liberty is almost a commonplace among Englishmen. Catholics, Dissenters, and Jews have all been enfranchised. They enjoy the full rights of citizenship; their propaganda, worship, and property are fully protected by the law. But there is one exception to this rule of toleration. Freethinkers are still victims of oppression. They may vote for members of Parliament, and other representatives of the people; they may even sit in Parliament without hypocrisy or subterfuge under Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Bill; but they are still insulted as jurymen by ignorant or bigoted judges; they are liable to penalties for propagating their principles; and the law does not allow Freethought Societies to hold any kind of property, or to receive any legacies.

Many persons who are not Freethinkers are unaware of the grievances under which they suffer, and the following statement is intended for their benefit. It is believed that, when they understand the facts of the case, they will, for the most part, be favorable to an alteration of the law, so that all forms of opinion may enjoy a legal equality.

Under the old English law, heresy, blasphemy, schism, and other such offences, were tried and punished by the Ecclesiastical Courts. By the writ *de heretico comburendo* atheists, heretics, blasphemers, and schismatics could be burnt to death. This penalty was only abolished in 1677 by the Act 29 Charles II., cap. 9. The Act did not, however, take away the power of the Ecclesiastical Courts to deal with such offenders by "censures not extending to death." But in the course of time, by a gradual change of practice, the Ecclesiastical Courts have lost actual jurisdiction except over clergymen of the Church of England.

As heresy dropped out of sight attention became fixed on blasphemy. Lord Coleridge said that "the law of blasphemous libel first appeared in our books—at least the cases relating to it are first reported—shortly after the curtailment or abolition of the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts in matters temporal. Speaking broadly, before the time of Charles II. these things would have been dealt with as heresy; and the libellers so-called of more recent days would have suffered as heretics in earlier times."\*

Thus law and practice continued till the passing of an Act known as the 9 and 10 William III., cap. 32, called "An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness." It declares that "any person or persons having been educated in, or at any time having made profession of, the Christian religion within this realm, who shall, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or shall assert or maintain that there are more gods than one, or shall deny the Christian doctrine to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority," shall upon conviction be disabled from

holding any ecclesiastical, civil, or military employment, and on a second conviction be imprisoned for three years and deprived for ever of all civil rights.

Lord Coleridge and Sir James Stephen have both called this law "ferocious." But it still disgraces the Statute Book. So much of it, as affected the Unitarians, was ostensibly repealed by the 53 George III., cap. 160. Lord Eldon, however, in 1817, doubted whether it was even partially repealed; and Chief Baron Kelly and Lord Bramwell, so late as 1867, held that a lecture on "The Character and Teachings of Christ: the former Defective, the latter Misleading," was an offence against the Statute.

This "infamous" Act was drawn up with such stringency that it defeated itself. No prosecution ever took place under it. But it largely guided the judges in their view of the Common Law of Blasphemy, under which scores of Freethinkers have been imprisoned.

The Act of William III. specifies certain *opinions* as blasphemous; it says nothing about the *language* in which they are couched. The crime was not in the *manner* but in the *matter*. And this view of Blasphemy has been held by all our judges, with the single exception of Lord Coleridge. In Woolston's case (1730) the Court "would not suffer it to be debated whether to write against Christianity in general was not an offence at Common Law." In Carlile's case (1819) the Court "was bound not to hear the truth of the Christian religion questioned." It declared that "if the defendant wished to produce authors to show that the Christian religion *might be denied*, that could not be allowed." Lord Chief Justice Abbott said "it was not competent in a Christian court, in a court of law, to rise up and say that the Christian religion was not a religion of truth." Mr. Justice Best went still farther. He said: "The Act is not confined to those who libel religion, but extends to those who, in their most private intercourse, by advised conversation *admit* that they disbelieve the Scriptures." Lord Ellenborough, in the case of Eaton (1812), who was prosecuted for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*, said that "to deny the truth of the book which is the foundation of our faith, has never been permitted." In the case of Hetherington (1841), it was decided by Lord Chief Justice Denman that "an attack upon the Old Testament is clearly indictable." In the case of Paterson (Edinburgh, 1846), the Lord Justice Clerk said that the law expressly provided that "they who publish opinions contrary to the known principles of Christianity might be called to account and proceeded against by the civil magistrate." When the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was illegally arrested at Devonport, in 1861, for *intending* to lecture against the Bible, he brought an action for false imprisonment, and obtained *one farthing* damages; Lord Justice Erle, holding that the policeman, although he acted illegally, had really conferred a benefit on the plaintiff by preventing him from disseminating infidel opinions. Precisely the same view was taken by the Court of Exchequer in the case of Cowen *v.* Milbourn. Baron Bramwell said "it was unlawful to deny the truth of Christianity or the divine authority of the Scriptures." Lord Chief Baron Kelly added that to call the teaching of Christ misleading was "a violation of the first principles of the law, and cannot be done without blasphemy."

Sir James Stephen, in his *Digest of the Criminal Law*, among alternative definitions of Blasphemy, gave the following: "A denial of the truth of Christianity in general, or of the existence of God, whether the terms of such publication are decent or otherwise." The same high

\* The Law of Blasphemous Libel. The Summing-up in the case of Regina *v.* Foote and others. Revised with a Preface by the Lord Chief Justice of England. London: Stevens & Sons.



authority, in a later magazine article,\* held that the crime of Blasphemy consists in the mere expression of heterodox opinions; that it is only an *aggravation* of the crime to express them in "offensive" language; that "a large part of the most serious and most important literature of the day is illegal"; and that every bookseller who sells, and everyone who lends to his friend, a copy of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, or of Renan's *Life of Jesus*, commits a crime punishable with fine and imprisonment.

Sir James Stephen detested this Law of Blasphemy. He even went to the length of drafting a Bill for its total abolition. He said that he preferred "stating it in its natural naked deformity to explaining it away in such a manner as to prolong its existence and give it an air of plausibility and humanity."

This view of the law is borne out by the language of indictments for Blasphemy. In the abortive prosecution of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, and the successful prosecution of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp (1883), it was alleged against them in their indictments that they wickedly and profanely attempted "to bring the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt," not only "against the peace of our lady the Queen," but also "to the great displeasure of Almighty God."

Lord Coleridge, however, in summing-up at the trial of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey in the Court of Queen's Bench, while admitting that the law of Blasphemy "is undoubtedly a disagreeable law," let humanity get the better of his legal judgment. Against the decision of all previous judges, he laid it down that "if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without a person being guilty of blasphemous libel."

"Such a law," said Sir James Stephen, "would never work." You cannot really distinguish between substance and style; you must either forbid or permit all attacks on Christianity. Men cannot discuss doctrines like eternal punishment, for instance, as calmly as they do questions in philology. When they feel deeply they will express themselves strongly; and "to say that you may discuss the truth of religion, but that you may not hold up its doctrines to contempt, ridicule, or indignation, is either to take away with one hand what you concede with the other, or to confine the discussion to a small and, in many ways, unimportant class of persons."

John Stuart Mill expressed the same truth in an article on "Religious Prosecutions," in the *Westminster Review* of July, 1824: "To declare that an act is legal, but with the proviso that it be performed in a gentle and decorous manner, is opening a wide door for arbitrary discretion on the one part and dissatisfaction on the other. The difficulty is greatly increased when the act itself is offensive to those who sit in judgment upon the manner of its performance."

Such a law is a downright absurdity. It means that twelve Christians are to be put into a jury-box to decide whether a Freethinker has attacked Christianity in a "becoming" manner. What is the Freethinker's liberty worth in such circumstances? Would Liberal writers like to be tried by their opponents for attacking Conservatism without a proper respect for the "decencies" of controversy?

"There is one reflection," said Sir James Stephen, "which seems to me to prove with conclusive force that the law upon this subject can be explained and justified only on what I regard as its true principle—the principle of persecution. It is that if the law were really impartial, and punished blasphemy only because it offends the feelings of believers, it ought also to punish such preaching as offends the feelings of unbelievers."

Unbelievers do not ask to have their feelings "protected." They demand—and sooner or later it must be conceded—that religious questions shall be discussed as freely as political and social questions. What has truth to fear from the wildest storms of controversy? "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple: whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Freethinkers will never be satisfied until the odious Blasphemy Laws are swept out of existence. A beginning has already been made. The late Charles Bradlaugh intro-

duced a Bill to abolish them, and, in the face of acrimonious bigotry, forty-seven members of the House of Commons voted for the measure.

Some day a more successful attempt will be made. Meanwhile attention is invited to the disabilities which the Blasphemy Laws lay upon Freethinkers.

Their opinions being illegal, their Societies are outside the protection of the law. They cannot as Societies hold any kind of property; in fact, they are in the position of Trade Unions under the old laws against such combinations. Legacies left them may be intercepted, and intercepted by Christians. Some years ago house-property was left to the Bolton Secular Society and appropriated by the heir-at-law. In 1886 the sum of £500 was left by Mr. Josiah Spencer to assist the Manchester Secularists to obtain a hall of their own; Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mr. George Payne being appointed trustees. This sum was also appropriated by the residuary legatee, the Duchy of Lancaster Court holding that part of Mr. Spencer's will to be invalid.

In order to defeat this disabling law, as far as possible, Freethinkers may form Limited Liability Companies; but the shares may in time pass into hostile or indifferent hands, and several properties have been lost or diverted in this way. Of course a legacy may be left absolutely to an individual, with an understanding that he is to apply it, or a portion of it, to Secular purposes; but such a legacy would be invalid if a secret trust could be established. And if the sum to be disposed of were a large one, a testator might feel the want of a proper security; for, admitting the strict rectitude of the person he trusted, his intentions might be frustrated by accident, such as death or bankruptcy.

To obtain at least a partial security for non-Christians, Mr. Manfield, late member for Northampton, introduced a Bill which never came up for the second reading. Its title was the "Civil and Religious Liberty Extension Act," and its special object was to make it "lawful for any person to create and endow, or create or endow, any Trust for inquiry into the foundations and tendency of religious and ethical beliefs which from time to time prevail, or for the maintenance and propagation of the results of such inquiry."

A more drastic Bill, drafted on the lines of the one introduced by the late Charles Bradlaugh, was introduced, first by Mr. S. Storey, member for Sunderland, and afterwards by his colleague, Mr. J. Gourley. It provided for the practical repeal of the Blasphemy Laws by abolishing prosecution on account of religious opinions. This measure also failed to reach a second reading.

It is doubtful whether anything will avail except the absolute repeal of the Blasphemy Laws by such a Bill as Mr. Gourley's. There is no express law declaring that Freethought Societies shall not hold property or receive legacies. The disability follows from the illegality of their propaganda at common law. While it is a crime to oppose Christianity, it is as illegal to leave money for the promotion of Freethought as it is to leave money for the promotion of theft or murder.

Prosecution and imprisonment are not the worst evils of the Blasphemy Laws. A cause which is persecuted has a compensation in the publicity that is given to its principles, and the stimulus that is given to its activities. But to rob it of those material rights, which are indispensable in a civilisation based upon property, is to doom it to suffer the worst form of injustice. It is within the personal knowledge of the present writer that many thousands of pounds have been lost to the Secular party, during the last five years, in consequence of the infamous law which denies Secularists the common rights of citizenship, and makes them as *Secularists* but aliens in the land of their birth and affection.

This is not a religious question at all. It is a political question. Secularists appeal for a recognition of their full rights of citizenship, not on the ground that their opinions are true—for all sects occupy that ground, to the exclusion of others—but on the ground that Religious Liberty should cover every variety of conviction. Unless it does so it is not Liberty at all, but merely an extension of Privilege.

With this view the following questions have been drawn up for use in the present general elections. Secularists are earnestly invited to put these questions to parliamentary candidates, and to bring this statement of the nature and effect of the Blasphemy Laws to their notice:—

\* "Blasphemy and Blasphemous Libel." By Sir James Stephen, *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1884.



- (1) Are you in favor of the fullest extension of Civil and Religious Liberty ?
- (2) Do you consider that Secularists or Freethinkers should be liable to prosecution, fine, and imprisonment for disseminating their principles ?
- (3) Do you consider that Secular Societies should be kept without legal security for their Funds and Property ?
- (4) Do you think it just and right that legacies left to Secular Societies should be withheld from them under sanction of the law ?
- (5) Will you vote, if you have the opportunity, for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, under which Freethought is a crime ?
- (6) If you are not prepared to vote for the entire abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, would you vote for such a measure as the Liberty of Bequest Bill ?

Candidates' answers to these questions should be noted and forwarded to the editor of the *Freethinker* as soon as possible. Such information will be extremely valuable in view of the introduction of a Bill in the new Parliament.

G. W. F.

### UNDOGMATIC CHRISTIANITY.

We hear a good deal in these days of undogmatic Christianity. The Creeds have long been crumbling, and now Christians are saying, "Oh, we are not bound by what our fathers believed." Even the preachers, who are sworn to believe and defend the articles of their faith, notoriously do not preach them. Whoever heard a sermon enforcing the doctrine that "Works done before the grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God," or teaching that "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." Such sermons would not be listened to by intelligent congregations. We are offered now all the honey and none of the vinegar of the old faith. The genuine, old, unadulterated Christianity cannot be obtained at any price. The brimstone is carefully omitted from the treacle. Hell is unmentionable to ears polite, and is supposed to have been turned into a skating rink.

Now, either the old dogmas were true or they were false. It is either true or not true that God Almighty, the presumed creator of the universe, came down to the earth at a particular time and was born of a mortal woman, who did or did not remain a virgin. And the necessity for this illegitimate birth either did or did not depend upon a prior woman having partaken of some forbidden fruit. If there was no Fall, then there was no necessity for a Redeemer from the effects of that Fall.

To say that dogmas do not matter is virtually to confess that they are untrue, and to say this is to affirm that what has been held to be the very core of Christianity during the mass of the centuries of its existence is founded on mistakes or falsehoods.

The New York *Tribune* (Sunday, June 16) devoted an editorial to showing that Christians could, with Dr. Heber Newton, give up the dogma of Christian's bodily resurrection. It says: "The evidence for dogmas, however, is one thing; that for Christianity as a system of life and conduct is another." But why should we trust on matters of life and conduct a system which has proved to be in the wrong in other respects? Why should we go back to Jesus, who believed in demons, for a system of life and conduct any more than to Buddha?

What is Christianity without its scheme of redemption, its salvation through the punishment of an innocent person? Wherein is it differentiated from "essential" Judaism, "essential" Islamism, or "essential" Theism? If Socrates, Darwin, or Mill could get to heaven without believing Christianity, why on earth should I or anyone else believe it? For I find questionable, not only its dogmas, but its very essence. The central doctrine of all religion is reliance upon God, and such reliance I hold is futile and weakening to moral fibre.

We are now told that the Bible is "inspired but not inerrant"; that is to say God dictated some part of it, but

did not keep out errors in other parts. If this meant frankly that it is partly true and partly false, I can agree. If the undogmatic Christians will honestly admit the supremacy of reason we will shake hands, only we shall proceed to test it on the very fundamentals of the faith; on the doctrine of the existence of God. Will they say God or no God it does not matter, or is their real meaning, "We do not care how much you throw over as long as you pay your pew-rents promptly? You may dispense with every doctrine of Christ, only you must hold on to the name of Christian because it is so highly respectable."

The politician who said "Them's my sentiments, and if you disapprove of them they can be changed," was no more accommodating than the creedless Christian, who even, if he gives you his "sentiments," will never state distinctly what it is he accepts and what he rejects. Christianity, in fact, is shredded down to a mere sentiment common to all religions. What is left should be infinitely precious, for it is infinitesimally small.

J. M. WHEELER.

### CROMWELL THE FRIEND OF FREEDOM.

THE name of Oliver Cromwell has recently been brought prominently before the public through a proposal having been made in the House of Commons to erect in his honor a national statue; but I regret that the late Government did not adhere to this intention to nationally recognise the services of one of England's greatest sons. It is, however, gratifying to find that what a prejudiced Parliament failed to do, will shortly be accomplished by private generosity. Surely if statues are raised to the memories of kings, who did nothing that added to the honor and nobility of the nation, one should be erected to commemorate the hero of, what was undoubtedly, up to that period, the grandest epoch in the history of our country. From my earliest years the character of Cromwell always had a peculiar charm for me, inasmuch as in him I recognised a concentration of those qualities which make a great and noble man. His genius for achieving thorough reform of the gross abuses of his time, his fidelity to principles which he deemed right, his keen power of discrimination in the midst of difficulties, his courage under adversity, and his marked power of self-control in the hour of victory, commanded my admiration. Not being a hero worshipper, I do not regard Cromwell as having been a perfect man. Still, I agree with the late Charles Bradlaugh that Cromwell "was a man of higher stature and of mightier will than any other who lived in his age." As a Secularist, I applaud his persistent defence of mental freedom, of the right of personal opinion, also his sincere vindication of religious liberty. Secularists need not ignore the excellent traits in a person's character, because they are unable to endorse the whole of his conduct. Our duty is to acknowledge noble and useful actions wherever they are found, and to emulate the good deeds of others, so that we may be the better enabled to equip ourselves with the means of fighting successfully the battle of life.

To be in a position to judge fairly the career of Cromwell, it is necessary to remember his early training, the incidents that led to his entering upon public life, and, above all, the characters of the men with whom he had to cope, and the circumstances with which he had to contend. He was educated in the strict Puritan faith. For some time he sat in Parliament "a silent member," but the unjust attempt upon the part of the king to exact the payment of ship-money from Hampden and others enraged Cromwell, and he became a determined enemy to the despotism of Monarchy. He commenced his public life in stormy times. Society was then rotten to its very core, and Cromwell had to confront intrigue, treachery, and conspiracy. The five years of his rule as Protector was one continual struggle, not only against petty machinations, but also against attempts to take his life. In his time parties not only differed in opinion and policy in reference to general political matters, but a fierce and bitter feud existed between the supporters of the king and those who favored government by Parliament. Such conditions, no doubt, caused Cromwell to resort to methods that, under other and better circumstances, he would not have adopted. While, of course, it is absurd to say that Cromwell was



"raised up by God," still there is no doubt that he was for the most part equal to what the hour demanded of him. To the Freethinker of the present day, a man marching to battle singing psalms, with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other, would not be regarded as a political messiah, or an ideal hero of the Saxon race. The fact, however, remains that, whatever was the incentive, Cromwell possessed an undaunted courage, which made him as supreme in Parliament as he was victorious on the battle field.

It is said that Cromwell was a fanatic and superstitious in religion, which probably, to a certain extent, is true; but so was the King. Yet the one proved himself a lover of liberty, and the other a tyrant by nature. Even religious fanaticism has not the same effect upon all natures. Some men have a too keen sense of justice, and are too strong intellectually to be swayed by the more insidious and pernicious influence of the fanatical spirit of theology. Such a man was Cromwell, who never allowed his own ardent zeal in the cause of religion to prompt him to unjustly interfere with the worship of others. But what is called fanaticism in him I should term a deeply-rooted enthusiasm inspired by a sincere belief in the stern Puritan faith. With him to "please his God" was his highest duty; but to do this fortunately he deemed it necessary to be fair and just to man, and to use his power to secure for all equal privileges and equal rights. It was not that vulgar theological fanaticism which has so often, since his time, deprived men of that to which they were entitled by birth and citizenship. We must judge Cromwell, if at all, by his works at a most critical epoch in our history. He purified the seat of Government by ridding it of political corruption; he was the head of a movement that suppressed the King and the power of the aristocracy; he gave a fatal blow to the delusive but mischievous belief in the "divine right of kings"; and he made the name of England feared, if not respected, by all the civilised world. Moreover, he raised, from most unlikely materials, the finest army in Europe. His grand regiment, called the "Ironsides," was "never beaten." In his first engagement the enemy were three to one, and at the battle at Winceby his horse was killed, and fell upon him. He rose, but was again struck down; still he was not to be defeated, for, mounting a trooper's horse, he made the enemy fly, pursuing them many miles and won a glorious victory. Where are the kings, or other members of the royal blood, who ever displayed, in the face of such fearful odds, similar skill and bravery? Contrast this military ability and this indomitable courage with the conduct of the Duke of Cambridge in the Crimea; and yet upon this "feather-bed soldier" more of the people's money has been wasted than would pay for the erection of a hundred statues to the great Protector.

The position of Catholicism previous to the time of Cromwell must not be overlooked. He succeeded in checking the flames that had been lighted by the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholics believed that no faith ought to be kept with heretics. But Cromwell gave the Duke of Savoy and the Pope of Rome to understand that if justice was not done, "England's guns should be heard in the castle of St. Angelo." Neither must we forget by whom he was surrounded. We may fairly judge a man by the company he keeps, if he is free to select it. Cromwell had around him the master-minds of that age. John Milton, who was his secretary, was one of the most virtuous and learned men of the period. Frederick Harrison says: "By rare and unexampled fortune, the first political genius of his age was served by the greatest literary genius of his time. . . . Never had ruler so mighty a poet in his service; never did poet share such labors of state under so great a chief." Milton's friend, Thurloe, was Secretary of State, and among Cromwell's associates were Andrew Marvel and George Fox, besides John Hampden, of whom Baxter said, in his *Saint's Rest*, that he should like him for a companion in heaven. Cromwell's greatness was not marred by either bigotry or selfishness. Whenever he found honest men of ability he was willing to avail himself of their services, not for purposes of his own, but for the service of his country. That was an indication of true statesmanship, and of the highest political wisdom.

However much some of my readers may be opposed to the political views of Cromwell, it cannot truthfully be denied that in the very height of his power he proved

himself possessed of qualities which all Secularists must admire. He was brave and honest and he had a scrupulous consideration for those who differed from him, provided they did not seek to trample upon the rights of others. This fact will be amply proved in my next article. His aim was to establish a system of justice throughout the kingdom. The means he sometimes employed would not perhaps be thought the most appropriate to adopt to-day, inasmuch as conditions have changed since his time. Still, in the words of Macaulay, "he reformed the representative system in the most judicious manner, and rendered the administration of justice uniform throughout the island."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

## LINCOLN'S RELIGION.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S character is shown in the truest, clearest, and most effective light when it is presented in its real colors. He was neither a blatant infidel nor a professing Christian. He was simply an unbeliever. He was without faith in the Bible or its teachings. On this point the testimony is so overwhelming that there is no basis for doubt. In his early life, Lincoln exhibited a powerful tendency to aggressive infidelity. But when he grew to be a politician, he became secretive and non-committal as to his religious belief. He was shrewd enough to realise the necessity of reticence with the convictions he possessed, if he hoped to succeed in politics.

It is a matter of history that in 1834, at New Salem, Ill., Lincoln read and circulated Volney's *Ruins* and Paine's *Age of Reason*, giving to both books the sincere recommendation of his unqualified approval. About that time, or a little later, he wrote an extensive argument against Christianity, intending to publish it. In this argument he contended that the Bible was not inspired, and that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God. He read this compilation of his views to numerous friends, and on one occasion, when so engaged, his friend and employer, Samuel Hill, snatched the manuscript from the author's hands and threw it into the stove, where it was quickly consumed. A Springfield friend said of him that, in 1838, "Lincoln was enthusiastic in his infidelity." John T. Stuart, who was his first law partner, declares: "Lincoln was an avowed and open infidel. He went further against Christian belief than any man I ever heard. He always denied that Jesus was the Christ of God." David Davis stated that "Lincoln had absolutely no faith in the Christian sense of the term."

These authorities ought to be conclusive, but there is further testimony. This latter is important as explanatory of Lincoln's frequent allusions, in his presidential messages and proclamations, to the Supreme Being. To the simplicity of his nature there was added a poetic temperament. He was found of effective imagery, and his references to the Deity are due to the instinct of the poet. After his death Mrs. Lincoln said: "Mr. Lincoln had no faith and no hope in the usual acceptance of those words. He never joined a church." She denominates what has been mistaken for his expressions of religious sentiment as "a kind of poetry in his nature," adding, "he was never a Christian." Herndon, who was his latest law partner and biographer, is even more explicit. He says: "No man had a stronger or firmer faith in Providence—God—than Mr. Lincoln; but the continued use by him late in life of the word 'God' must not be interpreted to mean that he believed in a personal God. In 1854 he asked me to erase the word 'God' from a speech which I had written and read to him for criticism, because my language indicated a personal God, whereas he insisted no such personality ever existed."

So it must be accepted as final by every reasonable mind that, in religion, Mr. Lincoln was a sceptic. But, above all things, he was not a hypocrite nor a pretender. He was a plain man, rugged and earnest, and he pretended to be nothing more. He believed in humanity, and he was incapable of Phariseism. He had great respect for the feelings and convictions of others, but he was not a sniveller. He was honest and he was sincere, and, taking him simply for what he was, we are not likely soon to see his like again.—*Chicago Herald*.



## THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE STILL FORBIDDEN.

THE *Austin Statesman* of April 7 has an editorial that would have better fitted the first of that month. It is entitled "The Danger of Great Learning." It is the old cry of wolf, when there is no wolf. It is the old scarecrow of the priests of all religions, from the earliest times of which we have any record, to prevent men from knowing anything except what the priests chose to tell them. The first law ever promulgated for the government of man was, that he should not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and the penalty prescribed for disobedience was death. The man did eat the fruit, however, and found out that it was good, and that all that God told him about the danger of doing so, was a lie, and the knowledge he thus acquired had made him as one of the gods.

Thus it has been from the first until now; the priests have been denouncing learning and trying to persuade men that the greatest sin they could commit was to attempt to learn the truth about the mysteries of their religion. It is for this reason they tell us that God has chosen the weak and foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings cometh wisdom—such as priests approve of. Great learning is dangerous to the Church, and to all the pretensions of the teachers of the myths of religion; but it is the greatest blessing of life to all who are able to acquire it. It is the greatest emancipation proclamation that ever spoke freedom to a race of slaves; that set free the human mind from the shackles of superstition and the bondage of priestcraft. Priests have struggled to prevent its progress, and the history of religion has been a long record of the persecution of learned men by rack, thumbscrew, and the stake, to prevent the spread of knowledge. But all this has been in vain. Knowledge has increased and multiplied in spite of the attempts of priests to suppress it; until now, through the humanising effect of learning, religion has been disarmed of all its tools of torture, its teeth have been drawn, and it can only gnash its toothless gums and slander those it fain would kill. But hear the pious editor of the *Statesman* :—

"The man with great learning becomes so confident of his mental strength, of his ability to weigh every statement and apply the strict rules of syllogism to every proposition, to analyse statements and problems, that he loses faith or belief in all things that do not receive the endorsement of hard, material facts, and measure up to the standard of his intellectual logic. While such a man may be said to be severely intellectual, he refuses to believe anything partaking of the supernatural."

All this is most solemnly true; but if an infidel had said it instead of the pious editor of the *Statesman*, every minister in Texas would have denounced it as a slander upon the Church, and an attempt to throw discredit upon the holy mysteries of the Christian religion.

The poet says, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." It is dangerous because it is little, and the less it is, the more dangerous, in exact proportion. But the theory of the Church and the *Statesman* is, that the more learning a man has, the more dangerous it becomes; for—as the editor says—"What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Now there are two assumptions in this statement. First, that man has a soul; and, second, that great learning will cause him to lose it; neither of which has a particle of evidence to sustain it. If it be true that man has a soul concealed about his person, it would seem that a learned man, who has studied anatomy, physiology, and psychology would be most likely to find out the truth as to whether he had one or not. So also, if he should find out that he actually had a soul, he would be best able to tell whether the knowledge that had enabled him to demonstrate the fact, would be likely to cause the loss of that soul.

There can be no danger in knowing the truth, except to those who would wish to suppress it; and the editor's talk that man has a soul; and, second, that great learning will cause him to lose it; neither of which has a particle of evidence to sustain it. If it be true that man has a soul concealed about his person, it would seem that a learned man, who has studied anatomy, physiology, and psychology would be most likely to find out the truth as to whether he had one or not. So also, if he should find out that he actually had a soul, he would be best able to tell whether the knowledge that had enabled him to demonstrate the fact, would be likely to cause the loss of that soul.

ing that would enable us to find out the truth about it must be beneficial to everybody except those who are profiting by the imposition.

It is like this. A man comes to me and says, "There is a fortune for you that amounts to millions deposited in the First National Bank, that you can have by paying to me 10 per cent. of it." I reply, "Good! I will go at once and draw the money and pay you the commission." "No," he says, "you cannot do that; the money will not be paid to you until after your death; but it is a sure thing for you then if you pay my commission now." "Well," I say, "it is a good thing for my estate, anyhow, if true. I will go to the bank and ascertain the fact, and cheerfully pay your price for the information." "No," he says; "that won't do; you must take my word for it. There is great danger that you may lose it all by knowing too much. You must have faith that it is true—all safe as I tell you. All learning that goes beyond faith is dangerous." And so, if I am a fool or an ignoramus, I pay the commission, exemplifying the proverb, "A fool and his money are soon parted," and hug myself with the delusion that I am smarter and richer than the infidel who, from his great learning, refuses to believe in the promises of the Gospel sharp, who is now living high on the money he has fooled me out of. Such bunco steerers as this find it very dangerous to meet a man who has learning enough to see through their little game.

The pious editor seems to think that belief is a matter of volition, and that the learned man refuses to believe in the supernatural out of pure pride and cussedness; and not because the evidence is insufficient to convince an intelligent man who has learning enough to know how to sift, weigh, and analyse it. But the fact is, everybody must believe that which is proved by evidence if he has brains and education enough to comprehend the evidence. Every lawyer knows and acts upon his conviction, that if he has an honest case he must secure an intelligent and learned jury to try it; but if he has a bad or dishonest case, in which he must pull wool over the eyes of the jury and make them believe that falsehood is truth, and the truth a lie, then he has no use for men of intelligence on his jury, and secures, so far as he can, a jury of ignoramuses, who will believe any nonsense that he may tell them. I quote again: "He [that is the man of great learning] is intellectual but he demands material proof of everything, forgetting that his intellect receives the evidence of many material facts that are not confined by any one of his senses, but the moment that the spiritual is presented to the intellect for belief, although the material is sustained by the same kind of evidence, he refuses utterly to believe it."

If by this the editor means to say that the spiritual is sustained by the same evidence that material facts are, I take issue with him. The spiritual rests upon faith alone for its evidence, but material facts are sustained by material evidence sufficient to force belief upon any cultivated mind. When such evidence is presented, it does not rest with the will to believe or to reject it; if the judgment is convinced there is no escape from the conclusion. As I said before, the spiritual has absolutely no evidence to support it but faith, and whether a man believe it or not, will depend upon whether he has sacrificed his judgment to his fears and hopes, or has sufficient brains and learning to properly weigh evidence.

The pious editor goes on to say: "The miracles wrought by Christ when he was on this earth are attested by the same kind of testimony that informs us of the remarkable military career of Alexander, or Charlemagne; the man of great learning refuses to believe the proof of the former, while he gives ready credence to the latter."

It is true that both rest upon hearsay testimony; but there is another element in the evidence which he has forgotten; and that is, the probability or credibility of the story itself. If a man should come to me and say that he ate a beefsteak for his breakfast this morning, I would have no difficulty in believing the story, because there is no improbability in it, and the man could have no motive in deceiving me about so simple a matter. But if he told me his cow jumped over the moon, I would utterly refuse to believe it, though the testimony came from the same man that I had believed in the first case; and so would the editor of the *Statesman*, or any man of a very moderate degree of learning.

When a man tells me that Christ raised a dead man to



life after he had been so long dead that putrefaction had set in, I want something stronger in the way of testimony than the word of any man, because it is much more credible that the man told a lie than that a dead and rotten corpse should come to life.

The histories of Alexander and Charlemagne have been told by hundreds of writers in all the nations of the earth; and we know who they are, and the authenticity of their works. Besides, there is nothing in their works that transcends the bounds of probability, not to say possibility. The life and miracles of Christ are found only in a book that is as full of marvels as the life and adventures of Baron Munchausen.

Nobody knows who the authors were, nor when the stories were written. The Jews, among whom these miracles are said to have been performed, did not believe in them, never did believe in them, and do not believe in them to this day. The Romans, who governed Palestine, and the Greeks who stood at the head of the science, arts, and literature of the world are all silent as to the wonderful things that are said to have taken place in their midst. How absurd to say that these improbable and impossible wonders are sustained by the same evidence as are the histories of Alexander and Charlemagne.

One more quotation and I have done. "Outside of the evidences of the divinity of Christ, and beyond that a Christian professes to have been drawn or taught by the Holy Spirit, is the fact that he revealed a religion that no man or set of men would or could have conceived at that age or time."

If the pious editor had a little more learning, he would have known that modern research and discovery has proved, beyond doubt, that whoever it was that concocted the Christian religion, he revealed nothing that was new; that the whole teaching of Christ, as told in the Gospels, was copied from earlier Pagan books and traditions that the fathers of the Church endeavored to destroy, and hoped they had destroyed, but which modern learning has brought to light.

It is too late in the history of the world to attempt to build up barriers against the tide of learning; the time was when the power of the Church could suppress all attempts to enlighten the mass of the people. That time has passed away, never to be revived. Free schools, free thought, and free speech have opened the eyes of all men to the impositions and fraudulent claims of the teachers of religion, and the tide of learning, like the leak in a dam, has grown until it is now irresistible. Let everybody know and understand that learning is always safe, and the more we have of it, the safer we shall be.

—Independent Pulpit.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

### Obituary.

A WELL-KNOWN London character has passed away in the person of Dan Chatterton, who died on July 7 at the age of seventy-five. As a vendor of literature and bill-poster his gaunt figure was familiar in the London streets and parks, since the days when Hyde Park railings fell and Mrs. Law first spoke there despite prohibition. Devoted to the propaganda of Communism, he lived in great poverty, and produced a curious paper and pamphlets which he set up and printed himself. Violent in invective against princes, peers, priests, and other parasites, he would not hurt a fly, and he was the soul of integrity. He was working almost to the last. Miss E. Robins, like her sister a true sister of mercy, nursed him during the last week in his slum residence off Drury-lane. Mr. Forder conducted the funeral.—J. M. W.

### After Death.

"After death—what?" Eternal peace. We simply go back to the eternity of unconsciousness wherein we were before birth. Others must now fight the battle of life for us. We may rest forever. Is this not infinitely more consoling than eternal joy for the few and eternal torment for the many? And this is what true Christianity implies. And it is not progressive—it means now precisely what it did in the days of the popes and Calvin and Edwards. Do not be so foolish and think it is me, and not you, marching on the "broadway" of destruction. Few there are, indeed, scrambling on the "narrow path"—all others, including all those who doubt a single word of that hoary book, are damned! There is no middle ground.—Otto Wettstein.

## ACID DROPS.

THE men of God are a danger in every movement. They should really stick to their pulpits, and let laymen do the political and social work of the world, just as they let laymen do all its professional and industrial work. When they take up a cause, or a principle, they nearly always overdo it. A layman, used to the rough-and-tumble of the world, is more circumspect; he has also more self-control, and a stronger sense of justice.

Some years ago we told some of our Socialist friends, who are also Atheists, that the men of God would exploit their movement as soon as it was profitable to do so. Well, our prophecy is fast being realised. Listen to men of God like the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and you would fancy they were all Fabians. But they are not, and they don't mean to be. They only want to attract the support of people who are Socialistically inclined; and their Socialist sentiments—always vague and therefore easily disownable on occasion—are only the bait upon the hook.

Having no real sincerity, but only the simulation of it, such men of God overdo everything, as we have already remarked. Just take an illustration. Many of our readers know that Mr. Blatchford's *Merrie England* has been a striking success. At any rate, it has had a very extensive sale. Now a fact like this is one that tells with Mr. Price Hughes. Accordingly, he praised "Nunquam's" book, and only regretted that he was not a Christian. Well, a reply to "Nunquam" is written by Mr. George Brooks, who is a Christian; whereupon the *Methodist Times* pitches into the replier, describing him as a self-made man who has made a "pile," and who therefore sees nothing but wickedness in all attempts to improve the social position of the people. It also accuses him of using a "vituperative" style and employing "brutal language."

Mr. George Brooks writes to the *Methodist Times*, stating that he has not made a "pile" at all, and that he earns a living by his pen; and as to the "vituperation" and "brutal language," he challenges Mr. Hughes to produce anything of the kind from the book. Mr. Hughes does not accept the challenge, nor does he express any regret for his misrepresentations. Which is exactly what would be expected by anyone who knows the author of "The Atheist Shoemaker."

Mr. Price Hughes naturally gives his readers a "tip" over the general election. "The duty of every Christian, he says, 'at this national crisis, is to speak and act and vote as he believes Jesus Christ would have spoken, acted, and voted if he had been in similar circumstances.' What a beautiful rule of policy, to be sure! It means anything or nothing. There are pious Conservatives and pious Liberals, and both sides feel that they have the support of Jesus Christ.

There is one thing that Jesus Christ would probably want to do if he were alive. He would want to "boss" the Salvation Army or the West London Mission. But he wouldn't do it. Booth and Hughes would take precious good care of that. Jesus Christ dead for nearly two thousand years is one thing; Jesus Christ in the field as an active rival is quite another.

From a report in the *Christian World*, it appears that "General" Booth's match-making business—we don't mean the matrimonial department—is a wretched failure. Traders and consumers will not pay double the market price for Salvation lucifers. But why doesn't Booth sell them cheaper, especially as he got his capital for nothing? His reply is that he pays such high wages. Well now, that's news!

When the news arrived that the Canadians had carried a "Prohibition" law, the "Temperance" women (who shortly before had passed the previous question to a resolution supporting some small attempt to improve the industrial position of women) stood up and sang the Doxology. It must surely have been a revised version. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," but curse him for having said in his written word "that it is wine that maketh glad the heart of man"; and for having, by his incarnate word, turned the water into wine.—*Church Reformer*.

Charles Jackson Holmes, mission preacher, was sentenced to three months' hard labor at Canterbury, for robbing a Wesleyan minister, whose guest he was, at Faversham.

At the East Riding Sessions the Rev. Alfred Barber, on bail, pleaded guilty to indecently assaulting a boy named John Pogmore, at Filey, on May 25. Prisoner is a Church of England clergyman, and was recently married. He was sentenced to four months' hard labor.



Michael Cleary, the husband of the poor woman who was burnt as a witch near Clomnel, has been sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude, and those who assisted him in his superstitious cruelty have received various minor terms of imprisonment. While Christians hold, as the word of God, a book which proclaims "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," the punishment of witch-killers is an anomaly, proving their Bible belief is nothing more than a farce.

Charles Jackson Jones, a mission preacher, has been sentenced to three months' hard labor at the East Kent Quarter Sessions for stealing jewellery at Faversham. He was conducting a mission in the neighborhood when he perpetrated the theft.

Dr. Pentecost is having the same trouble with the congregation in his London Tabernacle that Dr. Talmage encountered in Brooklyn. The coppery color of the contents of his contribution boxes worries him. He finds an average of no less than six hundred big, clumsy English pennies each Sunday. The modest shillings and sixpences make a poor show amid the mass of grosser metal, and the yellow gleam of the sovereign is almost unknown. The preacher's prejudice against copper as a monetary metal is so strong, that he has expressed it in earnest language to his people. No bimetalist has made a more eloquent plea for silver than that of Dr. Pentecost to his congregation. Even three-penny bits, he declares, are more respectable and honorable than the despised brown coins.

The Theosophists had a split at their Convention. Mr. H. A. Coryn demanded that, as its first business, the Convention should address itself to the consideration of the legal status of the European section, with a view to determining whether it was or was not *de jure* a part of the Theosophical Society. This resolution Colonel Olcott declared out of order. His ruling was challenged, and, on a vote being taken, was upheld by thirty-nine to fourteen.

Then came a squabble over a letter from the American section, which it was proposed to reject as improperly directed. Some were for waiving technicalities and receiving the letter and answering it in a friendly spirit; others, led by Mrs. Besant, held that the letter should be simply received and laid on the table. While it pretended to make overtures of peace, Mrs. Besant argued, it really had behind it a very different sentiment. She moved that it be simply received as an act of courtesy without discussion or further action. On a vote being taken, this course was adopted.

Then came the *denouement*. Irritated at the two decisions come to, antagonistic to the American section, all those delegates who had voted on the opposite side rose in a body, together with their friends, to the number of fifty or sixty in all, and, one of their number acting as spokesman, it was announced, with portentous solemnity, that they had determined to sever their connection thenceforward with their fellow European members—in pursuance of which they resolve they thereupon one and all tramped hilariously out of the room. The first object of the Society is to promote universal brotherhood. It is getting on.

*Light*, the organ of the high-class Spiritists, says of the Theosophical Society: "It is being shivered to atoms by personalities, constitutions, rules, formalities, officials, and doctrines, all the direct result of intense organisation. Theosophy has not set us an example—it has put up a warning."

The *Church Times* urges the entire body of the Church of England to vote solid Tory, because "We have reached a supreme moment when, if we put forth all our strength, we can arrest the assault upon the Church for many a long day to come." The more frankly the Church becomes partisan in politics the more surely will the doom come when its day of party triumph is over.

The "unco guid" of Glasgow still prefer dirt to desecrating the Lord's Day. At first the public baths were only open on "lawful days," and when it was proposed that they should be opened for an hour or two on Sunday morning, the Council and the Kirk raged in chorus, and all but swore over the impiety of the conception. Better be dirty than offend the Deity by washing under public auspices on the Sabbath morning. But the contemptible squalling was useless. Common sense refused to budge or vanish "up the Cowgate," and at last the slight concession was made that the baths might be opened for a short time on Sunday for the benefit of those who had no private baths of their own.

The accommodation proved insufficient, and last week Mr. Stevenson proposed that the baths should be open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Again the bigots raged about the sanctity of the Sabbath, and Mr. Stevenson's motion was lost; but a motion doubling the open time on Sunday morning was

carried, so the Lord's Day will be doubly desecrated after all.

A religious riot has taken place at Porbandar, Bombay, owing to the clashing of Hindu marriage processions with the Moslem Mohurran. Three persons were killed and 184 injured. It is a sweet thing is religious fervor!

Nietzsche's statement that a people is nature's circumlocution for a few great ones, has been considered an instance of the callousness of Anarchism. It is, however, curiously paralleled by Coventry Patmore, the Roman Catholic poet and essayist, who says the world is but a dunghill whereon to grow one or two saintly characters. This is a good instance that extremes meet.

The bicycle in America, as in England, is helping to turn the first day of the week into a day of recreation. The ministers are seeing the drift, and giving Bicycle Sermons. The Rev. Mr. Scadder, New Jersey, who describes himself as an enthusiastic wheelman, frankly says that if the movement continues, the churches will be weakened, if not ruined. It is seriously proposed that all the churches should provide store rooms for bicycles, and open their door to wheelmen wearing riding-dress.

A new old story of a soldier saved by his Bible is going the rounds of the religious press. It is of a soldier who, during the storming of the Malavand Pass, was hit in the chest and fell to the ground. The bullet, however, was buried in a Bible which the soldier carried in his bosom, and had thus saved his life. Many similar tales, and possibly true ones, are told of all fetishes. A Freethought volume would never have served, but a pack of cards would have done the business.

Messrs. Booth and Shaw, the Liberal candidates for Halifax, have been heckled on the subject of the Blasphemy Laws. Being asked if he would vote for their repeal, Mr. Shaw replied, "That is a most difficult question. I could not answer that." Mr. Shaw has simply to say if he is in favor of Freethinkers being punished by Christians for opposing Christianity. There is really no difficulty in the question; the difficulty is in Mr. Shaw's reluctance to do justice to those who differ from him on religion.

Alderman Booth was rather more explicit. He replied that so far as the Blasphemy Laws affected religious distinctions or civil rights, he should be prepared to repeal them to that extent. But if words have any real meaning, that is repealing them altogether. Freethinkers don't want to curse and swear in the public streets, if that is what Alderman Booth is thinking about. What they want is the same right as Christians to hold and propagate their opinions. No more and no less.

The *Tablet* (R.C.) sneers at Huxley as "a fanatic of negation and a dogmatist without a creed," and says "the theory of the *Origin of Species* was accepted, not from a belief in its inherent truth, but because it gave speculators a colorable pretext for dispensing with the assumption of an intelligent Creator of the universe."

The *Church Times* says of Huxley, that "in entering upon the arena of theological controversy, he forgot the homely proverb which forbids the cobbler to go beyond his last." After the thrashing he gave theologians this is either ignorance or cheek.

There is a boy evangelist out in Missouri who weighs only about seventy-five pounds. He is thirteen years of age, and boasts of having broken the entire Decalogue before his conversion. This precocious sinner was plucked like a brand from the burning, and baptised into the Baptist Church before he had reached his teens. He now conducts services in knee-breeches and broad collar. They go ahead so rapidly in America that there is hope that he may emerge from his evangelistic stage ere he comes of age.

Mr. Page Hopps is an amiable man as well as a theologian with an inclination towards Spiritualism. He hopes to see a great reunion of Christendom in another sense than Dr. Lunn's. People will "intensely agree about the things of the spirit which are spiritually discerned." Mr. Hopps hopes that "even such iconoclasts as Colonel Ingersoll" will join this happy family. We fancy he will be disappointed. Colonel Ingersoll has logic as well as poetry. He is opposed to every form of supernaturalism.

Christian temperance people, who act on the "fallen angel" theory in their attempts to put down drinking, are all on the wrong tack. They don't understand the law of cause and effect. It would do them good, unless their case is hopeless, to study Mr. Charles Booth's remarks on the "drinking habits of London workmen." Mr. Booth finds that it is the worst-paid workers who drink the most, and



that drinking increases with irregularity of employment. Skilled men, well paid, and in regular work, as a rule drink the least. This is exactly what might be expected by a common-sense Materialist.

A big pilgrimage, organised by the American Catholic bishops and sky-pilots, has left New York for Loretto, Rome, Lourdes, and Paray de Monial, where the pilgrims will have the opportunity of worshipping Our Lady of each place. Four separate and distinct virgins, yet the four are not four, but one.

Yellow fever is raging at Santos, in Brazil. Men were dying by scores in the city, and on the British and foreign vessels in port. Some British ships had their flags flying at half-mast for weeks as man after man of the crews succumbed to the scourge. The death-boat was being rowed about the harbor day and night, from vessel to vessel, collecting the dead for burial. Some ships had only one or two men left of their entire crews.

During a thunderstorm in Southern Sweden, last week, fourteen persons—nine men and five women—were struck by lightning. Eight of the men were killed on the spot, and the others had to be taken to a hospital.

A lady representative of the *Christian World* went to report the proceedings at the laying of the foundation-stone of the Cathedral cathedral at Westminster. She was stopped on the stairs leading to the Press seats. "Pass this lady out," cried an official, and she was passed out. It was stated that Cardinal Vaughan was emphatic in ordering that the *Christian World* was one of the papers not to be admitted! More Christian harmony!

Three centuries ago the Catholic Church would have burnt the editor of the *Christian World*. Now it only puts an affront upon a member of the staff. The will is there, but the power is gone, or burning would still be the order of the day.

It was rather appropriate that, at the launching from Genoa of a new ship called "Giuseppe Garibaldi," the vessel entered the sea splendidly amid the cheering of the bystanders, but, moving before the appointed time, without the customary blessing of a priest.

Orangemen and Catholics came into collision at Boston on Independence Day. Casualties—one dead and scores wounded. Good old religion!

American lynchers are not very particular. A party of them entered a negro church in Lake City, Florida, dragged the black preacher from the pulpit, and shot him dead. Of course they were all Christians. How they love each other!

The G. O. M. has long been engaged on an annotated edition of Bishop Butler's works, which he has nearly completed. It is to be published as soon as possible in two volumes—one for Butler and one for Gladstone. The G. O. M.'s ruling passion is strong at the finish. He always had a love for theology, and he would have made a splendid archbishop. Even in his political orations he was always at home with God Almighty, especially in the perorations.

"Come unto me, all ye that want a smoke, and I will give you tobacco." This is not in the New Testament, but it might have been if Jesus Christ had preached in the nineteenth century. "If you want a smoke (free)," says an East-end advertisement, "come next Sunday afternoon, at three, to Christ Church Hall, Hanbury-street. A free cup of tea, if you like. Tobacco gratis." This is very different from the old style of "compel them to come in." We shall yet see smoking-pews in churches.

The secretary of the Liberator Relief Fund says there are still 2,528 victims on the books, for whom a further sum of £50,000 is required. Most of these were deluded by the pious character of the directors and their supporters, and the appeal is, properly, mainly directed to the churches.

"A Faithful Servant" writes to the Duc d'Orleans through the Paris *Figaro*, relative to his wearing the order of the Holy Ghost at the marriage of the Duc d'Aosta: "I wish the Holy Ghost had inspired you better."

The Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs. Benson gave their second garden party last week. According to the society papers it was quite too too exquisite an affair, and would have considerably astonished Jesus Christ could he have been present.

At the Laurel Hill Convent, Limerick, sixty-eight of the nuns and boarders were prostrated with every evidence of

irritant poisoning. One of the nuns died and was privately interred without any inquest.

Bishops Doane and Coxe, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, have been much scandalised at the idea of a Woman's Bible, and have been denouncing the New Women who projected the scheme. Bishop Doane prophecied no end of evils from women's rights, and said money would buy their votes "as it now does themselves." Bishop Coxe said: "The effort to establish the 'New Woman' has, it must be said, been accompanied by a desire on the part of the agitators to emancipate themselves from religion. When I read from day to day of the utterances of this new cult, giving forth startling 'truths' and disseminating odious principles from the lecture platform, I am inclined to cry, 'Oh! shame, where is thy blush?'" Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, and other of the advanced women, are starting on the bishops, and we bet the women will have the last word.

A Catholic priest, known as the Canon-Bishop of Segouzac, has been brought before the Correctional Chamber at Paris for conducting a matrimonial agency.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions have long been dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the Land of the Rising Sun, where the native Christians will not stand the nonsense of their American pastors, and wish to run a Christianity of their own. A committee has gone out to investigate and report.

There is quite a row between English and American missionaries in Japan. The latter claim that their work is of greater importance than that of their British *compères*, because America spends much more money on her missions than England. The English declare that this does not prove the merit of American mission work, as it is quite possible that five pounds of English money, spent judiciously, may do as much good as double that amount of American funds. The Jap looks on and laughs.

In the text book of *Moral Philosophy*, by Father Rickaby, in use at Stoneyhurst, and published with the express approval of the Pope, it is laid down that "Brute beasts, not having understanding, and therefore not being persons, cannot have any rights. They are of the number of things." It goes on to show at length that "We have no duties to them, not of justice, as is shown; nor of religion, unless we are to worship them like the Egyptians of old; not of fidelity, for they are incapable of accepting a promise." It even shows at length that "We have, then, no duties of charity, nor duties of any kind, to the lower animals, as neither to sticks or stones." Paul said, "Doth God care for oxen?" Such is Christian morality!

The papers have been making a fuss about a monkey getting into St. Stephen's Church, Hampstead, and defying all efforts to dislodge it. Really this is not the first time a monkey has been in church—or even in the pulpit.

A Dalziel telegram reports a sad accident on the Mississippi. A large passenger steamer had a hole knocked in her bottom, and made water so fast that the captain was only just able to run her upon a sandbank. Several persons jumped overboard while she was in deep water, and were drowned; but all on board were saved after she stranded, with the single exception of a Christian minister. He had been on his knees praying from the first moment of the accident, and in getting into the boat he stepped into the water. Such is the efficacy of prayer.

A special train conveying Dutch pilgrims to Mont-Aign ran off the line near Antwerp. One pious lady was killed, and several pious persons were badly injured.

Jehovah will not look after his own houses. The parish church at Callington, near Plymouth, has been partially destroyed by fire. Just a little of that water which made Noah's Flood would have stopped this calamity.

There is a foul-mouthed fellow in Liverpool who delights in (safely) libelling Colonel Ingersoll, and circulating the most abominable lies about his personal character. This fellow makes a great boast of his Christianity, but many Christians are ashamed to hear him profess to be of their religion. We happen to know that he was kicked out of a Christian church for getting drunk while denouncing drinkers in general, and moderate drinkers in particular. We could say more, but the rest will keep until it is wanted.

There was a regular scuffle between rival clergymen in the pulpit at Irvine last Sunday. The Rev. Albert Kerr and a rival orator had both been asked to preach by different sections of the church. They fought for possession of the Bible, and the police were called in but declined to interfere.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

July 21 and 28, Milton Hall.

August 4, Newcastle; 11, 18, and 25, St. James's Hall, London.

## 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.

H. L. SUMNER.—Thanks for Lady Cook's pamphlet on *The Evils of Society*. It is plain-spoken and honest. We do not agree with all she says, but we believe her pamphlet will do good in its way.

W. McLACHLAN (Chicago).—Yes, it is the same Mr. Wheeler who introduced you to Mr. Foote at Glasgow in 1876. If you write to him address your letter to 27 Enkel-street, Holloway, London, N.

E. TRUELOVE writes that he will subscribe £2 and "G. R." £3 to the President's Honorarium Fund.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) Martin Luther did not practise polygamy himself, but he appears to have thought it compatible with Bible Christianity. No doubt he liked a drink when he was thirsty. (2) We have often explained the "Great Debate" which Z. B. Woffendale advertises. It was a surreptitious job, done by a reporter who could not take a verbatim report, although it pretends to be verbatim. The noble Woffendale's speeches are twice as long as Mr. Foote's, and he also embellished the "Report" with annotations. Mr. Foote declined to read the proofs of the wretched abortion, and publicly repudiated all responsibility for it. As the law now stands a debate in which Mr. Foote takes part could not be published without his consent.

G. NÆWIGER. We regret the oversight. In our next.

A. WOXLEY.—Your letter arrives very late. We have condensed into a paragraph for "Sugar Plums."

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. KRIST.—Glad to hear you are having such good meetings at Eastville Park, Bristol. The open-air propaganda in the summer should swell your indoor meetings in the winter.

J. HILL.—See paragraph. Glad to hear from such an old reader. The general public does not buy the *Freethinker*; it rarely does buy anything worth buying. Humanly speaking, we love the world, and wish to serve it; but, intellectually, we rather despise it. "Providence" has stocked this planet with a terrible lot of fools.

J. G. BARTRAM.—So you all liked Mr. Putnam at Newcastle. Why, certainly. He'll be liked anywhere.

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to hear you had capital audiences at New Brompton. Shall be glad to see you at Clacton.

W. BRADBURN.—What is the use of asking us whether there is any truth in the story of "an Atheist" who "said to his dying daughter," etc. The preacher who told it may have had a low forehead, but he had plenty of front.

W. J. WENHAM.—(1) Sufficient reason for Jewish hatred of Pilate arose from his removing the army from Caesarea to Jerusalem and placing Roman standards on his palace, and from his using the temple revenues to construct an aqueduct. (2) Philo would share the prejudices of his countrymen, but we cannot be sure we have his writings as written. (3) Our sources are not trustworthy enough to judge Pilate's character. Many legends cluster round the name of Pilate. The story that he committed suicide at Vienne rests on the dubious authority of Eusebius (*H. E.* ii. 7), and probably arose from there being a Mount Pileatus, or cap-shaped, there; it was also said that he became a hermit by Mount Pileatus, near the lake of Lucerno, and that he was beheaded by Nero. Tertullian says he was a Christian in conscience, and in the Ethiopic Church he is a saint. His day is June 25. The Copts also say he died a Christian martyr. Origen, Chrysostom and Hilary assert that his wife became Christian, and the Greek Church makes her a saint (Procla), and observes October 27 as her day. Washing the hands was a Jewish and not a Roman custom, and helps to betray the unhistorical character of the whole story.

T. POWELL.—Well, if Jesus did not steal the donkeys, he requisitioned them. We admit the technical distinction.

E. G. TAYLOR.—Received with thanks. Our statement and appeal, with the two Bills, will be reprinted in leaflet form for permanent use.

CURIOUS.—Many thanks for the information. The copy of Mr. Foote's pamphlet on the Resurrection, which you enclose, is one of the special sheets printed for binding when *Bible Romances* are completed. Whoever is selling them for one penny is a thief. The sheets have been stolen from our stockroom. We should be glad to identify the culprit.

W. CABELL sends £1, his half-yearly subscription to the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.

SYMPATHISER.—Dan Chatterton was a character. He breathed fire and slaughter, but wouldn't hurt a fly. His integrity was remarkable. Poor as he was, you might have trusted him with ten thousand pounds, and you would have found it all right, even if you found him dead of starvation beside it.

W. P. SOVER.—We cannot send you copies of the Bills. Let Mr. G. W. Palmer, the Liberal candidate at Reading, have a copy of this week's *Freethinker*.

B. BENNETT.—We cannot answer such questions through the post. If you want to waste your time by studying Baxter's views, read the *Christian Herald*.

T. DOBSON.—The questions for parliamentary candidates are printed in our first article this week. We don't think it would answer to publish Mr. Putnam's "Notes and News" in a separate form.

J. H. SIMPSON.—Many thanks. We hope your example will be followed everywhere. Candidates should be pressed firmly on subject of the Blasphemy Laws.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Non-Sectarian—New York Tribune—Public Opinion—New York Sun—Literary Digest—Secular Thought—Light—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—Truthseeker—Open Court—Remarks—Southend Express—Freidenker—Progressive Thinker—Church Reformer—Universal Republic—Twentieth Century—World's Advance Thought—Western Daily Mercury—Crescent—Islamic World—Glasgow Weekly Herald.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SPECIAL.

THE Director of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) having left the Hall of Science matter in my hands, as Chairman of the Board, I have had to act according to my best judgment; and in doing so I have closed the Hall for Freethought meetings until we can arrive at a definite settlement. Meanwhile I have had Milton Hall engaged for our Sunday evening meetings. It is not central, like the Hall of Science, but it is fairly accessible, and anything is better than a serious break in the continuity of our propaganda.

Milton Hall will be closed this evening (July 14), in consequence of the Secular Federation's excursion. So many of our own people being away, and the weather being too fine to tempt many strangers indoors, it is better to discontinue the meetings for once, than to put a lecturer on the platform to address empty chairs.

On the two following Sundays—July 21 and 28—I shall be at Milton Hall myself, and, with a little judicious advertising in the neighborhood, I dare say we shall secure good meetings. Friends who can circulate handbills announcing these two lectures should communicate with Miss Vance at 28 Stonecutter-street.

As a first step in carrying out the lecture-scheme which I mooted at the Conference, and which I have since referred to in the *Freethinker*, I have engaged St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, for three Sunday evening lectures in August. All the three lectures will be delivered by myself. We cannot charge at the doors for admission, but we can sell tickets beforehand; and it will be necessary to do this, as the expenses will be rather heavy.

Should this experiment succeed, as I believe it will, we could follow it up, and introduce other lecturers to the same public. I have long been of opinion that the West-end of London has been gravely neglected. Indeed, I am not sure it would not be a good policy to engage halls temporarily—say for a month or so—in various parts of this huge metropolis with its five millions of inhabitants, and put our best lecturers forward where the people can come and hear them without a long walk or a somewhat expensive railway journey.

I hope to get a brief holiday before this summer weather is ended; after which I shall be ready for a long hard winter's work. I believe our party wants the President to push forward. Those who will accompany him are welcome; those who will not must be left to come on afterwards.

G. W. FOOTE.



## SUGAR PLUMS.

SECULARISTS all over the kingdom should make use of our first article in this week's *Freethinker* during the general elections now taking place. If a candidate does not understand the *questions*, he should be supplied with our *statement*. After reading that, it will be idle for him to say he does not understand the Blasphemy Laws. We have printed enough of this week's issue to allow of extra copies being available for this purpose.

Since the paragraph in our "Acid Drops" was in type, Mr. W. R. Shaw, Liberal candidate at Halifax, has been written to and supplied with a copy of Mr. Taylor's pamphlet. His reply is as follows: "Though absolutely opposed to Atheism in any shape whatever, I consider your contention in respect to the Blasphemy Laws a just one, and therefore I shall vote for any Bill which will further religious liberty."

Mr. F. Barratt, the Liberal candidate for Torquay division, in answer to a question from Mr. Widdicombe, of Dartmouth, as to whether he would vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, said he was in favor of the toleration of any view whatever.

Mr. S. P. Putnam lectured at Newcastle on Sunday. His audiences were not so large as they might have been, but this was probably owing to the hot summer weather. Mr. Bartram tells us that the "saints" were delighted with Mr. Putnam's lectures, and delighted with him too, as a thoroughly genial gentleman, full of human nature. They earnestly hope to see him again in the near future. At Chester-le-Street a fine audience gave Mr. Putnam an enthusiastic reception. To-day (July 14) he lectures at St. James's Hall, Bristol, where we have no doubt he will meet with a grand welcome. Bristolians had a taste of him at the Conference.

Mr. J. P. Gilmour, of Glasgow, lectured at Milton Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The New Theism." Mr. G. W. Foote presided, and Messrs. Wheeler, Forder, Heaford, Rowney, and other well-known London Freethinkers were present. Considering the miraculous weather there was a good attendance. Mr. Gilmour treated his subject with marked ability. Unfortunately he was suffering from hoarseness, but his voice improved as he went along, and rose for a powerful and brilliant peroration, which won enthusiastic applause. Mr. Gilmour lectures to-day (July 14) in the Secular Hall, Leicester.

London Freethinkers will doubtless turn out in strong force this morning (July 14) for the Secular Federation's annual excursion to Clacton-on-Sea. There seems every probability of fine weather, and the arrangements allow of a long time at the seaside. Our special train leaves Liverpool-street Station at 8.45, which looks very early, but is not so in fact, as the metropolitan train service enables people from almost every part of London to get there in time. Finsbury Park and Holloway are the difficult parts to get from, but we dare say the "saints" in that district will manage to catch the train by some sort of conveyance.

Tickets should be obtained, if possible, before the morning of the excursion. Of course they will be obtainable, as far as they hold out, outside the railway station, where Miss Brown and other friends will be prepared to supply late applicants; but the safest plan is to get tickets beforehand.

The same friend who gave £5 for free tickets to children last year, has repeated his generosity. The tickets have been distributed by the Excursion Committee in conjunction with the Branch secretaries.

Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Parris will go with the excursion to Clacton. Mr. J. M. Wheeler and Mr. R. Forder will be there as usual. Mr. A. B. Moss also writes that he may be expected. No doubt some other leading men will turn up before the train starts, and we hope they will find a perfect swarm of friends on the platform.

Excursionists to Clacton will find plenty of accommodation for dinner in various restaurants, with prices for all pockets. A common tea for the Federation party will be provided at Rigg's Retreat, a few minutes' walk from the pier, at ninepence per head. Mr. Foote will preside, and will be supported by the friends above mentioned. The time for this "communion of saints" is 5.30. This will give ample opportunity for brake-drives in the neighborhood or a sail on the sea.

Mr. John Grange debated with the Rev. A. J. Waldron at Bradford on the first two evenings in July. Christianity *versus* Secularism was the subject of discussion. Mr.

Waldron spoke well and never fell into the orthodox method of abuse. Mr. Grange satisfied his own party and often won the applause of his opponents. A correspondent describes his opening speech on the second night as "masterly."

The Chatham Branch takes its annual outing on Sunday, August 11, driving to Stockbury Valley. They start from the Luton Arches at 9.30 a.m., calling at Military-road, Rochester, and Strood, for friends. The route selected is through Cuxton, Snodland, Town Malling, Waterringbury, and Detland Hill; returning through Key-street and Rainham. A good tea will be provided at the "Three Squirrels," Stockbury. Friends will provide their own lunch, which will (D.V.) be partaken at Waterringbury. Tickets, including tea, 3s. 9d.; children under fourteen half-price; to be obtained of J. Hill, 174 Canterbury-street, New Brompton, or from the committee.

The "Atheist Shoemaker" affair has been a subject of correspondence in the Nottingham *Argus*. Lindley Maxfield contributes a racy letter on the Secular side, and points out the absurdity of a letter by the local Christian Evidence secretary, who relies upon Mr. Holyoake's "vindication" of Mr. Price Hughes. Mr. Maxfield shows that the *facts*—as distinct from mere opinions—are on Mr. Mr. Foote's side, and that Mr. Hughes has yet to prove that Charles Alfred Gibson was ever an *Atheist* or a *lecturer*.

Darwin was intended for the Church, and Huxley as a child had strong clerical affinities. "I remember turning my pinafore wrong side forward, in order to represent a surplice," Huxley wrote, "and preaching to my mother's maids in the kitchen as nearly as possible in Sir Herbert's manner one Sunday morning when the rest of the family were at church. That is the earliest indication I can call to mind of the strong clerical affinity which my friend Mr. Herbert Spencer has always ascribed to me, though I fancy it has for the most part remained in a latent state." Our sub. has an early portrait of Huxley, taken over forty years ago, in which he appears remarkably like a Methodist parson, chiefly owing to his wearing a white, or blue, tie.

"Fifteen years ago" (writes a correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News*) "it was my lot to come in frequent contact with Mr. Huxley. At that time he was in his zenith as a social lion, and would turn blithely from a lecture on lobsters at the Zoo to a cultured drawing room, where he would stand sipping tea and gossiping on the latest book of the day, in entire defiance of his own principles of hygiene. On one occasion, which comes back to me vividly, he remarked that the best equipment for the battle of life was not a sound education, but a sound stomach."

The *Academy* says of Professor Huxley: "His encyclopedic learning, his absolute clearness of vision, his unrivalled facility of popular exposition, his trenchant argumentation, his lucid prose, his flashes of irony and wit, guarantee that his name will be preserved as long as the language is read."

Similarly, "E. R. L.," the writer of the obituary notice in the *Atheurum*, says: "To the present writer it seems impossible not to regard him as one of the very greatest minds of this century—a permanent glory of the English race."

The *Independent Pulpit* keeps up a good standard, as may be seen from the article by J. P. Richardson which we reprint. Mr. Davis also writes well on "Rational Morality"; H. Wettstein on "The Source of Psychic Phenomena," which he attributed to auto-hypnotism and double consciousness. Mr. Bailey writes on "Religion and Morality," and N. Zediker on "Immortality."

From a brief editorial in the *Independent Pulpit* we clip the following: "Freethinkers are often asked, 'What will you give us in place of religion?' This is a queer question; it is like the old slave who, on emancipation day, asked to whom he belonged, since they had taken 'old master' away. Liberalism is trying to set the Christian free, and for what it takes from him, there is no need of a return. It does, however, offer him many opportunities for making himself the happier and better for the burden he has cast off. It opens up to him a field for investigation and study, interesting, beautiful, and instructive beyond compare, and if he be so inclined, he may find in it the material with which he can clothe himself in beliefs and thoughts as much superior to the garments he has laid aside as the robes of a king to a beggar's rags."

The American Protective Association, at its convention at Milwaukee, passed the following resolution: "All institutions of an ecclesiastical character claiming temporal dominion or the right to define the extent of their own jurisdiction, are inimical to all forms of constitutional government, and are a menace to the perpetuity thereof."



If this is anything more than an abstract pious opinion, the A. P. A. ought to throw itself into the work of the American Secular Union and support their Nine Demands for the complete separation of Church and State.

Dr. Andrew Dickson White, in his "New Chapters in the Warfare of Science," in the *Popular Science Monthly*, traces the different opinions held concerning the Bible. His last chapter is entitled "From the Divine Oracles to the Higher Criticism."

We receive from S. David's, Portland, Kansas, a copy of a little semi-monthly paper entitled the *Freethought Ideal*. The paper is new to us but it has already reached its thirteenth number. It is extremely cheap, as American papers go, being only 50 cents. per year; and is ably conducted. It ought to have a large circulation and do good work in the States.

*De Dageraad* continues its translation of *Crimes of Christianity*, and, in the July number, one of the editors contributes a long article on "Free Life."

While our London friends are enjoying themselves at Clacton, the Manchester saints will be picnicing at Chester. Their train leaves the Central Station at 9.20. Those from Liverpool and neighborhood who intend joining the excursion at Chester, should be at the landing-stage at 1.30, for the boat to catch the 2.10 train for Birkenhead. From the Central Station at 2 o'clock, change at Rock Ferry. Due at Chester 3.3. Trains leave Chester at 7, 8.35, or 10.5, for both landing-stage and Central Station.

Mr. T. McKinnon Wood, Liberal candidate for East Ilkington, says: "I am in favor of the abolition of the blasphemous laws, and of the granting of liberty of bequest to the institutions you name." Mr. B. L. Cohen, the Conservative candidate, also says: "I have no hesitation in assuring you that I also am a 'Freethinker,' if it is understood by that expression that everybody should be free to think as he likes, and also, as it appears to me, a necessary consequence, to bequeath his money to any institution he deems worthy of such consideration."

*Nya Sanningar*, the new Swedish Freethought paper, continues to publish illustrations of Bible texts. It also gives a capital portrait of Victor Hugo.

The Freethought Federation has opened its new headquarters at 141 South Water-street, Chicago, which, we hope, will be a centre of activity in that great metropolis.

*Secular Thought* (June 29) reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "A Jolly Japanese Religion" from our columns. The other contents are good. Our contemporary is now entering on its eighteenth half-yearly volume, and we are pleased to note that Mr. Ellis maintains it worthily as an exponent of the cause in Canada.

### Freethought Philosophy.

Freethought doesn't make a man anxious. It makes him a philosopher. He takes life as it is, for what it is, and makes the best of it. A Freethinker never climbs on himself in the vain desire to lay hold of the "next world." He is fairly content with this world, even if things are not just as they might be. He can fold his hands with a quiet touch, or he can stretch wide his arms without waiting to see whether the Lord approves of the operation. The Freethinker finds enough to do to mind his own business, and has no time to waste, either in singing praises to keep God in good humor, or supplying mundane news for the information of Jehovah. He feels that life to him means work and service, and not show and ceremony. Let the poor Christian, conscious of his spiritual imperfection, struggle mightily for the kingdom of Jesus—the Infidel cares not; he has a kingdom of his own, within which he can live in peace, free from the interference of priestly demagogues.—*Boston Investigator*.

### Priests, Women, and Children.

The Jesuits have been accused of hatching a regular system for undermining and corrupting the principles of youth. But, though the accusation be just, every priest is a Jesuit as far as relates to a desire of gaining the minds of youth. All priests have necessarily the desire of influencing the minds of others. From their very calling they have a disposition to be teaching; women and children are the materials that they like to work upon. Next to the Devil they dread men of understanding.—*William Cobbett, "Register," vol. xxxiii., p. 297.*

## THE HONORARIUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

It will be remembered that at the last Conference of the National Secular Society a letter was read from Mr. George Anderson, suggesting that its President "should be recompensed for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests." Accordingly, the Conference appointed a Committee, consisting of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Mr. George Ward, to consider the best plan to be adopted for carrying out the suggestion. The Committee met and drew up a circular, which probably most of the readers of the *Freethinker* have seen.

This Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, proposed by Mr. George Anderson, and seconded by Mr. George Ward: "That the sum to be paid the President of the N.S.S. for this year be £100, to be confirmed, augmented, or diminished each year by vote of the Conference."

By this resolution it was the desire of the Committee to carry out the object, for which it had been appointed by the congress of delegates, in the most satisfactory manner both as to terms and amount, leaving the Society to act yearly in future as circumstances might dictate.

It is to be hoped that what has been done will meet with the approval of the Secular party, and that its members will subscribe the required amount as promptly as possible.

CHARLES WATTS.

### Subscriptions Received:—

Amount acknowledged, £16 1s. 6d.

Per R. Forder: Toby King, £5; E. Painter, £5; H. Byshe, 10s.; A. Lewis, 10s.; R. Griffiths, 4s.; W. H. Wood, 2s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. H. R., 1s.; J. P., 1s.

Per Miss Vance: J. and J. McGlashan, £1; W. Hardiman, 2s. 6d.; Edward Clodd, 10s.; C. H. Gask, 10s.; T. Beach, 5s.  
Per Mr. Watts: Mrs. J. Donaldson, £5.

## MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

*Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (June 22).*

COVENT GARDEN theatre and the Italian opera make one of the supreme attractions of London at this season. Through the kindness of friends I was enabled to behold this splendor of fashion without its costing a fortune. The music is superb, and the orchestra is one of the finest and largest in the world. The stage adornments, the magnificence of scenery, and the brilliancy of the acting and singing, make a world of fascination for the lover of art. But besides the imaginary glory there is also outspread a real glory of wealth and enchantment in the vast auditorium itself. Here are the *élite* of London dressed in rich and royal robes. I was not among them, but over them in one of the democratic stalls, and from this height a gorgeous picture in living colors flashed and moved before me. Lords and ladies, with silks and jewels of uncounted value, composed the sparkling scene. It was like an immense animated garden, and one could but watch, with intense curiosity, its vibrating rainbow tints, and, at times, it seemed more unreal to my fancy than the romance of the opera itself.

The next wonderful panorama to unfold before my vision was the Kew Gardens, which I visited on Thursday with Foote and Watts. Even the opera must pale its artificial splendors before these multitudinous flowers—flowers of all hue, flowers of every climate. All that the soil can produce is gathered here for the scientific gaze, and for poetic ardor and love's sweet spell. The Kew Gardens are a great place for London courtships. If a fellow will not propose here on a fine day, with the beauty of nature about him, luminous as the imagined paradise, he certainly will never do it, and many a vow has been uttered amidst these glorious pomps. The Kew Gardens, although originated for purely scientific purposes, are open to the public, and the throngs on Sundays and holidays are innumerable. It is a gay and festive place, while to the eye of science it is a world of wonders. One is transported, as if by magic, into all the regions of the earth while he lingers in these botanic chambers, where the warmth of the tropics mingles with the breezy north. As you emerge from the glassy palaces, the trees and grass glitter on every side in arcades of jewelled floor and roof far as the vision can sweep.



After the Kew Gardens, and a good square meal at Richmond, comes a magnificent drive to Hampton Court, six miles away, across the Thames, which here is a comparatively narrow stream, with green and wooded banks, and embowered mansions of the old English style. We pass through Twickenham with memories of the poet Pope in the mind, who here polished his brilliant lines for immortality. Twickenham is a curious town with a narrow and winding thoroughfare, and houses on either side as ancient as the hills, and great stone walls. I don't like these stone walls, for they shut out many a lovely view, and give England the appearance of feudal exclusiveness, which is not by any means the spirit of the times. I cannot report all the beauties of this charming journey, but the crowning beauty of all is Bushey Park. A wide road, smooth as a billiard table, extends straight ahead for a couple of miles. On either side are four ranks of mighty trees that stand like venerable warriors. Beneath these spreading canopies glows a green sward. Beyond the branching arcades on the sunlit fields are deer and sheep indolently feeding. As we glance forward, the vast columns of trees seem to meet and mingle in the mellow horizon, and backward the same prospect presents itself—masses of green sinking into silvery and golden distance in the glory of the occidental sun.

How shall I describe Hampton Court? A "new moon risen on mid-noon," we might say, in Milton's words. Here a thousand thrilling recollections mingle with the pomp of nature and of art. Through the wide galleries and storied chambers we wander; heroes and kings and the illustrious beauties of the olden time shine upon our vision; while from the vast windows of the palace we behold the glittering gardens, the fountains, the silvery sheen of waters, and the majesty of ancient oaks. I can only suggest the massive and brilliant glories of the renowned scenes, the great, solemn building, the shadowy arches, the laden walls, the relics of royalty and war, and the bright and variegated world without. Here the mighty Cromwell reigned in the grandeur of his solitary genius, a sublime energy in the midst of battling factions. I must confess I never understood Cromwell as I did this hour in the shadow and splendor of Hampton Court, when the glowing words of my comrades revealed the hero in his true colors. They studied him and comprehended him from a Freethought view, without prejudice, in the clearness of universal principles; and certainly the gigantic Puritan was an admirable and wonderful character—a man of action, like Caesar and Napoleon, and equal to either of them in the creative energy of his genius. He was not, after all, a fanatical religionist, but a comprehensive and tolerant man, the best his time could produce; misunderstood in his own era, and only now being appreciated, not only as the greatest warrior England ever produced, but as its wisest statesman and boldest administrator.

It is the sunset hour; the chimes are ringing forth, and we wander alongside the Thames, where the boats glide up and down with merry passengers. As the great night glooms onwards, with its million stars in London's bosom, we return homeward with an added lustre in the illuminated chambers of memory.

On Friday morning, with Joseph Mazzini Wheeler (who has read more books than any other man in the Freethought ranks) I visit the British Museum. Mr. Wheeler is named after the illustrious Italian patriot, who was the friend and comrade of his father. Mr. Wheeler is known on both sides of the Atlantic for his learning and his devotion to our cause. I thoroughly enjoyed my day's trip with him, and the objects I viewed were enlightened by his extensive knowledge. The British Museum is a wonderful place. Here is a revelation of vast spaces of human history. Here are relics and mementos from almost every nation. We plunge into the depths of time. There is a vast procession of the ages as we wander through these majestic halls. Here are human implements dating back 4,200 years B.C. It seems that the British Museum knocks out Adam by 196 years. There are mummies and sarcophaguses and mowments dating 3,700 years B.C., and man must have been quite civilized to have produced these evidences of artistic talent and skill in the use of instruments. The library of the museum contains at present 2,000,000 volumes. A copy of every book published in the empire is sent to the museum and preserved. The reading-room is a vast circular, domed hall, in which, I think, a thousand students could be gathered at once. There are desks and conveniences for study. Anyone can call for and examine any book he desires. The libraries are beginning to overflow the whole building, and will in time undoubtedly occupy the total structure, and the other vast collections will be removed to other places, as some already are placed in the South Kensington Museum of Natural History, which we also visited. In this is a noble statue of Darwin.

In the display of animal life is vividly demonstrated the process of evolution, much to the scandal of the orthodox party, who protested against such an exhibition of nature's history, but it is too late in the day. There is a beautiful collection of birds and insects, and the truth of natural selection is plainly perceived as we follow the changing

species. There are the bones of the ancient whale, which, I think, must have swallowed Jonah, since there is plenty of room to hold Jonah if ever he got in. He could walk around and take a nap quite comfortably in that capacious belly. There are also remains of huge mastodons, and of almost all the animals that have ever walked the earth. It is simply impossible to enumerate the multitude of curiosities. I must leave it to the imagination of the reader.

We also traversed the law courts of Lincoln's Inn, and witnessed the solemnities of justice. These courts are small and gloomy, but they hold an immense amount of wigs and dignity. Everything moved in a slow and ponderous fashion. The "law's delay" was pretty well exemplified.

We also took in Hyde Park—the people's park—a beautiful, ample space. Outdoor meetings of some sort are held here almost every day. If anybody is discontented he can come to Hyde Park and blow himself off. He is sure to find some listeners. One does not have to keep off the grass here. No matter how dilapidated one is, he can lie down on the greenery and bask all day in the sun, and he can sleep all night if he wants to. There is no policeman to tell him to move on. This is a vast lodging-house for houseless men and women in summer, and a motley scene can be witnessed in the small hours of the night. We passed by the noted "Reformer's Tree," under whose spreading branches many a mighty shout has been raised for liberty and justice. Here Bradlaugh has poured forth his torrents of eloquence. Fashion mingles with democracy at Hyde Park. This is typical English ground. The Anglo-Saxon race has surged here, rough and ready, polished and elegant, in vast variety. Our wandering steps encircle the Prince Albert Memorial that, in gilded magnificence, attracts the view at one of the entrances. It presents an imposing appearance. Prince Albert is displayed in golden panoply as the Patron of Art, and about him are placed the statues of the most illustrious geniuses of the human race. At the four corners are huge emblematical figures of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

I can't write any more of London. I must hurry on to Liverpool, where I lecture, Sunday, May 26, and at no place have I found a more cordial and generous reception. I am met at the station by a deputation of the Secular Society, Messrs. R. Towers, J. Roberts, J. C. Balfour, Wollett, and Small, and I have a pleasant social evening Saturday at the home of Mr. E. Newman, president of the society. Sunday morning I am greeted by a fine audience, Mr. J. T. Ross in the chair. In the afternoon Mr. J. Roberts presides, and in the evening Mr. E. Newman. The numbers increase, and I have a crowded house at night, and I never enjoyed more enthusiastic applause. Mr. George Wise, a somewhat notorious evangelist, was present to debate. We gave him twenty minutes for reply to my lecture, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century," but as he did not make a single point, it is no use to waste space on his assertions. There was a ripple of debate at each lecture, but nothing of any importance was elicited from the Christian side. So far as the lectures were concerned, there was almost universal approval. The platform, however, is always free and open to discussion. But the trouble is that the Christian disputant never meets the issue fairly. He dodges and uses words instead of ideas, and his pettifogging is not worthy of report.

I meet many friends at Liverpool who have known me through the columns of the *Truthseeker*, Mr. Doeg, secretary; Mr. Charles Stocker, bookseller, etc. It was a pleasure to meet these sturdy supporters. It was the Queen's birthday, and there were processions and celebrations and outdoor meetings, but notwithstanding these attractions a splendid assembly filled our hall, and Liverpool has shown her magnanimous appreciation of America.

I like Liverpool. It is a brilliant, go-ahead city of over half a million inhabitants. It is the next to London in size, and is like to London in its cosmopolitan aspects. The representatives of all nations are in Liverpool. It is a natural gathering-place for every race, it being a kind of universal seaport. The Mersey is a noble river, much like our own Hudson. It is broader and deeper than the Thames, and has seven miles of docks. Here come and go innumerable craft, and the largest ships in the world. There are many fine buildings in Liverpool, galleries, parks, etc. The residential portion of the city is very handsome, and from the river back into the wooded and hilly country extends many a delightful prospect. The city is not built upon a level spot, but upon acclivities sweeping upward from the docks, so that as you traverse the streets on top of the huge omnibuses many a splendid view of the town attracts the gaze.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

Mother—"Yes, Bobby, God made you. I'm surprised that you should have forgotten that." Bobby—"Well, it happened a good while ago, Ma. Seven years is a long time for a boy to remember anything."



## THE INFIDEL CONTRACTOR.

WE often can correctly say  
 What faith a man professes,  
 And sometimes can exactly weigh  
 The quantum he possesses.

The faith possessed by some who trade—  
 Like buttermen, or hatters—  
 May ne'er, or seldom, be displayed  
 Throughout their business matters ;

But, some there are whose faith we know  
 Exactly to a fraction,  
 Because the full amount they show  
 In ev'ry trade transaction.

For instance : those to whom we owe  
 The wonders of construction  
 Are faithless, as their labors show,  
 And destined to destruction.

A road-contractor always tries  
 To minimise expenses,  
 And yet he always treats as lies  
 The Christian faith's pretences.

No mountain does he move to-day  
 By prayer, faith, or fasting.  
 But slowly cuts his toilsome way  
 With shovels, picks, and blasting.

To cut a hill with spades and picks  
 At cost of time and money,  
 When faith could do the job for "nix,"  
 Is sad, as well as funny.

Yet pious, godly persons bless  
 The godless undertaking,  
 Puffed up with Christian righteousness,  
 Whilst Christ they're thus forsaking.

A mountain's small in all regards—  
 In plan and elevation—  
 That measures but a million yards  
 By cubic computation.

Now, if a grain of faith can start  
 And cast into the ocean  
 A million yards, a millionth part  
 Would set a yard in motion.

But faith, to-day, can't even start  
 A tremor in a custard,  
 Nor equals e'en the billionth part  
 Of any grain of mustard.

Still, faith's required—says Holy Writ,  
 My brothers and my sisters—  
 To save us from the burning pit,  
 And keep our souls from blisters.

So, navvies and contractors all !  
 Shun shovels, picks, and blasting !  
 Unless you wish to squirm and squall  
 In hell for everlasting !

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam :—  
 July 14, Bristol ; 16 and 17, Plymouth ; 21, Birmingham.  
 August 11, Failsworth ; 18, Leicester ; 25, Liverpool.

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.

## BOOK CHAT.

*Man's Faith: His God-given Attributes. The Creed of an Artist*, by Ilex Illuminati ; 1895 (Labor Press, 57 Tib-stree Manchester), is a sort of prose poem or rhapsody. The author is evidently an artist, and a lover of music, who has been influenced by Shelley, Browning, Whitman, E. Carpenter, and Ruskin. Disliking Church orthodoxy and conventionality, calling the Bible "a gross mixture of fallibility," he holds that "Religion is a Morality." On the question of the nude in art, he says : "We need to be frank with nature to be truly chaste. Reared under one prejudice and another, we warp the mind as Chinamen do the feet." The book is full of fervor and fine feeling, but it is one of those writings which Horace would recommend to be kept nine years, and then revised before publication.

\* \* \*

Zola's *Rome*, on which he is now busy, is to be the second of a trilogy, *Lourdes, Rome, Paris*. *Lourdes* symbolises the Middle Ages with all the simplicity of its faith ; *Rome* symbolises the present with the attempt of the Neo-Catholics to accommodate old faith to new wants and aspirations ; and *Paris* will symbolise the future, in which Zola will try to foretell what will be the outcome of it all.

\* \* \*

Huxley's "Corybantic Christianity" is a phrase that should stick to Booth's army of militant missionaries. The *Westminster Gazette*, however, points out that "its application to the Salvationists was new, but the collocation of ideas itself is as old as Celsus. That ancient writer applied it, curiously enough, to all Christians alike. We quote from Froude's essay on "Origen and Celsus" a paraphrase of some remarks by the latter : 'So long as the Christians were few there was tolerable agreement among them. As their numbers extended the mutinous spirit displayed itself ; sect was formed after sect, each condemning the other, till they have little left but the name in common. Their faith rests on nothing but their hopes and fears, and they have invented the most extraordinary terror. God forbid that they, or I, or any man, should cease to believe that wicked men will be punished hereafter and good men rewarded. But the Christians have taken this ancient doctrine, and distorted its meaning, and now howl it out like the Corybantes, as if no one had ever heard of it before.'

\* \* \*

We are informed that Mr. Edward Clodd, the author of *The Story of Creation* and *A Primer of Evolution*, is not engaged on *The Story of Joseph*, as stated in several journals, including our own. There is probably some mistake in the name.

\* \* \*

The *Rational View*, by Charles C. Moore, the editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, of Kentucky, is concerned with Christian theology. Mr. Moore, like several other of the leading American Freethinkers, was brought up to the ministry, which he left when he found he could no longer hold the Christian doctrines of the miraculous. At his very ordination he had his eyes partially opened. He says : "I remarked to Dr. Pickett that I should never be willing to defend the doctrine of slavery as it was understood in the South. He kindly but earnestly, rebuked the remark, and, picking up a New Testament, read to me the first five verses of the sixth chapter of First Timothy. I saw plainly that the passage not only justified slavery, but warned me, as a young preacher, that I must teach that slavery was right, and withdraw 'myself from such as said it was not.'" An endeavor to bring the truth of Christianity home to his auditors, and a study of Colenso and an investigation of the claims of the Bible, led Mr. Moore to resign the ministry, and become completely opposed to supernaturalism.

\* \* \*

The *Rational View* is a book of 373 pages, giving Mr. Moore's views at full length. They are stated very clearly and simply, and, even when dealing with such topics as the evolution of life and society, are written so that he that runs may read. A large part of the book is devoted to showing the incompatibility of the Bible with the conclusions of reason, science, and common sense. Mr. Moore is always frank and direct. Thus he says : "At the very threshold of religious inquiry is the question, What is God? I do not think that any man can, with any great satisfaction, answer this question, though I think it can be answered, with great confidence, that God is not what he is represented to be in the Jewish Scriptures." He is equally ready to acknowledge his difficulties with regard to the Bible. Thus he says : "How the New Testament manuscripts ever got into the Greek languages I have never been able to find out." The *Rational View* is well calculated to stir thought, and we hope it is having a good circulation in America.



## 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.

#### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Jews on Tramp."  
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.  
CAMBERWELL GREEN: Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.  
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."  
DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, O. Cohen will lecture.  
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Stories from the Bible."  
FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, no lecture.  
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex-side): 7, W. Heaford, "The Creed of an Unbeliever." Thursday, at 8.30, W. J. Ramsey, "God so Loved the World."  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Credentials of Christianity"; 3.30, "Holy Absurdities." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.  
ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, no lecture.  
KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Stories Re-told."  
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.  
LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus."  
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, no lecture.  
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Stories Re-told."  
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, no lecture.  
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, O. Cohen will lecture.  
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. G. Hertzfeld, "The Real and Ideal Jesus"; 7, O. Cohen will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN: Business meeting.  
BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): S. P. Putnam lectures three times. Important members' meeting after evening lecture.  
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, quarterly meeting of Tontine Society; 7, C. Doeg, "Religious Materialism." (For Branch Excursion to Chester see "Sugar Plums.")  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Picnic to Chester; train leaves Central Station at 9.20; tickets 2s. 9d.  
ROCHDALE (Working Men's College): 7, special Branch meeting—election of officers, etc.  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, members' quarterly meeting; 7, Mr. Drury, "Is Death an Eternal Sleep?"  
SOUTH SHIELDS THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY (Free Library Hall, Ocean-road): 11, Annie Besant, "Masters as Facts in the Past and in the Present"; 3, "The Brotherhood of Man"; 7, "Man the Master of his Destiny."

#### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Market-place, Godwin-street): 6.30, John Grange will lecture.  
DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Mr. Bowie will lecture.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—July 14, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 18, Wood Green; 20 and 21, Manchester; 23 to 26, Blackburn; 28, Stockton-on-Tees; 29 and 30, Middlesboro'. August 1, Wood Green; 4, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 6, Camberwell; 8, Wood Green; 11, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 15, Wood Green; 18, m. and a. Finsbury Park; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, E.—July 14, m. Kingsland, e. Edmonton; 21, m. Camberwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Camberwell; 24, Hyde Park; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. and e. Wood Green.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—July 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Tottenham. August 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—July 17 and August 4, Kingsland.

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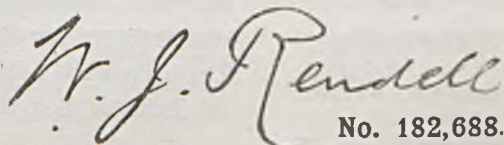
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