

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## FREETHOUGHT MISSIONS.

It is perfectly obvious that the old methods of Secular advocacy are now inadequate. Twenty years ago there were only three possibilities in an English town on a Sunday; you might go to church, or to the public-house, or attend a Secular lecture, if there happened to be one in the place. Until the Sunday League was formed there was absolutely no competition to be faced by Charles Bradlaugh when he lectured at the Hall of Science. Unless you went to the dram-shop or the gospel-shop, it was "Bradlaugh or nothing" on a Sunday evening. But what a different state of things exists to-day! The Sunday League has concerts going on in all parts of London, which are attended by thousands of persons. Ethical Societies invite the public to their meeting places. Socialists have dozens of lecturers going on Sunday. Even the churches and chapels are going in for "pleasant Sunday afternoons." There is rivalry on all sides in the metropolis, and on a lesser scale it obtains in all the large centres of population. Even if Charles Bradlaugh were living now, and in the plenitude of his powers, it is very questionable whether he would draw "paying" audiences as he once did. Hundreds might go to hear him with a charge at the door—but would thousands? I doubt it, and I believe he felt the change for some time before his death.

Another fact has also to be taken into consideration. Twenty years ago the Churches were very sleepy. They thought themselves secure, and did not foresee the great interest that was to be excited in social questions. But they are asleep no longer. They are courting "the people," the new voters, the democracy, with great ardor and perseverance. The activity of the Church of England is astonishing to those who remember its old supineness. Nor are the Dissenting bodies lagging behind. Thousands a year are spent by Wesleyan Methodists on their West London Mission. The public are invited to St. James's Hall, instead of a church; and the raucous voice of Mr. Price Hughes is supplemented by a choir and band.

For my part, I have long seen that Secularism must be more modern in its methods of propaganda. Some years ago I induced the National Secular Society's Annual Conference to pass a resolution for the reform of our lecture system. Nothing was done, however; and at length I resolved to strike out myself. If I could not move the party by mere persuasion, I might do so by convincing action. Accordingly, I formulated my Lecture Scheme, which I determined to nurse myself, at least until its value was fully recognised, and the labor of operating it could be entrusted to the ordinary party machinery.

My scheme has been in operation only for a few months, but I am already and entirely satisfied that it moves along the line of least resistance. Mr. Watts and Mr. Cohen have delivered dozens of lectures under it, which would not have been delivered otherwise. The meetings addressed under my scheme are thrown open to the public. There is no charge at the door. Secular salvation is offered to Christians without money and without price. The collection taken up goes towards defraying the local expenses, the expenses of the lecturer being guaranteed by myself.

Readers of the *Freethinker* have already seen accounts of the success of my lecture scheme from the pens of Mr.

Watts, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Gilmour. It may not be amiss, however, if I supplement what they have written.

Having to visit Glasgow, I decided to deliver some lectures in the district, following for the most part the track of my friend and colleague, Mr. Charles Watts, who had recently given south-west Scotland a taste of his vigorous eloquence. My lectures at Glasgow were attended by the largest audiences the Branch has seen for a considerable time, the hall being quite unpleasantly crowded in the evening. These meetings were not free. There was the usual charge at the door. The free meetings began on Monday, when I visited Dunoon and broke fresh ground. A handful of Secular "saints" had taken a large room in the Town Hall premises, and advertised the lecture extensively. The result was a crowded meeting. Most of the people present must have been Christians, at least by profession, but they showed an unexpected sympathy with my treatment of the Bible. Several questions were asked, and a local doctor made some rather feeble observations. The local clergy were all absent. They did not care to oppose the "infidel." One of them, the Rev. Mr. Johnson, preferred to rate a member of his flock, Mr. Robertson, the Convener of the Halls Committee, for letting the room to the Secularists; and I hear that Mr. Robertson has since resigned his eldership in Mr. Johnson's church. I also hear that Dunoon has been "shaken" by this lecture, and that it is still the talk of the town. Anyhow, the local organisers of the meeting are simply delighted. The success of the experiment exceeded their most sanguine expectations.

On Tuesday I lectured at Paisley. There was another large meeting and plenty of discussion. On Wednesday I lectured at Greenock. A Freethought lecture was once delivered in this town by Robert Owen, another was delivered by George Jacob Holyoake, and a third by Charles Bradlaugh. But that was long ago, and I was virtually breaking fresh ground again. Mr. Kennedy had worked hard, and the handsome hall was crowded; and here again there was plenty of discussion. On Thursday I addressed another large meeting at Motherwell, the hall being quite filled with a most appreciative audience. On Friday I lectured at Cambuslang, where I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Keir Hardie's father, sister, and two brothers, who are all Secularists. This meeting was not as large as the others, but it was much larger than Mr. Watts's some weeks previous. Of course his meeting helped mine, as mine will help its successors. We shall get a good hearing amongst the miners of Cambuslang if we only "keep pegging away."

Mr. Gilmour presided at every one of these meetings, and a better chairman would have to be specially manufactured. Mr. Black sold the *Freethinker*, and made himself generally useful. He is what the boys call "a brick." Several other friends kept us company. We returned to Glasgow every evening except Monday, and the pleasant companionship was quite medicinal to me, struggling as I was against indisposition. The Glasgow friends are "gone" on my lecture scheme, and don't mind working and subscribing now that a feasible plan is devised for reaching the "heathen" in their part of Scotland.

On Saturday I travelled up to Hull—a nine hours' journey. Some of my readers will remember the battle I had there once with the Chief Constable. He said I should not charge for admission on Sunday, and I said I would. I engaged a hall for a week, and kept a man in possession;



lectured every week-night free, and charged on Sunday; and defied the Chief Constable to begin his threatened prosecution. His threats, however, terrified the lessees of halls, and I have not visited Hull since. But rather than neglect it altogether I resolved to deliver three lectures with free admission. Captain Monro and other friends worked very hard, and we had splendid meetings on Sunday. The hall was crowded at night. There must have been eight hundred persons present. The collections were excellent, and the hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were sold out early in the day. If the Hull Branch perseveres, it will soon be in a strong position.

Let me conclude by stating that on Tuesday evening I delivered an address for the Humanitarian League on "The Rights of Men and Animals," giving "The Secularist View." We had by far the largest meeting of the whole course. I am told that hundreds of people could not gain admittance. Friends of my own could not get near the door. Despite the newspaper boycott, the public does get to know that a Secularist is speaking, and takes an interest in his message.

G. W. FOOTE.

### IT IS NOT TRUE.

"We have no right to believe a thing true because everybody says so, unless there are good grounds for believing that some one person, at least, has the means of knowing what is true, and is speaking the truth so far as he knows it. However many nations and generations of men are brought into the witness-box, they cannot testify to anything which they do not know. Every man who has accepted the statement from somebody else, without himself testing and verifying it, is out of court; his word is worth nothing at all. And when we get back at last to the true birth and beginning of the statement, two serious questions must be disposed of in regard to him who first made it: was he mistaken in thinking that he *knew* about this matter, or was he lying?"—WILLIAM KINGDON CLIFFORD.

"What is incredible to thee, thou shalt not at thy soul's peril attempt to believe."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

"GEORGE ELIOT" once remarked that she had but one objection to Christianity. "And what is that?" was asked. "*It is not true.*" The answer was complete. "George Eliot" had looked into the matter for herself. She had studied science, and discovered that the Christian doctrine of the origin of this world and of man was at variance with fact. She had looked into the historic evidences of Christianity, and found that anything like adequate evidence of the supernatural narratives of the Christian books was altogether wanting. Much might be said of the great part which Christianity has played in the world, but nothing that could be said is to the purpose compared with the fact that it is not true. The Christian account of creation is fabulous, the story of the Fall is a fiction, and the theory of redemption founded upon it is a figment.

It is not true that Eve was in transgression, or that all women have to be kept in subordination on that account. It is not true that for Adam's sin all are born in sin and shapen in iniquity. It is not true that a serpent talked, or that death entered into the world in the time of Adam.

It is not true that the Jews, two thousand years ago, were better conversant with the laws of nature than we are to-day. The testimony to miracles of ignorant and superstitious fisher-folk of Galilee, even if we had it at first-hand, would be received by moderns with doubt and suspicion.

It is not true that the Bible is without error. That book says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." This command has been the occasion of the putting to death of myriads of helpless women. The delusion has been fostered and perpetuated by the Gospel stories of diabolical possession. The New Testament throughout speaks of the speedy approach of the end of the world. The early Christians lived in daily expectation of that great event. If mistaken on this point, is it not probable that they were mistaken on others?

It is not true that God ever made this world in six days, or proposed to drown it with forty days' rain. It is not true that he stayed the sun and moon to enable a tribe of Israelites to slaughter a band of Amorites; or that he sent his own Son to be slaughtered for the sins of other people. It is not true that God or the Holy Ghost visited a young Jewess, or that her boy was born without a father, or that she remained a virgin after producing a large family. It is not true that Jesus turned water into wine, devils into pigs,

or walked on water, or ascended through the clouds into heaven.

It is not true that his followers can take up serpents or drink deadly things with impunity, as they were promised. It is not true that prayers are potent to change the course of nature. The fervent prayers of the righteous are not effectual. The Armenians vainly cry to God for help. Kings, who are the most prayed-for people, are among the shortest lived. It is not true that faith the size of a mountain will suffice to move a single grain of mustard-seed.

It is not true that any of the Apostles had anything to do with drawing up the Apostles' Creed. It is not true that the compilers of the Athanasian Creed had any more information on the subject of the Trinity than Voltaire. It is not true, as affirmed in the Church Articles, that works done before grace have the nature of sin, nor is it true that one man's sin can be washed out by the blood of another. It is not true that faith suffices to turn a bad man into a good one, or that he who is deficient in faith is therefore without any virtue. It is not true that Christianity ensures morality. Hindus, Buddhists, and Moslems have less crime among them than the Christian nations. Christianity has brought, not universal peace, but dissension in its train. It is not true that some persons are fit for eternal happiness, while others deserve eternal misery. You cannot divide men sharply into sheep and goats. Hair and wool are mixed. As Shelley says in *Peter Bell the Third*—

'Tis a lie to say "God damns";  
Where was Heaven's Attorney-General  
When they first gave out such flams?  
Let there be an end of shams;  
They are mines of poisonous mineral.

It is the verdict of human experience that falsity in the long run carries disaster in its train. Hear the ringing voice of Carlyle, the prophet of this century: "Speedy end to superstition—a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end. What can it profit any mortal to adopt locutions and imaginations which do *not* correspond to fact; which no sane mortal can adopt in his soul as true; which the most orthodox of mortals can only, and this after infinite essentially *impious* effort to put out the eyes of his mind, persuade himself to believe that he believes?" A system which has at its back a mighty past, which is supported by immense wealth and protected by power, is sure to find much, very much, that can be said on its behalf. But, to the Freethinker, nothing that can be said is of significance compared with the fact that it is not true.

J. M. WHEELER.

### THE NEW DEFENCE OF THE BIBLE.

No book has had so many varying and conflicting estimates formed as to its nature and value as the Bible. For centuries it was regarded by the orthodox Church as the "very word of the very God"; the cry was "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." As education, however, illuminated the human mind and liberated human thought, it was found that such a claim and demand could not reasonably be maintained, hence even Christian scholars began to entertain very modified views in reference to the character of the Bible; the belief in "verbal inspiration" gave way to reliance upon "essential inspiration," and the book was no longer considered as containing only the Word of God. The Secular method of eclecticism was adopted by some of the foremost men within the Church. These eclectic Christians felt impelled to submit the Bible to the test of their own reason and conscience, which had been educated and purified, not by the book itself, nor by any supernatural grace, but by the results of a long and gradual progress in Secular enlightenment, which progress had been at nearly every step opposed on the authority of the book, and in the name of the religion founded on it. Doctrines that now revolt the common conscience did not in former centuries revolt the consciences of men who were taught by the book and purified by the Holy Spirit. It is not by special grace, nor by revelation of the Holy Scriptures, but by critical scholarship, that men have come now to decide as to the genuineness and authenticity, the date and authority, of the various portions of the book. Until free learning was revived at the classical Renaissance, the



Holy Spirit was content to leave all the most pious Biblical students in very deep darkness as to nearly all the points on which our eclectic Christians are now so clearly enlightened.

While, of course, it is gratifying to us to note this rational progress, the question may be fairly asked: From a theological standpoint, what can be the use or authority of a moral and doctrinal code from which each man is free to pick and choose just what commends itself to his own taste and judgment? Selection having once begun, who can say where it is to end? What will ultimately be left in common to all who, with this elastic theory, call themselves Christians? We believe it would not be difficult to gather from various eminent men—learned, subtle, and devout, and all alike claiming to be orthodox—denial and refutation of every doctrine usually and vaguely considered essential to the creed. To assert that the Bible contains the Word of God, but that the whole of it is not so, is to leave to the individual mind the decision as to what is and what is not "God's Word." The alleged divine is thus made subordinate to the human. The damaging result to theology of adopting such a course is seen in the many contradictory notions that are entertained by professed Christians as to what the Bible really teaches. As the different existing sects which constitute the Christian fold hold so many varying and opposite ideas as to what the Scriptures mean, it is an irrefutable proof that the supposed truths of the Bible are not self-evident; each person is left to attach to them what veracity he or she thinks they deserve. The logical sequence of all these changes in the views entertained of the Bible is that it cannot be looked upon as aught else than a human production; the old pretensions put forth by the Church upon its behalf are given up, and now the book is allowed to be judged by its merits or its demerits. This is a striking evidence of the progress of Freethought.

An illustration of the new mode of defending the Bible was given only the other Sunday at the Union Chapel at Islington, when the Rev. Hardy Harwood preached a sermon from the text, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The sermon was reported in the London *Daily Chronicle* of February 3. Mr. Harwood is considered one of the leading Nonconformists of London. He is the successor to the late Dr. Allon, and his chapel is termed the "Nonconformist Cathedral of North London." His sermon was a desperate effort to reconcile the theory that the Bible is "God's Word" with the modern views held in reference to it. It is strange, if the book is such a "lamp" and "light" as the text states, that so few persons accept its illuminating power to guide them in the "path" of their lives. We know of no one who regulates his conduct by, nor of any progressive institutions that are based upon, teachings which are peculiar to the Bible. True, it contains some practical injunctions, but these are to be found in other books that have no relation to either the Old or the New Testament, and therefore they are not distinctive Bible teachings. Besides, the "light" obtained from the Bible "lamp" is clouded by so much mist from the same source that, without other light, it would be extremely difficult to see our way through the path of life.

The rev. gentleman frankly admitted that the Bible was not "the perfect revelation of God to man, or designed to impart to men the secrets of natural science, or facts about history." To a rational mind, undisturbed by theological considerations, it seems remarkable that a revelation from God should be imperfect, and that a knowledge of science as the greatest benefactor to man should not be imparted. If the Bible were silent upon history and science, it would be bad enough in a book that is said to be "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"; but when it teaches as history and science what is known to be false we fail to see the good of the light from the Bible lamp. Take its history as to the origin of man; the description of the river out of Eden that parted into four heads; the Biblical chronology, making our race about 6,000 years old, which is not only contradicted by science, but by clear historical memorials. The pyramids, temples, and tombs of Egypt, dating back more than 5,000 years, with their inscriptions, their dynastic records, their pictures, and other works of art, prove that that country must have been populous, maturely organised, and skilled in many arts and handicrafts, at a period when, according to the book of Genesis, the human kind consisted of but a few

families. Again, as to the New Testament history, the story of the life and death of the founder of Christianity, there is an external test, which to a thoughtful and candid mind is none the less effectual because it is negative—namely, the silence of contemporary writers of the first century. Had Jesus been crucified as alleged; had Pilate himself written the title to be put on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"; had there on this occasion been a mid-day darkness over all the earth for three hours, the sun eclipsed, an earthquake, the rocks rent, the veil of the temple torn in twain, graves opened, buried saints arising and going into the holy city, and appearing unto many;—had all these signs and wonders appeared, is it possible to conceive that no other record of them should remain?

It appears to us that for Christians to assert that the Bible ignores natural science is to attribute to their God an utter neglect of that which provides for their principal requirements. But the fact is, the Bible does refer to scientific subjects, and deals quite largely with matters that fall within the region in which science reigns supreme. Kalisch says: "The Bible is not silent upon the creation; it attempts, indeed, to furnish its history; but in this account it expresses as facts that which the researches of science cannot sanction." But the subject of creation is not the only topic upon which the book states the very opposite to what is correct. Surely, how man was made, the phenomena of the solar system, and the mode by which disease and death entered the world, are scientific questions. These, with other similar subjects, are dwelt upon in the Bible, and a reference to its statements thereon will show that science and the Bible are not on the most friendly terms. Indeed, there have been but few discoveries of any magnitude in science that have not exhibited in some way the fallacy of portions of the Bible. That which in the days of Moses might have been considered right, and in accordance with the laws of nature, science has since proved to be incorrect; and what Christ taught concerning the possession of devils by the human body is now regarded as an exploded superstition. The Bible alleges that mankind has degenerated from a state of perfection; science, on the contrary, indicates that the career of man has been progressive, and that each age, profiting by experience, has been superior to its predecessor. The Bible affirms that at a certain command the sun and moon stood still; science rejects such a statement. The Bible asserts that all the kingdoms of the world were exhibited from a certain high mountain; geography teaches that there are many parts of the world totally invisible from any one elevation. In almost every field the "sacred writings" appear to be the very antithesis of the teachings of science. Where does the "light" of "God's word" come in here?

The rev. gentleman's new defence of the Bible is that its record is "honest, sincere, and reverent." But surely this does not make the Bible superior to other books; neither is it any guarantee that its statements are true. These virtues may be allied with the greatest errors and the direst superstitions that ever darkened the human mind. They have also been the characteristics of men who have written against the orthodox claims of the Bible. Take, for instance, Thomas Paine, who, in his *Age of Reason*, displays the utmost honesty, sincerity, and reverence for truth. Will the Rev. Hardy Harwood admit that on that account Paine's unanswerable book is true? If not, why not? If the Bible is to be accepted because its writers were honest, etc., then upon the same principle the writings of some of our noblest heretics should not be rejected.

Honesty, sincerity, and reverence for the true and useful are always commendable; but something more is expected in a book that is supposed to be our guide through life. We need accurate statements, practical teachings, and ethical consistency; and it is in these necessary requirements that the Bible is deplorably deficient.

CHARLES WATTS.

Who can compute what the world loses in the multitude of promising intellects combined with timid characters, who dare not follow out any bold, vigorous, independent train of thought lest it should land them in something which would admit of being considered irreligious or immoral? . . . No one can be a great thinker who does not recognise that, as a thinker, it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead.—*J. S. Mill, "On Liberty."*



## BYRON'S RELIGION.

LORD BYRON was undoubtedly a Freethinker, though he does not, as a Freethinker, stand on the exalted eminence of his friend Shelley, who, eclipsed in his lifetime by the popularity of the noble poet, is now seen to have been greater as a poet and greater as a man. Both may be called poets of the Revolution, yet Byron only embraced it on its negative side, while the imagination of Shelley looked forward to the time when the enthusiasm of humanity should recreate society. Self-love, too predominant in Byron, was in Shelley lost in an ocean of love for his fellows.

Most competent judges would assign the first place among Byron's works to *Don Juan*, whom Leigh Hunt said he designed at last to turn into a Methodist. Certainly the work could have been written by no Christian. Byron's views were fluid and fluctuating, yet he doubtless uttered a predominant mood when he wrote:—

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,  
In nameless prints, that I have no devotion;  
But set those persons down with me to pray,  
And you shall see who has the properest notion  
Of getting into heaven the shortest way.  
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,  
Earth, sea, stars—all that springs from the great whole,  
Who hath produced, and will receive, my soul.

In *Childe Harold*, his noblest, if not his ablest, utterance, we have yet more clearly this pantheistic worship of nature:—

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part  
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?  
Is not the love of these deep in my heart?

In this light the petty religions of man all dwindle:—

Even gods must yield; religions take their turn;  
'Twas Jove's, 'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds  
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn  
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds—  
Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is built on  
reeds.

He had a strong sense that all forms of faith were of equal inutility:—

Foul superstition! howsoever disguised—  
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,  
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized—  
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss,  
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross?

Contempt for death, which Byron exhibited in death's face at Missolonghi, is seen almost obtruded in some of his most characteristic utterances:—

And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure—  
They who have revelled beyond measure  
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure—  
Die calm, or calmer, oft than he  
Whose heritage was misery.

He may at times have hoped for immortality. He certainly did not believe in it. How finely he apostrophises this longing in *Childe Harold*!

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eyes to heaven;  
Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to know  
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given  
That, being, thou would'st be again, and go  
Thou know'st not, reek'st not, to what region, so  
On earth no more, but mingled with the skies?  
Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?  
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies,  
That little word saith more than thousand homilies.

How nobly Cain, in the very spirit of the vegetarian, Shelley, pours his scorn on the God who takes "his high pleasure in the fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood"; and, even when making offerings of fruit to him, says:—

If a shrine without victim  
And altar without gore may win thy favor,  
Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,  
He is—such as thou mad'st him; and seeks nothing  
Which must be won by kneeling.

Indeed, the whole drama is a protest against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The "Vision of Judgment," in which the poet's genius for satire has full force, is no less daring in its "blasphemy." From its opening, with the angels all singing out of tune, to its close, with George III. practising the hundredth Psalm, it is full of contempt for all the hallowed paraphernalia of revealed religion.

Leigh Hunt, in his account of *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*, says:—

"The world have been much puzzled by Lord Byron's declaring himself a Christian every now and then, in some part of his writings or conversations, and giving them to understand in a hundred others that he was none. The truth is, he did not know what he was; and this is the case with hundreds of the people who wonder at him. I have touched this matter before, but will add a word or two. He was a Christian by education; he was an infidel by reading. He was a Christian by habit; he was no Christian upon reflection. I use the word here in its ordinary acceptation, and not in its really Christian and philosophical sense, as a believer in the endeavor and universality which are the consummation of Christianity. His faith was certainly not swallowed up in charity; but his charity, after all, was too much for it. In short, he was not a Christian, in the sense understood by that word; otherwise he would have had no doubts about the matter; nor (as I have before noticed) would he have spoken so irreverently upon matters in which no Christian of this sort indulges liberties, God knows. They are much profaner than any devout Deist ever thinks of being; but still their profanities are not of a certain kind. They would not talk like Voltaire, or say, with Lord Byron, that, upon Mr. Wordsworth's showing, 'Carnage must be Christ's sister.'"

Byron himself, in his *Letters* to his friend, John Cam Hobhouse, is fairly explicit. In his letters to the Rev. Francis Hodgson, in 1811, he says in so many words: "I do not believe in any revealed religion.....I will have nothing to do with your immortality; we are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another.....The basis of your religion is injustice; the Son of God, the pure, the immaculate, the innocent, is sacrificed for the guilty." Moore, poetaster, flunkey, and philistine, admits "Lord Byron was, to the last, a sceptic."

YOOMY.

## BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

REVIEWING Sir Monier Williams's contrast of Christianity and Buddhism, in the pages of the *Open Court*, its editor remarks:—

If the essence of Christianity consists in the hope of an entire washing away of every guilty stain and getting rid of the consequences of our evil deeds, we can only hope that the civilised nations of mankind will abandon Christianity. Buddha's doctrine is certainly grander, and, what is more, truer, than this hollow doctrine of a salvation of the guilty by the death of the innocent. Buddha, when speaking of sacrifices, rejected the idea that blood can wash away sins, and when he regarded himself as the savior of man he meant that he was their teacher. He claimed to have pointed out the way of salvation, and to have removed the cataract from the eyes of the blind; but he expects every one of his followers to exert himself when walking on the path.

A man converted from sin is saved in the sense that henceforth he will walk in the right direction; his character is changed; he turns over a new leaf, but he cannot annihilate the past and the consequences of his former karma.

The dogma of the vicarious atonement through Christ's death is a survival of the age of barbarism, for it is based upon the savage's idea of religion which represents God as an Apache chieftain, who, when offended, thirsts for the death of somebody, and must be pacified with blood.

In a summary of his comparison of Christianity with Buddhism, Professor Williams remarks:—

"Buddhism, I repeat, says: Act righteously through your own efforts, and for the final getting rid of all suffering, of all individuality, of all life in yourselves. Christianity says: Be righteous through a power implanted in you from above, through the power of a life-giving principle, freely given to you, and always abiding in you. The Buddha said to his followers: 'Take nothing from me, trust to yourselves alone.' Christ said: 'Take all from Me; trust not to yourselves. I give unto you eternal life, I give unto you the bread of heaven, I give unto you living water.' Not that these priceless gifts involve any passive condition of inaction. On the contrary, they stir the soul of the recipient with a living energy. They stimulate him to noble deeds and



self-sacrificing efforts. They compel him to act as the worthy, grateful, and appreciative possessor of so inestimable a treasure.

"Still, I seem to hear some one say: We acknowledge this; we admit the truth of what you have stated; nevertheless, for all that, you must allow that Buddhism conferred a great benefit on India by encouraging freedom of thought, and by setting at liberty its teeming population, before entangled in the meshes of ceremonial observances and Brahmanical priestcraft.

"Yes, I grant this; nay, I grant even more than this. I admit that Buddhism conferred many other benefits on the millions inhabiting the most populous part of Asia. It introduced education and culture; it encouraged literature and art; it promoted physical, moral, and intellectual progress up to a certain point; it proclaimed peace, goodwill, and brotherhood among men; it deprecated war between nation and nation; it avowed sympathy with social liberty and freedom; it gave back much independence to women; it preached purity in thought, word, and deed (though only for the accumulation of merit); it taught self-denial without self-torture; it inculcated generosity, charity, tolerance, love, self-sacrifice, and benevolence, even towards the inferior animals; it advocated respect for life and compassion towards all creatures; it forbade avarice and the hoarding of money; and from its declaration, that a man's future depended on his present acts and condition, it did good service for a time in preventing stagnation, stimulating exertion, promoting good works of all kinds, and elevating the character of humanity."

If Professor Williams's conception of Christianity must be accepted as true Christianity, Christianity will pass away to make room for Buddhism. Happily, Christianity is a living religion, that, having passed through the stage of metaphysical dogmatism, is still possessed of the power of regeneration, so as to approach more and more—though progress is sometimes slow—the ideal of a genuine catholicity. Those features which Professor Williams regards as the essential grandeur of Christianity are a most serious defect; and their absence in Buddhism indicates that it is the more advanced religion. That religion only which has overcome the pagan notions of a special revelation, of atonement through blood, of wiping out the past, of the miraculous power of prayer, of the ego-consciousness as a kind of thing-in-itself, and of a creation out of nothing by a God-magician, can eventually become the religion of mankind.

## FETISHISM.

It is profoundly curious that in a city like Paris, which inherits the civilisation of Greece and of Rome, and after the progress of science accomplished during the last four centuries, there are still minds so belated or rudimentary as to represent the world as the work of a supreme being, who is a kind of almighty machine constructor, like Edison or Eiffel.

This fetishism, this African theology, this Papuan philosophy, belongs not only to the different Churches—Jewish, Christian, or Moslem, fossil *débris* of early ages of thought vainly trying to comprehend the world. Even present-day teachers seem as little emancipated in this particular as the magistrates, the politicians, and the common run of writers. The words, "God," "Providence," "soul," "immortality," are retained as much in the academies and the chairs of education as in synagogues, mosques, or churches. Since all infirmities are worthy of compassion, perhaps this is a sore which respect for humanity might interdict exposing to daylight: even the animals lick their ulcers. How long will this immense flock of deicoles make us assist at the spectacle of their superstition? There seems to be no remedy—at least, for all those who have neither the leisure to learn nor the power to reflect. We must take account of them. It has ever been thus, and perhaps will be always so. Democritus and Protagoras hardly found themselves in any better company.

I say this spectacle is profoundly curious. I say no more. To be astonished is simple; to be angry extremely bad taste. The naturalist who studies the social life of hymenoptera soon ceases either to admire or be indignant at the doings or antics of bees, wasps, and ants. When young, we dreamt of reforming the world; later, we held that all is probably for the best, or for the least evil in the human ant-hill.

Besides, to one who follows and observes, even from afar, the transformations of the public mind, it becomes evident that the leaders of opinion, who are always in reality serifs, do little beyond transposing the political institutions or the religious and metaphysical beliefs of a nation. These great players on the lyre sing and play in one key that which has been noted in another. That is all. But fetishism looses nothing by all this. The Mexicans have placed at the feet of the Pope a crown of gold and precious stones destined for some statue of the Virgin. Leo XIII. blesses the crown at audiences accorded to the academicians. The French raise statues to their heroes, and, above all, to their heroine. The worship of Joan of Arc succeeds to that of the Madonna, as this last succeeded the worship of Isis. Yet these are men of the nineteenth century, doubtless in possession of "integral instruction," and not poor, ignorant monks. Well, in my opinion, this fetishism is well worth that of the Eternal Father.

I say that the most striking result of the knowledge of the world and of life, accumulated during two thousand years in human brains, is not that there is no God, Providence, immortal soul, etc., but that it is useless to discuss, save as an historian of language and ideas, conceptions which have been as necessary, but are as childish, as those of the devil, of ghosts, or of phlogisticon. No instructed person, capable of reflection, provided sincere and not under the weight of inherited physiological fatalities, admits that the causes of things are to be sought for outside the universe itself—that is to say, in nothingness; for what can there be outside all? The sane and penetrating reason of the old Greek philosophers long since posited the problem in the same terms as Laplace and Darwin.

I know well, and profess, that we have not, and cannot have, any other knowledge of ourselves and of the universe than one which is subjective and ideal, and that the reality of things is only a postulate. Such is the result of an analysis of the human understanding. But if the last word of science should be a supreme avowal of ignorance, assuredly it will not be an act of faith. Is it not enough to be ignorant that one must also be dupe? Nothing, absolutely nothing, as far as we can penetrate into infinity, leads us to think that that which now exists has not ever existed, under some form and in some condition. Nothing suggests the idea that the universe does not suffice for itself, its own cause, or, as says St. Beuve, all can be deduced from the eternity of matter.

That this matter is neither brute nor inert, in the sense of antique atomism, may be seen by the physico-chemical sciences. But if for life and the elementary properties of life the same eternity may be argued as for force and matter, it does not follow, in my opinion, that we must place consciousness among these, or any consciousness whatever among those primordial properties which are common to inorganic and organic existences. Nothing reveals the existence of consciousness, however elementary, neither in the sidereal universe, nor in the life of plants, nor in that of animals, until physiological division of labor has determined the appearance of nervous structure.

JULES SOURY.

—*Almanach de la Question Sociale.*

## "And a Good Judge, too!"

Talking of the Bench, there is a good story told of an American judge who occasionally relieved the monotony of his court with a quiet though telling observation. "And, gentlemen of the jury," said a certain flowery advocate pleading before his honor, "as I stand at this bar to-day in behalf of the prisoner, whose health is such that he may at any moment be called before a greater Judge than the judge of this court, I—" His honor rapped sharply on his desk. Counsel stopped suddenly, and looked up with an interrogation in his protesting face. "The advocate," said the Court, with great dignity, "will please confine himself to the case before the jury, and not permit himself to make invidious comparisons."

Two little girls were quarrelling the other day over the possession of a doll. Their struggle in time waxed fierce, and their mother attempted to interpose in a gentle, motherly way. "There, there, little girls, you mustn't quarrel like that; what do you read in your Bible?" "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," was the unexpected response of one of the little belligerents. And the struggle went on.



## ACID DROPS.

THE Duke and Duchess of York's second baby has been christened. The ceremony was an elaborate and costly affair. A special gold font was let into the ordinary one, and filled with Jordan water, which the officiating sky-pilot splashed on the royal infant. The *Daily Telegraph* reporter thinks it necessary to say that York's baby cried at this salutation. While the sky-pilot was invoking "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" the royal infant protested in the only way open to him against the whole performance. He was handed back to his nurse still snivelling. When he grows up he will not protest against religious rites. He will understand their efficacy in bamboozling the people.

Jordan water has long been used for royal christenings. It is now being patronised by a wider public. It is sent to England and other countries in tin bottles, and sprinkled over babies who cannot tell how it differs from water which comes from the domestic tap or the back-yard rain-barrel.

Alfred Austin, the new Tory-Christian Poet Laureate, has written another poem entitled "Who Would Not Die for England?" We could name one who wouldn't—at least one who won't. He would rather write for England, though some of us would sooner die than read his loyal effusions.

Hugh Kenny, a Rochdale operative, lost his young wife, who died in giving birth to her first (still-born) child. He naturally wished to bury them together, but Canon Boulaye, the Catholic priest to whom he applied, told him that it was impossible, as the child, not having been baptised, was not a Christian like its mother. The dead baby had to be taken out of the dead mother's arms, and buried in another part of the cemetery. Such are the consolations of religion!

The *Parish Councillor* (Feb. 14) copies a slashing exposure of the *Christian World* from *Plain Talk*. The writer points out that, while in its editorial columns it deprecates usury, the advertising columns insert the notices of the worst kind of money-lenders. The Rev. A. C. Perian says of the proprietor: "Members of his staff may denounce wrong-doers, but for himself he consents to receive a portion of their ill-gotten gains, and goes on publishing their pestilent puffery." In a recent issue of the *Parish Councillor* Mr. Farrow asks his readers to note "The proprietor of the *Christian World* is still inserting the advertisement of Townend's 'Pall Mall Bank'; he persists in this course in the face of my having proved in my pamphlet that Townend is an unscrupulous usurer, and that his advertisement is grossly misleading. I wonder whether the leaders of the Churches, the eminent Christian men who contribute signed articles to the *Christian World*, commending social righteousness and brotherhood, ever think about this matter—whether it ever occurs to them that the parallel column with the tout of the 60 per cent. usurer is just a little incongruous."

Miss Editha Lolita Montez Dis Debar, an American mejum who is well known to the police, now announces herself in the *New York Sunday World* as a re-incarnation of Madame Blavatsky. Theosophists doubt this, having H. P. B.'s word for it that in her next incarnation she would be a male. Those who know both ladies, however, allege that they are remarkably alike. Claude Falls Wright, secretary of the Theosophical Society, says: "Personally, I have met no less than five women who asserted that they were incarnations of the ego behind Madame Blavatsky. Dis Debar makes the sixth. She has nothing to do with the Society, has never done any work entitling her to recognition, and no member of the Society would, for an instant, accept her as a Theosophist."

Who says there are no miracles now-a-days? On the heels of the Röntgen photographs we read that the Jews of Glasgow have decided to excommunicate a person who has been charging extortionate rates of interest from certain Gentiles in Scotland.

A certain Miss Jackson, as we see from the *Madras Times* of January 30, has written a fifth gospel, being a resetting of the old four for children. This is how she tells the story of the Annunciation: "There was a kind look on the angel's face, and he spoke to her in such a gentle manner that her fear left her, and a quiet gladness came into her heart; for Gabriel told Mary that God was with her, and that he was about to send her a baby." Our Indian contemporary hopes that St. Jackson's Gospel will be excluded even from the apocrypha, at any and every œcumenical council of the future.

Church attendance is sadly decreasing at Birmingham.

According to the *Daily Post*, the morning and evening attendance at five large central churches is quite shocking. These churches offer the attraction of surpliced choirs and free seats, yet the worshippers, counted on a recent Sunday, were wretchedly few. The five gospel-shops contain seats for 8,850 people; in the afternoon the worshippers in all five numbered only 840, and in the evening 1,340. Oh, what a fall was there!

The *Dublin Journal* proposes to set up a "clerical will pillory." It mentions the case of Father Flood, who was executor and director of a will whereunder, out of five or six thousand, only £250 was to go to the children, and the great bulk to chapels and charities. The will was put aside, but, as the *Journal* remarks, "for one case that comes into court there are at least twenty cases where the victims are afraid, or have not the means, of seeking legal redress." The Church enriches itself by death-bed terrors, while any endowment of Freethought is illegal. Such is Christian justice.

Norman Kerr, the well-known teetotal doctor, writes to the *Church Times* that from an examination of communion port he holds it would be necessary, in administering the Sacred Eucharist, to put fourteen tablespoonfuls of water to one of wine in order that the communion may have no bad effect on reformed drunkards. Clerical writers in the *C. T.*, however, hold that to dilute the wine at all is probably to render the sacrament invalid.

It may be doubted if the advocacy of prohibition is as efficacious in the cause of temperance as the older method of persuasion. At any rate, with the increase of prosperity there is a marked advance in the drink bill of Great Britain, which, from £138,737,828 in 1894, rose to £142,414,812 in 1895. It is largely from the drink revenue that the Church hopes for support to its schools.

According to the *New York Journal* (Feb. 2), thousands of negroes throughout the South are settling up their worldly affairs preparatory to leaving the earth on March 5 next. On that day they firmly believe the world is to end. Gabriel is to blow his trumpet at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Jerusalem time. The signal, therefore, will be received in Georgia about sunrise.

When the blast echoes throughout the land, all good negroes, so they are told, will rise into the air, and by some celestial force be carried over land and sea to Jerusalem, where there is to be a grand "round up" of the faithful ere the journey to the skies is resumed. So thoroughly have these ideas taken possession of many of the negroes that they have already disposed of their worldly belongings. They have thrown up their jobs, and are simply waiting for the trumpet blast. Circulars, headed "Jesus is Coming," are scattered all over Georgia.

The chief propagator of this mania was Dr. J. S. Willetts, a faith-cure prophet, who was killed by the White Caps. But a worthy successor to his mantle was found in Dr. Anderson Rogers, who has also taken a leaf out of the book of Prophet Baxter. The motto of the believers is the saying of Jesus: "If a man shall keep my saying, he shall not see death."

March 5 is fixed as the time of the second coming of Christ by counting 1896 as 1900, the new creed holding that an error of more than four years was made when the system of reckoning as now used was introduced. They say the command in Mark xvi. 15, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," will have been carried out by March 5.

The Willettsites are not spending money for robes as did the Millerites, who expected the judgment day several years ago. The latter congregated on a large hill and awaited in vain for the coming of the Lord. The followers of the new creed will remain right in their homes until the summons they expect arrives. Mrs. Willetts says that she recently had a message from her departed husband in which he announced he was making arrangements for the reception of the faithful, and that he would be on hand early on the morning of March 5 to greet the saved. If Jesus Christ is aware of the folly his utterances have given rise to, he should surely be sorry he spoke.

Says the *Twentieth Century*: "The American missionaries have acquired a considerable portion of the Hawaiian Islands; English missionaries own large blocks of land in New Zealand, and we are informed that the father of Cecil Rhodes did some mission work in South Africa. He converted the Kaffirs just as his distinguished son is doing to-day—that is, he is converting Kaffir stock into money in the London market."

The same paper observes: "The Japanese are civilised.



They are keen observers. They do not like to hurt the missionaries, but they consider them a nuisance. A Shintoo priest said recently to an American missionary: "You are helping to destroy the belief of our people in the spiritual. But you are not converting them. They are simply becoming Atheists. Our educated classes now read French and English, and they learn from French theological works that Protestants are heretics, who will go to a warm place when they die, and from the English and American works that Roman Catholics are idolaters, who worship sticks and stones. And, again, have you not in your native land poor people deserving of your attention?"

The *Methodist Times* is wild with Dr. Rigg, the official head of the Methodist Education Department, because Mr. Purcell's *Life of Cardinal Manning* proved that Rigg was in correspondence with Manning, and distributing his tracts on the education question. Moreover, Dr. Rigg wrote to Manning about "our Methodist firebrand, Hugh Price Hughes." This is blasphemy to the readers of the *Methodist Times*.

*Chambers's Encyclopædia* is grossly unfair to men and women of sceptical opinions. The latest edition quotes a diatribe against Paine from Leslie Stephen, which the writer has apologised for; but there is no mention of this fact. Ingersoll is said to attract more attention than he deserves, and readers are referred for information about Bradlaugh to the libellous "Life," by Mackay (and a clique of other rascals)—a work which Bradlaugh proceeded against and had destroyed. "Ouida" is accused of "muscular heathenry" and "encyclopædic ignorance." There seems to be a good deal of "encyclopædic ignorance," or worse, about *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

We don't often look at the *Literary World*. It is a sort of offshoot from the *Christian World*, and it views literature through a religious medium. Nevertheless, it is not exactly a fatuous paper, and we do glance at it occasionally. Last week's issue contained a brief notice of *The Crucifixion Mystery*, by John Vickers. The notice is obviously meant to be smart, but it is really impertinent. We are told that the book "exhibits to perfection the credulity of scepticism," and there are several similar sneers at the author, but not a word is said about the drift of his argument. All the reader can learn—if he is ready to learn it—is that Mr. Vickers is a silly sceptic. And this is called criticism! We shall have to read *The Crucifixion Mystery*. It must have some merit to be treated in this fashion.

The *Literary World* has also some observations on Thomas Paine. It sees that the old abuse of this great Freethinker is played out, at least in decently well-informed circles; so it praises him considerably, but takes care to counteract the praise as far as possible by reservations, qualifications, and back-handed compliments. Paine is admitted to have been "a bold and inventive schemer" in politics and engineering, but then he had not "the steadiness and the penetration of a solidly able man." In other words, Paine was a man of ideas and convictions; he was not a Philistine of ability, who made the most of his powers in promoting his personal interest; he was troubled with principles, which are always apt to be burdensome; and so, instead of making a fortune, and leading an impeccably "respectable" life, he made acquaintance with hardship and imprisonment, and died amidst the curses of "decent" society. That he was an "able" man cannot be denied; it is only urged that he was not "solidly" able; that is, his ability was far more useful to the world than it was to himself; and men of that sort are ridiculously frivolous. The "solid" man puts on a big "corporation," and Paine went down thin to his grave.

It is hinted that Paine drew an ideal commonwealth. Nothing could be more absurd. His mind was eminently practical. Utopia did not fascinate him, and certainly it did not mislead him. The principles of *The Rights of Man* have largely been woven into the texture of the English constitution. Paine was not a social romancer. He was a pioneer of popular self-government.

The most famous sermon of Principal Caird was one which he preached before the Queen many years ago on "Religion in Common Things." He took for his text, "Not slothful in business" (Romans xii. 11). Caird did not choose to consult the Greek, or he would have known there was nothing about business in it. So that there was really no connection between the subject of this popular sermon and the true interpretation of the text on which it was ostensibly based.

In a similar way, what a number of sermons have been preached upon 1 John v. 7, disregarding the fact that that verse, like some others, is an arrant forgery. We have heard of one divine who used this verse in a friendly controversy on the Trinity. "Why," said his opponent, "you do not mean to say you are not aware that that verse is

spurious?" "Oh, yes," replied the man of God; "I know all about it; but I was not aware that you did."

One of the most amusing things in life is the fact that so many people consider themselves Christians, and are ready to do almost anything for their religion; and yet at every step they put their foot upon some command of Christ! They swear, though he forbade all swearing; they do not turn the other cheek, or lend the "cloak also"; they do not follow the example of the birds and lilies, and are just as anxious about to-morrow and this world's goods, pleasures, and affairs as Infidels and Atheists could be. Indeed, you can only learn that they are Christians from their tongues, which give the lie to their general conduct. The day when Christians went about in sheep skins and goat skins, or naked, destitute, and afflicted, is past, never to return. The followers of the lamb have learnt the art of reconciling Mammon and Jesus, although the two hate each other like mad.—*Liberator*.

The Rev. W. J. Jenkins, rector of Fillingham, but resident at Muswell Hill, is always in squabbles with somebody. He has been threatening to put the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor in motion against the magistrates at Highgate for ordering his removal from court. We should advise the reverend gentleman to restrain his Christian infirmity of temper, and keep out of police-courts, if possible, for an entire year.

Some funny matters cropped up in the action brought by the Rev. E. B. Ward against the Rev. E. B. Green, of St. Simon Zelotes, Bethnal Green, for the sum of a guinea for preaching a sermon. The Rev. Mr. Ward, it appeared, expected the curacy, but Mrs. Green said his housekeeper was too young. He had been dismissed, or rather asked to resign his position of chaplain at the Northern Hospital for alleged immorality; but, nonetheless, he held the bishop's licence to preach. The plaintiff said: "I did not think the morality of Bethnal Green was so high as to object to my young housekeeper; but I would agree to separate bedrooms." The Judge: "But the remedy you suggest, that of separate rooms, suggests and implies that some other system existed before you undertook, if appointed, to have a separate bedroom." After this admission the plaintiff lost his case. The defendant said: "If every blackleg were to charge for services rendered in view of a curacy, they would not need to trouble about getting one. They could get a living without." He evidently thinks there are many in the Church of no better character than the Rev. Mr. Ward.

An American minister is said to have announced at a meeting of his brethren that a worker in the Smithsonian Institution had discovered the color of sin. Some of the other ministers remarked that we were already informed by Scripture that the color of sin is scarlet, so there was no need for any research in that direction. It appeared, however, that experiments had shown that it is not of quite so deep a hue, but is merely "pinkish." This is found by submitting to a certain test the perspiration of persons when under the influence of some sinful passion. Persons of blue blood may be expected to perspire purple.

A former undergraduate of Cambridge, named Green, brought an action against the Master and Fellows of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, for breach of contract. Mr. Green gave up attending the college chapel on religious grounds, and claimed exemption under the Universities Test Acts; but this was refused, and eventually his name was erased from the college list. His plea to be re-instated, and enabled to take his degrees, was disallowed by the judges.

M. Emile Vandervelde gives, in the *Almanach de la Question Sociale*, statistics showing that in Belgium the departments which show a majority of Catholics also show the greatest criminality, while the liberal and freethinking portions show a minimum of crime.

At Courtrai, in Belgium, they are getting up a grand procession for Whitsuntide in honor of the Holy Hair of Jesus Christ, which Courtrai claims to have possessed since 1279, when it was brought there by Count Philippe d'Alsace, who was given the auburn locks of his Savior in return for his bravery in the Holy Land. The priests at Courtrai, having seen what money was brought to Trèves by exhibiting the Holy Coat, have decided to exhibit the Holy Hair, and to institute a procession which shall outrival the famous procession of the Holy Blood at Bruges. There is money in it.

Speaking of the number of churches he has known to have been injured by lightning, earthquake, etc., and of the number of sudden deaths of preachers, the *Blue Grass Blade* editor says: "If the lightning, or paralysis, or a cyclone, or an earthquake, or some other of the sportive dispensations of providence, were to knock out old Bob Ingersoll and two or three of us Infidel editors, in pretty rapid succession, the



whole Christian world would see 'the hand of God' in it, and would start a boom in religion that would make forty million people join the Church."

The Rev. F. Passmore (of Denver) says, in the *Coming Nation*: "One of the heart-bleeding, sad, and humiliating scenes of this age is that of the bishops and great preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church prostituting the power and influence of the Church of God at the feet of the millionaires, the corrupt Republican party, and saloon power of this nation. There can be no liberty while this remains. What a sight to see—our bishops, millionaires, corrupt Republican politicians, and saloon men living in fine mansions, clothed in the splendors of the earth, and living on the fat of the land, while millions are deprived of justice, and consequently are hungry, workless, and homeless."

The editor of the *Christian Soldier* has been put in a pious rage by receiving a copy of the *Crescent*, and finding that the editor thinks there are worse atrocities than those in Armenia. It says: "A fearful and eternal fate awaits both the lawyer-editor and his bloodthirsty royal client. It is a fearful thing to tempt the living God. Unless he repents and comes to the arms of Jesus Christ, whom he is daily recrucifying by his vile apostasy, the name of Quilliam, the English Turk, will be branded in history with those of Tom Paine, Voltaire, Bradlaugh, and other infidels, who, by this time, have learned by bitter experience the folly of rejecting salvation through Jesus Christ." There is no accounting for tastes. Some people would rather go to hell with the company named than inhabit heaven along with the editor of the *Christian Soldier*.

Mr. Morley's Montrose candidature has called attention to the fact that by an Act for securing the Protestant religion and Presbyterian Church Government, passed separately by the Estates of Scotland and the Parliament of England, and afterwards embodied in the Acts of Union, 1707, the established Presbyterian Kirk cannot be touched by the British Parliament. The only way apparently to deal constitutionally with the question would be to give the Scotch Home Rule, and let them decide for themselves. Parliament, however, is not likely to allow its own jurisdiction to be overruled by any old Acts, and probably some lawyer will discover a way to drive a coach and six even over the Acts of Union.

We are informed that a somewhat similar betrayal of trust to that instanced in the administration of Lord Gifford's will has taken place with regard to the college left for the higher education of women by Thomas Holloway. We hope the matter will be looked into.

The *British Weekly* says that the Bishop of Manchester was asked not long ago what was the first book that had influenced him in his early years. His lordship replied that his first ideas of another world were derived from reading *Jack and the Beanstalk*. He believed that to many little children this well-known tale brought a first suggestion of something above and beyond this world. We should fancy the story to the full as instructive and credible as those of Balaam and of Jonah.

Mr. J. O'Neill, the author of *The Night of the Gods*, looked on *Jack and the Beanstalk* as representing a real feature of ancient religion, when it was actually considered easy to climb up to the sky. Certainly the old myths give many stories of such ascents and descents, all true as gospel.

In Cincinnati the Roman Catholic Church owns a million dollars worth of property, other than that used as churches. Catholics in office having refused to put it on the list for taxation, a suit has been filed for a *mandamus*, requiring it to be set down for taxation. The suit will be an important one.

The Chicago Board of Education have published a revised Bible, in which they have considerably improved the handiwork of the Holy Ghost. They have cut out the Song of Solomon *in toto*, also the stories of Abraham and Sarah, and the imprecatory Psalms. The story of Joseph is told omitting the episode of Mrs. Potiphar. The whole volume consists only of two hundred pages of large print.

Peter Lombard says in the *Church Times* that there is at Varese a statue of the Virgin with the inscription in Latin, "Come unto me all ye that labor, and I will give you rest." P. L. thinks this an awfully blasphemous misapplication of scripture. It would be hard, however, to say why it is not just as appropriate to a woman as to a man.

Miss Mary Clarke recently wrote to the *Echo* suggesting that, "as Mr. Wilson Barrett's play of *The Sign of the Cross* seems a great financial success, perhaps the persecutions and tortures inflicted by Christians on those who differed from them might prove equally remunerative. Someone might

write a moving drama on the persecutions of the Waldensians, or on harrowing torture scenes in the chambers of the inquisition."

"Hudor Genone" writes in the *Metaphysical Magazine* on "The Holy Trinity of Science." According to Mr. Roe, Relation (that which is), Action (that which does), and Volition (that which desires) is the triune God, without body, parts, or passions, in which we live, move, and have our being.

Dr. Joseph Parker is renowned for his modesty. Everybody in England knows how he excels in that characteristic. Imagine our surprise, then, on reading that a Swiss pastor, who recently visited England, speaks of Dr. Parker in this fashion. "Never in all my life," he says, "have I heard a man so frankly boast of himself, nor could I believe it possible."

Dr. Pierson did not get the pulpit of the late Mr. Spurgeon. However, he is not going to forsake us. He has undertaken a mission through England, Scotland, and Ireland. Possibly by way of pre-advertisement, he states that he had a fresh spiritual experience on August 15, which he regards as a precious anointing for his new labors. Dr. Pierson adds, rather maliciously, that he regrets he did not have this experience while he was preaching (*pro tem.*) at the Tabernacle.

A Palermo church has a miracle-working Madonna, who was reputed to be the wealthiest in all Italy. But, alas! her splendor is departed. She was unable to work a miracle on certain thieves who broke into the church, and divested her of twenty pairs of diamond ear-rings, dozens of valuable bracelets, and other precious finery. Unless the police are sharper than the Madonna, those thieves will quietly enjoy the proceeds of their robbery.

Four hundred Hindoo gods were recently sold in London for £71. This is about three-and-sixpence apiece. Will the Trinity fetch as much at the end of the twentieth century?

In the current number of Dr. Bernhard Slade's *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* Dr. Cheyne has an article, in English, on "The Date and Origin of the Ritual of the Scapegoat." Dr. Cheyne allows that "the post-exilic Jews had the custom of propitiation of dangerous goblins called serim by sacrifices (2 Kings iii. 8; 2 Chronicles xi. 15; Leviticus xvii. 7), and also that the goat which was allotted to Azazel must originally have been a sacrifice to some superhuman being. Doughty found that the Arabs of the desert still sacrifice goats to jinn, but Dr. Cheyne argues that the object of the ritual was to provide the ignorant people with a visible sign of the removal of the sins of the year, and to do away with the cultus of goats." He dates the ritual about the fourth century B.C.

"I am innocent, your honor. Heaven is my witness." "I am sorry," said the sympathetic justice. "Your witness is beyond the jurisdiction of the court. Five years."

There are many more vital points of contact between the New Testament and the Talmud than divines seem yet fully to realise; for such terms as Redemption, Baptism, Grace, Faith, Salvation, Regeneration, Son of Man, Son of God, and Kingdom of Heaven were not, as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudic Judaism.....The fundamental mysteries of the new faith are matters totally apart, but the ethics in both are in their broad outlines identical. The grand dictum, "Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by," is quoted by Hillel, the president, at whose death *Jesus was ten years of age*, not as anything new, but as an old and well-known dictum "that compriseth the whole law."—*Em. Deutsch, "Quarterly Review," October, 1876.*

### How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 23, North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell, at 7.30.

March 1, New Brompton.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 23, Manchester. March 1, Camberwell; 8, Sheffield; 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—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.

F. LANSDELLS.—Pleased, though not at all surprised, that Mr. Watts gave such high satisfaction at Ipswich.

JOSEPH SEDDON.—(1) Mr. Foote was in the doctor's hands, and is not even yet restored to his usual good health. He had to send a substitute to Camberwell and Islington as well as to Edmonton. You will be able to understand now the full depth of that evangelist's egotism who asserts that Mr. Foote did not lecture at Edmonton through fear of him. The last time Mr. Foote saw that evangelist was in the Court of Queen's Bench, where his printer and publisher, whom he had indemnified, were condemned to pay damages and costs for a filthy libel on the Hall of Science. (2) Your lecture notice, not being marked as such on the envelope, was forwarded to the editor in Scotland. Paragraph is inserted this week.

TRUTHSEEKER (Kettering).—Many of Calvin's writings are translated into English, including his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. We do not know of any journal devoted to the advocacy of his views. Of course the Scottish Presbyterians are all Calvinists, though they do not wear that label.

VIGILANT.—(1) Not at all annoyed. The lady's letter is amusing. She thinks Mr. Foote must be prejudiced if he does not share her opinion of Mr. Barrett's play. She does not appreciate his criticism of the play, because people go to a theatre to be amused rather than instructed. But this is to lose sight of the fact that Mr. Barrett claims more than entertainment for his production. And what is there amusing in torture and massacre? Mr. Foote's criticism of *The Sign of the Cross* will be published, and you will be able to judge of it for yourself. (2) The Glasgow Freethinkers have no power to prevent the abuse of the Gifford Trust. It is no use to blame them.

S. HOLMES (Southport), in sending a cheque for Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, writes: "I think your scheme is admirable. Bolton was the first evidence I had of it, and I must certainly say that I now think it the best thing ever attempted for bringing Secularism more into contact with the people." Mr. Holmes hopes we shall succeed in exciting the enthusiasm of certain Freethinkers who, being saved themselves, have done little for the salvation of others. We hope so too.

R. W. TRENAMAN.—Many thanks for paper and cuttings.

F. TODD, secretary of the West London Branch, has removed; his new address being 21 Abdale-road, Shepherds Bush. Lecturers and others please note.

J. POTTER.—Prophet Baxter's book, and his subsequent fresh prophecies, have been dealt with more than once in our columns. Baxter is no fool, but there are plenty of other fools to keep him going.

MARY HUMPHREYS.—Shall appear.

P. H. SMITH.—We cannot insert advertisements in this column. Mr. Forder may be able to find you a purchaser. Apply to him direct, at 23 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Mr. Thompson (Hull), 10s. 6d.; Thomas Johnson, 5s.

JOHN SANDERSON.—Your second letter to hand. It is all right now, and acknowledged. Mr. Foote is rather better, but needs a holiday for complete restoration to health.

SECULARIST.—Sorry we cannot make use of your copy.

S. J. B.—Shall appear.

H. O. SCHOFIELD.—It was an oversight. The Newark Branch, just formed, was not started through Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, but independently. Much pleased to hear that six new members have joined this Branch since your previous communication.

PETE KAVANAGH.—A good idea if newsgagents would use the name of this journal on billheads. But they won't. Bigotry is too rampant yet. Thanks, all the same.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for the packet of cuttings, etc. The reference to Mr. Foote in the *Free Review* hardly calls for a special reply.

CASTOR.—We are obliged for the extract.

G. E. C. NAEWIGER.—Pleased to hear that the Hull audience, among whom you sat, were so delighted with Mr. Foote's lectures. Shall be glad to receive any local paper containing a notice of the meetings. You need not have refrained from speaking to Mr. Foote personally.

W. SIMONS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Much obliged for the cuttings.

G. HILL.—The extract will be useful. Glad to hear that you circulate *The Age of Reason*, *The Bible Hand-book*, and other of our publications, amongst your friends and acquaintances.

K. W. B.—Jokes are welcome. Thanks for your interesting letter. We have often recommended leaving a copy of the *Freethinker* in the train or tramcar. Pleased to know that you endeavor to promote our circulation in this way.

E. S. H.—(1) The passage seems plain enough. It means that the Christian apologists have to explain the connection they allege between the Christian Sabbath, which was observed in the second century, and the "event that was said to have occurred nearly seventy years before that century commenced"—namely, the Resurrection. It seems pretty evident that the Christians just adopted the Pagan Sunday (Sun's-Day). (2) What is the use of asking us questions about "a certain Atheist"? What Atheist? (3) Read Darwin and Huxley for yourself.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Homeopathic Review—Parish Councillor—Sun—Workers' Friend—Western Figaro—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—Freidenker—Dunoon Observer—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Labor Leader—Dublin Journal—Irish Life—New York Sun—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Torch of Anarchy—Freethought Ideal—Twentieth Century—Open Court—Liberator—La Justice—Reading Observer—Leeds Mercury—Crescent—New York Journal—Progressive Thinker—Natal Witness.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

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 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 23 Stonecutter-street, London, 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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 23 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

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.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (Feb. 23) at Camberwell. We are unable to announce the subject, as the secretary has not forwarded the weekly notice. Possibly it will be "The Sign of the Cross," which was the first subject on the list that Mr. Foote sent to Camberwell for selection.

The *Dunoon Observer* gives nearly a two-column report of Mr. Foote's lecture on "Who Wrote the Bible?" Amongst the local "Echoes" appears the following: "Foote put his foot into the Bible question on Monday night." Omit the word "question," and the statement is correct.

A briefer report appeared in the *Dunoon Herald*, which mentions that there was "a crowded audience."

Mr. Foote's lecture at Greenock was reported in the local *Telegraph*, which noticed "the hall being crowded." An editorial note on the subject, appearing in another column, was as follows: "Great interest was taken in Wednesday night's Secularist lecture, and Mr. Foote did not get it all his own way either. He might, however, have been opposed to better advantage. If a discussion was to take place at all, the exponents of Christianity should have been represented by 'heavier metal,' for it is hardly possible to effectively reply to a carefully-prepared lecture with a few cursory remarks of an impromptu character."

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, upon "Woman: Past, Present, and Future," to a capital audience, the hall being filled in every part. The lecture was enthusiastically received. There was no discussion, although Mr. Watts made a severe attack upon the Church for its treatment of woman. A Christian gentleman asked a few questions. Miss Vance presided, and made a brief but appropriate and facetious speech, which was warmly received.

To-day, Sunday, February 23, Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. Of course, our Lancashire friends will, as usual, muster in full force. Mr. Watts's lecture at Todmorden is postponed, as no hall can be obtained for the date announced.

The West London Branch has arranged for a course of lectures to be given on Sunday evenings, during the month of March, in the Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Robert Forder will open the course, his subject



being "The Bible and Ancient Monuments." Freethinkers in the West of London should do their best to make these lectures a success. The admission is free, but reserved seats can be obtained, price 3d. and 6d.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, President of the American Secular Union, sends a strong official invitation to Messrs. Foote and Watts to visit America this year and attend the Secular Union's Annual Congress in October. Mr. Putnam's letter will be printed in our next issue.

One of the most curious facts in the world's religious movements of to-day is the introduction of Buddhism into the British colonies of South Africa. It has been introduced from Ceylon by Buddhist monks, who hope that their religion will humanise the African black. The Sikhs, and other warlike races of British India, have been brought over to South Africa for service in the police, and it is said that they are uniting with the Buddhist missionaries in the effort to convert the Nyassa-land regions to Orientalism. Buddhism, unlike Hinduism, is a missionary creed, and seeks to convert the world to its belief.

Mr. Harry Simpson, secretary of the Manchester Cremation Society, lectured for the Manchester Branch on Sunday evening, February 9. The lecture—which was a most interesting one—was illustrated by means of an oxy-hydrogen lantern, which the Branch has recently purchased. There was a large attendance, and the lecture was much appreciated. Mr. Simpson is a thorough Freethinker, and one who is not afraid of expressing his views.

The President of the Folk Lore Society, Mr. E. Clodd, in his address to the Society, "went for" baptismal regeneration and a whole host of Christian superstitions. There was a nice row in consequence, some pious members threatening resignation if the address were printed, as it was an attack upon their religion, etc. The council had a meeting on the subject. Good sense prevailed, and the address will, as usual, be printed in *Folk Lore*. If the narrow-minded secede and are replaced by more liberal members, the Society will be all the stronger.

The members and friends of the East London Branch hold a tea and concert at the Aldgate Pump Hotel, 26 Aldgate, on Sunday, March 1. Tickets can be obtained from Mr. Warren, 20 Rhodeswell-road, E.

Monsieur Jules Soury, from whom we translate an article entitled "Fetishism," is one of the most pronounced and learned of French Freethinkers, and has occupied since 1865 an important position in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Among his Freethought works may be mentioned *The Religion of Israel* and *Jesus and the Gospel*, the former of which shows the savagery which underlay Judaism, and the latter maintains that Jesus suffered from cerebral affection. Both these are translated into English. M. Soury has also published works on *The Bible and Archaeology*, *A Breviary of the History of Materialism*, *Studies of Psychology*, and *Contemporary Psychological Doctrine*.

### Renan on his Sister Henriette.

To tell the truth, she never thought of reward. That interested view, which often spoils the sacrifices inspired by positive religions, leading us to think that virtue is practised only for the usury to be derived from it, never entered into her great soul. When she lost her religious faith, her faith in duty was not lessened, because that faith was the echo of her inner nobility. Virtue with her was not the fruit of a theory, but the result of an absolute disposition of nature. She did good for its own sake, and not for her own salvation. She loved the beautiful and the true, without any of that calculation which seems to say to God: "Were it not for Thy hell or Thy paradise, I should not love Thee."

Her religion had attained to the last degree of purification. She absolutely rejected the supernatural.....About a month before her death we had a religious conversation with good Dr. Gaillardot on the terrace before our house at Ghazir. She held me back from the abyss of formulas in regard to an unconscious deity and a purely ideal immortality, into which I allowed myself to be drawn. Without being a Deist in the vulgar sense, she did not wish religion to be reduced to a pure abstraction. In practice, at least, everything was clear to her. "Yes," she said to us, "at my last hour I shall have the comfort of thinking that I have done as much good as possible; if there be anything which is not vanity, it is that."—*Selected by L. Levine.*

"Mamma, didn't the vicar say that the natives of Gongaloo wore no clothes?" "Yes, darling." "Then why did papa put a button in the box?"

### INSTINCT AND INNATE IDEAS.

THE term "instinct" is very vague and ill-defined. It is commonly employed to denote any action, or even any feeling, which is not dictated by conscious reasoning, whether it is or is not the result of previous experience. It is "instinct" which leads a chicken just hatched to pick up a grain of corn; parental love is said to be "instinctive"; the drowning man who clutches at a straw does it "instinctively"; and the hand that accidentally touches something hot is drawn back by "instinct." Thus "instinct" is made to cover everything, from a simple reflex movement, in which the organ of consciousness need not be at all implicated, up to a complex combination of acts directed towards a definite end, and accompanied by intense consciousness.

But this loose employment of the term "instinct" really accords with the nature of the thing; for it is wholly impossible to draw any line of demarcation between reflex actions and instincts. If a frog, on the flank of which a little drop of acid has been placed, rubs it off with the foot of the same side, and, if that foot be held, performs the same operation, at the cost of much effort, with the other foot, it certainly displays a curious instinct; but it is no less true that the whole operation is a reflex action of the spinal cord, which can be performed quite as well when the brain is destroyed, and between which and simpler reflex actions there is a complete series of gradations. In like manner, when an infant takes the breast, it is impossible to say whether the action should be termed instinctive or reflex.

What are usually called the instincts of animals are, however, acts of such a nature that, if they were performed by men, they would involve the generation of a series of ideas, and of inferences from them; and it is a curious, and apparently an insoluble, problem whether they are, or are not, accompanied by cerebral changes of the same nature as those which give rise to ideas and inferences in ourselves. When a chicken picks up a grain for example, are there, firstly, certain sensations, accompanied by the feeling of relation between the grain and its own body; secondly, a desire for the grain; thirdly, a volition to seize it? Or, are only the sensational terms of the series actually represented in consciousness?

The latter seems the more probable opinion, though it must be admitted that the other alternative is possible; but in this case the series of mental states which occurs is such as would be represented in language by a series of propositions, and would afford proof positive of the existence of innate ideas, in the Cartesian sense. Indeed, a metaphysical fowl, brooding over the mental operations of his fully-fledged consciousness, might appeal to this fact as proof that, in the very first action of his life, he assumed the existence of the Ego and the non-Ego, and of a relation between the two.

In all seriousness, if the existence of instincts be granted, the possibility of the existence of innate ideas, in the most extended sense ever imagined by Descartes, must also be admitted. In fact, Descartes illustrates what he means by an innate idea, by the analogy of hereditary diseases or hereditary mental peculiarities, such as generosity. On the other hand, hereditary mental tendencies may justly be termed instincts; and still more appropriately might those special proclivities which constitute what we call genius come into the same category.

The child who is impelled to draw as soon as it can hold a pencil; the Mozart who breaks out into music as early; the boy Pascal, who evolved Euclid out of his own consciousness: all these may be said to have been impelled by instinct as much as are the beaver and the bee.—*T. H. Huxley, "Life of Hume."*

From the first council of Nice to the last council of the Evangelical Alliance, the history of the Galilean Church has been the history of an unremitting war against nature; and the propaganda of her dogmas could prosper only at the expense of our earthly happiness. The direct results of that warfare would be amply sufficient to account for the fact that the Age of Faith, the era when the rule of the cross maintained its supremacy, was the dreariest period in the history of the human race; but, unhappily, those results were not confined to the suppression of harmless amusements and scientific investigations. It is easier to pervert than to suppress a natural instinct. Wherever pessimism crushed the flowers of this earth, the soil began to teem with poisonous weeds. The suppression of healthful pastimes begat a passion for vicious pastimes, and made the fancied identity of sin and pleasure a sad reality.—*Felix L. Oswald.*

Mrs. G.—"Mr. Henpeck seems to be going to the bad since his wife died." Mr. G.—"Yes; her last words were that she'd meet him in heaven. So he's taking measures to prevent it."



## THE MERCIES OF PROVIDENCE.

ANOTHER calamity has transpired which may be ascribed to the merciful dispensations of Providence. The unprecedented floods which have been desolating the Osage Valley in Missouri are quite as rare as unacceptable in the winter season.

The Lisbon earthquake made an infidel of Goethe, and it would be a matter of no great surprise if there were some few of those unhappy sufferers in Missouri whose homes were devastated, whose babes were drowned, and whose hearths are desolate by reason of the dreadful visitation Christmas Eve—I say it would be no surprise to me if some of those miserable beings should in future fail to celebrate the birthday of Christ with the customary religious fervor, and perhaps sing the song of his mercies in a somewhat weaker strain.

But, of course, we cannot penetrate the inscrutable mysteries of a merciful Divinity, and perhaps it would be best to say no more of this. Yet the heart goes out in sympathy to the occupants of those stricken homes who have no shelter from the howling blasts that sweep down from the north. The inscrutable mysteries of a merciful Divinity! One must confess that there is something inexplicable and mysterious pervading the attribute of mercy when applied to the aforesaid Divinity.

The losses in that river valley will aggregate millions of dollars. Where once were fertile fields, where crops were grown and cattle grazed, and where the flowers grew, now nothing may be seen but the bleak surface of sand-bar upturned to the winter's storm.

In the face of such vivid facts, is it not mockery to talk of "mercy," when none has been displayed? The singular individual who "plants his footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm" is either highly blameable for the misfortunes which befall mankind, or else they are entirely beyond his control. If the latter is true, he is too impotent to maintain his sovereignty; but if the former is a fact, he is a barbarous and cruel despot, who deserves not the obedience of his subjects.

It is not a little remarkable that men will adhere to the standard of one who demonstrates his affection for his friends by administering to them a severe castigation as the first mark of his favor; for it is said, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

And it is passing strange that recruits can be obtained under a banner within whose folds lurks the greater portion of life's ills and sorrows, in whose shadows is pestilence, and whose protection is desolation and woe. And, too, what good can be expected of a master who promises a crown, and bestows no earnest of his good intentions but the badge of servitude? Very odd, indeed! Yet it is answered, "God's ways are not our ways." Fortunately for us, they are not. If a man should dispense to his fellows the same treatment accorded them by the deity, he would soon find himself in the penitentiary. I allude to the practice of laying waste whole farms, and the committing various other pernicious depredations not at all consistent with the well-being of society, and altogether incompatible with the spirit of universal love. This may be an evidence of friendship, but fellow-feeling is not usually indicated by cuffs and blows. A parent may chastise his child moderately without incurring the indignation of the community; but if he beat it to death he can scarcely be presumed to have committed the deed through motives of kindness.

Men may have much to be thankful for, but none but the most ignoble slaves can bless the hand that wields the scourge. And yet this passive submission is called Christian fortitude! It is Christian imbecility. It is well that man should maintain that magnanimity of spirit, that greatness of mind, which enables him to breast the storm and move serenely through the most trying difficulties; this is true greatness, and is a distinctive peculiarity of the grandest human characters. But to feel a sense of gratitude towards some imaginary being who is deemed the author of all the mischief is the height of folly, and can only be denominated a most egregious absurdity.

Common sense amounts to something. The "firm and unalterable experience" which Hume extols is entitled to rather more credit than the roving creations of Hebrew fancy, and the burden of proof ought certainly to be on those who assert the improbable. They talk of faith, but

I apprehend a reasonable man will have little faith in the goodness of one so little distinguished for complaisance and civility. The so-called dealings of God with man evidence a unique idea of justice; they bear the stamp of a barbarous age.

It is not desired to deaden the human heart to the emotions of gratitude; I hate an ingrate. But it does seem that gratitude should be yielded to whom it is due, and naught but the blind and imperturbable credulity of misguided zealots could ever bestow it elsewhere.

—Independent Pulpit.

SPEED MOSBY.

## THE FATE OF PIOUS DAN.

"Run down and get the doctor, quick!"  
Cried Jack Bean with a whoop:  
"Run, Dan; for mercy's sake be quick—  
Our baby's got the croup!"  
But Daniel shook his solemn head,  
His sanctimonious brow,  
And said: "I cannot go, for I  
Must read my Bible now;  
For I have regular hours to read  
The Scripture for my spirit's need."

Said Silas Gove to Pious Dan:  
"Our neighbor, 'Rastus Wright,  
Is very sick. Will you come down  
And watch with him to-night?"  
"He has my sympathy," says Dan,  
"And I would sure be there  
Did I not feel an inward call  
To spend the night in prayer.  
Some other man with Wright must stay;  
Excuse me, while I go and pray."

"Old Briggs has fallen in the pond!"  
Cried little Bijah Brown;  
"Run! pious Dan, and help him out,  
Or else he sure will drown!"  
"I trust he'll swim ashore," said Dan,  
"But now my soul is awed,  
And I must meditate upon  
The goodness of the Lord;  
And nothing merely temporal ought  
To interrupt my holy thought."

So Daniel lived a pious life,  
As Daniel understood;  
But all his neighbors thought he was  
Too pious to be good.  
And Daniel died, and then his soul,  
On wings of hope elate,  
In glad expectancy flew up  
To Peter's golden gate.  
"Now let your gate wide open fly;  
Come, hasten, Peter. Here am I."

"I'm sorry, Pious Dan," said he,  
"That time will not allow,  
But you must wait a space, for I  
Must read my Bible now."  
So Daniel waited long and long,  
And Peter read all day.  
"Now, Peter, let me in," he cried.  
Said Peter: "I must pray;  
And no mean temporal affairs  
Must ever interrupt my prayers."

Then Satan, who was passing by,  
Saw Dan's poor, shivering form,  
And said: "My man, it's cold out here;  
Come down where it is warm."  
The angel baby of Jack Bean,  
The angel, 'Rastus Wright,  
And old Briggs, a white angel, too,  
All chuckled with delight:  
And Satan said: "Come, Pious Dan,  
For you are just my style of man."

—New York Sun.

SAM WALTER FOSS.

A tedious, monotonous sky-pilot who had exhausted the patience of his hearers by an elaborate dissertation on the four greater prophets, to their sad disgust passed on to the minor ones, and asked: "And now, my brethren, where shall we place Hosea?" A man rose from the congregation and made answer: "You can place him here, sir; I'm off."



## ADAPTATION, NOT DESIGN.

To my mind, there is no evidence of forethought or of intention in Nature. She is eyeless, earless, voiceless, and reasonless. Hence, she has no purpose. She simply moves, having no power to rest. Her phenomena are the products of matter, whose predominant characteristic is never-ending activity.

If this activity has produced phenomena which seem to correspond to other phenomena, it is not proof of foresight and of design, but simply of adaptation, which is effected by the more pliant organisms fitting themselves to those more nearly fixed and unyielding. Useful structures have been improved, while very faulty ones—those so poor as to lose their utility—have fallen into disuse, become rudimentary, and in many cases no doubt have been entirely obliterated.

In the case of animals, plants, and many geological formations, it is evident that structures have been modified by the circumstances with which they came in contact. Why is not the same true of the various organs of man's body, and even of his mental and moral characteristics?

I have been asked by advocates of the "design theory" if "the wonderful adaptation of the eye to light did not prove that it was designed to meet such requirements." I answer, "No." The adaptation, such as it is, proves that the eye, in its efforts to inform the brain of external circumstances, has developed itself into a very useful organ of surprisingly ingenious mechanism.

If we should admit an evidence of design in the above case, we would be forced by the imperfections of the eye to admit that it was designed by a very limited power.

Structures, faculties, and propensities have improved and strengthened themselves in accordance with the degree of usefulness of their activity. I find it easy to account for the evil in man by the fact that these propensities have, at some time, been beneficial to the individual or to the race.

In the realm of life, only active structures thrive. When they cease to be active, they degenerate and die, and their component parts are, by degrees, taken up by other organisms. They are active only as they are useful. When their utility ceases, their activity ceases also, and decline and death ensue.

Thus we have a complete solution of the apparent "marks of design"; and it will be fortunate, indeed, when all terms which can be construed to mean design or intention shall be dropped from Liberal and scientific literature. They have properly no place in dealing with any theory of the universe, save that of creative intelligence. Only intelligence can form or execute a plan; but in the operations of nature, where a blind yet incessant force is ever at work, things arrange themselves with a degree of order, just as pebbles in a basket, by being continuously shaken, will arrange themselves with a degree of regularity according to their sizes.

—*Boston Investigator.*

LOU LAWRENCE.

## Colonel Ingersoll on Vivisection.

The initial number of an excellent quarterly paper, published by the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, has been received. Its chief contents are "The Personal Experiences of Two American Anti-Vivisectionists in Various Countries," and an appendix by Robert G. Ingersoll. The "experiences" comprise several interesting accounts of the journeyings of Philip G. Peabody and Dr. George Baudry among European laboratories. The following remarks are an extract from the appendix contributed by Colonel Ingersoll: "Vivisection is the disgrace and shame of some of the sciences. A good man would no more think of flaying a living animal than of murdering his mother. It is wonderful that it ever occurred to any human being to dissect any living animal; to so fasten a horse or dog that he could not resist, and then proceed to cut him to pieces for the purpose of ascertaining certain facts that, by no possibility, can be of real use to any human being. It is still more wonderful that anybody ever did this. The man who cuts a hoof from a living horse is capable of committing any crime that does not require courage. Such an experiment can be of no use. Millions of living animals have been cut to pieces. Millions of experiments have been tried; all the nerves have been touched. Every possible agony has been inflicted. People can read these reports. There is no need of repeating such savage experiments. I believe that it is the duty of every civilized man to do what he can to prevent the infamous practice of vivisection."

The Infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought, the creditors of all the years to be.—*Ingersoll.*

## A MODEL MISSIONARY.

If Mr. William Day, of Canbury Park-road, Kingston, who carries on the business of missionary, finds himself as destitute of faith and good works at the end of his terrestrial journey as he was of a genuine railway ticket at Maldon Station of the South-Western Railway, it is to be feared that the celestial janitors will treat him even more severely than mundane magistrates, "and cast him into oblivion." This gentleman is in the habit of impressing his deep piety on the public by carrying about with him a black bag on which are painted, in large letters, the words: "After Death is Judgment." He would have done better to use the money he spent on the artist in purchasing a railway ticket, like ordinary Christians, who do not require to carry a sign-board with them. When his fraud was discovered by the ticket-collector he attempted a game of bluff, showed him the text on his bag, and indignantly demanded, "Do you think a man in my position would defraud the company?" Afterwards he saw that such a course would have no effect; then, like Uriah Heep, he became "werry 'umble," and wrote to the South-Western authorities a letter, in which he referred them to the 1st Corinthians, chap. vi., verse 7, where they would find written the consoling words, "Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" Was it not far better to follow the advice of St. Paul than adopt the un-Christian attitude of persecution, and thus bring a reproach on the religion they all cherished? When smitten on the one cheek, were they not told to turn the other? Apparently the missionary labored under the impression that, because he had defrauded the company of one journey, they ought to give him another for nothing. Obviously, it is impossible for railway directors to do justice to their shareholders on such terms, so the gentleman, with his text-covered black bag, was duly forced to appear before the Kingston Bench of magistrates, to whom he practically offered no defence for his breach of the Ten Commandments, as well as of the South-Western's bye-laws, but called a witness who certified that Mr. Day was a "consistent Christian." The Bench repudiated the description, saw hypocrisy in the case, and ordered the missionary to pay a fine of £2, with 12s. 6d. costs. The one bright feature in the course of the proceedings was the admission by the defendant that he was "deeply ashamed and humiliated," and that the conviction would be a "severe lesson" to him. There is always joy over a repentant sinner, and if the man will in future leave his black bag at home and buy his railway tickets like a real Christian, he may yet issue forth into the full light of a perfect Day.—*Daily Telegraph.*

## THE PRODIGAL SON UP TO DATE.

THERE lived a wealthy Christian in a place remote from town;  
His name—but tell it not in Gath—was Jeremiah Brown.  
He dwelt in a secluded spot, shut out from worldly strife,  
And, like his God, ne'er did a stroke of labor all his life.

Now, Jeremiah Brown Esquire possessed an only son,  
Who was a great deal more than seven, for he was twenty-one.  
A dismal life this young man led; for Brown the live-long day  
Did nothing else but read the "Word of God" to him, and pray!

This pious life at length upon Brown Junior did pall;  
It seemed as if it didn't suit the young man's health at all.  
"Perhaps," thought Brown, "he wants a change—he is so pale and thin";  
So up to town he sent him, with a month's supply of tin.

Now, with religion, by his dad, he had been dosed so long,  
As you'd expect, when "on his own," he came it rather strong;  
He visited a skating rink, a playhouse, and a ball,  
And, sad to say, was even seen inside a music hall!

He led so gay a life, 'tis sad, but I the truth must speak,  
His money lasted not a month, but only just a week.  
And when he found, save railway fare, a penny he did lack,  
He took the next train out of town, and to his dad went back.

## MORAL.

Now, all you wicked infidels, this moral I would teach:  
"The pious seldom practise what in pulpits parsons preach."  
On seeing his son return "stone broke," Brown's face grew dark and grim;  
He didn't kill the fatted calf, but nearly murdered him!

ESS JAY BEE.



## BOOK CHAT.

*Almanach de la Question Sociale Illustré pour 1896, Sous la direction de P. Argyriades* (Paris, 5 Boulevard Saint Michel), is a volume of 256 pages, containing contributions from the leading continental Socialists, such as A. Bebel, Clovis Hugues, Marya Chéliga, Paule Mink, Octave Mirbeau, Maurice Barrès, Jules Guesde, Amilcare Cipriani, Louise Michel, etc. The famous scientist and Freethinker, Charles Letourneau, writes against the presumed necessity of war. Guillaume de Greef has an article on "Positive Sociology." Prudent Dervilliers writes in favor of suppressing the embassy to the Pope, and René Ghil on "The Poetry of Science." Extracts are also given from Machiavelli, Lassalle, Zola, Coppée, L. Ackermann, Jean Richepin, H. Denis, etc. The longest piece is a four-act play, *Monseigneur*, by Charles Raymond, which exposes how the Church lives on its dupes. Another paper on "Fetishism," by Jules Soury, we translate for the benefit of our readers. We notice a misprint in the calendar; 1891, instead of 1890, being given as the date of the death of Dr. Cesar de Paepe.

\* \* \*

Among the forthcoming publications of the Humanitarian League will be a pamphlet on the subject of vaccination by Mr. Joseph Collinson, which will form No. 21 of the League's well-known series. The pamphlet announced will deal with the humanitarian view of vaccination, and not only the abolition of the laws, but the entire prohibition of the practice, will be advocated.

\* \* \*

*A Radical Secularist's Candid Examination and Criticism of Mr. John M. Robertson's "Future of Liberalism,"* by Thomas James Thurlow, is a penny pamphlet published by the Truth Seeker Company, 36 Villiers-street, Bradford. It warmly attacks the Socialistic proposals of Mr. Robertson, presenting the other side in a very direct fashion.

\* \* \*

Père Ragey has published a volume on *La Crise Religieuse en Angleterre*. The worthy Marist priest has worked himself to the belief that there is a religious crisis in England which will lead to its reconversion to Rome. This will only be the sequence of a former miracle, the establishment of a Catholic hierarchy in England. If the reverend father considers the establishment of a paper hierarchy a miracle, he is easily satisfied of the supernatural.

\* \* \*

Cardinal Vaughan, not relishing the exposure of Cardinal Manning's worldly intrigues by his own chosen biographer, Mr. Purcell, has caused a new biography to be rapidly prepared by the Oblates of St. Charles. The full rotundity of the Cardinal's life will doubtless be considerably obliterated by the process.

\* \* \*

The *Catholic Month*, of course, follows the lead of Cardinal Vaughan's *Tablet* in denouncing Mr. Purcell for his life of Cardinal Manning. This is altogether overdone. If there is any blame, it is not Mr. Purcell who is at fault in using the materials entrusted to him, but the executors of the Cardinal for handing over to him materials the Church would desire concealed. But the truth is, the Catholics are wild because, instead of getting an idealised biography, they found the duplicity and worldly ambition of the late Cardinal exposed by his own letters. Hence these whines.

\* \* \*

Ruskin's *Letters to the Clergy on the Lord's Prayer and the Church*, which has been out of print for nearly fifteen years, appears in a new edition, edited by the Rev. S. A. Malleon, and published by Mr. George Allen.

\* \* \*

A German with the singularly appropriate name of Bor-mann has taken up the cracked-brained theory of Delia Bacon and Ignatius Donnelly, and elaborates it with the usual fearful ponderosity of a German. A bad joke elaborated into a volume, which it would take a week to read, is one of those things of which only a Teuton is capable.

\* \* \*

Colonel Meadows Taylor, the author of *Confessions of a Thug*, in his interesting *Story of My Life*, gives the following incident of his early days, which illustrates a phase of religion seen early in the century at Liverpool. He says: "One incident I have never forgotten. I was returning to the office late one evening when, passing by the door of a chapel, and hearing groans and cries, I looked in. A person stationed at the door invited me to enter and 'save my soul.' The place, a large one, was in profound darkness; a candle here and there only made the gloom more impenetrable. People of both sexes were sitting in the pews, and shrill piercing cries arose of 'Save me!' 'I'm going to hell!' 'I'm damned!' 'The Devil has me!' 'I'm burning, burning!' 'Go away, Satan!' 'Jesus has got me!' and the like, with prayers so profane and shocking that I dare not write them down. Sometimes one got up, man or woman, and gave his

or her experience of sins and crimes, horrible to hear, but which, nevertheless, fascinated me. I know not how long I stayed, but a girl sat down by me at last and whispered, 'Come and kiss me, you beautiful boy—come away.' I gained the door, and fled rapidly in the darkness up the street." One other reminiscence in Taylor's life is amusing. He threw a shilling to an old Irishwoman, who fell upon her knees and cried: "Ah then, that yer honor might be in heaven this night, sitting wid the blessed Virgin Mary upon a binch!"

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## MR. WATTS AT IPSWICH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I wish to record my appreciation of Mr. Charles Watts's efforts to atone for the disappointment the Ipswich Branch suffered in November last, when Mr. Watts was unable, through illness, to fulfil his engagement here. His proverbial fairness was forcibly shown on Monday and Tuesday (February 3 and 4), when he delivered two excellent lectures here in the Co-operative Hall, giving his services free. Everybody connected with the Branch worked hard to obtain large audiences, but the attendance was much below expectations. Ipswich is described in the guide-books as an ancient borough with narrow, winding streets. I think it should have been creeds. Mr. Watts's gentlemanly behavior and jolly appearance so *non-plussed* the Christian friends, who were diligently taking notes at the lectures, that when the time came for questions and opposition, only one could be found who had as much pluck as Balaam's ass.

F. LANSDELL.

## PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school Teacher (trying to enforce the necessity of faith)—"And what was the one thing Jonah needed to make him safe?" Bright Scholar—"The earth."

"Our mother Church," said a preacher, "is like a giant, with one foot firmly planted on the earth, the other pointing to heaven."

Evangelist—"Do you ever have any revivals in your town?" Mr. Bute—"Nope; they mostly dies once they gets plugged."

"Jabber's son, they say, could talk when only two weeks old." "That's nothing. The Bible says Job cursed the day he was born."

The Rev. Mr. Sainly—"I hope you go to Sunday-school, Bobbie." Bobbie—"Yes, sir. And that's how I get ahead of father and mother." The Rev. Mr. Sainly—"How so?" Bobbie—"They have to go to church."

"The need of the age," said the Rev. Mr. Wilgus, as he leaned back in his chair and placed the tips of his fingers together, "is a more practical Christianity." "Which reminds me," said the captious man, "that your church hasn't cleaned the snow off its sidewalk yet."

"I see," said Mrs. Hashcroft, "that they have passed an ordinance imposing a fine on any one who yells 'fire' in a church." "Oh, well," said the cheerful man, "that sort of preaching has pretty much gone out of date, anyway."

Militia Captain (to new recruit)—"What religion are you?" New Recruit—"I be a shepherd." Militia Captain—"No; but what church do you go to?" New Recruit—"Does the band go to church?" Militia Captain—"Yes." New Recruit—"Then I go to church."

"Young man," said a minister to a youth of his congregation, "do you know what relations you sustain in the world?" "Yes, sir; two cousins and a grandmother, but I do not intend to sustain them much longer."

Three very young children who were supposed to be in bed attracted the attention of their mamma by the noise they were making. Upon inquiring into the cause of the disturbance, she was greatly amazed to find the little ones parading around the nursery with large straw hats on their heads, and otherwise entirely devoid of clothing. "What are you doing?" she exclaimed in consternation. "We's playin' Darden of Edin," said one. "Yes, and I'm Adam," said the oldest boy. "And I'se Eve," chimed in the little girl. And then, in a most important tone, the third little voice chirped up, "And I am the Lord Dod, walkin' in the tool of the day."

An old woman who sold ale, being at church, fell asleep during the sermon, and unluckily let her old-fashioned clasped Bible fall, which making a great noise, she exclaimed, half awake, "So, you jade! there's another jug broke!"



## 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.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, R. Forder, "A Night with the Devil." Tuesday, at 8.30, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture VI., Gemini."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, entertainment.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote will lecture.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Roman-road): 3, Sunday-school; 7.30, M. Adams, "The New Morality."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "The English Church Idolatry."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Evolution of Religion."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH N.S.S. (42 Vincent-street): 8, members' meeting.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, A Member, "Secularism: Past, Present, and Future."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, S. Armfield, "The Mythical Temptation of Jesus." (Collection for N.S.S. Benevolent Fund)

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, J. Watts Treasure, "Bible Morals and Society."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Gilbert, "Anarchism and Communism: A Comparison"; 6.30, soirée.

HULL (Cobden Hall, No. 4 Room, Storey-street): 7, Messrs. Smith and Trumpet, debate on *Merrie England*.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Genius and Sanity."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Wollet, "Marcus Aurelius."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Charles Watts, "The Science of Life from a Secular Standpoint"; 3, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 6.30, "The Religious Man."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, urgent business; 7, a lecture.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7, business meeting; 8, music.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Stanley Jones, "Creation and the Deluge"; 7, "Christianity and Civilisation" Tea at 5. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Charles Darwin and Christianity"; 7, "Atheism: its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."

STOCKTON-ON-TRES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

SUNDERLAND UNITARIAN DEBATING SOCIETY: 8, R. Weightman, "Jesus and Labor Problems."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—February 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 1, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 8, Balls Pond; 15, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road; 22, Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow.

## POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Services and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Co-operative Hall, Green-street.—Lectures by Mr. MALCOLM QUIN every Sunday afternoon (till March 8 inclusive) at 3.15. Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

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