

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## THE BLACK ARMY.

AFTER my lecture at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening a young gentleman rose to offer some opposition. While not wearing clerical attire, he had a very decided clerical accent, and I concluded that he had caught the twang in addressing Sunday-school children or in debating at Young Men's Christian Associations. Perhaps he has aspirations to the ministry, for one of his objections to my lecture was urged with much feeling. I had said that the ministers of all denominations were, for the most part, actuated by commonplace motives; that they went into pulpits as others go into law, or physic, or the army—for a living; and that their being called by the Holy Ghost was only the cant of their profession. My critic declared that I was wrong. He asserted that hundreds of them, perhaps thousands, entered their Churches, and engaged in the service of Christ, for purely disinterested reasons; that their great object was to save souls and fill heaven; that many of them were very poor, the average income of curates, for instance, being only £120 a year; and that some of them went abroad as missionaries to convert the heathen, facing all sorts of hardships, and carrying their lives in their hands. I cannot say that my critic put his case so tersely, but this is the substance of his objection; and I think it well to give an answer, once for all, to what I dare say is a very common argument.

Now at the outset I wish to make my own position clear, and to guard against misunderstanding. In the first place, I have nothing to do at present with the truth or falsity of Christianity; yet, at the same time, I am entitled to expect of its ministers a decent conformity to its teachings. In the next place, I do not assert that there are no ministers or missionaries who are earnest and sincere. Some of them, I have no doubt, would preach Christianity if it were poor, despised, and oppressed. These are men of principle and conviction; men with a passion for their calling; men who really believe that they are under God's orders to exhort and reprove a fallen, sinful world, and to point out the only way of eternal salvation. There are also some lawyers with a passion for law, some doctors with a passion for medicine, and some soldiers with a passion for military affairs; as I dare say there are men with a passion for almost every one of what are called the "humblest" employments. But these are the exceptions, and may be eliminated from a general survey. When we talk of any profession, as such, we have to go by the average; and I say that the average minister, like the average lawyer, doctor, soldier, tinker, tailor, or ploughman, is simply earning a subsistence for himself and his family; in short, that he preaches for a living. Simply this and nothing more.

Let us look at the number of these clerical gentlemen. There are some fifty thousand of them in England alone. Will any man in his senses affirm that the law of averages does not apply to this huge Black Army? Are they all heroes and enthusiasts? The very idea is an absurdity. Try them by any other test, and what is the result? They are average in stature, average in shape, average in looks, average in strength, average in intelligence. Why then, even on the most favorable estimate, should they not be average in character? Has not the Catholic Church always recognised this fact, and made its priests sink their little individualities in the greatness and splendor of the Church? Has it not found a compensation for the pettiness of its

myriad agents in the magnificence of its organisation? Are not all its orders, wheel within wheel, from the Pope down to the poor bog-trotting Irish priest, a practical recognition of the hard truth that the men of God, like the masses of other men, are actuated by the fundamental motives of human nature?

Look next at the *unfailing supply* of these clerical gentlemen. Exceptional motives are liable to fluctuation, and are therefore unaccountable. Any one of twenty men who saw a sovereign lying at his feet would pick it up, but it would be hard to tell which of them would risk his life to save a fellow being's. The British army is filled by enlistment, and well filled, because poverty and misadventure drive thousands into taking "the Queen's shilling." But how full would it be if it depended upon the accession of men who yearn to fight and die for their country, turning from all other attractions to follow that stern ideal? And how full would the Black Army be if it were not recruited like the Red Army, under the forceful pressure of the necessities of existence? Year by year every vacancy is filled, and a waiting crowd is clamoring for admission. The supply always equals the demand, and goes beyond it, as it does in every other trade and profession. This phenomenon can only be explained by the ordinary laws of human action. Were the Churches manned by persons of exceptional—that is, incalculable—motive and character, there would be variations in the supply. Sometimes there would be a lull, and sometimes a feverish activity. But nothing of this sort ever occurs; the supply of ministers is as regular as the supply of carpenters or tailors, and must be subject to laws of the same generality.

This is quite consistent with the fact that *aptitude*, as well as accident, plays a part in determining a minister's career; but it also operates in the case of other professions, without implying any ethical consideration. A young man at one of the universities may have a taste for theology, as another has a taste for science or art or history or poetry. He may have a bent for public speaking, without the active, enterprising character which is requisite for successful oratory in politics; he may be fond of the social attentions which are paid to clergymen, especially by the female members of their congregations; or his temperament may be suited to the comparatively easy, unharassed life which is led by the general run of Christian ministers, who go to bed when they like, rise when they like, and adapt their duties to their convenience.

We will now consider the financial aspect of the question. It may be true that the average income of Church of England curates is only £120 a year. But before I recognise any hardship in this, I must be assured that they would earn more (I mean on the average) in the general labor market. I am not at all satisfied that the ordinary curate is gifted with more brains than the ordinary skilled artisan. He may talk better English, but that is an accident, and we all know that great nonsense may be couched in very elegant language. Being able to speak grammatically is no criterion of a man's ability to do anything serviceable to his fellow men, for which he may reasonably expect a fair remuneration. One's own experience, of course, is not everything; but I have met both curates and artisans, and I cannot say that the former showed any distinct superiority over the latter. Perhaps I shall be told that their superiority is ethical and spiritual; to which I reply that I am not discussing their character, but their capacity.

It must also be remembered that income is not the sole factor in determining employments; or we should not see

so many clerks keeping up a respectable appearance on meagre salaries, while they might earn more in a rougher or more active occupation. A minister's life has certain advantages of personal comfort and social respectability. Nor is this all. His position is not precarious; he is not affected by commercial disasters and aberrations; his income is generally as certain, and as regular, as the succession of the seasons.

There is also the *prospect* to be considered. A curate's position is humble, and his income is "sadly limited," but a long vista of possibilities is before him—temporal as well as spiritual. He may become a vicar, a rector, a dean, an archdeacon, a canon, a bishop, even an archbishop. Who knows? Every one of Napoleon's soldiers fought with "a marshal's baton in his knapsack." Few of them *could* become marshals, but there was at least the chance, and the hope lured them to a hundred battlefields. And is not the "poor curate" under a similar inspiration? He also may climb the ladder of preferment, at the top of which shines resplendent, in the sunlight of glory, the golden prize of the great Archbishopric.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## HALLOWEEN.

THE importance of rites and customs in elucidating the beliefs of the past, thanks to the labors of anthropologists like E. B. Tylor, W. R. Smith, and J. G. Frazer, is beginning to receive recognition. The great nature festivals of Easter and Christmas remain, and their customs, though modified, sufficiently betray their origin. But those connected with All Hallowtide are rapidly dying out in Protestant countries, and will soon be known mainly by the West of Scotland customs celebrated in the poem of Burns. Yet the festival of All Souls has a distinct place in the history of the evolution of religious faith. Early man is much troubled with his ghost belief. Ghosts and gods—they are one and the same—are a confounded nuisance by their interference in human affairs, and very much of early religion consists of attempts, by sacrifices and spells, to cajole, propitiate, and cheat the ghosts or gods, and prevent them troubling their worshippers. Artful medicine men and priests contrived to get many of these spirits, saints, and gods adored with regular offerings, and with special days devoted to their service.

The month was known before the year, and it was an advance on the nightly worry of ghostly dreams, when the spirits of the dead were supposed to reside in the moon, and the new moon was celebrated with a festival. It was a still further advance when this festival in honor of the common ruck of ghosts, the poor wandering spirits who had no special day assigned them, became annual. The Eastern nations still set apart a day for the worship of ancestors. With the Coreans it is the 15th of the first month. But a general time was that of offering the first fruits of the harvest, which ceremony is called in many places "Feeding the Dead." The offering, instead of being daily, became annual at the harvest season. In Northern nations it was towards the end of October when the corn was gathered, beer was brewed, and the long, dark nights were coming. That was the time for the spirits to have their outing, and for the living to hope to pass over the winter well by propitiating the spirits. In Tooke's *Russia* (vol. i., p. 48) is an account of All Hallows among the Finns, which feast almost drives them out of their wits.

Dorman, in his *Origin of Primitive Superstitions* (p. 35), mentions that "Many of the savages of South America have a subterranean spirit-world, where the pursuits are the same as in life. The Zuñis had removed their spirit-world to a comfortable distance, where they would not be troubled with them daily; but they annually assembled on the top of a lofty mesa, and spent the entire day in communication with the spirits of the departed, who were supposed on that day to revisit that locality and hold converse with their friends and relatives, who carried them presents." This superstition, he says, is very similar to the custom of Roman Catholics on All-Souls Day. The Catholic custom of grave decorating on All Saints is one of the most deep-seated, and in Eastern Europe it is customary to light lamps and lanterns at the graves, to let the spirits see their way about. In Japan, also, on the day of the dead they light the tombs with colored lanterns and

place on them food for the spirits. Next morning little vessels are sent out to sea, also provided with food, that the spirits may migrate to another clime. This giving of one day to the dead has something poetical, pathetic, and attractive about it; and the feast of All Saints is retained by Auguste Comte in the Positivist Calendar. With our Pagan ancestors the day of spirits was connected with the break-up of the season of fruitage and the coming of winter and desolation.

Flammarion says, in his *Astronomical Myths*, that the night of November 1 was to the Druids one full of mystery, in which they annually celebrated the reconstruction of the world. On this day the Druidess nuns had to pull down and rebuild the roof of their temple, as a symbol of the destruction and renovation of the earth. If any of these nuns happened to drop any of the materials for this new roof, they were pounced upon and torn to pieces by their companions, who were seized with a fanatic transport. It was also on this night that the Druids extinguished the sacred fire, and then all other fires were put out, and a primitive night reigned throughout the land. Then the phantoms of those who had died in the preceding year passed along to the West, and were carried away by boats to the judgment seat of the god of the dead.

Offerings of the fruits of the earth used to be laid out for the spirits, but these in time came to be used chiefly in divination, for it was thought that the eve of All Souls was the special time to call spirits from the vasty deep, to divine one's fortune, and to evoke the apparition of one's future husband or wife.

Burns has so happily described the Ayrshire superstitions and customs of Halloween that to his poem the reader must be directed. We will look at a few others, mostly taken from Hazlitt's edition of Brand's *Antiquities*. T. Bisset, D.D., minister of Logierait, Perthshire, says: "On the evening of October 31, O.S., a remarkable ceremony is observed. Heath, broom, and dressings of flax are tied upon a pole. This faggot is then kindled. One takes it upon his shoulders, and, running, bears it round the village. A crowd attends. When the first faggot is burnt out, a second is bound to the pole and kindled in the same manner. Numbers of these blazing faggots are often carried together, and, when the night is dark, they form a splendid illumination." The minister of Callander says: "On All Saints' Eve they set up bonfires in every village. When the bonfire is consumed, the ashes are carefully collected into the form of a circle. There is a stone put in near the circumference for every person of the several families interested in the bonfire, and whatever stone is moved out of its place or injured next morning the person represented by that stone is devoted, or *fey*, and is supposed not to live twelve months from that day." The minister of Kirkmichael, in Perthshire, says: "The practice of lighting bonfires on the first night of winter, accompanied with various ceremonies, still prevails in this and the neighboring highland parishes. Formerly the Hallow Even fire, a relic of Druidism, was kindled in Buchan. Various magic ceremonies were then celebrated to counteract the influence of witches and demons, and to prognosticate to the young their success or disappointment in the matrimonial lottery. These being devoutly finished, the Hallow fire was kindled, and guarded by the male part of the family." This because rival families or clans would attempt to scatter the fire, and thus bring disaster on their enemies. "But now the Hallow fire, when kindled, is attended by children only; and the country girl, renouncing the rites of magic, endeavors to enchant her swain by the charms of dress and of industry."

In North Wales, upon All Saints' Eve, they made a great fire called *Coel Coeth*, and, when the fire is almost extinguished, every one throws a white stone into the ashes, having first marked it; then, having said their prayers, turning round the fire, they go to bed. In the morning they search out the stones, and, if any is found wanting, the owner is supposed to die before another All Saints' Eve. They also distributed *Soul Cakes*, on receiving which poor people pray God to bless the next crop of wheat. The poor used to say: "God have your Soul, teens and all." Seed cakes at All Hallows used to be common in Warwickshire. At Ripon, on the Eve of All Saints, the good women make a cake for every one in the family. Martin tells us that at St. Kilda they baked at this time "a large cake, in the form of a triangle, furrowed round, which was to be all eaten that night."

In Owen's account of the bards we read: "The autumnal fire is still kindled in North Wales on the eve of November 1, attended by many ceremonies, such as running through the fire and smoke, each casting a stone into the fire," etc. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1784 it is stated that at Findern, in Derbyshire, the boys and girls go every year, on the evening of November 2, to the common, and light up small fires, which they call Tindles. The burning of guys on November 5 only represents a modified survival of an ancient practice.

Martin, speaking of the Isle of Lewis, says it was long before the minister could persuade the people to relinquish a practice they had of going by night on Hallowtide to the Church of St. Mulvay, whence one of their number went into the sea up to his waist, with a cup of ale brewed for the occasion with malt contributed by the inhabitants, and, pouring the liquid into the water, invoked the sea-god Shony, who was supposed to have an influence over the crops. They then returned to church, observed a moment's dead silence; then extinguished, at a given signal, the candle on the altar, and proceeded to the fields, where the rest of the night was spent in revelry. The Rev. M. Mac Phail, in his account of the Superstitions of the Lewis (*Folk Lore*, p. 165; June, 1895), says the invocation there was, "Shoni, Shoni! send us plenty of sea-ware this year, and we will give thee more ale next year." H. Arnot reports, in his *Criminal Trials*, that in the seventeenth century a poor woman was burnt, in the south of Scotland, on a charge of "blasphemy." She was alleged to have offered a cup of ale to the Devil.

It was an old custom in England at this time for poor persons and beggars to go *a souling*—that is, they begged money, and offered to pray for the souls of the donors and the departed. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* Shakespeare makes Speed speak of one puling "like a beggar at Hallow-mass." Special soul cakes were made for the dead, and children used to sing a carol beginning:—

Soul! soul! for a soul-cake;  
Pray, good mistress, for a soul cake—  
One for Peter, two for Paul,  
Three for Them that made us all.

In some parts—*e.g.*, North Staffordshire—"souling," or begging for apples on the Eve of All Souls, is still a common custom. This custom, Miss Charlotte S. Burne, authoress of *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, says, was suddenly checked in her parish "by a new vicar forbidding it to the National School children" (*Folk-Lore*, September, 1890, p. 321). The men of God are usually violently opposed to any superstition save their own. Yet the getting of apples by children under pretence of souling is venial, compared with living on the labors of others by pretending to give salvation through the blood of a dead Jew.

J. M. WHEELER.

## THE BIBLE AND HUMAN PROGRESS.

THERE are certain facts deserving of attention when the relation of the Bible to human progress is being considered. These are: (1) The place where it is supposed to have originated was not remarkable for a high state of philosophy, science, or general education. Literature, culture, and knowledge of nature, which are the characteristics of the present progressive age, were comparatively unknown where it is said most of the contents of the Bible were written. Albert Barnes, in his *Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity* (pp. 257-8), writes: "The Bible came from a land undistinguished for literature; a land not rich in classical associations; a land not distinguished for pushing its discoveries into the regions of science. Chaldea had its observatories, and the dwellers there looked out on the stars and gave them names; Egypt had its temples where the truths of science, as well as the precepts of religion, were committed to the sacred priesthood; Greece had academic groves, but Judea had neither. To such things the attention of the nation was never turned. We have all their literature, all their science, all their knowledge of art; and all this is in the Bible. Among the ancients they were regarded as a narrow-minded, a bigoted, a superstitious people." Now, here was an entire absence of the principal elements that have aided modern progress.

(2) The alleged period when the Bible was written was

one of moral and mental darkness. The grandeur of Rome had subsided, the glories of Greece had departed, philosophy was at a discount, and the facts of science were unknown. Further, ethics were in their infancy, the government of the universe was misunderstood, and the true nature of man had not then been comprehended. The result is, that the teachings of the Bible are thoroughly unscientific, its philosophy is misleading, and, as John Stuart Mill has shown in his work, *On Liberty*, its morality is incomplete and defective. Moreover, Bible statements as to the origin of all things, the development of the human race, the manifestation of phenomena, the self power of man, and the value of intellectual acquirements, are all the very opposite to the lessons derived from a progressive and an enlightened age.

(3) The factors necessary to human progress existed before the Bible was known, and are now to be found in sections of the community where Biblical teachings are not accepted as an authority in mundane affairs. Greece, without the aid of the Bible, had reached a high state of culture, of intellectual sublimity, and of moral excellence. It is to the Greeks that historians trace the beginnings of our intellectual civilisation. As Max Müller observes: "Like their own goddess, Athena, the people of Athens seem to spring full-armed into the arena of history, and we look in vain to Egypt, Syria, and India for more than a few seeds that burst into such marvellous growth on the soil of Attica" (*Science of Language*). "To the Greeks," says the present Bishop of London, "we owe the corrective which conscience needs to borrow from nature." The same Christian writer admits that "it is in the history of Rome rather than in the Bible that we find our models of precepts of political duty, and especially of the duty of patriotism." With such facts as these given by Bible believers, how futile it is to contend that to its teachings we are indebted for the progress of the world.

(4) Professor Huxley, after showing that modern progress is the result of a knowledge and application of physical science, says: "She is teaching the world that the ultimate court of appeal is observation and experience, and not authority." The Bible, however, teaches the very opposite, for it rests upon authority, not upon observation and experience. Many of its teachings are certainly contrary to what we learn from the observed facts of nature and the lessons of experience. From these sources we find that the progress of the world has been an evolutionary process, and that things change for the better with increased experience and facilities. But the Bible alleges that at the "beginning" all things were perfect, and that God pronounced them to be "very good," although they proved to be far from good if the Bible theory be true. Now, we have no lack of evidence to show that the history of man has been one of progression, not retrogression.

The Bible teaches that the operations of nature depend upon the capricious will of God. If his children obeyed him and walked in his statutes, they were to have rain in "due season," and grass in their fields for their cattle; but if they did not hearken unto him he would "shut up the heaven that there be no rain," he would appoint terror over them and subject them to "consumption and the burning ague," and they were to eat the flesh of their sons and daughters (Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xi.; Psalm lxxviii.). There are no elements in these barbarous narratives that would tend to the progress of humanity. Besides, if it were once sincerely believed that the operations of nature were interfered with in consequence of belief or disbelief in theological figments, there would be no reliance upon the stability of natural law, and cause and effect would have no meaning. The belief in this very law has formed the basis of all progress; it is the fulcrum on which the lever rests that has caused the advancement from the ignorance of the past to the enlightenment of the present. This natural law is not recognised in the Bible, and therefore so far its teachings are not favorable to the progress of society. Men of science no longer inculcate the delusion that this world is governed by a supernatural will in opposition to the doctrine of fixed natural laws.

Progress cannot be secured, to any great extent, if the acquirement of knowledge is retarded; but the tendency of Bible teachings is to do this, and its believers have done their best to limit knowledge to the Bible and to writings which favored its inculcations. They have manifested a dread of secular instruction, and even God is reported as

becoming alarmed at his first children knowing too much (Genesis iii. 22). Paul writes: "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (Cor. xiv. 38). He also says: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise" (1 Cor. i. 27), which was a very foolish thing to do; and in the same chapter (verse 19) we read: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent"—a poor encouragement, surely, for obtaining wisdom. The following command, said to be from God, is certainly not conducive to the spread of knowledge: "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered: Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate" (Isaiah vi. 9, 10, 11).

Progressive ideas arise from mental activity, unfettered by fear and undismayed by the dread of penalties that might be inflicted for arriving at any other conclusion than a certain specified one. The tendency of Bible teaching is to inspire the mind with terror, which often prevents intellectual freedom. For instance, many portions of the book inculcate the notion that those persons shall be "put to death" who "hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God;" while, if even a mother, wife, or daughter seek to induce a man to serve other than the Jewish God, the Bible exclaims: "Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him" (Deut. xiii. and xvii.). The same spirit of dread and restriction is taught in 2 Thessalonians (i. 7-9). It is also stated that all things are done at the command of this God. As the prophet says, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 7); "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah xlv. 7). Such teaching, if sincerely believed, must make the intellect stagnant, man a helpless creature, and therefore progress impossible. To teach that human affairs are regulated by this supernatural being, and that they are dependent upon his vacillating will, is to promulgate the delusion that in the operations of nature there is no certainty.

The fact is, the candid and impartial mind arrives inductively and deductively at the conclusion that the advancement of useful knowledge, and its application for the removal of physical and mental evils, have been in proportionate ratio to the cessation of belief in Bible teachings. Less and less are men heeding the commands of revenge given in the Old Testament, or those of non-resistance found in the New. No practical attention is paid to Christ's supposed Sermon on the Mount; to his doctrine of prayer; to his utter disregard of this world, or to his assigned cause of physical diseases. Belief in the power of secular knowledge, and reliance upon the facts of science, have taken the place of the confidence which was once felt in the inculcations of the Bible; and the result is that we are at the present time progressing to a higher state of civilisation than has ever existed at any period during the Christian era.

CHARLES WATTS.

## HENRY GEORGE ON RELIGION AND THE STATE.

LIKE other political economists of the new school, Mr. Henry George has been guilty in his time of promulgating serious doctrinal errors, which, being fundamental in their nature, have largely prevented a fuller recognition of the truths he has assisted in disseminating. It seems inevitable that all original and great thinkers, though masters of the special subjects with which they deal, are unable to appreciate the essential features of other matters of no less vital importance for the public welfare. Henry George, however, has made amends for some of his superficialities by his outspoken advocacy of certain principles which many of the petted leaders of democracy to-day fight shy of, and will not have discussed except on narrow premises of their own. He has fearlessly com-

bated the popular notion that it is the duty of the State to concern itself with questions of faith; that one of the functions of government is the provision of theological instruction; and that the association of religion with authority is necessary for the well-being and morality of a community. In his volume on *Social Problems* Mr. George devotes a chapter to "The Functions of Government," under which heading he writes plainly and forcibly of the proper relations of the State, religion, and morality. This is one of his passages: "It is not the business of government to make men virtuous or religious, or to preserve the fool from the consequences of his folly. Government should be repressive no further than is necessary to secure liberty by protecting the equal rights of each from aggression on the part of others, and the moment governmental prohibitions extend beyond these lines they are in danger of defeating the very ends they were intended to serve." These are words of wisdom, which, though uttered by Secularists in many forms times out of number, are of special significance coming from the pen of an acknowledged Christian, whose desire is to reform the world, not only in the interests of man, but for the glory of God, who has, seemingly, so signally failed in his creative works and social arrangements. There are many people to-day who are being seduced by the sophistries of social saviors, and it is to these the words of warning must be taken. They must be urged to withdraw their trust from sycophantic leaders; they must be made to realise—which they are far from doing at present—that the alliance of the State and the Church is indefensible on grounds of justice and liberty, and that the interference on the part of a governing power with the private belief or unbeliefs of its subjects is a gross perversion of the rights of man.

Never was it needed so much as it is at present that the cardinal principle of religious liberty should be made known to the half-intelligent masses of electors who now wield the sceptre of legislative power. Education, so powerful in other respects, has done but little in developing healthy opinion on the proper place in society for religion, so blasting has been the effect of sectarian prejudice on minds otherwise free. The local and national business of the country being vested in representative bodies, which are now, more than ever, kept constantly in touch with the ideas of the governed, it follows that all legislative work must depend upon the bent of the popular mind. The system is one of many defects, and is open to many objections; but, so long as it exists, it is clear that no serious alteration can be made in the law until it is distinctly and definitely called for by a majority of the people. Beforetime the middle and poorer classes were not consulted as to the methods and manner of their government, the propertied and titled classes monopolising the instrument of management, during which period comparatively little concern was manifested with the enactments of controlling bodies only so far as the administration of existing laws, and the making of new, affected public safety and comfort. Protest by small communities in the State was practically useless; there were no means of voicing their grievances or giving effect to their desires. But now the Government is not an oligarchy. The giant growth of democracy has equalised men of all grades of society in respect of electoral power; the ploughman and the squire, the sweep and the lord, and the artisan and the capitalist sit on the same bench to order the destinies of the nation. Such authority, such power, such opportunity in the hands of the working classes have never been fully and freely utilised. It is said that when the American slaves were set at liberty many of them failed to realise their position; they were ignorant what to do, and sought to be taken back into bondage again. The attitude of the British working man since the gift of the franchise has been somewhat similar. Lethargic, ignorant, indifferent, prejudiced, and full of the spirit of servility, he has practically rejected the offer of his salvation, and spurned the means of exodus from the land of his oppression. Politicians may argue to the contrary, but it is almost indisputable that a large proportion of the electorate care little, and know less, of the many questions on which they vote. Hence it is that many monopolies, abuses, and privileges have not been removed, though the changed foundations on which the constitution rests would have led one to suppose that many peaceful revolutions would have long ere now been accomplished.

In respect of the question of the establishment of State Churches, and, bound up with that, the relations of the individual to religion and government, it is sad to confess the non-existence of much sound opinion in the public mind. True, there has been for some years past a vague kind of agitation for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, carried on by the Nonconformist section of one of the political parties; and certain bold ones among their number have gone so far as to suggest a similar process for the State Church in England; but it is pretty plain that mere sectarian interests only have dictated such action. We do not know if it be disputed, but it is tolerably safe to assume that, were the opportunity presented any one of the dissenting bodies of instating itself in the position of the Established Church with its endowments and emoluments, it would not refuse the privilege, and continue to stand by the principle of non-governmental recognition of religion. The Nonconformist attitude on this question is solely prompted by motives of self-interest and jealousy. The Free Churches, enjoying the pecuniary and social advantages enjoyed by the Establishment, and perceiving no chance of grasping the perquisites of ascendancy, adopt the only course open for them—that of championing the principle of self-supporting Churches free from State alliance, the advocacy of which admits the assertion of the blessings of their own unfettered position with the boastful exhibition of their liberty. Their policy is choicely indicated in the lines:—

Well, while I am a beggar I will rail,  
And say, There is no sin but to be rich;  
And, being rich, my virtue then shall be  
To say, There is no vice but beggary.

Only they full well know that the latter possibility will never be realised.

Among the teachers and preachers of democracy, also, there are few who handle the question of the relation of government with private beliefs on its broadest merits. One or two could be mentioned, we believe, who recognise the injustice of State recognition of a creed in a country whose inhabitants are attached to numberless beliefs and some to none at all, and they have sometimes given articulate expression to their ideas in a more or less explicit kind of way. Public men, however, fear to jeopardise their reputations, for which they care far more than any cause they advocate; and, knowing that no section of the public is so intolerant and prejudiced as the religious class, they are exceedingly careful to refrain from wounding their susceptibilities. On the question of religious equality they are especially diligent in refraining from dealing with its fundamentals, contenting themselves with siding with half-hearted believers in the principle, whose only desire is to remove their own shackles, no matter how heavily similar impediments may press on other people. In the passage quoted above Henry George has spoken out fearlessly, and, though the words may have often been noticed before, it is not without benefit to emphasise his ideas on the subject, in view of the ominous silence of other writers. He indicates his knowledge of the essentials of liberty when he points out that governments become coercive and tyrannical when they infringe on the personal concerns of their subjects. It is not the business of government to make people religious, or to provide them with the means of ministering to their "spiritual needs." The propagation of creeds should be assisted only by their devotees, and not by grants from the national exchequer. Besides the immorality of robbing one man to pay for another man's priest, there is the danger that in the establishment of a religious system with vast powers and influences there may be created a movement in society subversive to the interests and safety of the constitution. A large priesthood, an extensive monopoly, a great organisation with civil powers and privileges, are liable to undermine the healthy life of a country, and sap a nation of her vigor. The records of history show what a disintegrating force is organised religion; it is, therefore, the duty of the State to guard against the recurrence of similar dangers. Henry George recognised the evil consequences of governmental patronage of sectarian creeds, and urged that "it is not the business of government to interfere with the views which anyone may hold of the Creator, or with the worship he may choose to pay him, so long as the exercise of these individual rights does not conflict with the equal liberty of others; and the result

of governmental interference in this domain has been hypocrisy, corruption, persecutions, and religious war."

F. WILSON.

### INFIDEL ABOLITIONISTS.

WHETHER William Lloyd Garrison was an "infidel" or not, it is certain that the orthodox Christian press of America stigmatised him as one, and that some of his most prominent colleagues were unbelievers in the divine authority of the Bible, which, in any full sense, he was also. Prominent among his friends and colleagues was Henry Clarke Wright. He wrote many abolitionist works, and was also author of *The Errors of the Bible Demonstrated by the Truth of Nature*. He also wrote *The Living Present and the Dead Past*.

Another prominent friend and colleague was Parker Pillsbury, who, though he became a Congregational minister, left the Church, which he found to be the bulwark of slavery. Wendell Phillips relates that the Faculty of Andover Theological Institution threatened Pillsbury that they would never recommend him to a parish unless he gave up speaking at anti-slavery meetings. In his *Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles* Pillsbury shows that "the apostles" were everywhere met by the opposition of the Churches. Pillsbury acted as editor of the *Herald of Freedom*, of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, and the *Revolution*. He became an out-and-out Freethinker, wrote *Pious Frauds*, and contributed to the *Boston Investigator* and the *Freethinkers' Magazine*.

Then there was Ernestine Louise Rose, who proudly called herself an Atheist, and wrote a *Defence of Atheism*. This eloquent and brave woman lectured, without fee, against slavery, not only in the North, but in the Southern States. She died as she had lived, a confirmed infidel. Her friend and colleague in Abolitionism, as in the Woman's Rights movement, and in Freethought, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, still lives. Before them Frances Wright had taught the same doctrines, and *The Life of W. L. Garrison*, by her sons, says: "Her attempted community, Shelby, co. Tennessee, in 1825, was a notable early anti-slavery enterprise." Harriet Martineau, who also became an Atheist, was one of the best upholders of the anti-slavery cause, both in England and America. Lucy Colman is another woman who has spent most of her life in promoting Freethought, the abolition of slavery, and woman's emancipation.

The first corresponding secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society was Elizur Wright. He edited the *Abolitionist* and the *Commonwealth*. He was a firm and uncompromising Atheist, and a contributor to the *Boston Investigator*, *Freethinkers' Magazine*, etc. He promoted the Convention which organised the American Liberal (Free-thought) League. He died in 1885, and his funeral oration was delivered by Colonel Ingersoll.

C. C. Burleigh, who was twice put in jail for selling anti-slavery books on Sunday, was, with Francis Jackson, C. K. Whipple, A. K. Foster, and Garrison, among the callers of the Anti-Sabbath Convention.

Emerson, Thoreau, Theodore Parker, Gerrit Smith, and La Roy Sunderland were all men of literary standing in the ranks of the Abolitionists, and all tainted with very pronounced heresy.

### GARRISON AND THE BIBLE.

IN the life of *William Lloyd Garrison*, by his sons, Wendell Phillips and Francis Jackson Garrison (vol. iii., p. 386), is given the following as the text of a resolution moved by Garrison at the Hartford Bible Convention, June 5, 1853:—

"Resolved: That the doctrine of the American Church and priesthood, that the Bible is the Word of God; that whatever it contains was given by Divine inspiration; and that it is the only rule of faith and practice; is self-evidently absurd, exceedingly injurious both to the intellect and soul, highly pernicious in its application, and a stumbling-block in the way of human redemption."

In the eighteenth volume of his *Liberator* (p. 186, 1845)

Mr. Garrison reviewed the works of Thomas Paine, which he had then read for the first time. In the course of the review he said:—

“To say that everything contained within the lids of the Bible is divinely inspired, and to insist upon the dogma as fundamentally important, is to give utterance to a bold fiction, and to require the suspension of the reasoning faculties. To say that everything in the Bible is to be believed simply because it is found in that volume is equally absurd and pernicious.....When the various books of the Bible were written, or by whom they were written, no man living can tell. This is purely a matter of conjecture; and as conjecture is not certainty, it ceases to be authoritative.....Truth is older than any parchment, and would still exist though a universal conflagration should consume all the books in the world.”

### GARRISON AND “INFIDELS.”

SINCE writing my article on “Some Christian Truths” (*Freethinker*, Oct. 13, p. 642), I have found, full confirmation of what was told me by my friend, Ernestine L. Rose, and what is affirmed in Mr. Bradlaugh’s *Notes on Christian Evidences*—viz., that William Lloyd Garrison had to resort to an “infidel” hall to deliver his anti-slavery lectures. The facts are given in the largest and best life of the great Abolitionist, entitled *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879; The Story of his Life. Told by his Children.* (New York: The Century Co.; 1885.) On page 211 of the first volume appears the following:—

“During the first fortnight after his arrival in Boston, Mr. Garrison vainly endeavored to procure, without cost, a place in which to deliver his lectures, and he finally sent this advertisement to the *Courier*: ‘Wanted, for three evenings, a Hall or Meeting-house (the latter would be preferred) in which to vindicate the rights of TWO MILLIONS of American citizens who are now groaning in servile chains in this boasted land of liberty; and also to propose just, benevolent, and constitutional measures for their relief. As the addresses will be gratuitous, and as the cause is of public benefit, I cannot consent to remunerate any society for the use of its building. If this application fails, I propose to address the citizens of Boston in the open air on the Common.—William Lloyd Garrison, No. 30 Federal-street, October 11 1830.’ This appeal was quickly answered, but not by any of the Christian ministers or churches of Boston. It was left for a society of avowed ‘infidels’ [*Note.*—Under the leadership of Abner Kneeland] to save the city from the shame of sealing its doors against the slaves’ advocate, and to offer him their hall for his three lectures, although, as a body and individually, they had no personal acquaintance or sympathy with him, and no especial interest in his cause.”

This is final and decisive. It may be well for Freethought advocates to keep this extract beside them in view of controversy.

J. M. W.

### “D.V.” OR “GOD WILLING.”

ON pious posters, years ago,  
We always used to see,  
For instance: “Mr. So-and-so  
Will preach to-night (D.V.)”

And even yet, a few remain,  
In ‘ninety-five A.D.  
Apparently possessed of brain,  
Who use the sign “D.V.”

These praying folk think God decides  
Each hour, what things shall be,  
And yet they count upon the tides  
Without the sign “D.V.”

They know the moon enough to know  
It ne’er skylarking tries,  
And that the tides will ebb and flow,  
“D.V.” or otherwise.

All thinkers know—if Christians don’t—  
“D.V.” means this, or *nil*—  
That things that won’t be, merely won’t;  
And things that will be, will.

Of course, the implication is—  
If God must first agree—  
That all our acts are really his;  
That he does all—not we.

All honest parsons must admit—  
If honest ones there be—  
That none can e’en a “weasand slit,”  
Unless their “D.” is “V.”

If God is God, he’s all in all,  
And less he cannot be;  
So thieves will steal, and cats will squall,  
Next Tuesday week (D.V.).

But these are days of common sense,  
So now we seldom see  
Announcements in a future tense  
Conditioned by “D.V.”

The spirit of our Freethought day  
Has forced the world to see  
That now ’tis time to put away  
The silly sign “D.V.”

A few who cannot quite forsake  
The pious sign “D.V.”  
Prefix an “O”; and thus they make  
The symbol “O.D.V.”

Thus godly signs and symbols fade,  
With all they symbolise:  
The priests’ and parsons’ stock-in-trade,  
Which honest men despise.

And now, as Science proves her rules,  
The Christian’s forced to see  
That faith in prayer’s the faith of fools—  
Amen! So let it be.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

### ACID DROPS.

CHRISTIANITY is the religion of mercy—that is, to all who escape hell. It is also the religion of peace—that is, when the Christians leave off fighting. But they don’t leave off frequently, or for long at a time; and the best of the joke is, that they generally bring in their religion to sanctify rapine and bloodshed. Let us take a couple of illustrations.

On Saturday last a big new English warship was launched at Chatham. It has all the latest improvements, and is thought to be the most destructive ship afloat. Its business is to send other ships to the bottom if required. But the advent of this terrible monster on the sea had to be attended with a religious ceremony. The dockyard chaplain read a portion of a psalm, and implored God’s blessing on this magnificent specimen of man’s malignant ingenuity.

On Sunday *Te Deums* were sung at Notre Dame in Paris, and at other churches in various parts of France. God Almighty was thanked for letting the French lick the Madagascense. It is difficult to see what right the French have in Madagascar at all. The island is a very long way from France, and ought to belong to its own inhabitants. However, the French think otherwise, and their priests think so too, and apparently the Lord is of the same opinion. Anyhow, he shows no indignation at being thanked for his share in the bloody business. N.B.—The last phrase is not swearing. It is a quotation from *Macbeth*.

The magistrates of Dundee have been severely denounced by certain ministers for licensing certain spirit vaults in Lindsay-street, said to be directly underneath a church. The proximity of the spirits above to the spirits below seems the occasion of the disturbance, but probably the church people are responsible for letting the basement for the purpose named.

Samuel Oldham Allan, of Lees-road, Oldham, was a Protestant who married a Catholic. On his death-bed she

called in a priest, and he received extreme unction. This anointing from the holy one resulted in ructions. The friends quarrelled how he should be buried. There was a scuffle at the house, and the brothers forcibly removed the corpse to have it interred by a Church of England clergyman. But this person declined, having heard that the deceased died a Catholic and his widow wished him buried by a Catholic priest. A noisy crowd assembled and waited a long while, till at last a Catholic father was induced to perform the ceremony, and the women bore the bier in triumph to the grave, the widow having police protection from the cemetery to her home.

Another Church of England parson—the Rev. E. M. Phillips Treby, rector of Forrabury, Cornwall—has gone over to Rome. However, the clerical market is well stocked, and the vacancy will soon be filled.

Big salaries are not confined to the Established Church. Some of the Nonconformists make the best of this life while they are waiting for the next. "Why should men," asks the *New Age*, "be paid twelve hundred a year for holding out prospects of perdition to workers on twelve shillings a week?" We have asked that question ourselves, and we are glad to hear it echoed by Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. W. H. D. Rouse, in *Folk-Lore*, of June this year, gives "Notes from Syria," and mentions that "Women who wish for children tie a thread round a broken pillar (that which is popularly called the 'hanging pillar') in the Church of the Annunciation at Nazareth; and afterwards they wear it about their waists." It thus seems that a very primitive superstition remains in the native place of the Christian's deity.

An interesting review of *Malay Sketches*, by F. Swettenham, is given in the *Saturday Review* (October 19). It notices that witchcraft and possession by evil spirits is widely believed in by Malays, and says: "Of the origin of these spirits there is a legend, dating from a time before the teachings of Islam reached Malaya. When God purposed to make man, He took clay and fashioned it into a figure which He endowed with the spirit of life. But the spirit was too strong, and, the body being only clay, was rent into a thousand fragments, and scattered all over the world. These were the *jin*, *hantu*, and *bajang* of the Malays."

"Then God made another figure, but this time he wrought iron into the clay, which made the body able to withstand the strain of the vital spark, and it became man. This legend is, no doubt, a survival of the ancient spirit worship of the Malays, as are many customs of the people which the Mohammedan priests dislike, but are often obliged to wink at for fear of unpopularity."

Christianity has never taken root in the Malay Peninsula. Mr. Swettenham tells a story of a Christian missionary who got hold of an earnest and truthful Malay, apparently a promising subject to begin upon. The missionary told him the story of the Immaculate Conception. The Malay listened to the end, showed great interest in the miraculous narrative of the Blessed Virgin; then he said: "If that had happened to my wife, I should have killed her."

The *Presbyterian* says that "Matthew Arnold, though not an orthodox believer in Christianity, was a great admirer of the Bible, and was the means of converting Charles Reade, the novelist, to Christianity. On one occasion he urged Mr. Reade to read the Bible through in an unprejudiced and candid spirit. The novelist did so, and was thereby led to accept the Gospel." This is a real orthodox Presbyterian whacker. Matthew Arnold rejected the supernatural element in the Bible, and Charles Reade was a believer all his days. Winwood Reade, his nephew, was a sceptic, and was never converted.

The Burgess Golf Club, Edinburgh, is agitated on the question of Sunday playing. Bailie Macpherson wants a bye-law to stop this horrid practice, but Councillor Cranston opposes the bye-law as a piece of despotism. A special meeting will be held to consider the matter. It is to be hoped that too much respect will not be paid to what is called "the feelings of the people of Scotland." For our part, we have no respect whatever for the "feelings" of people who want their own predilections to be a law to their neighbors. Both sides have "feelings," but apparently it is only those of the bigots that are to be consulted.

The German Emperor does not like to be stared at when he is communing with the King of Kings. He has issued the following extraordinary notice: "As soon as I enter church, every one is on the *qui vive* to look at me—a thing which annoys me extremely. I therefore desire that all shall abstain from this curiosity when I go on Sunday to hear Divine service. Those who desire to have a good view

of me can do so every day when I take my walk in the Thiergarten, or drive in my carriage."

Cremations are spreading in New York, especially among the Germans, since Dr. Hartmann's scare about being buried alive. The cost of cremation is thirty-five dollars for an adult, which is less than that paid for a funeral. Indeed, it is claimed that cremation, with a handsome urn for the ashes and a niche for the urn, is altogether less costly than the price of a poor man's burial.

Mr. Diggle, ex-chairman of the London School Board, repeats that old fable about the Queen declaring that the Bible is the cause of England's greatness. Christian imagination is so active, and Christian veracity so feeble, that useful falsehoods pass current in spite of any amount of contradiction.

Henry Sherwood, an American Doctor of Divinity, is in trouble at Blackburn. He is charged with maliciously wounding a laborer, and has to give substantial bail on remand, himself in £100 and two sureties of £50 each.

God is no respecter of persons, and his storms are no respecters of places. Churches get knocked down like theatres, or rather more so. During the recent cyclone in Italy a church collapsed at Avellino, east of Naples, and several persons were killed and more injured.

"Dodo" of *Reynolds'* says he has received a letter from Mr. H. Sims, stating that if the Bible is to be believed the world is flat. "Everyone now knows," "Dodo" remarks, "that the Old Testament does teach that the world is flat. Perhaps, if Mr. Sims addresses, say, the Archbishop of Canterbury—in that dignitary's official, but not learned, capacity—he will discover why no State-Church parson believes the Bible in this respect."

The Rev. G. W. Elliott went to preach at a church at Aston, and during the anthem left the building and proceeded to a neighboring public-house. The congregation waited in vain for his return. He was charged with drunkenness at the Aston Police Court, and remanded to see if anything could be done for him.

A clerical correspondent, who is not ashamed to give his name and address, has sent to the Rev. Dr. Guinness Rogers the following letter. It refers to Dr. Rogers's recent address at the Congregational Union Assembly at Brighton, as reported in the *Daily News*: "Reverend Sir,—If, as is reported, you said that 'the English people did not love the Anglican priesthood,' you are a malignant liar. Royal David said, 'Liars shall be turned into hell.' I wish you joy of your journey and its end.—Yours in the faith, —" —*Daily News*.

Dr. Dawson Burns writes to the *Daily News* on the continued refusal of the British and Foreign Bible Society to print the Revised Version. He says: "Without entering upon a discussion of the comparative merits of the two versions, it is beyond denial that the Authorised Version contains many errors of great magnitude from which the Revised Version is free; and the persistent publication of myriads and millions of copies of the Authorised Version, with all its inaccuracies, to the exclusion of the Revised Version, is a procedure which has no parallel in the history of translated literature of any other kind."

Sworn statements by native princes witness to human sacrifices still being offered in Ashanti. When Kwassie Afrani, the King of Gyeso, died King Prempeh ordered six men to be sacrificed "to go along with him to the other world." The Dahomeyans had so strong a belief in immortality that they dispatched messengers to heaven, and if anything was forgotten another man was killed to take the postscript.

The Catholic Bishop of Nottingham was asked the plain question in the local *Daily Express*: "What will become of death of a man who, from birth to death, never heard of our Bible, never heard of either Papist or Protestant, or of Jesus Christ, and who lived a pure, honest, and industrious life?" The Bishop answered: "I say that the man who was 'only' pure, honest, and industrious would go to hell because he neglected to worship God by faith, hope, and charity, which are necessary for everlasting salvation, for 'without faith it is impossible to be pleasing to God' (Hebrew v. 3); and again (Hebrew iii.), 'We see that they could not enter in, because of unbelief'; and 'This is the first and greatest commandment: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul.'"

This is good sound Catholic doctrine. All outside the Church will be damned. There is no salvation in any other name under heaven. This is the good old cry to frighten the sheep into the shearing fold. Hume well said the more tremendous the divinity, and the more mysterious his

methods of salvation, the better for the priests, to whom the frightened and the foolish always look for guidance.

The *Crescent* reports from the *Ceylon Independent* that Mr. C. J. R. Le Mesurier, a well-known member of the Ceylon Civil Service, has abjured Christianity, and on September 15 embraced the faith of Islam. He has taken the Moslem name of Abdul Hamid.

Ameer Ali, a Rationalist Moslem, who writes in the *Nineteenth Century*, makes the following point against orthodox Christianity: "The baptismal dogma is the best index to the charity of the Church of Christ. The orthodox Moslem believes that all children are born in Islam, and that they are perverted by education, so that if they die before they formally adopt any religion they go to heaven. The orthodox Christian believes that all children are born in original sin, and that if a child dies before it is baptised it is doomed to eternal perdition—the fate charitably assigned to heathens, Moslems, and Jews."

The *Lutheran Witness* shows its true Christian spirit in the following remarks on German Rationalism: "Just think of men like the famous—or rather infamous—Church historian, Harnack, in Berlin, who uses all his influence, not only to discredit parts of the Apostolic Creed, but to do away with it altogether. Think of Ritschlianism, which is subverting the system of Christian religion by denying all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, as the doctrine of redemption and reconciliation as taught in the Scriptures, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, etc. Think of the almost universal rejection of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, regarding which even the most prominent so-called orthodox-believing professors, who are looked upon as pillars in the Lutheran Church, declare that this doctrine as taught by the dogmatists of our Church could not be accepted and adhered to any longer in the light of modern science." Think of the *Lutheran Witness* unable to do anything better than howl at heresy.

The tombstone of the person at Allendale, who inscribed it as a rebuke to infidelity that his wife had ten children all of whom died in birth, reminds a correspondent that the Rev. J. Eagles, in his essays, mentions that "A medical man told me that he was called upon to visit a woman who had been confined, and all of whose children had died. As he reached the door, a neighbor came out, saying: 'O, she's a blessed 'oman, a blessed 'oman.' 'What do you mean?' said he. 'She's a blessed 'oman, for she breeds angels for the Lord.'"

The writer of "Feminine Fancies" in the *Wheeler*, a cycling journal, speaks of marvellous trees alleged to have grown out of the grave of an Atheist at Aldenham, who said: "If there be an Almighty Power, then let trees grow out of my grave." Of course the legend grew up after the trees had grown. Such legends are numerous, and are easily accounted for. In ancient times it was customary to place seeds on graves as food offerings to the spirits of the dead. When the seeds grew, the plants coming from the grave were deemed to absorb the spirit beneath. Mr. Grant Allen holds that this was the origin of cultivation, that originally a corpse was supposed necessary for a crop, and this led to human sacrifices, for which animal sacrifices and consecrating fields were substituted.

Mrs. Hart, writing on Japanese women in the *Saturday Review* (Oct. 19), remarks: "Good manners and courtesy are the constant rule of life in Japan, so that brutal conduct and wife-beating, common upon Christian people, are unknown there." There are, however, serious drawbacks in Western eyes: for instance, the husband can return his wife to her family if unapproved. Since 1872, there has been a system of national education where boys and girls, rich and poor, are taught on the same benches.

A traveller in the Sahara was once informed by one of his savage escort that he had just killed a devil. It appeared that the devil was the traveller's watch, which the savage had found, and, hearing it tick, had concluded there was a devil inside. Accordingly he smashed it by hurling it against a tree (El Tounsy, *Voyage au Ouaday*, p. 538; Paris, 1851). How would Paley's famous argument from the watch have operated on this savage?

Mr. Didier says the negro in America is an habitual liar and thief. On this Judge Tourgee remarks: "Considering the fact that Southern white Christian civilisation had absolute control of the American negro for two hundred and fifty years, that there is nearly as much white as colored blood in his veins, and that it gave as an excuse for its acts the need of Christianising and civilising the blacks, this indictment of the result should be taken as conclusive evidence of the worthlessness of Southern methods, and a serious imputation on Southern Christianity."

The Rev. Francis Whaley Harper, M.A., canon of York, who died there recently, was eighty years old. In 1877 he preached a sermon in York Cathedral, in which the following passage occurred and became widely circulated, and caused much comment: "The spirit and the body were the Lord's, and the Bible and beer, taken rightly, were the Lord's too. The beer would not do without the Bible, and the Bible would not do fully and perfectly without the beer." It is therefore claimed that he is the author of the alliteration used in Mr. Foote's latest pamphlet. But it is probably older even than Canon Harper.

One of the most popular churches in New York announces every Saturday in the papers that "the entire service, including the sermon, is limited to one hour." The old-time "thirdly" business has become unpopular.

A humorous controversy is going on in Chicago between the Rev. Dr. Caulfield (Universalist) and the Rev. Dr. Hensen (Baptist). Man of God No. 1 says "all human beings are children of God." Man of God No. 2 says the immense majority are children of the Devil, and follow the injunction, "Children, obey your parents."

Fifteen thousand pilgrims annually visit St. Baume, in Provence, not far from Marseilles, where Mary Magdalene is said to have spent the last thirty years of her life. The legend runs that Mary Magdalene came from Judæa in a small boat with Lazarus, Martha, the two Marys, and Salome. It is curious how many of the saints got to the West. Irenæus, the first bishop of Lyons, is said to have come from Asia Minor, and this is probably as true as that Mary Magdalene went to St. Baume.

The lessee of the Theatre of Varieties, Johannesburg, who was prosecuted by the Ministers' Union for contravening the Sunday law by giving a concert of other than sacred music, has been discharged with a caution.

The poor fellow Miers, who committed suicide in London, under the stress of neglect and starvation, left behind him a letter which can hardly be pleasant reading to a good many pious people. He disclosed his misery to rich men "pulling long faces at church and pocketing a good deal of money for religious work," but they told him to "Believe in Him." Sometimes they advised him to work for the Salvation Army. "How kind!" he exclaimed; "again, cheap Christianity. To join a Salvation Army refuge at my age, without knowing a trade, and in such a weak state of health." The poor fellow's landlady was good to him, but rather than be a burden to her any longer he ended it all, saying, "In my case suicide is no crime, but a necessity."

The *Sunday Chronicle* comments on the fact that the *Sporting Chronicle* has been excluded from the Priestman Institute at Ashton, though the meeting decided to order the *Freethinker*. The publisher of our Sunday contemporary is "glad" of this, because he "wouldn't like the *Chronicle* contaminated." But why on earth does he lose his temper in this fashion? We don't rail at luckier papers when the *Freethinker* is excluded from public institutions, as it is too frequently. We simply wait—as we must wait—till our countrymen grow more tolerant.

The Rev. W. W. Howard does not show a coming-on disposition. We are waiting to hear what he has to say in response to Mr. Foote's offer. Meanwhile we note that he is getting into hot water at home, and that a Leek layman, writing in the local *Times*, remarks that "It has been left to a sceptic—Mr. G. W. Foote—to remind us that prize-fighting does not come within the requirements of even the most versatile Christian minister."

The Hon. Waldegrave Leslie, at a meeting of the Council of the Scottish Episcopal Church, said he was afraid that a number of the young Presbyterian ministers did not believe in the Word of God. We fancy his fears are far from groundless.

The Sabbath Observance Association has remonstrated with Messrs. W. S. Brown & Sons, upholsterers, George-street, Edinburgh, for printing a testimonial dated June 23, 1895. That date was the Lord's Day. Gods and little fishes! what a keen eye for desecration is in the head of a Scotch Sabbatarian!

"Brother, the present's an era of questionings;  
Nothing is taken for granted to-day;  
Science and reason are probing the best o' things;  
Truth is the guerdon they seek, and they say  
Nothing is right because  
Time out of mind it was.  
Error is not the less gross that it's gray."



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, October 27, Co-operative Hall, Plymouth: 11, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible"; 3, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

November 3, Balls Pond; 17, Leicester.

December 1, Bradford; 22, Manchester.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—October 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. Nov. 3, m. Newington Reform Club, e. Foresters' Hall; 10, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

ADMIRER.—Mr. Foote hopes he may fulfil your wish to "wake them up at Plymouth."

A. BANKS trusts the "laggards" will "prove many, and liberal in their subscriptions."

L. KEEN.—Announcements are inserted only when they come officially from Branches. Some rule is necessary, and this is ours.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—The correspondence will do good. You have certainly had the best of it. In any future controversy you will find a lot of fresh useful matter in Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* pamphlet, which is cram-full of information.

A. S. (Glasgow).—Shall appear, but not with your name, which would make it too personal.

W. BRADBURN wishes to know where the *Freethinker* can be obtained at Harrow, Middlesex. Can any reader oblige him with the information?

J. C. GRANT thinks the Shilling Month appeal should be made periodically—say half-yearly—in order to afford an opportunity to many who, like himself, cannot give much at a time.

J. RICHARDS.—Our best thanks to the Ryhope pitmen who subscribe to Shilling Month. We hope to see them all again before the winter is over.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. CHARLTON.—We have not the least hope that Mr. Howard will debate with Mr. Foote. If he does, we shall be very agreeably disappointed. Cannot you get a good hall for Sunday lectures at Hanley? Mr. Foote has offered to come ever since the Conference held in your town.

S. H. HALLIFAX.—Your deposit is transferred to Shilling Month. Thanks.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Dr. Nichols, £1 1s.; C. M. M. Jacob, 10s.

W. S. CLOGGS.—Thanks. Shall have attention shortly.

E. SMEDLEY.—Thanks for cuttings.

S. FISHBURN.—The Bishop of London gets £10,000 a year; Durham, £8,000; Winchester, £6,500; Bath and Wells, £5,000. Jackson, Bishop of London, left £72,000 by will; Barry, of Durham, £120,000; Sumner, of Winchester, £80,000; Auckland, of Bath and Wells, £120,000. So they contrived to save a little. Full particulars of the Bishops and their wealth will be found in the *Secular Almanack for 1896*.

T. BIRTLEY.—Glad to hear you are going ahead at Chester-lo-Street. We will write to Mr. Nicholson.

J. DODDS.—So you are "only a navy," are you? Well, you may be perfectly certain you are a useful man. Don't say "only" again. A good many of your "betters" are "only" useless. Glad to know you would sooner miss your dinner than the *Freethinker*, but hope you will always have both.

EPPIO.—We do not care to keep the fund open beyond October, though we shall acknowledge any subscriptions that dribble in, as they always do after date. The fund can be reopened in the new year.

A. FORRESTER.—A further list of subscriptions from Glasgow! You have done well. No doubt you regard Mr. Watts's week-night lectures under the new scheme as a proof that the President means business. The subscription of £1 4s. to the Benevolent Fund is handed to Miss Vance.

T. HINTON.—Richard Brothers was a well-known pious lunatic, though with a spice of the craftiness we find in Prophet Baxter. Thanks for the pamphlet, which shall be returned as you request.

R. WARD.—Best thanks to the Hanley friends for subscriptions and hope that we shall "raise a good round sum."

H. W.—We never heard of any Dr. Newell in connection with our movement.

G. CROOKSON.—Subscription received with your genial letter. Thanks for both.

J. CARPENTER.—The Church must be very hard pressed when it puts up a man like Dr. Kinns, with an Archbishop in the chair, to defend Genesis in the name of Science. Kinns and Science! The two are never heard of together except in pious circles.

E. PINDER.—We shall see the Leicester friends face to face in a few weeks. Meanwhile, thanks.

D. FYFE.—It is pleasant to find sympathy, and practical sympathy too, in such a remote part of Scotland. Our wish for your country is, that the spirit of Robert Burns may extinguish the spirit of John Knox

A. E. ASPINALL.—Volney was, we believe, an Atheist. He is in the list of our *Infidel Death-Beds*.

A. BAXTER.—Shall be attended to. You are misinformed as to Mr. Watts's position at the Finsbury School Board election. He did not promise to vote for free meals for children at the expense of the ratepayers. He distinctly refused to consider the question, as it was unpractical, the Board having no legal power to provide such meals, even if it wished to do so.

W. H. STEVENS.—Thanks for your good wishes, which we know are sincere.

H. LEES SUMNER.—Your letter is a real encouragement. There will always be cavillers. The great thing, as you say, is to go on with the work, and let it speak for itself.

J. WILLEY.—Yours is an interesting letter. With regard to the question, why so many sympathisers with Freethought do not avow their opinions, we can only say (1) that courage is not a common virtue, and (2) that Christian bigotry is very malignant.

W. H. TWYMAN.—Mr. Putnam would have been delighted to shake hands with you at Canterbury. Lecturing in your old city is, after all, worth thinking about; considering that you have a Marlowe memorial just in front of the cathedral.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Johannesburg Star—Digger's News—Two Worlds—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Ipswich Star—Echo—Torch—Progressive Thinker—Londoner—Freethinkers' Magazine—Pioneer—Der Arbeiter Freund—Yiddish Worker's Friend—Liberty—Lloyd's Newspaper—Oldham Chronicle—Cape Times—Twentieth Century—Dundee Courier—Sunday Chronicle—Leek Times—Truthseeker—Chatham News.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

**SHILLING MONTH.**

OCTOBER has a week to run after the publication of this number of the *Freethinker*. During that brief period I earnestly invite all my readers who are able to subscribe, but have not yet done so, to forward me their donations. They may rest assured that the money they send will be spent usefully. My lecture scheme, so far as I can see, meets with universal approbation. Some of the lecturers have written to say that it bears the only present hope for a real forward movement. I am anxious to have Freethought propagated with vigor in all parts of the kingdom, and it shall be done if (mark the *if*) adequate means are placed at my disposal. Next week I will state how many persons have subscribed, and how much I have received.

G. W. FOOTE.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.**

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

Admirer, 3s.; A. Banks, £1 1s.; No Name, 5s.; J. C. Grant, 5s.; G. Hutchinson; J. Richards; W. Metcalf; T. W. Wright; H. H.; J. H., 6d.; W. B.; G. Richardson; T. Richardson, 6d.; M. Hunter; S. B., 2s.; R. Richardson; F. L., 6d.; Eppio, 2s.; J. P. Gilmour, 2s. 6d.; A. Forrester, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Webster, 2s. 6d.; J. Ogilvey, 2s. 6d.; T. W., 2s.; J. Carnichel, 2s.; A. Campbell, 2s.; Mr. Sprout; C. D. Bell; R. Stewart; Alpha; G. Dodds and Three Friends, 4s.; F. Rogers, 5s.; S. H. Halifax, 5s.; Spero, 5s.; G. Gledhill; T. Hinton; G. Dixon, 2s.; W. Lancaster; V. Page; Hanley Secular Club, 16s. 6d.; J. W., 2s.; W. J. S.; C. Crookson, £1; Luton; Dunmock, Rudd, Langridge, Webster; J. Proctor; R. Proctor; R. Sears; Mr. and Mrs. Crozier, 2s.; G. J. W., 2s.; A. Baxter, 5s.; A. R.; W. H. Stevens, 15s.; J. H.; H. Lees Sumner, 4s.; J. L., 4s.; J. Willey, 5s.; Poor but Loyal, 1s. 6d.; Few Leicester Friends, 7s.; W. S. M.; H. Witty; F. J., 2s. 6d.; J. O., 2s.; Friend, 2s.; W. Varley, 3s.; Three Bearsden Friends, 6s.; Smiley, 2s. 6d.; Sinclair, 2s. 6d.; Cameron; Friend; D. Fyfe; W. H. Twyman; O. N. W., 2s. 6d.

Per R. Forder.—J. Bowey, 2s.; W. H. Twyman; From Two Friends, 2s. 6d.; J. C. Banks; Mr. Buzzard; Miss

Buzzard; W. J. Cone, 2s.; A. Waymarks, 4s.; Crab, 2s.; W. Hooton (junior); E. Johnson; Lancaster; Jones; E. Bond; W. Sowdon; W. Linnett, 5s.; D., £1; W. Holroyd, 2s.; E. H.; W. Anderson; T. Hull, 2s.; O. Ford; R. Bretnal, 6d.; Mr. Dean, 6d.; F. O. Dean, 6d.; J. Dean, 6d.; W. Worsley; A. Gibson.

Per Miss Vance.—C. Smith, 2s.; R. E. Douglas, 6s.; J. Clark; T. Birtley; J. Phillips.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (October 27) in the handsome new Co-operative Hall, Plymouth, where he hopes to meet all the local "saints," with others from the surrounding districts.

The audience at Foresters' Hall goes on improving. Mr. Foote had a capital meeting on Sunday last, and the collection was considerably ahead of all previous record. For the second time a sovereign was dropped in the box. The lecture on "The Holy Ghost" was frequently punctuated with laughter and applause. Mr. Heaford, who had been preaching the Gospel of Freethought out of doors, made an excellent chairman. In response to his appeal for discussion, a young gentleman, with a clerical accent, mounted the platform and spoke for ten minutes. He admitted that Christianity was all a matter of faith, and the more you reasoned about it the deeper you got in the mire of unbelief.

Mr. Touzeau Parris lectures at Foresters' Hall this evening (October 27) on "Some Bible Symbols, and their Meaning." We hope he will have a good meeting, for he is sure to be interesting and instructive. Mr. Watts lectures on the following Sunday, and after that Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow last Sunday. In the evening the hall was crowded in every part. Mr. Watts named a sweet little girl, "Mary Lindsay"; the ceremony was much appreciated by the large audience.

To-day, Sunday, October 27, Mr. Watts lectures twice in Edinburgh, and to-morrow, Monday, in York.

The *Pioneer*, of Wood Green, gives a good report of Mr. Parris's first lecture there, and speaks of him as "a gentleman whose sincerity and ability are bound to command respect."

Mr. Forder concludes the course of lectures at Wood Green this evening (October 27), dealing with the subject of "The Devil." Tickets can be obtained of J. Wood, 71 Gladstone-avenue.

Mr. C. Cohen had good meetings at Newcastle on Sunday, the best he has ever had in that city. He lectures again to-day (Oct. 27) to what we hope will be still larger audiences. Next week Mr. Cohen lectures at Stockton and Blackburn under Mr. Foote's new scheme. He will visit several other places, under the same scheme, this side of Christmas.

Mr. Thomas Birtley informs us that he is endeavoring to reorganise the Chester-le-Street Branch for active work during the winter. Meetings will be held at 7 Twert-street, adjoining the Co-operative Hall. Mr. Birtley's address is 7 Co-operative-street. We hope all the Freethinkers in the district will rally in support of this forward movement. Mr. Cohen is delivering two lectures at Chester-le-Street this week, under Mr. Foote's scheme, and his visit is expected to give the cause a fillip.

On Saturday the members of the Failsworth Sunday-schools have a dramatic entertainment, and on Sunday evening the quarterly meeting of teachers and scholars.

One of the most energetic members of the Battersea Branch met with an accident while at work, and will be unable to follow his employment for some months. The Branch gives him a benefit this Sunday evening, October 27, when there will be a musical and dramatic entertainment, followed by a dance. Tickets are sixpence each, and can be had at the outdoor meeting or at the Battersea Secular Hall.

The hall at Balls Pond, having been cleaned and decorated by Messrs. Ward, Guest, Jackson, and lady friends, was opened last Sunday. Mr. Forder presided, and addresses by Messrs. Calvert, Thurlow, and Rowney were interspersed with songs and music. Over sixty members joined the club, and the entertainment was followed by dancing.

Miss Vance is still waiting for some notices and particulars from secretaries and lecturers for insertion in the *Almanack*,

part of which is in the printer's hands. Particulars should be sent without delay.

The world goes round, and the Churches have to go with it. Even the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has to keep moving, however reluctantly. One of its latest books is *The Dawn of Civilisation*, by Professor Maspero, who writes as follows on the antiquity of Egyptian civilisation: "The oldest monuments hitherto known scarcely transport us further than six thousand years, yet they are of an art so fine, so well determined in its main outlines, and reveal so ingeniously combined a system of administration, government, and religion, that we infer a long past of accumulated centuries behind them. It must always be difficult to estimate exactly the length of time needful for a race as gifted as were the ancient Egyptians to rise from barbarism to a high degree of culture. Nevertheless, I do not think that we shall be misled in granting them forty or fifty centuries wherein to bring so complicated an achievement to a successful issue, and in placing their first appearance at eight or ten thousand years before our era." Egyptian civilisation is thus allowed to be six thousand years older than Adam, who, according to the Bible, was the first man!

The *Athenaeum* (October 19), in a review of M. Maspero's *Dawn of Civilisation*, remarks: "The people are not content to be led passively by the facts as they are found by experts. There is no knowing in what this might issue, perhaps in the slaughter of their convictions; so, in order that their 'convictions' may be soothed and strengthened, they require, like children at bedtime, to be told the same story over and over again. The result is that, in England at present, the teachers are far from being as strong, numerically and otherwise, as they should be in proportion to the monstrous regiment of the preachers." Our leading review also refers to "the temptation to blindfold Science, and then make her prophesy to ignorance and superstition." Surely the reviewer has been reading the works of Sayce, Drummond, or some other of the reconcilers of the new truths with the old myths.

Mr. John Skelton ("Shirley") has just published his recollections of, and correspondence with, a number of dead celebrities in literature and politics. One letter from Froude is very interesting. Referring to the doctrines of John Knox, he writes: "The horrible creed is not new. Thomas Aquinas says much the same. And, after all, if it is once allowed that God Almighty will torture poor devils for ever and ever for making mistakes on the nature of the Trinity, I don't see why any quantity of capricious horrors may not be equally true. Given the truth of what all English orthodox parsons profess to believe, and Hephzibah Jones may believe as much more in the same line as she pleases. Only I think our opinion ought to have been asked as to whether we would accept existence on such terms before we were sent into the world."

The first of a series of addresses on "The Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals" was given in the Memorial Hall, E.C., on October 15, by Mr. J. C. Kenworthy, the friend and disciple of Tolstoi. The title was: "The Humanitarian View—Social Conditions and the Treatment of Animals." Mrs. C. Mallet was in the chair. The lecturer showed that we must first consider the treatment of man by man, as the proper treatment of animals depends on human social conditions; and that under the present commercial morality, which permits of sweated labor, aggressive militarism, and an inhuman prison system, no real improvement in the condition of animals is possible. The next lecture will be by Mr. J. Oldfield, M.A., B.C.L., on "The Scientific View," on November 19, when Mrs. Massingberd, President of the Pioneer Club, will take the chair. The Rev. Canon Wilberforce, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. G. W. Foote, and Rev. A. Lilley will take part in subsequent meetings.

Can any of our readers design a barrow, to be hand-driven, for selling Freethought literature in the streets of London? It would require to be light but capacious, and with means to protect the stock against rain. Communications to Mr. Forder, who desires such a vehicle.

## Obituary.

We regret to notice the death, at an early age, of Katie Kehm Smith, one of the most promising of American lady Freethought lecturers, and secretary of the flourishing Oregon Secular Union.

Of all deceivers who have plagued the world, none are so deeply ruinous to human happiness as those impostors who pretend to lead men by a light above nature.—Logan Mitchell.

## INSPIRATION.

THE primary definition of inspiration is, "The act of inspiring, breathing in, infusing, and the like; inhalation; as the inspiration of the air into the lungs; opposed to expiration."

We read that at the creation God, after he had made Adam, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. From this the Bible writers concluded that the soul, or spirit, of man was the air that filled his lungs, and as the breath left the body at death they spoke of it as the spirit leaving, or becoming separated from the body and returning to the God who gave it. So God, who was spoken of as a spirit, was supposed to be air or the wind. And when Christianity came to modify the monotheistic ideas of the Jews, the third person in the triune God became the Ghost, more particularly the wind in motion, or a gust of wind; and as these winds were caused by the heat of the sun—*helios* in the Greek, and *hele* in the Phœnician—the language of Palestine, it became the *Hele Gust*, corrupted into the Holy Ghost. All inspiration, therefore, came from that part of God that was called the Holy Ghost.

In the evolution of religious ideas inspiration came to mean something more than the inhaling of air into the lungs, and it was supposed that with the air some persons drew in some undefinable influence that enabled them to perform acts or things that were beyond the ability of the mass of common people to do. They spoke of the inspiration of the poet, the artist, the statesman, and the successful leader of armies. And in modern times—not earlier than the fifteenth century—Christians had formulated the doctrine of the plenary and verbal inspiration of the writers of the Bible, upon which to base the claim of the inerrant word of God for those writings.

This theory of the plenary inspiration of the Bible writers was an invention of the Protestants; Roman Catholics never took any stock in it. It is one of the necessities of any system of religion that it should have a standard of absolute truth, to which should be referred for settlement all questions of doctrine or church discipline. The Catholic made the Church itself its standard, and held that the decisions of its general councils and the decrees of the Pope constituted the infallible authority for the belief and doctrine of all Christians. As the Protestants repudiated the authority of the Church and the Pope, it became necessary to adopt some other standard that should be their authority for absolute truth; and so they invented this dogma of an inspiration that rendered all they wrote and said the infallible word of God, not subject to any change or contradiction, or even interpretation by the private judgment of individuals.

Of course, in the nature of things there can be no such thing as an infallible standard of absolute truth. Human reason is the only guide to truth; but even this, with the limitations of the human machine, in its not yet perfected stage of development, cannot be said to be infallible.

But, leaving now the Catholic claim to an infallible Church, let us inquire into the modern Protestant doctrine of an infallible Bible, made so by the inspiration of its writers.

In the first place, it should be noted that none of those writers claimed to be inspired. They wrote as modern novel writers do, for pay, for reputation, for fame, for influence in the community in which they lived; they wrote to suit the taste of the people for whom they wrote, and, as that was a taste for wonders and marvels, each writer strove to tell the biggest story, and he who succeeded in doing so became the most popular.

As time wore away till the authors of these stories were dead and forgotten, under the influence of a priestly caste who monopolised all learning, these old mythical stories became history, and it was made a crime to doubt the actual truth of them; and thus they have come down to our time, developed by law, force, and religious terrors into the veritable words of God, through the modern doctrine of plenary inspiration.

But how can we know that the writers of these old stories were inspired? The stories themselves are incredible without convincing evidence of inspiration, and inspiration is incredible without proof of the truth of the stories. Even supposing the stories to be true, it does not prove that the authors of them were inspired; and if you prove

that they were inspired, it does not follow that they told the truth. It is now proved that much of what is set forth in the Bible as the writing of inspired men is not true, and the latest dodge of Christian Bible worshippers is that the Bible was not intended to teach science, and that, as a matter of fact, the Bible writers were mistaken when they undertook to teach us anything which science has already disproved. That is good doctrine; but the trouble is that these Bible-mongers still keep up the war against science, upon matters that are particularly within the province of science, and hold to the scientific truth of the Bible as against science, until they are ignominiously driven out of it by the ever-rising tide of human intelligence.

How, then, are we to know whether a writer is inspired or not? If he is liable to make mistakes in matters of fact—as we see he is—how does his being inspired make him any more reliable? Are there any rules or marks by which we can recognise his inspiration? The question of the existence of God is a question of fact, and he may be mistaken about that. If it takes an inspired man to teach good, sound morals, still the question appeals to uninspired men to recognise the good morals, and the inspiration is useless and proves nothing. If an uninspired man knows the difference between good and bad morals, then there is no need of inspiration to teach it. And, in fact, morals were developed out of the needs of human society, and religion with its doctrine of inspiration knew nothing about it.

Suppose a man sits down to write a story, a psalm, or a creed, how is he to know whether he is inspired or not? There is no message to him direct conveying the information. He says to himself, I feel something that may be inspiration, or it may be the effect of indigestion. Nothing is so deceptive as feeling. If I am inspired, of course I must tell the truth. It is like testifying in court under oath. But then suppose I don't tell the truth, there is no perjury about it, and there is no court in the case to send me before the grand jury, or sentence me to the penitentiary. Besides, if I make what I write favorable to the clergy, they will pretend it is true whether or no, and the crowd of their devout and ignorant dupes will swallow it all as "gospel truth" anyhow. And that is just the kind of truth it will be.

But suppose the feeling I have does indicate inspiration, there is another question that bids me pause. What or who is it that inspires me? It may be God, or it may be the Devil; neither of them is in sight or hearing: how am I to tell which of them it is? If I look to the productions of most of the Bible writers, it would seem that they could have been inspired only by the Devil. But, again, what is the difference? Who knows which of the two is the better friend of man? It was the Devil who told the truth to the woman in the Garden of Eden, while God was trying to deceive her and her husband to prevent them from getting a taste of the best fruit in the garden.

With all these questions pending, without any possible solution, the thoughtful man must remain in doubt about the fact, the source, and the utility of inspiration. He will be safer to conclude that the whole doctrine is an invention of the priests for their own profit and advantage, and that it has no foundation but in fraud and duplicity.

Any man may say he is inspired, or priests may say it for him; but to prove it is entirely another thing. In ancient times, if a person was eccentric or crazy, he was supposed to be inspired; but whether he was inspired by a good spirit or a bad one was a question upon which men were divided. If his insanity took a religious form and his ravings suited the priests, then he was an inspired saint; otherwise he was sold to the Devil, and they burned him at the stake. In these more enlightened times Christians do not claim inspiration for any living case that may be investigated by scientific physicians, but only for the insane or fraudulent ones who lived and died so long ago that science cannot diagnose their cases.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

J. P. RICHARDSON.

They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think;  
They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three.

—*J. R. Lowell.*

## MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

*Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (September 21).*

I SUPPOSE right here I might give some of my impressions of the British working-man and his conditions. Of course, I have not had time to study the matter thoroughly, but I have learned many things. I used to think that the position of the working-man in this country was not much better than slavery, and the sooner he could emigrate to America and "go West," the better. As far as I can see, the position of the working-man here is fully as good as in America. He may not receive as much for his labor, but then it does not cost so much to live. Rents and clothing of all kinds are much less than in America. I can buy as good a suit of clothes here for \$7 as I can for \$15 in New York or Chicago. Shoes that cost \$10 in America are only \$5 here, and so on. You can get a shave for 3 cents in London that costs 10 cents in New York, and 25 cents in the Far West. Luxuries, however, are not much cheaper. Restaurant living in London is fully as expensive as in New York, Chicago, or San Francisco. They have a fashion here of charging for everything. You have the impression at first glance of the menu that you get your steak or chop at a less price than at home; but you have to pay extra for potatoes and other vegetables, for bread, butter, napkin, and also two or three pennies for attendance, so that by the time you finish you have paid even more than in New York. You cannot get a good meal in London short of fifty cents, and it is more often a dollar if you are extra hungry. I think, however, that the materials for home living throughout England are much cheaper than in America; and if you get into out-of-the-way places, off the line of travel and fashion, you are surprised at the abundance, goodness, and cheapness of the living.

I am therefore satisfied, from observation and the reports of those who should be well informed, that the working-man is pecuniarily as well off in England as in America.

The British working-man is intelligent and independent. To a certain extent he has won his rights. He is not by any means the "under dog." His power is respected. There is getting to be a good understanding between employer and employed. They are finding out that both are made of the same stuff; both are human beings, with the same interests and the same world to live in. The old feeling of antagonism and distrust is disappearing. Of course there are strikes, with more or less bigotry on one side, and selfishness on the other; but arbitration is generally resorted to, and justice prevails. Wrongs exist, but enlightenment and improvement are on the gain, and the rights of labor are more and more acknowledged. This mainly by voluntary co-operation, and not by any interference of the State.

The British workman takes things easier than the American. The American works faster; he will get more out of a machine, and, of course, gets greater wages. But, if he works faster, he also spends faster; and even if he takes a holiday he still "rustles" and hurries through his pleasure as if time were short. But the British workman will take his time. He doesn't hurry. He enjoys life as he goes along. He is tranquil. He makes the most of his holidays. He gets all out of them he can. He doesn't seem to make it a business to be happy, as the American does. He simply is happy with a jolly complacency. He makes no fuss about it. The workmen don't labor hard in England, so far as the factories are concerned. They have for holidays Sundays, half Saturdays, and generally half Wednesdays or Thursdays. They begin work at six in the morning, breakfast from eight to half-past, work from that time to one, dinner from one to two, and then quit work at five. It strikes me that this arrangement breaks up the monotony of labor better than the custom in America.

While much is yet to be accomplished, I feel that labor in England has made magnificent progress, and its vast results are not going into the hands of a few. Wealth is on the road to equitable distribution. The principle of co-operation, as I have before noted, has been developed with wonderful success in Great Britain. An International Co-operative Congress is now being held in London, whose sessions I have attended. At the meeting yesterday, when George Jacob Holyoake, the father of the co-operative movement in England, was introduced by the chairman as of "Great Britain and the world generally," it was stated that in Great Britain there were no less than 1,700 co-operative stores. Enrolled in the ranks are a million and a quarter of members, carrying on a trade of \$250,000,000 a year, with a profit of \$25,000,000 a year. About \$200,000 were spent in education, and \$90,000 in charities. I am glad to hear from Mr. Holyoake that from the beginning there has been no question of the full equality of woman. She has been a shareholder, and received profits, in the same way as man. There is a Woman's Guild connected with the movement for the education of woman, not only in domestic, but in social and universal life. While woman endears the home and also

wields the "basket power"—that is, the marketing power—yet she is not simply for the home, but for all the world, side by side with man.

It must be noted that these vast results have been achieved by voluntary co-operation, not by State Socialism. The interference of the State in such matters would not only be useless, but injurious.

Sunday morning, with my host, Mr. Gimson, and his little son Humphrey, five years old, I wander over the stately Abbey Park of Leicester. The old ruined abbey is near by, though not in the park itself. In this abbey Cardinal Wolsey died, and, I believe, was buried. Only the walls are standing of the once grand structure. The sunshine flouts it, as fortune flouted the poor cardinal himself. The people of Leicester who do not attend church come to the park to enjoy the Sunday, and the young folks make love, and it presents quite a pastoral scene.

In the afternoon I make acquaintance with the Secular Society of Leicester. First of all we have a splendid sociable time. We gather around the tables, over one hundred of us in all. There is a delegation of eight good comrades from Derby, and another friend travels thirty miles on his bicycle to attend the first Freethought lecture of his life. Music adds its charms to the festal hour. Nobody says grace; but before we partake of the tea and bread and cake the orchestra pours forth its animating strains.

It is certainly a great pleasure to satisfy the hunger to "the Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders." It adds to the conversational ability of the occasion, and we don't eat so fast. After the tables were pretty well cleared of the delicacies, and the tea, which "cheers, but not inebriates," had permeated the chambers of the brain, the chairman, in the name of the Secular Society, gave a warm and generous welcome to the American visitor, to which he responded with cordial goodwill. The party then adjourned to the club-rooms, reading-room, and library until half-past six o'clock, the hour for the evening service, at which I gave my lecture on "Christianity and Woman." The hall was filled. It was one of the best audiences that I have greeted in England. There was music by the choir, which was excellent every way. I was cheered by the animating surroundings of this Leicester campaign.

I have much to say of this Leicester Secular Society. It has a noble record, of small beginnings, of struggles, and of brilliant victory. The building in which the society now meets is about as large as the Paine Memorial Hall, Boston. It is a handsome structure on one of the best streets of Leicester, with ample accommodation for improvement and pleasure.

The origin of this society dates back to 1840. A Discussion Class was held in the Mechanics' Institution, originated and animated by George Bown, one of the advanced thinkers of that time. Among the young men who gathered about him was Josiah Gimson, the father of Sidney A. Gimson. The subjects brought forward in the class soon became the talk of the town. Afterwards a school was carried on during the week, with lectures on the Sunday. A library was also formed. The social and Secular views of progressive thinkers were discussed, and Leicester thus had the opportunity of listening to new thoughts. Out of this evolving institution, which, having no creed, readily adapted itself to circumstances, in May, 1873, was organized the Secular Hall Company, and the site of the present hall was purchased. In 1881 the hall was completed from designs of W. Larnar Sugden, and opened on the first Sunday in March. A large number of notable Freethinkers were present from all parts of England. The property now pays an income of six per cent. on the investment. Secular, social, political, and religious advocates are welcome to its platform, provided they submit their views to criticism and debate. A long list of illustrious names adorns its record. Among them I must mention James Thomson (B.V.), who contributed a poetic address at the opening of the hall. I must quote a few lines, for they show the vigorous Atheism of the poet, whom I have already referred to as a genius of high order:—

Lo, all the lands wherein our wandering race  
Have led their flocks, or fixed their dwelling-place,  
To till with patient toil the fruitful sod,  
Abound with altars to the Unknown God  
Or Gods, whom man created from of old,  
In his own image, one yet manifold,  
And ignorantly worshipped. We now dare,  
Taught by millenniums of barren prayer,  
Of mutual scorn and hate and bloody strife,  
With which these dreams have poisoned our poor life,  
To build our Temples on another plan,  
Devoting them to God's creator, Man;  
Not to Man's creature, God. And thus, indeed,  
All men and women, of whatever creed,  
We welcome gladly if they love their kind;  
No other valid test of worth we find,  
*Who loveth not his brother at his side,  
How can he love a dim dream deity?*

Another name must be added to this extraordinary list, that of Professor Huxley, who placed himself among the

supporters of the society. An appeal being made for funds, he wrote, February 12, 1891: "Mr. Huxley encloses a small contribution to the special fund of the Leicester Secular Society in evidence of his full sympathy with the objects of the society."

To a request for permission to publish the above he replied: "You are quite at liberty to use my note, and I shall be glad if it is of any service.—I am, yours very faithfully, T. H. HUXLEY."

This record, it seems to me, places Huxley in square accord with the principles of Secularism.

The importance and far-reaching nature of the Leicester movement will thus be understood. In Leicester, as in Failsworth, we see that, give Secularism a fair field, it will show its true adaptation to humanity. It will satisfy, not perhaps a "believer," but anyone who is willing to accept the truth and do his duty.

In the hall are the portraits of Charles Bradlaugh, George Jacob Holyoake, and Josiah Gimson. The name and fame of the latter cannot be forgotten in the history of this society. He was one of its founders, and a most ardent and generous supporter. At his death, in 1883, he bequeathed, in maintenance of the institution, an income of one hundred pounds for ten years.

I am cordially entertained during my stay at Leicester by Mr. and Mrs. Sydney A. Gimson, and I must thank them for the delightful and instructive hours I spent in this beautiful city, where I had an opportunity to see so much of progressive English life. I cannot name all the Secular friends I met here. They are many. I shall not forget the generosity of their reception.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

### WATTS-WALDRON DEBATE AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

DURING the last week Newcastle has had an intellectual treat. The long-talked-of debate between Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. H. J. Waldron took place on the evenings of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, October 14 to 17, in Sinnett's Amphitheatre, Northumberland-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Unfortunately, the weather was far from what could be desired; the first two nights, especially, it seemed as if "all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Although there were great counter attractions during the week, such as races, a special preacher from Glasgow, and last, but not least, the world-renowned nightingale, Madame Patti, was giving a concert in the next building on the Monday evening—nevertheless, large numbers flocked each night to hear the discussion, many coming from Shields and other surrounding towns; and an admirer of Mr. Watts, who came all the way from York, was present every night. The audience, who were on the whole orderly, listened with great attention, and enthusiastically applauded the debaters whenever they thought a point had been scored. Judging from the applause, there seemed an equal number of Christians and Secularists, which is very gratifying.

Both disputants throughout were gentlemanly and earnest, frequently eloquent, and were absolutely free from personalities. Mr. Waldron, a lecturer for the Christian Evidence Society, London, is a fluent speaker, and probably a good preacher; but he is certainly not a good debater. He did not seem to grasp the points at issue, and to note the force and bearing of his opponent's arguments. He too often appealed to the feelings of his "followers of faith." Mr. Watts once remarked to the audience: "If warmth of feeling and appealing to the emotions constitute debate, then you have had it."

The subject for the first two nights was, "That Christian Theism is More Reasonable than Atheism," and the Christian gentleman's arguments were the one from design and "that philosophers like Herbert Spencer did not believe in Atheism." Mr. Watts said the latter proved nothing, as the philosophers he had mentioned did not believe in Christianity either. Mr. Watts had nothing to do with disproving the existence of "a god," but only of the "Christian God"; and from the Old and New Testaments he read about a dozen texts showing the imperfect character of that God—such as Ezekiel xx. 25 and xiv. 9; Proverbs xvi. 4; 1 Samuel xv. 3—and commented on the fact that from pulpits they would preach that God, though he had never yet found one who could defend him. Except saying that "the evil" mentioned in "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord not know it?" meant punishment for sin, without defining the last word "sin," although requested—except this mere statement, and that there was not one Jew who would accept the anthropomorphic ideas of God, Mr. Waldron never attempted to deal with the texts, which, according to the Bible, were characteristic of the Christian God. Being asked what there was "unique" in Christianity, Mr. Waldron said "it was intellectual," upon which Mr. Watts, with a smile, complimented him upon his great modesty,

and asked if men like Voltaire and Thomas Paine were void of intellect. Mr. Watts regretted that the subject had not been discussed. Mr. Waldron was the first person he had known to stand up to defend "Christian" Theism, and would probably be the last.

On the second and third nights the proposition was, "That Secularism is Superior to Christianity." Mr. Watts opened the debate by expounding the N.S.S. principles, and showing, in his masterly way, the necessity for Secularism: (1) Because Christianity had failed; (2) there were persons who absolutely could not believe Christianity; and (3) a rule was needed for all. "Christ," said Mr. Waldron, "was not a social reformer, but a social regenerator"—an expression which his followers frantically applauded; but, notwithstanding being afterwards twice asked if there could be regeneration without reform, no answer was forthcoming. Mr. Waldron commenced then to build up a man of straw, and urged that, according to Secularism, there could be no meaning in such words as "duty," "responsibility," and "morality," as Secularists did not believe in free will; but, while frank enough to admit (when pressed for an answer) that he himself did not believe in absolute free will, he carefully abstained from explaining where free will commenced, although asked to do so in every subsequent speech by Mr. Watts. Secularism, Mr. Waldron urged, was not a system at all, for it is based on ignorance, as Atheism teaches "I don't know." In his final speech Mr. Waldron showed himself much better than the creed he was defending, by saying: "If Secularism raises humanity, I will admit Secularism as equal to, nay, superior to, Christianity. I will judge by results." Mr. Watts, in replying to Atheism being ignorance, said: "Quite true, if you mean with regard to the supernatural; and in this we have an advantage over you: we know that we don't know, but you have that yet to learn."

Mr. Watts has shown how Secularism, if given fair play, would benefit humanity. One earnest Christian gentleman, after the debate, came up to Mr. Watts, expressing his admiration, and said: "Although not of your way of thinking, I admit you have given me something to think about."

CARL A. AARSTAD.

### WAR!

I SEE marching armies, over vast continents;  
Practising the use of weapons deadly;  
Men full-prepared to take the life of brother-man;  
Great, giant forces, lying dormant, waiting,  
Want but a spark to spread destruction's flame.

Comrade-man! what seest thou?  
Observe thou but the gorgeous uniforms;  
The pomp and pride of seeming-glorious war?  
Nay! look thou well beneath the surface;  
Heed not nation-hatreds: Humanity is thy nation!  
Thou the Altruist shouldst be.

See the consequence of war, the corse upon the field.  
This man knew thee not! Wherefore was he slain?  
Look again! at widows, orphans, sorrowful fathers and mothers:  
They ask thee of the loved one: What wilt thou say?

Men, ye are comrades! Why allow your rulers  
Thus to send you forth to take your brothers' lives?  
Speak! true men! Speak trumpet-tongued!  
Clasp hands and say, "We will not quarrel."  
Pass ye the verdict—you are the masters—  
War must cease! Enough of strife and carnage in the past:  
No king shall now our friendship break. Henceforth we brothers are.

F. W. THORRINGTON.

### The Early English Clergy.

In theory, of course, the clergy set up a standard of morals which was opposed to most of the worst faults of the age. But the theory was by no means in accordance with the practice. In reality, the priest took to money-getting and wenching, and was frequently rebuked by his superiors for his own ignorance. Priest became the rival of priest for tithes, bishop of king for worldly dignity.—L. O. Pike, "A History of Crime in England," v. 93.

The orthodox clergy, of course, maintained that the most suspicious form of study which lay people could undertake was that of divinity. The consequence was that the clerical party enlisted as far as they could every knightly prejudice on their side, and represented a thirst for knowledge as essentially unchivalrous. It was easy, too, to foster a belief that no one would know, or even wish to know, more than his neighbors, except through the influence of the Devil.—Ibid, p. 353.

## 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.

FORESTERS' HALL (Olerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Some Bible Symbols and their Meaning."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 8, social gathering and short addresses. Wednesday, at 8.30, open discussion on "Religious and Secular Education," to be opened by R. Forder.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, special entertainment and dance. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Friday, at 8, special meeting of members.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, a lecture. Friday, at 8, free science classes.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Psychology."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Philistine Conscience."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. H. Smith, "The Persistency of Barbarism."

WOOD GREEN (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, Robert Forder, "Who is the Devil? What is the Devil? and Where is the Devil?" Business meeting at 71 Gladstone-avenue on Sunday morning at 11.30.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Bible God."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, St. John will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, St. John will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Primitive Culture."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "How Christianity became Strong."

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, select concert.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, G. Harper, a paper.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): Saturday, October 26, at 6.30, drama, *Belphégor*; music by string band. Sunday, at 6.30, quarterly meeting of teachers and scholars.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Paul, "The Single Tax"; 6.30, J. Cowie, "G. B. Shaw's 'A Degenerate's View of Nordau.'"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Gustav Smith, "Different Forms of Slavery and Murder."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, John M. Robertson, "Christianity and Slavery"; 6.30, "The Future of Liberalism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Four Scientific Men who have Modified the Thought of Intellectual Europe."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 3, "Gods and God-Makers"; 7, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall): 11, G. W. Foote, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible"; 3, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, special musical evening.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, readings and music.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, the Secretary will read a paper on "Christian Evidences a Delusion." Tuesday, at the Borough Hall Dining Room, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "What Think Ye of Christ?" Wednesday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Scepticism, its Meaning and its Value."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, R. Chapman, "Secularism: A Defence."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 27, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 28 and 29, Stockton-on-Tees; 31, Blackburn. Nov. 1, Blackburn; 3, Sheffield; 4, 5, and 6, Barnsley; 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London—October 27, Kingsland.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Nov. 24, New Brompton. Dec. 22, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 27, Foresters' Hall. November 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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