

# The Free Thinker

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## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

(Concluded from page 162.)

### MR. BARRETT'S "NERO."

IN his letter, before cited, to the *Newcastle Chronicle*, Mr. Barrett quotes a jumble of names as authorities for his picture of Nero. It is certain, however, that all subsequent historians have mainly relied upon Tacitus and Suetonius. What these relate of Nero is enough to stagger credulity. It is difficult to conceive that for so many years Rome tolerated such an unnatural monster. This much, however, must be admitted, that the Nero of Tacitus and Suetonius, but especially of Tacitus, is a study in degeneration, reaching at length to absolute insanity. Such a pathological case is profoundly interesting to the students of morbid psychology; but its historical interest is almost infinitesimal, for it can scarcely be argued that the character or actions of Nero had any serious influence on the development of the Roman empire; while as for the burning of Rome, in which it is hardly credible that he was implicated, it is certain that the catastrophe was as much a blessing in disguise as the Great Fire of London, since a finer Rome, as later a finer London, sprang from the ashes of its predecessor. It should also be remembered that the career of Nero was not terminated, and never could have been terminated, by Christian efforts. The teaching of Paul, in the very height of Nero's despotism, was one of passive obedience. Nero's power was ordained of God, and to resist him was to incur damnation. Such was the teaching of Paul in his epistle to the Romans. But such was not the old spirit of Roman liberty, which fired the hearts of Pagan senators to declare Nero a traitor to the State and worthy of death; and the suicide of the monster only anticipated the executioners sent to carry out the national sentence.

Mr. Barrett does not give the least idea of the *vice* of Nero. He almost represents him as a model husband, fondly devoted to Poppea, and dwells exclusively on his cruelty and hatred of the Christians. The subtle characteristics of neurotic vanity appear to be chiefly contributed by Mr. McLeay, who acts the part of Nero, and whose performance is certainly powerful, although it is marred by overacting.

Nero's vices would have made a shocking entertainment. But, bad as they were, they were not so singular as Mr. Barrett seems to imagine. Courts are seldom pure, and the worst records of ancient society are quite paralleled in the pages of a writer like Brantome; indeed, as Mr. Cotter Morison observes, it is difficult to see how the court of the later Valois "differed, except for the worse, from the court of Caligula or Commodus." And the royalties and aristocrats of France were at that time intensely religious, and ready to kill or be killed in the maintenance of Christianity. It was an age of intense piety and unspeakable filth.

Christian apologists systematically represent the old Pagan world as infinitely immoral, and their own religion as the divine agency which rescued mankind from utter degradation. This is not history, however, but partisanship. The vices of antiquity have been more than equalled in modern times; and, if we take the literary point of view, it is incontestable that, for every dirty book produced in Greece or Rome, dozens have been produced in Christendom.

No. 765.

### MR. BARRETT'S HISTORY.

Mr. Barrett seems to believe that the Roman Empire was governed like Turkey. He appears to know nothing of its courts of law and its criminal jurisprudence. He imagines that men were commonly put to death without trial. By virtue of a mere rescript from Nero, Christians are put to death in this play as unceremoniously as the Turks dispose of Armenians. At the end of the second act a band of Christians arrange a secret meeting for worship in the Grove by the Cestian Bridge. By way of concealing themselves more effectually, I presume, they indulge in congregational singing. Before they have time to disperse they are pounced upon by a party of soldiers, headed by no less a person than Tigellinus, chief counsellor to Nero. Swords flash, shrieks are heard, and presently all the Christians (except Mercia, who is melodramatically rescued by Marcus) lie about in various attitudes of dissolution.

It is doubtful whether Nero ever murdered or molested any Christians, as will be seen presently. If he did so, there is no record of how they were dealt with by the tribunals. But there is such a record with respect to the more authentic persecutions of the second and third centuries, and it lends no countenance to the summary methods of *The Sign of the Cross*. "A modern Inquisitor," says Gibbon, with keen and polished sarcasm, "would hear with surprise that, whenever an information was given to a Roman magistrate of any person within his jurisdiction who had embraced the sect of the Christians, the charge was communicated to the party accused, and that a convenient time was allowed him to settle his domestic concerns, and to prepare an answer to the crime which was imputed to him." No such consideration was shown by the Inquisition, which butchered myriads of heretics. Over its prisons might have been inscribed: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." Prisoners were not even informed of the charges laid against them. They were *questioned*—that is, *tortured*—and accusations were based upon the wild and wandering words they uttered in their agony. It was the *modern* Inquisition, too, which devised the crowning cruelty of seizing upon a condemned heretic's property, after burning him to ashes, and leaving his widow and children to absolute beggary.

One incident of Mr. Barrett's play is positively ridiculous. There is brought to Marcus Superbus, Prefect of Rome, a rescript from Nero, stating that the Christians conspire against his throne and life, and ordering their extermination. Kill them all, says Nero, men, women, and children. Marcus (Mr. Barrett) drops his voice, tremulous with horror and pity, at the word "children"—and the audience (or congregation) shudder in turn, as though the thing really happened. But it never did happen. No ruler of a civilised or semi-civilised state ever issued such an order. What is related in the New Testament of Herod is simply a falsehood. Certainly no Roman emperor ever wrote out an order for the massacre of men, women, and children. Such an order *was* written once, and Mr. Barrett forgot where he had read it. It is to be found in the book of Deuteronomy, and is the direct command of Jehovah. The Jews were directed, in the case of certain cities they captured, to slay all, men, women, and children, and leave alive nothing that breathed.

### THE NERONIC PERSECUTION.

Mr. Barrett makes Nero and Marcus talk about Christ and Christianity as though both were perfectly familiar.



This, again, is unhistorical. Marcus Aurelius, more than a hundred years later, as George Long says, knew nothing of Christianity. Renan says that Jesus was unknown to Marcus Aurelius. How, then, could Nero and Marcus have so well known both? Mr. Barrett has only to read the Acts of the Apostles to recognise his mistake. Christianity had not penetrated to Rome when Paul was taken there as a prisoner in the very days of Nero, and close to the time (A.D. 64) of Mr. Barrett's play. The people he called together and preached to were Jews. This same Christian document proves the absurdity of Mr. Barrett's opinion, which he puts as a declaration in the mouth of Poppea, that Nero gave liberty of worship to all his subjects but the Christians; for we read in the last chapter of Acts that Paul, who had appealed to Cæsar as a Roman citizen, when charged with stirring up tumults, was "suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him," and "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house," preaching Christianity every day under the very nose of his janitor, without the slightest molestation. Indeed, it is perfectly clear, as Gibbon demonstrates, that, whatever did occur in Rome under Nero, there were no laws or decrees in force against the Christians, nor was there any precedent for the conduct of a Roman magistrate, when Pliny, in the beginning of the second century, wrote to the Emperor Trajan for instructions with respect to those who were accused at his tribunal of being worshippers of Christ.

Even according to Tacitus the Christians were not punished as Christians. It was rumored that Nero had set fire to Rome himself, and to divert the public suspicion he had the Christians accused of the crime, many of whom were cruelly executed. The passage in Tacitus, however, never saw the light of day until the fifteenth century, prior to which there is not the slightest trace of its existence. But this matter cannot be treated in the present article, though it will be treated in the pamphlet I am preparing for early publication, in which I shall have room for further criticism of the extraordinary looseness of Mr. Barrett's melodrama.

G. W. FOOTE.

### SAINT BUDDHA.\*

SINCE the appearance of Max Müller's essay on "The Migration of Fables" (*Contemporary Review*, July, 1870), embodied in his *Chips from a German Workshop*, iv. 174, it has been well known that the religious romance of Barlaam and Josaphat, written in Greek, and ascribed to St. John of Damascus, of the seventh century, and versions of which are spread all over the Christian, and even over the Islamic and Jewish, world, is really an adaptation of the legendary life of Gautama Buddha, belonging to the pre-Christian era.† The late W. R. S. Ralston wrote: "About this there is no doubt, and it is equally certain that the *Martyrologium Romanum* includes the names of Barlaam and Josaphat—*sanctorum Barlaam et Josaphat, quorum actus mirandus sanctus Joannes Damascenus conscripsit*. The names of two fictitious personages, the character of one of whom was an adaptation of that of the legendary Buddha, have therefore found their way into the *Martyrologium Romanum*."

This fact is one of the greatest curiosities of literature and religion. It suggests, moreover, that much of Christianity may have come westwards from India. One of the most certain items of ancient history inscribed on the rock pillars of India is the fact that in the time of Asoka, in the third century B.C., Buddhist missionaries were sent to all parts of the then known world. These inscriptions mention by name Antiochus of Syria and Ptolemy of Egypt among those who received these missionaries. One of the Buddhist sacred books, the *Milindapanha*, reports a discussion held in the capital of Syria, between Nagasena, a Buddhist missionary, and Menander, who, we are told, was born at

Alexander, and who is represented as becoming a convert to Buddhism. The victories of Alexander opened a route between Europe and India, and the spread of Buddhism westward explains the origin of Jewish Essenism and of Christian monasticism.

Mr. Jacobs says in his Introduction, p. xii. :—

"Diverse as are the aims of the Christian and of the Buddhist schemes, their methods are remarkably similar. They have a common enemy in what is known in Christian parlance as the World. The pleasures of the senses and the pride of power are the chief forces which deflect men from the paths of Wisdom and of Virtue. Till the New Man comes, who shall synthesise all four ideals, the Christian-Buddhist plan of Renunciation must remain the necessary pre-requisite of salvation."

Mr. Jacobs might have pointed out that the monkery alike of Buddhism and of Christianity is as alien to Judaism as the doctrine of the Incarnation, which to this day is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to Freethinkers foolishness. He says :—

"The similarity of the two schemes extends far beyond their general plan. The legend of the founders presents a remarkable set of parallels—the Annunciation, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Temptation in the Wilderness, the Marriage at Cana, the Walking on the Water, the Transfiguration, find parallels, more or less close, in the Legend of the Buddha. Both taught by parables, and in several instances the subject of their parables is the same (*Sower; Prodigal Son; Seed and Soil*). Much of their teaching is similar. The stress laid on the spirit as against the letter, the opposition between riches and spirituality, the inwardness of purity, are equally insisted upon in both systems. The formation of a Brotherhood or Church has been in each case the cause of giving permanent effect to the ideals of the founders, and, as is well known, even the external cultus have many points of contact."

The developments of Buddhism in Tibet are so like those of the Catholic Church that Mr. Rhys Davids observes of the similarities of ritual: "If all this be chance, it is a most stupendous miracle of coincidence; it is, in fact, ten thousand miracles" (Hibbert Lecture, p. 193). Such particulars as monasteries, nunneries, bells, confession (public), penances, tonsure, pilgrimages, use of flowers and lights before altars, etc., were all certainly pre-Christian. James Ferguson asserts, in his *Rude Stone Monuments*, that the details of the early Christian Church were borrowed *en bloc* from the Buddhists. "Relic worship," he says, "was certainly borrowed from the East, and nine-tenths of the institutes and forms of Latin Christianity from Buddhist sources." Mr. Jacobs thinks that the whole case for the dependence of Christianity on Buddhism will have to be solved on Folk-lore principles. "In other words, till Folk-lore has become so much of a science as to be able to discriminate between foreign and independent origin, this question must remain an open one."

While I by no means affirm the question as settled, it is certain the evidence all leans the one way. Buddhism was the earlier faith. It was distinctly missionary in character, and this story of Barlaam and Josaphat shows that the story of Gautama Buddha's great renunciation did spread westwards, percolate through Christian countries, and amalgamate itself with Christian legends. The problem of the order of the derivation of the various versions of the story may be, as Mr. Conybeare points out, a complex one; but the fact that in the early Arabic is found the parable of the Sower by no means proves that version to be Christian, but may throw light on where the Christian parable came from.

It is, indeed, a notable circumstance that this story of Barlaam and Josaphat, which, in its essence, is Buddhist, was the first and most popular of all religious romances in Christendom before the time of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It exists in Icelandic, Coptic, Arabic, Armenian, Irish, Bohemian, and has even been preserved in the Spanish dialect used in the Philippines.

Buddha has not only got into the Roman calendar, where the date of Barlaam and St. Josaphat is November 27, but he also appears in the calendar of the Greek Church under August 26, where he figures as "the holy Josaph, son of Abener, king of India."

Max Müller, Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids, and others, have pointed out that Josaphat is simply a corruption of the word "Bodisat," that title of the future Buddha so constantly repeated in Buddhist works. The name Barlaam

\* Bibliothèque de Carabas, vol. x. *Barlaam and Josaphat*. English Lives of Buddha. Edited and Induced by Joseph Jacobs. (D. Nutt; 1896.)

† This important fact was hinted at by the Portuguese historian, Diogo de Couto (Mr. Jacobs has it Conto), in 1612. Modern attention was first drawn to it by M. Laboulaye in the *Journal des Débats*, July 26, 1859.



was that of an Antioch worthy of the fourth century, and Mr. Jacobs thinks his name must have been introduced into the Syrian version of the story from its accidental similarity to the Arabian Balauvar, a corruption of the Indian Bhagavan.

That the founder of a heathen religion, and one often accused of being an Atheist, should have become a saint of Christendom is one of those curious facts which should make an orthodox Christian ponder as to whether, in sooth, his religion has the monopoly of all the truth, beauty, and goodness in the world. For indeed, if he will inquire, he will discover that the Hindu heretic is far more worthy of remembrance and reverence than the great host of those celebrated in the calendar of Christian saints.

Of the priority of the story of Buddha there can be no question. Max Müller, in his essay on the *Migration of Fables*, mentions that, as the Chinese traveller, Fa Hian, "three hundred years before John of Damascus, saw the towers which commemorated the three drives of Buddha still standing among the ruins of the royal city of Kapilavastu, it follows that the Greek father borrowed his subject from the Buddhist Scriptures." He should have rather said "that they were prior." The Greek father did not write the story, and it is more probable that it percolated into Western literature through oral transmission than that it was taken direct from the Buddhist scriptures.

The English versions "edited and induced" by Mr. Jacobs are *The Life of Saynt balaam*, given by Caxton in his *Golden Legende*, and a chapbook of last century in doggerel verse by a "Reverend Divine." This last is of extremely little value, but the Caxton version from the *Legenda Aurea of Jacobus de Voraigne* is notable alike for its English and its incidents. It is hardly necessary to say that the book, like the rest of Mr. Nutt's publications, is admirably got up. Altogether, we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Jacobs for taking up this important subject and treating it in a style bright, breezy, and popular, and yet with the thoroughness and accuracy of a sound scholar.

J. M. WHEELER.

### "THE CHRIST HAS COME."

I HAVE just been reading, for the second time, a book bearing the above title, and written by E. Hampden Cook, M.A. This gentleman has been lecturing recently in London, and, I believe, in the provinces also, with a view of proving that the second advent of Christ upon the earth took place nearly two thousand years ago. It may be mentioned, however, that grave doubts are entertained by many thinkers as to whether he ever visited this planet the first time. Be that as it may, Mr. Cook tells us in the Introduction of his work that "the purpose of these pages is to briefly set forth the evidence that exists for believing that the second advent took place at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and was accompanied by a spiritual judgment of the Jews; a resurrection from Hades (the intermediate state) to a higher sphere of the saints who had previously left the earth; and by the translation to heaven of Christians of the first rank throughout the world, who were alive at the time; that the prince of darkness was then imprisoned in the abyss, and the kingdom of God (meaning, by those words, the kingship of Christ and his saints) established; and that the saints are at this moment reigning with the Lord Jesus in heaven, not *on*, but (as the Greek word may equally well be rendered) *over*, the earth, and doubtless also over the whole of humanity in the unseen world of spirits" (pp. 14, 15).

I have given this extract in full, so that it may not be thought that Mr. Cook is misrepresented in the few comments I shall here make as to his extraordinary claims. Before noticing the arguments he adduces, it may be as well to clearly understand what the New Testament teaches upon the subject. There appears to me ample evidence, according to the Gospels and the Epistles, that in Christ's time his second advent was expected; but this fact does not justify the assertion that he did appear as Mr. Cook alleges. Of such an appearance there seems to me to be no proof apart from the New Testament, and what is thought to be "evidence" therein is exceedingly doubtful. One of the most remarkable features about these Gospel stories is the utter ignorance of the disciples as to the

nature of the events that were said to have occurred. They appear to have failed to grasp the meaning of what Christ is reported to have said and done. Hence we read, "They understood not this saying," and "they understood none of these things" (Luke ix. and xviii.). Even Peter, after looking into the tomb, "departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass" (Luke xxiv.). So unconcerned was he about the matter that he said to the other disciples, "I go a-fishing," and he went, taking his friends with him (John xxi.). Moreover, when "Jesus stood on the shore, the disciples knew not that it was Jesus" (*ibid*).

Notwithstanding this apparent ignorance upon the part of the disciples of one with whom a few days previously they had been on intimate terms, there is no doubt that the "second coming" of their Master was expected by the believers of those days. Such passages as John xxi. 22, 1 Thessalonians iv. 15, 16, 17, 2 Thessalonians i. 7, 8, 9, 2 Peter iii. 16, 17, and James v. 7, 8, evidently indicate this. I am not here concerned with the inconsistency of the expectation of the early second advent existing in the midst of the lack of comprehension upon the part of the disciples as to the meaning of the repeated references to the coming event. Contradictions and inconsistencies are prominent features in the Christian system. But the important point to be noticed is this: If the second advent did not take place, as foretold in the Gospels and the Epistles, the Bible is false; while, if it did take place, the Church, for nearly two thousand years, has been deceived, and has been imposing a delusion upon credulous believers.

Of course, in making this statement, I take the words of the Bible in their ordinary English meaning; this I regard as being the only reasonable course to adopt. If the language of the book does not mean what the legitimate use of the words justifies us in thinking they do, then its narratives are a delusion and a snare. Once allow the etymology of language to be ignored, and the Scriptures may be made to prove any nonsense. Upon this principle, as Shakespeare says, "the Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose." If the meaning of a leading term in any argument is changed, the conclusion arrived at will doubtless be varied accordingly. For instance, if one day means a thousand years, it will alter what a day may bring forth. If the word "generation" is understood as meaning a "dispensation"—that is, a period without limit, the whole aspect of the question is altered. It is not here overlooked that many of the Bible sentences are indefinite and mysterious in their signification. This is one of the characteristics of "God's Word," and Christ is reported to have defended such ambiguity (Mark iv. 11, 12). Certain it is that, according to the Gospels, he indulged in it freely. Thus, in Luke (xvii.), having said that "the kingdom of God is within you," and that "it cometh not by observation," he proceeds to mention a number of most wonderful things that were to happen at "the coming of the son of man"; and when he was asked, "Where, Lord?" he answered, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." Such a reply is like the peace of God—it passeth all understanding.

There is one passage in Luke (xviii. 8) which some persons think throws a doubt upon the theory that Christ's second advent took place in the first century. The passage reads thus: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" It appears incredible that any doubt should exist as to faith being found in the first century of its propaganda. Had Jesus such scant confidence in the success of his system in the "pure days of the faith" that he was uncertain how far it would have "caught on" during his brief absence from this planet? It must, however, be remembered that, against the doubt conveyed in the record of Luke, there are the direct statements of an approaching second appearance in Matthew xxiv. Here it is explicitly stated that the sign of the Son of Man "shall appear in the heavens during the then present generation." Jesus told Nathaniel that among the wonderful things that he should see were "heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." On another occasion Jesus said: "There be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark ix. 1). Professor Sanday remarks that, from these words, Christ "seems" to imply his immediate appearance. Surely the word "seems" is not the term to



be used here. If the language employed means anything, it is that many of those who were then alive would see the second advent; but most Christians to-day do not believe that the event has occurred even up to the present time. If they are right in their conjecture, Christ must have been mistaken in his prediction.

The various accounts of the alleged supernatural incidents in the career of Christ are so ambiguous that it is not surprising the disciples failed to comprehend the meaning of what was said. Even when Jesus spoke of his betrayal, death, and resurrection, they did not understand him (Mark ix. 31, 32). And when he was "upon the Mount of Olives," Peter, James, and others "asked him privately": "Tell us, when shall these things [referring to the destruction of the temple] be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" (Mark xiii. 4). The answer they received was a most remarkable one. Jesus told them to look out for impostors, wars, earthquakes, famines, and a host of other fearful calamities. The stars were to fall, "and the moon shall not give her light"; and when these trifles happened, "then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth to the uttermost parts of heaven." "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds." We should think that the vision of the spectators would be very indistinct, inasmuch as the two great lights, we are told, had been darkened. There was one very important precaution to be observed—namely, "pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." Now, to an unbeliever, it looks very strange that the state of the thermometer should have anything to do with the departure for heaven. It is true the presence of rain or snow may interfere with laying the foundation of an earthly paradise; but one would reasonably think that a journey to the Celestial City, under the guidance of the great "Light of the world," would be free from such mundane inconveniences.

Fortunately, the horrible calamities mentioned in the Gospels, referring to the supposed second advent, can have no terror for Freethinkers, who cannot believe such "idle tales." Moreover, even if such prophecies had been realities, they belong to ancient history, the period of the first century, for Mark tells us most emphatically that Christ said: "Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done" (xiii. 30). It is also some consolation to be told that, before any of the events were to take place, "the gospel must first be published among all nations." This, it may be relied upon, was never done in the past; and there is no reason for supposing that it will ever be accomplished in the future.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

### MISSIONARY JOTTINGS.

If an increasing demand for lectures, growing audiences, and frequent converts be any test of the value of the lecture scheme, then it must be pronounced an unqualified success. Although lecturing nearly every evening, I have been obliged to decline a large number of invitations to lecture in new places, or to make a longer stay in the places I have visited. As it is, I am delivering about six lectures per week, the gratifying results of which compensate somewhat for the continuous stress of work. My first halt after leaving London on January 18 was at Sheffield, where my audiences were the largest I have yet had the pleasure of addressing in that city. The lectures were heard very attentively, received favorably, and followed by a little discussion of a very poor quality; one gentleman roundly declaring that if evolution was true he was a fool. As evolution was certainly true, I told him that it would be better to leave the matter as he put it without further discussion—a statement that was not received by him with as much pleasure as I anticipated.

Under the lecture scheme, I next paid a return visit to Hoyland Common—a place which has undergone considerable improvement since Mrs. Besant was stoned there some years ago. A boycott had been placed upon the meetings by the various chapels; but, thanks to the labors of Mr. W. Dyson, the energetic secretary of the Barnsley Branch, and Mr. G. Crookson, whose services to the Freethought cause

date back for many years, the meeting was much larger than on the occasion of my previous visit.

Huddersfield, Bradford, Heckmondwike, Cleckheaton, and Keighley—the last three the first fruits of the lecture scheme—were next visited, and fairly successful meetings held there. The new Yorkshire Branches are determined to justify their existence by steady attention to the dissemination of Secular principles; the members seem anxious to do their best, and it is to be hoped that time will witness no relaxation of their efforts in this direction. There are many disadvantages under which they labor at present, the greatest being scarcity of speakers. Mr. Grange is doing all that he can to supply this want; but, as he is engaged in a business which takes up most of his time, his work on the platform is necessarily very limited. An effective speaker, with time to attend to the matter of organisation, might perform wonders in a very little time in this district. From Bradford I went to Blackburn, where two very successful meetings were held. Blackburn forms a very good instance of what can be done by week-night lectures alone, the Branch there having been built up entirely by such means. When I first visited the town about nine months ago, I was informed that the members there were very few, and that to try and put life into the movement in Blackburn was a hopeless task. A few meetings, however, soon altered the position of affairs. Some very large open-air meetings were followed by lectures in one of the Socialist halls, from which we had to remove to a larger one, as it was too small to accommodate the audience. Good meetings soon led to an increased membership, a pleasing feature of which was the number of ladies who joined the party, and who are not by any means backward in promoting the interests of the cause. Altogether a very healthy society has been formed, and one which bids fair to bear good results in the near future.

The beginning of February saw me once more on the Tyneside, where I am getting to feel almost a native. Three Sundays at Newcastle and two at South Shields were accompanied by lectures in the district under the lecture scheme. Lectures were delivered at North Shields, Chester-le-Street, Bedlington, Willington Quay, Felling, Stockton-on-Tees, and South Bank, with very pleasing results. At Chester-le-Street, where I was booked for three lectures, the meetings grew in size on each occasion, some of the attendants walking quite a distance in order to be present. At North Shields the meetings were held under the auspices of the South Shields Branch, a body which possesses as much pugnacity to the square inch as any society in England. Only one meeting had been announced, but the success of the first led the Branch to arrange for a second one, which, despite very short notice, turned out still more successful. The only opposition (?) at these meetings came from a lady who didn't want to "argefy," but bade me a solemn farewell and "hoped to God that I might see the truth" before I died; and a gentleman who assured us that he was once an infidel, and a *drunken one*, and who then went upon his knees and, in sepulchral tones, imparted the startling information that he had God within him. The early Israelites carried their god about in a box; this man appeared to carry his in his stomach. Maybe it was only indigestion he was suffering from, and the pains of disordered digestive organs had been mistaken for religious yearnings—who knows? Taken on the whole, the Lord has a lively set of followers. The greater part of them seem to be composed of those who either brag of how bad they have been, and appear to feel a genuine sorrow that they were not worse, or imagine that the fact of their being upon the Lord's side dispenses with the necessity of decent behavior in public, or rational and truthful speech in discussion.

At Willington Quay the full responsibility of the meeting was borne by the Lecture Fund; but, thanks to Messrs. Bartram and Cresswell, the former of whom had the whole arrangement of the meetings under his control, the gatherings were good ones and the loss but trifling. These were the first Freethought meetings ever held in Willington, and would never have been given but for the lecture scheme. The same may be said of Felling, the next place to be visited. In conjunction with the Newcastle Branch, a few friends resident in the place had arranged for a lecture in the Mechanics' Institute on March 4. It was, I believe, the first Freethought lecture ever given there, although lectures have been given in the vicinity, and was one of the best week-night meetings I had yet held in the North.



The hall, capable of holding about three hundred people, was filled; and, although the audience contained a fair shrinkling of local preachers and the like, there was no discussion. I have no doubt that the meeting will lead to a Branch being formed in Felling in the near future—a move was made in that direction before I left. Two lectures at Stockton-on-Tees and South Bank on March 5 and 6 concluded my work in this district for the present. I had many applications for lectures in other parts of Durham and Northumberland; but, as I find it impossible to lecture on more than seven evenings per week, I was obliged to refuse.

On Sunday, March 8, I had the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with the Glasgow Branch, and, in spite of the beastly weather that prevailed, had better audiences than on my previous visit. During the ensuing week Mr. Gilmour, who appears to have taken the spiritual welfare of the whole district under his care, has arranged a course of lectures in neighboring towns, and I hope to be able in due course to report results equally as gratifying as those recorded above. On the whole, the Secular movement is making steady progress in Great Britain. People who have long held aloof are coming among us, and those of our own number seem to put more energy into the work. Perhaps the present attitude of the religious parties on Education and other matters has something to do with this. Numbers who looked upon theology as dead are beginning to see that it was only wounded, and might possibly recover; that we must either attack or be attacked, and that only by energetic fighting, strong organisation, and constant watchfulness is it possible to retain the liberties we have already won, and to remove those chains which still fetter our actions,

C. COHEN.

Glasgow, March 9.

### THE "JOYFUL NEWS" STORY.

MR. J. P. GILMOUR and another Glasgow Freethinker had their attention drawn to the fact that a Glasgow missionary named J. T. Smith was mentioned in the same number of the *Joyful News* which contained the story of the "Conversion of an Infidel," upon which I adverted in our issue of March 1. These gentlemen waited on the missionary at a Band of Hope meeting. Mr. Gilmour pulled out the copy of *Joyful News* for February 20, and asked him if he knew anything about the "Mr. X." story. He said he did. Mr. Gilmour continued that, as they were anxious to obtain confirmation of it, he would be glad to learn what reasons he had for accepting it as authentic. Mr. Smith said he was satisfied upon that point, because he knew Mr. Champness wouldn't insert anything inaccurate in his paper. Mr. Gilmour remarked that Mr. Champness was in a very happy case if he never fell into an error of judgment, as even expert journalists sometimes blundered. "Ah," interposed Mr. Smith unctuously, "but those are Secular papers, and this is a religious journal." Mr. Gilmour then pointed out that the initials appended to the contribution and those of Mr. Smith's name were the same, and asked, "Did you write it?" Mr. Smith replied: "I don't need to tell you unless I please." "Well, then," Mr. Gilmour rejoined, "do you deny that you wrote it?" "I neither assert nor deny that I wrote it; but write to Mr. Champness, and ask him to disclose the contributor's name, and if he chooses to do so, you can then deal with that person."

Probably Mr. J. T. Smith is aware that it is against editorial etiquette to disclose the names of contributors.

Subsequently Mr. Smith qualified the admission that he knew something about "X." Only meant that he had read it in *Joyful News*, then mentioned that he had seen the article in the *Freethinker*, and did they imagine that he would argue with anyone who called him a liar, as Mr. Wheeler virtually called the writer of "X." story? Mr. Gilmour's comment on this was that, unless the cap fitted him, he should not complain. Reverting to the question of the credibility of "X." narrative, Mr. Smith affirmed that, from its internal evidences, he felt convinced of its veracity. Whereupon Mr. Gilmour inquired: "Did you ever personally see an 'Infidel' on his death-bed behave in the manner there described?" "N—no." "You are a missionary, and you say you have many professional friends in the same line. Have any of them ever seen anything of the kind?" "I can't just remember."

Mr. Gilmour says "it was inevitable that we should carry away the impression that in J. T. Smith we had discovered the 'J. T. S.' for whom we were seeking, and that he would not give us any satisfaction, simply because he could not." Subsequently Mr. Gilmour received the following post-card:—

J. T. SMITH,  
Missionary.

51, WHITEVALE STREET,  
GLASGOW.

7/3/96.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received a letter from the editor of the *Joyful News* asking me to disclose the authorship of "The Conversion of an Infidel." You will perfectly understand that I could not give any information without the editor's consent. This will satisfy you that I am the author, so will forward a reply to the editor of *Freethinker* at my earliest convenience.—Yours truly,  
J. T. SMITH.

Mr. Smith was probably not aware that we should see this post-card, which was shortly followed by a letter to Mr. Foote, which came from Glasgow without either name or address:—

SIR,—My attention has only recently been called to the article in your issue of March 1, entitled "Another Conversion." In reply to Mr. Wheeler's query, "Is it true?" I am in the pleasant position to answer most emphatically in the affirmative. "The Christian cobbler" who figures so prominently in the story related it to me himself, and what is said of Mr. Gilmour can be as correctly declared of my friend—i.e.: "He is a gentleman whose accuracy and information can be relied on." He is well known in the district where he lives, and is very highly respected and greatly beloved. I have shown him the story as it appeared in *Joyful News*, and he says it is perfectly true, except, instead of my saying "near Glasgow Cross," I should have said near a Glasgow Cross. This clerical error was noticed by us a week prior to your reference. As several of the relatives of the deceased are living in the city, and not wishing to cause them pain, I thought it wise to leave out all names, either of persons or places. There are numerous "crosses" in Glasgow, and the one referred to is some distance from the Glasgow Cross.

I may say I have forwarded the name and address of the "Christian cobbler" to the editors of *Joyful News* for their private information, with a signed statement by my friend vouching for the accuracy of the story. I have also shown him your article, and he is so displeased with the *ridicule* thrown on the incident that he does not wish to open up any direct communication with you or your representatives.—Yours faithfully,  
J. T. S.

The editors of *Joyful News* may have reason to be satisfied with the explanation of "J. T. S.," but assuredly I am not. He was not asked for his opinion, but for evidence. He offers none whatever. He does not even send his own name and address. His Christian cobbler remains a name, and nothing more. He is said to be so displeased with the *ridicule* thrown on the incident that he will not vindicate his own veracity. If he will do himself the justice to give the proof of a most unlikely story, I will apologise for my *ridicule*. The only sign of locality in the story, being palpably wrong, is now "a clerical error." But another means of identifying the converted Infidel remains. He is said to have appealed to God to paralyse his hands, and to have had them cut off by machinery. It is alleged he was an Infidel chief, and that "others of his followers became Christians." How happens it that none of the Freethinkers of Glasgow have ever heard of an infidel in that city who was so remarkably mutilated?

If the editors of *Joyful News* are satisfied to insert such stories without receiving evidence with them, I can only surmise that tales of the conversions of Atheists are a profitable form of literature, stimulating probably to the subscription to missions. That such stories are plentiful is only an illustration of the law of supply and demand. Their abundance argues the paucity of genuine cases. Even Christians are beginning to suspect this. My attention was drawn to the *Joyful News* story by a Wesleyan who would rejoice in a genuine case, but who cannot but suspect such a strange, unauthenticated story as that of "J. T. S."

Since writing the foregoing I have heard again from Mr. Gilmour, who informs me that a deputation of four, including Mr. Cohen and himself, waited on Mr. J. T. Smith, and asked him—since he had at first suggested that when "J. T. S." was discovered he should be applied to for confirmation of the story—to give the name and address of the Christian cobbler, so that they might satisfy themselves if he was a credible witness. They offered, if he was a modest and retiring person, to deal tenderly with him; and if they were convinced of the truth of the story, pledged themselves to openly state as much without using his name. It was all in vain; Mr. Smith flatly refused to give the authority for his story; and, as it was evident nothing further could be done with him, Mr. Gilmour plainly told him that he did not believe the Christian cobbler existed at all. My surmise that he was related to Mr. Hugh Price Hughes's Atheist Shoemaker must, it seems, be amended into a relative of the Mrs. Harris, of Sairey Gamp. Mr. Gilmour says the quest of the Christian cobbler is about as hopeful as the search for the Holy Grail. I well believe it.

J. M. WHEELER.

Free institutions can be properly worked only by men each of whom is jealous of his own rights, and also sympathetically jealous of the rights of others—who will neither himself aggress on his neighbors, in small things or great, nor tolerate aggression on them by others.—*Herbert Spencer.*



## ACID DROPS.

"Gon's American Volunteers" is the modest name of Ballington Booth's new Salvation Army. Its organisation is to be "military," like that of the great William's (no reference to the German Emperor). The simple fact is that Ballington is tired of being bossed, and has set up "on his own." It is announced that all official relations with his father are now at an end; which means that no more cash will be sent to England.

Shakespeare is a splendid source for apt quotations. Here is one for General Booth from the *Merchant of Venice*: "My own flesh and blood to rebel!" The speaker is Shylock.

It appears from New York *Public Opinion* (March 5) that Ballington Booth's resignation was accompanied by a charge against the "General" that he was not handling the Army right, and that his policy was wrong. But in what army are the subalterns allowed to have their way because they think their general wrong?

The *Times of India* sets down "General" Booth as an arrant humbug. It seems he tried to get money from the Indian Government to settle some lands in which the Army has invested at Guzerat. In its issue of February 14 it says: "What they want the Government to do, in effect, is to lend them eighty-five thousand rupees on land for the right to cultivate which they paid Government less than a thousand rupees three years ago. The coolness of this proposition almost takes one's breath away."

About this same settlement at Guzerat the Rev. R. Gillespie, called in the *Times of India* "the well-known missionary of Ahmedabad," declares that, although Booth claimed to have settled on the land five and twenty families, there is only one *bona fide* settler there. He states that the Army and its boasted work have completely collapsed in Guzerat; that its leader, after first promising in writing not to do it, began by attacking the native Christian Church, and "did his utmost, by the most unscrupulous means, to wreck and rend it," and achieved what he did achieve only by pandering to idolatry.

All these charges relate to matters not of opinion, but of fact, and must be susceptible of proof or disproof. According to the Army reports, they ought to have something like seventy-five thousand followers in Guzerat; whereas, according to Mr. Gillespie, they have scarcely any; though, if his information is authentic, there is not likely to be much difficulty in manufacturing a crowd of "soldiers" to welcome the "General" on his arrival in the district. He alleges that, in order to make a big parade before the "General" at a Saturday's field day in Samarkha, bales of red salvation jackets were being hawked about the neighborhood at less than cost price. Salvation Army jackets were, it is said, offered to the heathen natives at sixpence a piece to welcome the "General."

The *Times of India* (February 18) further asks an explanation of the dismissal of an officer named Himnat Singh. His own account of the matter is that he incurred the displeasure of his superiors by sending in reports that were unacceptable because they were truthful; or, to put it in another way, that they did not approve of his seeing only one convert where they reported ten.

The *Times of India* says of Booth's Guzerat scheme: "Although twenty thousand rupees have been spent upon the settlement in three years, it is not yet self-supporting. Before the resources of the State are put at the disposal of 'General' Booth and his collaborator, it will be well to take careful note of the result of this experiment, and to inquire, among other things, who is to be the responsible conductor of similar experiments in other parts.....We share Mr. Gillespie's scepticism as to the ability even of Mr. Booth-Tucker to superintend the outlay of £50,000 of Government money upon Peasant Settlements in various parts of India from the Salvationist headquarters in London."

The Bytham railway accident was a sad affair, but it had a humorous incident. "Mr. Peterson, of South Bermondsey," according to the *Daily Telegraph*, "in an interview stated that when the carriage left the rails a clergyman exhorted them to prayer, as it might be their last moment. While he was speaking he was partly thrown through the window." So much for the efficacy of prayer.

Mr. W. T. Lee, with whom Mr. Foote debated last May at Derby, has been interviewed at Swansea by a representative of the *Cambrian Daily Leader*. Mr. Lee finds that Agnostics, Atheists, and Materialists are not so ready to offer opposition as they were ten years ago. It is no less true that Christians are not so ready as they were to oppose Freethought

lecturers. Mr. Lee says the old bitterness and incivility have passed away, but later on he admits that "It was largely the fault of our own people; our spirit was none of the best very often." This is putting it rather mildly. Insult and calumny used to be the regular stock-in-trade of Christian Evidence advocates, and still remain so with the baser sort of this profession.

Asked whether Secularism was gaining ground—what a question to ask one of its professional opponents!—Mr. Lee replied: "No, Secularism is a dead cause, or nearly so." For many years Mr. Lee fought this dead cause occasionally; he now devotes the whole, or nearly the whole, of his time to the work. It does not say much for his wisdom or his gallantry. But we should perhaps make allowance for the difficulties of being interviewed. When a man has to answer a point-blank question, he is apt to give a point-blank answer; and, of course, it would never do to say that Secularism was gaining ground, as it would be a reflection on the efficacy of Mr. Lee's exertions.

Secularism has always managed to keep alive a representative organ. The *National Reformer* lasted thirty years, and only died because Bradlaugh died. The *Freethinker* has lasted for fourteen years, and doesn't exhibit any signs of decay, much less of a speedy dissolution. But somehow or other it is impossible to keep a Christian Evidence journal alive for any considerable length of time. The dead ones may be counted by the dozen. One succeeds another in the same round of failure. Some success is achieved by reckless defamation of Freethought leaders, but that soon palls even on the taste of the most bigoted Christians; and when you have charged a man with most of the crimes in the Newgate Calendar, it is not easy to keep up originality in such accusations. The interest flags, and the paper falls into a consumption; which proves that, whatever its readers wanted, they did not want Christian Evidences.

Mr. Lee told his interviewer that "Mr. Foote has toned down a bit during the last few years." We scarcely understand this—it is so indefinite; but let it pass. "He is a wonderfully-improved man," says Mr. Lee, "and scholarly too." This is doubtless well-meant, but to those who have known Mr. Foote all along it will be rather amusing. The fact is, that Christians who never heard Mr. Foote, and never read a line of his writings, believed the lies told about him, and pictured him as a vulgar, illiterate ruffian. When they came across him they were undeceived. Sometimes they admitted that they were mistaken; but such an admission runs counter to human vanity, so they sometimes said: "He is wonderfully improved, and scholarly too." After all, however, what does it matter? No man worth his salt cares for the opinion of those who do not know him. What you *are*, is the only thing to care about; and what you *do*, is the only thing that tells in the long run.

The Rev. R. A. England, M.A., writes to the *Daily News* (March 11) comparing Asia Minor about 50 B.C. and in 1896 A.D. He cites Cicero's letter to his brother, the Governor of Asia Minor, half a century before Christ. Cicero said: "It seems to me that those who are under a Government should be as happy as possible," and "it is the duty, not only of those who rule Romans, but of those who have the care of slaves and cattle, to contribute to the welfare of those committed to their charge." Such were the sentiments of a heathen statesman who never anticipated the benefits which Christianity would bring on the world.

The new Clergy Discipline Bill will give more power than ever to the bishops. Under the existing state of things, an incumbent may become bed-ridden, or lunatic, or a fraudulent bankrupt, and yet he cannot be removed from his cure of soul. Lord Cranborne gave an instance in which an incumbent refused the sacrament to his wife for the purpose of extorting money, and had a grudge against a certain undertaker, refusing, when this undertaker was employed, to allow the body to be brought into the church. Of course, the congregation had in this case disappeared. But the incumbent stayed on. Under the new law the bishop may deprive without right of appeal.

The Jersey States have, by an overwhelming majority, passed the preamble of a Bill legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Eleven rectors voted like one against the change, which, if adopted, will lead to those who wish to indulge in this form of matrimony taking a holiday in the Channel Islands. The measure is legal in most of our colonies, but is invariably thrown out here by the piety of the peers and the unanimity of the bishops.

The English Church Union has had a meeting in Exeter Hall, declaring its view that the Divorce Act of 1857 has been productive of evil, and affirming that the use of the Church's service for the performance of marriage in the case of divorced persons is a degradation of sacred rites. The



Church always wants to take the State's pay, and please itself as to how it shall do the State's work.

Talmage has been telling the good people of Washington, and, through the syndicate for publishing his sermons, the English-speaking world, that sixteen of "the twenty most celebrated infidels in Great Britain in our day" have "come back to Christ." He does not give their names. It would be an invidious task if we were to select the exact number of the most celebrated infidels. Certainly such a list must include J. S. Mill, H. T. Buckle, Harriet Martineau, H. T. Huxley, G. H. Lewes, W. R. Greg, Winwood Reade, F. W. Newman, W. K. Clifford, A. C. Swinburne, G. J. Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh, and the author of *Supernatural Religion*. We have not heard that any one of these has "come back to Christ."

We fancy we know where Talmage gets his sixteen of the twenty most celebrated infidels from. Over a dozen years ago the Presbyterian, Rev. C. J. Whitmore, familiarly known as "bully Whitmore," published a widely-circulated leaflet entitled "What Becomes of the Infidel Leaders?" Whitmore gave the initials of sixteen persons alleged to have been converted infidel leaders. He was challenged to give the names, but wrote that he gave them privately, but "I will not play Mr. Bradlaugh's game by writing in his filthy print" (letter given in *Freethinker*, September 16, 1883). Of the names given the majority were unknown. Four only had any pretension to the title given, and one of these was never converted at all. The three genuine cases were well known and understood by Freethinkers.

Christians are apt to forget that the bulk of Freethinkers are converts from Christianity. That some few relapse is not surprising, especially when we remember how often their living depends on the goodwill of Christians. The life of an infidel leader is not a bed of roses, and if (as is often the case) the infidel is poor, dependent on Christian employers, and with Christian relations around him who constantly grieve at the lost condition of his soul, we cannot wonder if, here and there, one says with the poet:—

Let the long contention cease!  
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.  
Let them have it how they will!  
Thou art tired, best be still!

That so many cases of infidel conversions, when examined, are bogus, indicates that the genuine ones are not as numerous as might be expected, considering Christian ascendancy and Christian bigotry. In truth, the spirit of the Freethinker, however poor and dependent, is better represented in the poet's final word:—

They outtalk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee.  
Better men fared thus before thee;  
Fired their ringing shot and pass'd  
Hotly charged—and broke at last.

Charge once more, and be dumb!  
Let the victors, when they come,  
When the forts of folly fall,  
Find thy body by the wall.

Mr. Skewes Cox, M.P., and Lord Dysart have a nice notion of what is "compensation" for taking common lands in the vicinity of the metropolis. Mr. Skewes Cox, who is an alderman of Richmond, told the House of Commons that, in return for taking the Petersham and Ham Lands, it was proposed to give four thousand pounds to the "voluntary schools" that the horrors of a Board school might be averted; and, moreover, there would be a contribution to the Vicarage Improvement Fund. The House of Commons smiled at this idea of compensation for taking public lands for private uses, and rejected the proposed measure by a majority of 144.

It is amusing to a Freethinker to see how the priests manage the religious business, in which God is but a sleeping partner. Hungary, for instance, is about to hold a festival in commemoration of the thousandth year of its existence as a kingdom. The festivities are to take place during Lent, a period in which the faithful must abstain from meat. But the Church is always willing to relax its rules when it is judicious to do so. Accordingly, the Primate of Hungary has given the people permission to eat meat even during Holy Week, with the exception of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Thus a certain action is made right or wrong solely by the authority of the Church.

The Rev. Albert Ernest Brett, pastor of the Jubilee Chapel, New North-road, has been summoned under the Affiliation Act to pay for the keep of the child of one of the members of his church, who was engaged in Band of Hope work, and who only confessed to the defendant being the father of her child at her confinement when in fear of death.

Arthur Frederick Underwood, a well-known officer of the Free Methodist Chapel, Southend, and a Sunday-school

teacher there, has been committed to trial on the charge of indecently assaulting one of the singing-class of which Underwood is superintendent, within the chapel itself. The accused is fifty years of age, and the girl thirteen.

The Rev. William M. Ritchie, of Asbury Park, N.J., has been circulating the report that the Rev. Howard D. Widdemar, of the same town, is altogether too gay for a minister of the Gospel of Christ, because he is in the habit of getting into girl scrapes wherever he goes, and, besides that, he has never been regularly ordained to the Gospel ministry. The Rev. Mr. Widdemar denies these charges, and, having brought a suit against the Rev. Mr. Ritchie for \$5,000 damages for slander, recovered only \$750—probably quite sufficient compensation.

The Rev. H. J. Hunnycutt, a Baptist minister of Morilton, Arkansas, was arrested on the charge of infanticide, he having strangled to death his housekeeper's one-year-old baby, because he was enraged at the annoyance of its cries while he was preparing a sermon.

Another shocking instance of the Bible-supported belief in evil spirits comes from Ireland. James Cunningham, a shoemaker of Lisaphelim, Roscommon, killed his father just after kneeling down and repeating the Rosary, and doing this while under the belief in evil spirits. The whole family seems to have been demented upon the subject.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is, according to a writer in the *Echo*, a one-man Society. The Rev. Mr. Waugh declares that he is above all committees. He initiates expenditure, gives orders, buys houses, starts shelters, takes and dismisses officials without asking permission from committees. The cost of administration is set down at £47,220.

The Rev. B. Waugh receives £800 a year as director, and, in addition to this, his income-tax and travelling expenses are paid. His assistant, Miss Bolton, receives £225, plus income-tax, rent of chambers, and travelling expenses. The travelling expenses for these two have been, for the last six months, at the rate of over £500 a year.

An amusing correspondence has been going on between the Right Reverend Father-in-God, Dr. Gott, Bishop of Truro, and the Rev. John England, a Wesleyan minister, who is a chaplain at Devonport. The Bishop wrote reproving the Wesleyan for preaching in a Wesleyan church. The Wesleyan answered: "Your communication emphasises the thankfulness that many sincere and intelligent Christians feel that the Church is based on broader and firmer foundations than those laid by my Lord Bishop of Truro." The Bishop then wrote: "I generally write such letters as that which I sent you mostly or wholly on my knees." The minister then asked why the Bishop attacked a Wesleyan preacher on the strength of a newspaper report, and without consulting his clergy list. The Bishop explained: "My mistake arose from the public advertisement of your sermons in Cornwall, in which you were described as 'Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces.'" He answered: "There are chaplains to Her Majesty's forces of other churches than those of the Establishment, so that your interference is not justified. I am surprised that one occupying the position of a Bishop does not yet know that these chaplaincies are no longer the monopoly of the Church of England. Your Lordship has admitted the mistake made, but surely one who generally writes 'such letters as that' which was sent to me 'mostly or wholly on his knees' ought to give some indications of regret for having incautiously passed censure on a minister over whom he has no jurisdiction."

The *Joyful News*, taking no notice of our challenge of its last converted Atheist, treats us to a fresh one in its number for March 12. Again the individual is nameless and placeless, and the writer signs himself "X." The story of "X." is a shade more plausible than that of "J. T. S." The Atheist, instead of wanting the Bible burnt when converted, burnt all his infidel books. He is reported as saying: "I should like to warn all young men against Socialistic and Infidel books. I have prayed and prayed to God to help me to forget a great deal that I have read, and, blessed be his name, he has burnt a good deal already out of my memory; but I do earnestly warn all young men against reading the poisonous books, which will do nothing for them but make them miserable and wretched in themselves and with everybody else. I hate the very sight of them now."

The nameless convert says: "I found that Socialism was not infidelity, but it led on straight to it, just as a twelve-inch plank leads you on to a scaffold. You have nothing to do but to go straight on, and you will get into downright Atheism."

This *Joyful News* Atheist appears not to have been a bad fellow. He is reported as saying: "I used to laugh and



mock at all religion and at prayer, but I never mocked at her who used to pray for me. We have been married for nineteen years, and I can say that, though my wife has been a Christian from a girl, we have never had a quarrel since we were married. She has loved me, and I have loved her; but she has kept on praying for me all the time, and now her prayers are answered." Let us hope that now he is converted he will not hit her over the head with the motto, "God Bless Our Home," as we heard of one good Christian husband doing.

The Rev. Frank Ballard, of Hull, has been drawn into writing a letter to the *Daily Mail*. He does not see why he should be dragged into a public discussion. "Mr. Foote," he says, "comes to Hull to lecture whenever he pleases. If it be on a Sunday, and I—or any other Christian—give him a courteous hearing on the only part of the day free from regular public duty, why all this abuse because I decline to reply in two or three minutes to a prepared lecture of an hour and a quarter?" There is a certain force in this, but Mr. Ballard was offered *ten* minutes, not two or three; which is just ten minutes more than Secularists are usually offered after Christian discourses. Of course the Secularists of Hull have no right to demand that Mr. Ballard should discuss with Mr. Foote. It is a purely voluntary matter. Nevertheless, it is by no means impudent to expect him to do so. If Christianity be true, it ought not to be difficult for a man of Mr. Ballard's eminence to demonstrate its truth, even to the satisfaction of Secularists; and if only a dozen of them were converted, it would be at least twelve souls saved from everlasting hell.

Mr. Ballard will pardon us for saying that the word "abuse" occurs too frequently in his letter. Secularists "abuse" him, they also "abuse" Paul. But is not all this somewhat ridiculous? It appears to us that Christians are too sensitive—we might almost say conceited. To "criticise" them is to abuse them. When they criticise us, however, we are expected to regard it as a condescension.

Mr. Watts is lecturing in Hull to-day (March 22), and Mr. Ballard's time-limit objection loses its force in face of the offer publicly made to him of half-an-hour in reply to the afternoon lecture.

A later issue of the *Daily Mail* contains letters by "Fairplay" and A. R. Monro. "Fairplay" points out that Mr. Ballard answers questions privately in the vestry, while Mr. Foote answers them publicly from the platform. Mr. Monro charges Mr. Ballard with saying that he heard Mr. Foote say "there is no God"—which is untrue. He also charges Mr. Ballard with declaring from the pulpit that Mr. Foote told falsehoods. We hope Mr. Ballard is in a position to deny this.

John Edwin Pritchard, a local preacher, residing at Whitwell, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire, has all the usual characteristics of a child of God. He seduced Sarah Henderson under a promise of marriage, and then wrote to her a truly pious letter, in which he says: "I was preaching on Sunday morning, and addressing the Sabbath-school on Sunday afternoon at a neighboring chapel. I am giving myself up to do evangelistic work as soon as I can gain an admittance into some college. The work is now occupying all my time, and if I do get into a college I shall have to cease writing to you for a while, for I now conceive that I am not my own, but belonging to the Lord Jesus. I feel He must have all my thoughts and all my present love."

The Lord Jesus must be proud of the love of such a devoted and affectionate person as J. E. Pritchard. J. C. is reported to have required his disciples to give up father, mother, wife, and child for his sake; and Pritchard is prepared to throw up his affianced wife into the bargain. He declared, in his beautiful religious letter to the girl he seduced: "It may mean the breaking of earthly ties, but I am willing to do it, and leave the rest to God." The noble Pritchard also told the lady: "God will give you grace to bear any disappointment that may come." God does not seem to have given her sufficient grace, for she brought an action and obtained £50 damages.

It appears from an article on "Devil Worship in Malabar," in the *Madras Weekly Mail*, that the chief devil of Malabar has a cognomen very similar to that of Satan. He is known as Chathen. This demon, though powerful, is a dwarf. His worshippers seek, by mantras, spells, or prayers, to bring him under control. This Chathen, it is said, is sometimes enamored of the fair sex. He will, under these circumstances, display his preference for the woman in various ways, and she can command him without undergoing any preparatory *pujas* or rites of religious worship. If she be married, he will use every devilish device to keep husband and wife apart. Much the same beliefs were held in Christian Europe while the Bible-sanctioned notion of demonic influence lasted.

The infallible Bible has suffered some accidents; witness the following from the *Daily Telegraph*: "In addition to the 'Wicked' and the 'Bugge' Bibles, to which reference has been made, Dr. Wright enumerates the following, notable for their grotesque mistakes: The 'Breeches' Bible—'Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge-tree leaves together and made themselves breeches' (Gen. iii. 7); printed in 1560. The 'Treacle' Bible—'Is there not treacle at Gilead? Is there no physician there?' (Jer. viii. 22); printed in 1568. The 'Rosin' Bible—'Is there no rosin in Gilead? Is there no physician there?' (Jer. viii. 22); printed in 1609. The 'Place Makers' Bible—'Blessed are the place makers, for they shall be called the children of God' (Matt. v. 9); printed in 1561-2. The 'Vinegar' Bible—'The parable of the "vinegar," instead of the "vineyard," appears in the chapter heading to Luke xx. in an Oxford edition of the Authorised Version which was published in 1717. The 'Ears-to-ear' Bible—'Who hath ears to ear, let him ear' (Matt. xiii. 43); printed in 1810. The 'Standing Fishes' Bible—'And it shall come to pass that the fishes will stand upon it,' instead of 'fishers' (Ezek. xlvii. 10); printed in 1806. The 'Discharge' Bible—'I discharge thee before God' (1 Tim. v. 21); printed in 1806. The 'Wife-hater' Bible—'If any man come to me, and hate not his father.....yea, and his own wife also' (Luke xiv. 26); printed in 1810. 'Rebekah's Camels' Bible—'And Rebekah arose, and her camels,' instead of 'damsels' (Gen. xxiv. 61); printed in 1823."

The *Folkestone Herald* (March 14) reports that on the previous Sunday, the sky looking black, the authorities, thinking more of Tommy Atkins' clothes than his soul, ordered no parade. Church service was voluntary. The rain did not descend, and out of two thousand and more troops just three (two officers and a drummer-boy) attended church.

Last Wednesday, according to a writer in the *English Churchman*, was the nineteen-hundredth birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer says that Herr Johannes von Gumpach has demonstrated that the birth of Christ took place on March 18, A.U.C. 750 or B.C. 4. If he had been born later, Herod would not have been living.

Mr. T. G. Pinches, the Assyriologist of the British Museum, gives a new derivation of the word "Paradise" from a Babylonian tablet, in which the word occurs "Pa-ra-di-esu." This Mr. Pinches translates "Land of the God Esu." We wonder if J. C., when he said, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," understood the original meaning of the word.

It turns out that the Board school boy who is said to have answered to the question, "Was there a God?"—that he didn't know—is deaf, and had been well instructed in what they call religion. But the story is still being told as an illustration of the godless teaching of our too godly schools.

The *Church Review* laments that "so fashionable has 'honest doubt,' in which 'dwells more faith than half the creeds,' become, that even within the Church itself very rev. deans, very well-paid canons, and very well-placed incumbents consider themselves at perfect liberty to flout considerably more than half the creeds, although in every instance they derive their incomes from the lands of men who would have shed the last drop of their blood to defend them."

Father Barry has begun a course of lectures at the Royal Institution on "Four Masters of Modern Thought: Voltaire, Rousseau, Goethe, and Spinoza." Of course he seeks to show that these masters owe their influence to the imperfections of human nature. Beginning with Voltaire, he describes him as the Mephistopheles of the age—the spirit that denies and questions, the incarnation of criticism. Voltaire, said Father Barry, emptied the world of sacredness. He means emptied it of humbug. The Voltairean spirit, he said, had reappeared in the writings of Heine, Matthew Arnold, and Renan.

The Royal Institution seems to have largely got into the hands of the Catholics, for W. S. Lilly has also been lecturing there.

The Rev. David Macrae has brought together, in a volume entitled "Quaint Sayings of Children," a number of amusing anecdotes, one of which illustrates the fact that nature is no Sabbatarian, that flowers and animals procreate and grow on Sundays and week days alike. A little girl at Aberdeen brought a basket of strawberries to the local "meenister" early one Monday morning. "Thank you, my little girl," he said, "they are very beautiful; but I hope you didn't gather them yesterday, which was the Sabbath day?" "No, sir," replied the child, "I pulled them this morning; but they was growin' all yesterday."



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 22, Hull; 29, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, London. April 5 and 12, South Shields.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

H. B.—Mr. Wheeler is much obliged for the books. You have exactly hit his taste.

A. G. LEVETT.—Received with thanks. Your cuttings are always welcome.

GLASGOW CROSS.—Thanks. See Acid Drops. The connection between leathor and infidelity is almost as mysterious as the efficacy of sacraments.

PAGAN sends 2s. 6d. to Shilling Month, and invites a hundred other *bonâ fide* working-men to subscribe 5s. each. If they do so, he will send another 2s. 6d.

W. LAMB.—Mr. Foote is getting quite himself again, and looks forward to resuming platform work early in April.

J. H. R.—Belfast shall have a stirring up, if only a few of the old "saints" will act together in making local arrangements. Will you, or some one, see to this, and let us know?

NORTHAMPTON FRIEND.—Mr. Watts's lectures at Nottingham were delivered under Mr. Foote's scheme. Mr. Foote had even to be responsible for the local expenses in the case—rent, printing, advertising, etc. Now you understand.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—M. A. M., £1; Hermatite, 1s.; Larner Sugdon, 3s. 4d.; F. Jones, 5s.

MRS. KNOWLES (Blackburn).—Our thanks to the subscribers. Highly pleased to hear from a lady secretary.

J. G. DOBSON (Stockton-on-Tees).—Subscriptions for Lecture Scheme acknowledged. Remainder handed to Miss Vance.

J. SAUNDERS.—That human beings suffer is no excuse for the infliction of suffering on the lower animals. It may be true that the abolition of what is rather facetiously called "sport" would throw many out of employment, but every improvement in human affairs changes the direction of labor. You yourself would like to abolish Christianity, and doing that would throw thousands out of employment.

L. D. HEWITT.—We merely expressed a general approval of benevolence. We do not know enough of George Muller's enterprise to praise or condemn it. If, as you say, his benevolence does not extend to helpless children, whose parents hurried them into the world without taking the trouble to get married, it is so far deplorably narrow; and if, as you say, the cost at his Orphanage of maintaining each child is £16 a year, it does not show excessive economy.

J. TOPHAM.—Shall appear. Glad to know you appreciate our "fearless advocacy," as you are good enough to call it.

SPIRO (Gateshead), subscribing to Shilling Month, writes: "Allow me also to congratulate you on your timely criticism of *The Sign of the Cross*. I trust your masterly article will be at once republished." The criticism will be republished after revision and considerable amplification.

J. SCOTT.—Pleased to hear from you again.

J. PROCTOR.—Our thanks to the Sunderland subscribers. Mr. Foote hopes to be visiting your district before long.

W. S. M.—Bristol is not exactly neglected. Mr. Foote is offering the Branch an early date.

F. S., an old friend of the movement, sends a cheque for £5, with "kind regards and good wishes for the success of your lecture scheme."

C. D.—Acknowledged as directed. Hope the trouble will soon blow over.

BATH FRIEND.—You are not too late. March is not yet over. Many are later than you. Their subscriptions haven't arrived yet, and perhaps never will.

E. TRUELOVE, the veteran Freethought publisher, and the oldest of the National Secular Society's vice-presidents, born in the same year as Mr. Cladstone, sends his subscription to Shilling Month for the President's lecture scheme.

J. F.—We also wish your subscription "were a hundred times as much." But we should have ample funds if all subscribed according to their means.

J. ROBERTS sends subscriptions from the Liverpool Branch towards "assisting Mr. Foote in carrying out his excellent scheme."

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) You were ridiculously misinformed at Nottingham. Mr. Foote had absolutely nothing to do with the last N.S.S. Conference not being held there. His only movement in the matter was to beg the Executive not to be hasty in deciding. He did not speak or vote on behalf of either Nottingham or Bristol. So much for "Mr. Foote's autocracy." The other things you heard at Nottingham were just as true. (2) We make it a rule never to express any opinion about other English Freethought papers. (3) Professor Dana can easily say that Genesis and science agree; what he has to do is to prove it. A mere *ipse dixit* is utterly useless in a controversy.

C. COHEN reports that he has had capital meetings, under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, in south-west Scotland; a full report of which will be written by Mr. Gilmour. Mr. Cohen has unfortunately been troubled with a cold. We hope he will trouble that cold to emigrate.

W. SWEETMAN (Cardiff) writes: "Mr. Foote's articles on *The Sign of the Cross* are attracting a good deal of attention here, and would help the sale of the paper if we had an enlightened news-agent."

J. F. HAMPSON.—Thanks. Shall be noticed next week.

J. C. GRANT, subscribing to Shilling Month, writes: "In common with all here (Edinburgh) who have watched the working of the new scheme, I am delighted with the results you have been able to produce with so small a sum as was subscribed on the former occasion. I trust that on this occasion many who either did not subscribe at all, or gave less than they might, will do their utmost."

R. S. HOSE.—Pleased to hear the Camberwell social gathering on Sunday evening was a great success.

ZERO.—There is no truth in the statement that the late Charles Bradlaugh "on a certain public occasion"—how precise!—took out his watch and gave God Almighty five minutes to strike him dead. It is simply a Christian lie.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Of course we know there was a good explanation somewhere. Your "Mystery of Evil" is capital, and will appear in due course. Poets are proverbially poor. If you subscribe to Shilling Month, the example ought to tell on others who make money instead of verses.

G. KERSLEY says: "I should like to see a whole page filled with acknowledgments for Shilling Month, and it would be so if all Freethinkers did their level best."

CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Per Charles Watts:—S. A. Gimson, 5s:

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Leeds Evening Express—Hull News—Cambria Daily Leader—Crescent—Literary Digest—New York Public Opinion—Dublin Herald—Newark Advertiser—Truthseeker—Dundee Advertiser—Isle of Man Times—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Leek Times—Two Worlds—Joyful News—Lucifer—Liberator—Cyclist—Nya Sanningar—West Briton—Pick-Me-Up—Twentieth Century—Secular Thought.

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

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

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, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

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. G. J. HOLYOAKE has taken great pains over a work on Secularism, which he intends to be his final exposition and justification. It is divided into chapters with striking titles, and should prove of great interest and value, at least to the Secular public, and perhaps to inquiring minds still within the fold of Christianity. Mr. Holyoake has arranged to have this work published concurrently in England and in America. On this side the Atlantic it will appear, week by week, in the *Freethinker*, prior to publication in a separate form. The first instalment will be printed in our next issue.

A correspondent of the *Leek Times* desired to know when the debate was to take place between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. W. Howard. Mr. Foote replied that the delay had arisen in consequence of his indisposition. "I am doing no platform work at all at present," he wrote, "as my throat and lungs require a complete rest. Fortunately I am improving daily, and I dare say I shall be able to undertake the debate in April. With this view I am communicating with my friends, who will act with Mr. Howard's nominees in making the necessary arrangements."

Mr. Foote's letter in the *Leek Times* was immediately followed by a curious epistle from the Rev. W. W. Howard, who advised the first correspondent to "write to Mr. Foote, who most certainly is blocking the way." Mr. Howard refers to "the last issue" of the *Freethinker* in a way which indicates that he is one of our regular readers. In that case he must have been well aware of the breakdown of Mr. Foote's health, compelling him to cease lecturing altogether for a time; and not to allude to this circumstance in his letter to the *Leek Times*, and even to accuse Mr. Foote of blocking the way, was a gross uncharity on Mr. Howard's part. Some would call it, in substance, a gross falsehood and imposition.

Mr. Howard now hints that he will not consent to the debate-taking place in Leek "after what has passed here"



—alluding to the protest of Nonconformist ministers. Mr. Howard further hints that he would prefer the debate to take place at Liverpool. Very well, he can be accommodated there. The Liverpool N.S.S. Branch will be delighted to bring him upon a public platform in opposition to Mr. Foote.

Mr. Charles Watts had two capital audiences at Leicester last Sunday, the gathering in the morning being the largest our Leicester friends have had for the last three years. Visitors from surrounding districts, who had walked five and eight miles, were present. Mr. Watts had a hearty reception, and both his lectures were enthusiastically applauded.

This week Mr. Watts is debating at Derby and lecturing at Nottingham. The lectures are given under Mr. Foote's scheme.

To-day (Sunday, March 22) Mr. Watts lectures three times in Hull, also under Mr. Foote's scheme. We hope the friends will muster in good force, as it is some years since our colleague last visited Hull.

A tea will be held at 5.45 in the same building in which Mr. Watts lectures, for members and their friends from a distance. The tickets will be 9d. each, children 6d. Mr. Monro, 41 Hutt-street, Hull, will be glad to receive as early as possible the names of those who intend to partake.

Mr. A. B. Moss, as a Camberwell vestryman, is made the subject of a biographical sketch in the *South London Mail*. According to the writer, Mr. Moss "is a very intelligent, far-seeing man, and there is absolutely nothing at all the matter with him but his politics and his creed." The *Mail* is Tory and Christian, and it hopes to "convert" Mr. Moss and "make him a better and a wiser man." We presume this will take some time. Meanwhile the *Mail* might give its readers a better portrait of Mr. Moss. The one printed with the biography is far from flattering.

The Bill for the Extension of Civil and Religious Liberty, commonly known as the Bequest Bill, and the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill, are on the agenda for discussion at the Independent Labor Party's Congress, to be held at Easter, with a view to their being embodied in the Party's program of immediate objects. Dr. Pankhurst, the delegate for South Manchester, has given his word to fight for them at the Congress.

The Roxburghe Press will issue almost immediately a volume entitled *Carina Songs, and Others*, by Miss Amy C. Morant, a lady who is identified with most of the Labor and Social movements of the time.

One result of the Freethought missionary work in Blackburn under Mr. Foote's scheme is an address by the Rev. W. D. Watson, of Harwood-street Wesleyan Church, on "Secularism," which is reported in the local *Times*. Mr. Watson regarded Mr. John Morley as the chief exponent of Secularism in literature and public life. His account and criticism of Secularism indicated a wish to be fair, and it is pleasant to find a Christian minister warning his co-religionists to be "careful lest they brought railing accusations and misrepresentations against Secularists, which would only recoil upon themselves."

The Annual Children's Party, under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive, is a little later than usual. It takes place on Wednesday, April 1, in the large hall of the Club Union, next door to the Holborn Town Hall. Individual members of the N.S.S. who desire tickets should apply to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., enclosing stamped addressed envelope. Branch members can obtain tickets from their secretary. The tickets admit children over five and under fourteen years of age. Parents and friends are admitted to the galleries by ticket, price threepence. It only remains to add that further subscriptions are wanted towards the expenses of this function. There ought not to be much begging for a night's happiness for the little ones.

Branches of the National Secular Society should all be making arrangements to be represented at the Annual Conference, which is to be held at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. It is ten years since the Conference was held at Glasgow, which is the actual, though not the nominal, capital of Scotland. In addition to its commercial greatness, Glasgow has the advantage of being within easy reach of famous scenery of mingled loveliness and grandeur. Delegates and other members of the N.S.S. should contrive to spend a few days down the Clyde. Some of them might travel up the Clyde, and view its beautiful Falls, near which is New Lanark, where Robert Owen attempted the most successful of his social experiments. The Conference will be a rare opportunity of combining business with pleasure.

## SHILLING MONTH.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

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

M. A. M., £10; F. S., £5; G. Holloway; G. Brittan, 4s.; C. D., 10s.; Bath Friend, 2s.; G. R., £1; E. Truelove, £1; J. F., 2s.; S. Holmes, 2s. 6d.; Pyrites; H. Leggett; F. Warwick; G. L. Mackenzie, 2s.; G. Kersley; Spiro (Gateshead), 10s.; F. J., 2s. 6d.; J. Scott, 2s.; Messrs. Buzzard and Reynolds, 2s.; John Proctor, £1; J. Crozier, 2s. 6d.; J. Proctor; Joseph Proctor, 2s. 6d.; Robert Proctor, 2s. 6d.; W. Taylor, 2s.; W. S. M., 2s. 6d.; H. C. Byshe, £1; E. L., 5s.; Vegetarian Freethinker; T. H.; E. Belcher, 2s. 6d.; J. C. Grant, 5s.; J. Pruett, 5s.; Mrs. Beszant, 2s.; J. Topham; G. Thwaites, 5s.; J. G. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; W. Elcoat; T. Norton; Old Freethinker (per Bradlaugh Club and Institute), £1; Vickmount; T. Ollerenshaw, 2s.; J. Gledhill; Freethinking Spiritist, 2s.; Son of Crispin, 2s. 6d.; J. Hockin; J. D. Leggett, 2s. 6d.; Pagan, 2s. 6d.; W. Lamb, 5s.; J. H. R.

*Per C. Cohen*:—J. Mudd, 2s.; collection at Paisley, 12s. Blackburn:—J. Umpleby, 5s.; Tithrington, 2s. 6d.; Ashworth; Whitehead; Harley; Hampson; Haworth; Mr. and Mrs. Ashworth, 2s.; H. Jones, 2s.; J. Leach, 2s.; R. Ashworth, 2s.; J. Knowles, 2s.

*Per Miss Vance*:—Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Nash, 4s.; A. F., 3s.; T. S.; Mrs. Penny, 3s.; Mrs. Macmillan, 2s. 6d.; J. Warren; Larner Sugden, 3s. 4d.; J. O., 3s.

*Per R. Forder*:—G. S. Towell; E. Calvert; T. H. S., 5s.; A. Waymouth, 5s.; S. Newson, 2s. 6d.; J. and Mrs. Clark, 2s. 6d.; J. E. Banks, 2s. 6d.; Old Devonian, 2s.; W. Sweetman, 3s.; F. J. Voisey; W. C. (Dorking), 10s. 6d.

*Per Charles Watts* (from Leicester):—S. Leeson, 5s.; W. Caunt and daughter, 2s.; W. Armstrong, 2s.; Messrs. Bolton, Johnson, Palmer, Wade, Swisham, Pell, Hunt, Hopkins, Drabble, Wilher, Potter, Wheatley, Letts, Wilkinson, C. P. and Mrs. Shorman.

*Birmingham*:—H. Lees Sumner, 4s.; J. H. Ridgway; R. Taylor; W. T. Pitt; C. H. Cattell; T. Yapp; J. Partridge; W. Hodgkins; J. Terry; S. Armfield; D. Bullows.

*Liverpool*:—Towers, 3s.; Allen, 2s. 6d.; Small, 2s. 6d.; Ross, 2s. 6d.; Young, 2s. 6d.; Balfour Bros., 2s.; Radcliffe; Russell; Roberts; Davies; H.

## THE "D. T." ON DANIEL.

AMONG the many striking and picturesque figures which abound in the Scriptures Daniel holds a pre-eminent place, and his adventure with the lions has been the delight of children and the fortune of waxwork exhibitors for generations. A great mass of poetic and artistic lore has gathered around his head. Many people who have not forgotten the days of childhood's wonder will, therefore, hear with great grief and sinking of heart that in a sermon, which has been published, the Rev. Bernard Snell, of Brixton Congregational Church, one of the most popular divines belonging to that denomination, insinuates that reasonable doubts may be entertained of the existence of such a person. In fact, he plainly states that it is quite immaterial whether man, woman, or child believe in Daniel or not. Worse still, he treats the lions in the same sceptical manner. "If your children ask you," he says, "if this story of Daniel is true, say just what you believe about it. If you think it true, say so. If you are in doubt, say you do not know. If you do not believe it, then tell them that you do not. It is not of vital importance that they should believe in Daniel or the lion's den." Mr. Snell has the reputation of being very gentle and humane, and men of that description generally love to impart heartbreaking news by degrees, and after a soothing exordium. The suddenness of his blow against Daniel and the lions is, therefore, all the more surprising. It was bad enough to see last week the sacred tree of Kum-Bum in Thibet, with its mystical leaves and bark, ruthlessly abolished as an imposture by Mr. Thiselton-Dyer and other scientific gentlemen. Between its disappearance and the abolition of Daniel and the lions a reasonable time should have been allowed, in order to permit the public to regain part of its equanimity. If the hero of the lion's den is to go, who remains safe?

—*Daily Telegraph* (March 13).

It's mighty impressive to hear 'em compare  
The comforts of heaven with torments elsewhere;  
It makes ye ambitious to hear all these things  
'Bout the music of harps and the rustle of wings,  
An' the satisfied conscience, the feelin' of rest,  
That comes when a feller is doin' his best,  
Many times I've determined to go the right way,  
But it's hard to be good on a dollar a day.

—*Life*.



## THOMAS PAINE AND EARL CHARLEMONT.

AN accidental loan of a volume of the *Historical Manuscripts Commission*\* gives me the opportunity of placing before Freethinkers some interesting items, which will, I think, be new to a good many readers.

James Caulfield was born in Dublin on August 18, 1728; he was for many years the head of the military forces; and, though he was made earl in 1763 for quelling an insurrection in Ulster, it is probable that he received much more pleasure by being made president of the Royal Irish Academy in 1786; for, judging from his voluminous correspondence with literary men and scientific men and artists, booksellers, and engravers, he was too much a man of culture—in its best sense—ever to be a mere politician. He was a Liberal Whig in those days, and would be a good type of Whig Liberal to-day. That he, much like the Whigs of to-day, sometimes thought it well to sit on the fence will be seen in the answer to the first letter of moment in our connection, which was from Richard Sheridan, who, being called to the bar in 1774 and made a king's counsel, was in 1790 offered a seat in Parliament for the borough of Charlemont, Charlemont writing him a very flattering letter when begging its acceptance on April 10, 1790.

In a letter to —. Stewart on April 8 Charlemont says, writing of his intentions and wishes: "Sheridan, the lawyer, has long been the object of my wish..... He is a man beloved by all who know him, honorable and upright, of firm Whig principle, and, to my own knowledge, of considerable ability and natural eloquence."

In 1791 Paine published his *Rights of Man* in reply to Burke, and on April 11 Sheridan writes to his patron, Charlemont:—

"Determined in my public conduct to seek and follow your lordship's advice, give me leave to solicit that advice on a circumstance which has made me very uneasy. I find from the newspapers that the Whigs of the capital (a society of which I am a member, and into which I entered with the best intentions) have, in my absence, and without my knowledge, named and published me one of a committee for disseminating Mr. Paine's pamphlet in reply to Mr. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. I have read that pamphlet; it appears to me designed to level all distinction, and to have this object in view—a total overthrow of the constitution. With this opinion I must naturally feel it indecent, in my public situation as a member of Parliament, a citizen [how he could be a member of Parliament if he were not a citizen he does not explain], a barrister, and (what I value least) one of his majesty's counsel, to disseminate that work; but I am at a loss how to act. My first intention was to contradict it publicly. I fear a misinterpretation of my motives, and I dislike public differences with men in whose cause I am an humble assistant. Will you, my dear lord, advise me in this, and make me happy by removing my doubt? Possessing your opinion, I shall be totally indifferent to every other."

Richard Sheridan may really have felt in doubt on general and public grounds, and really desired advice for that reason; but it seems more than probable that he was more concerned to know what line Charlemont meant to take, and act accordingly. He was naturally anxious not to offend his patron, whom he knew to be more advanced than himself, and of whose views he may have had a hint. What these views were we can gather from a letter to one of his most frequent correspondents, Dr. Alexander Haliday, of Belfast, Secretary to the Northern Whig Club:—

"CHARLEMONT TO HALIDAY.

"1791, May 9, Dublin.—I did, indeed, suppose that Paine's pamphlet, which is, by the way, a work of great genius, would be well received in your district; yet, in my opinion, it ought to be read with some degree of caution. He does, indeed, tear away the bandage from the public eye; but in tearing it off there may be some danger of injuring the organ. Though I have always thought that political controversy is highly useful by conveying instruction throughout the land, and though I have been greatly entertained by his work and by that of his antagonist, perhaps I might be induced to wish that neither of them had been published. I confess myself to the last

degree partial to the English constitution as it ought to be, and I cannot help thinking that a line might be drawn between the projects of the two projectors which would be practicable, rational, and safe..... There is no science in which theory and practice differ more than in the science of politics. Were all men virtuous, a perfect democracy would be the best of governments. But, alas, is that possible? Was there ever a Government more tyrannical than the democracy of Athens? There is undoubtedly much good sense and much sound argument in Paine's production. Nay, even where he may by many be thought eccentric, his arguments are not easy to be answered except by experience. But this ratiocination, though much too scanty and short for the subject, is much too long for my head and eyes. I feel also awkward in the hazard of differing from you in any respect, yet comfort myself by being confident that in the present instance we do not differ much, as I am well assured that your veneration for the English constitution in its true spirit is to the full as great as mine....."

In a letter from Haliday to Charlemont, on June 16, 1791 (Belfast), it is reported that the Northern Whig Club had agreed to rejoice together on July 14, the anniversary of the French Revolution. And June 22 Charlemont, in a letter to Haliday, says: "Have you read Mackintosh's pamphlet? Barring a few errors, it is an excellent performance." This pamphlet is a fair-sized book, known as *Vindiciae Gallicae: A Defence of the French Revolution and its English Admirers against the Accusations of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke* (London, 1791).

Under date August 27 (Belfast) the jocular Doctor answers the query:—

"This town advances rapidly in size, improvement, and prosperity. Religion and luxury with us go hand in hand, no ordinary partnership. We are building a new meeting-house and a new theatre, bane and antidote together, like Burke and Mackintosh, whom I have compelled to live in close union, under one common roof of good calves-skin. They are not likely, however, to attend *levée* together, where I perceive the former consistent gentleman is very diligent, conceiving, since his trouble, that he is a fit companion for those who he long observed were fond of low company."

To note this bit of pleasantry we have had to pass two important letters, as we have, in addition to further comment on Paine and Burke, references to the riots at Birmingham when Joseph Priestley was driven from his burning home.

"1791, July 23, Belfast.—The troop was to have met you at Dundalk to escort you to Armagh, and our infantry to have met their beloved general there. By the by, my lord, I never saw our municipal guards more numerous or so well appointed as they are at present. This mortifying disappointment was in some sort compensated by an extract from your last letter to Sir Annersley (Stewart), which he had the goodness to send me, and by which we learn that both your Lordship and Lady Claremont had found considerable benefit from the (Bath) waters. Our procession on the 14th was truly splendid. I should be glad to have your lordship's opinion of the declaration. It was drawn up in Dublin by a late Belfast volunteer, has been translated into French, and transmitted to the President of the National Assembly, I believe through Mornbrat, the French consul, a sensible, well-informed man (particularly in botany), who happened to dine with me on Sunday last, as did another gentleman of strong reasoning powers from Germany, who stayed here a week that he might witness our festivity; both decided revolutionists, and both confident that French freedom is established without a great deal more confusion and disturbance than the drinking of its health has excited among the Birmingham brutes. Oh shame to England! O shame to what is affectedly called Protestantism exclusively! Go on, Burke, boast of our civil and ecclesiastical constitution and persuade us, against the evidence of our senses and the convictions of our minds, that the people of England are free and happy, liberal and enlightened. They are savages! Though Mackintosh has not put Paine's nose out of joint, he divides our suffrages with him; in truth, I think it, on the whole, a very masterly dissection of Burke's monster; while the one on Horace, with a face of beauty and an appearance of reason, has nothing at bottom but deformity, black, brutal, and offensive, to which all the light and gay feathers, scattered with profusion on the discordant members, cannot reconcile one."

To this Charlemont answers:—

"July 30, Bath.—You wish to know my opinion of the Declaration. Though parts of it might perhaps be better, it appears to me, upon the whole, a good composition

\* *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, Thirteenth Report, appendix, part viii. Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, First Earl of Charlemont, vol. ii. 1784-1799. (1894.)



which does honor both to the head and the heart of the writer. There is, indeed, one point which I would wish to be inculcated in every publication on the subject which at present agitates the minds of men, but which, however, might possibly not have been suited to a declaration intended to be laid before the National Assembly. Though I admire Mr. Paine, I am by no means a convert to his doctrine concerning our constitution, and cannot help thinking that some approbation of this constitution, as it ought to be, should at all times be joined with the applause which we so justly bestow on the emancipation of a great people from utter slavery. Thinking thus, it is needless to say that I entirely approve the resolutions of the Northern Whig Club, wherein you conceive that the civil constitution of these realms, in its pure and uncorrupted state, is the best model for us. Among the toasts given at the general meeting you will readily point out one which does not meet my full approbation. On the subject you know my sentiments, which must, I fear, remain unaltered till I can discover some analogy between Ireland and any other country in Europe on this point, and till I can persuade myself that what is excellent reasoning in all other parts of the world is equally incontrovertible with us. A time may perhaps arrive, but it is not yet come, and from the bottom of my heart I am sorry for it. The Birmingham\* brutes, as you justly call them, are a disgrace to England, a disgrace to humanity; and the letter of the gentlemen is, if possible, worse than the outrages of the rabble."

THOMAS SHORE.

(To be continued.)

## THE NIGGER PREACHER AND THE BLACK CAT.

A DISPATCH from Bay Shore to the *New York World* says:—

"There is a big demand for rabbits' feet and other hoodoo destroyers among the colored Methodists here. It all came about because the pastor, Rev. J. F. Jackson, killed a black cat the other night. It was during service.

"Parson Jackson is now a man who walks alone. All his flock pass him by on the other side when they meet. They do not propose to have the result of his rash act visited upon them. A number of good elders are also talking about resigning from the church.

"Parson Jackson has been holding a revival meeting, and all his good sheep have avoided hen-roosts for a week, and were earnestly praying for the wicked. At the meeting the other night the preacher's appeal to those who have refused salvation was rudely interrupted.

"A jet tabby cat solemnly stalked down the centre aisle and meowed loudly. There was consternation. Dominie Jackson leaned over the pulpit and said: 'Who put that black thing in here? Take it out, some of you small boys.' But the small boys didn't.

"The cat was carefully hidden, and when a good brother was calling upon the youths to turn from the wrath to come, pussy was loosed. With a swift spring it landed upon an aged Methodist's shoulders. The congregation was startled. But the dominie was strong and quick. He suddenly yelled, and, leaping over the mourners' bench, grabbed the cat by the tail. Then, swinging it round and round his head, Pastor Jackson rushed from the church.

"Once outside, the poor cat was beaten to death against the side of the church. Then the preacher returned to his prayers. There were no converts that night.

"But, aside from the superstition of the colored folks, there is much indignation among the residents here. There is some talk of notifying the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and having the preacher prosecuted."

## 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.

\* The rioters at Birmingham, who, July, 1791, opposed the commemoration of the French Revolution, and burned the house and library of Joseph Priestley, D.D.

## GOD AND I—(THE KAISER).

WE are a pair unique,  
God and I;  
Apart from ev'ry clique,  
God and I;  
He's strong and quick as winking,  
And I am good at thinking;  
We know no fear nor shrinking,  
God and I.

The German folk we guide,  
God and I;  
We're both upon their side,  
God and I;  
My Colleague's inspiration  
Gives me determination;  
We, thus, both bless the nation,  
God and I.

A "man of war"'s the Lord,  
So am I;  
He's partial to the sword,  
So am I.  
I am the Lord's adviser;  
Than one, two heads are wiser:—  
The Deity plus Kaiser—  
God and I.

I hope and trust that we—  
God and I—  
Will never disagree,  
God and I.

All jealousy we smother;  
Each supplements the other;  
We study one another,  
God and I.

If ever we fell out,  
God and I,  
We'd both be put about,  
God and I;  
All other kings are, clearly,  
His passive puppets merely,  
But we are equals nearly,  
God and I.

Of course, the Lord is chief  
God, not I;  
My life on earth is brief;  
Soon I'll die;  
But, when my days are ended,  
And I've to heav'n ascended,  
We'll have some matters mended,  
God and I.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

The Fathers laid down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds were justifiable, and even laudable; and if they had not laid this down, they would nevertheless have practised them as a necessary consequence of their doctrine of exclusive salvation. Immediately all ecclesiastical literature became tainted with a spirit of the most unblushing mendacity. Heathenism was to be combatted, and, therefore, prophecies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged, lying wonders were multiplied, and ceaseless calumnies were poured upon those who, like Julian, opposed the faith. Heretics were to be convinced, and, therefore, interpolations of old writings or complete forgeries were habitually opposed to the forged Gospels. The veneration of relics and the monastic system were introduced, and therefore innumerable miracles were attributed to the power of saints, or to the prayers of hermits, and were solemnly asserted by the most eminent of the Fathers. The tendency was not confined to those eastern nations which had been almost always destitute of the sense of truth; it triumphed wherever the supreme importance of dogma was held. Generation after generation it became more universal; it continued till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth seemed blotted out from the minds of men.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "History of Rationalism."*

The Hebrew conception of the world, like the Arabic, inclines to a glorification of the nomadic life. The Hebrews refer the origin of agriculture to a curse imposed by God upon fallen humanity.—*Ignaz Goldziher.*



CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DANGER OF HASTY BURIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Too little cognisance is taken of the fact that, while the present want of knowledge in the examination of the supposed dead and the existing mode of granting certificates of death obtain, persons suffering from suspended animation in its various forms are in immediate peril of being buried alive; and this peril is greatly increased by the practice of early or hasty burial. In France thirty-six hours is the extreme time allowed for interment, except by special permission; in the province of Quebec, Canada, twenty-four hours is the minimum; and in Ireland, a well-informed clergyman writes, "interment usually takes place the day after decease, and no certificate as to cause of death is ever required. There is no safeguard whatever, and among the ignorant poor, I fear, premature burial is terribly frequent." Among the Jews early burial is the invariable custom. The condition most resembling death is trance, and persons have been known to remain in that state for days and weeks. Dr. M. S. Tanner, in a letter to the *New York Times*, January 18, 1880, mentions two cases where persons awakened from trance at the moment of sepulture described in turn what their feelings had been. Said one: "Have you ever felt the paralysing influence of a horrible nightmare? If you have had such experience, then you are prepared to conceive of the mental agonies I endured when I realised that my friends believed me dead, and were making preparations for my burial. Once I believed there was no hell; now I not only believe, but possess positive knowledge. The hours and days of mental struggle spent in the vain endeavor to break loose from the vice-like grasp of this worse than horrible nightmare was a hell of torment such as no tongue can describe or pen portray." The other case was that of Dr. Johnson, of St. Charles, Illinois, who, in the hearing of Dr. Tanner, and in the presence of a large audience in Harrison's Hall, Minneapolis, stated that "when a young man he was prostrated with a fever, and swooned away apparently dead. The attending physician said he was dead. His father was faithless and unbelieving, and refused to bury him. He lay in this condition apparently dead fourteen days. The attending physician brought other physicians to examine the apparently lifeless form, and all stated unqualifiedly, 'He is dead.' Some fourteen physicians, among them many eminent professors, examined the body, and there was no ambiguity in the expression of their conclusion that the boy was dead. But the father still turned a deaf ear to all entreaties to prepare the body for the grave. Public feeling was at last aroused. The health officer and other city officers, acting in their official capacity, and by the advice of physicians, peremptorily demanded that the body be interred without delay. On the fourteenth day the father yielded under protest; preparations were made for the funeral, when the emotions of the still living subject, who was conscious of all transpiring around him, were so intense as to be the means of his deliverance. He awoke from his trance."

People subject to trance, it may be observed, often fall down suddenly; they are incapable of motion; are medically certified as dead from syncope or "natural causes," and are buried without waiting for signs of putrefaction. Every day the papers announce "sudden deaths" of this description.

W. R. J.

The Poor Man's Complaint.

(Not by I. Watts.)

Whene'er I take my walks abroad,  
How many rich I see;  
What should I say about the God  
That's so unfair to me?  
Boasting of more than they deserve,  
Yet grasping still for more,  
They roll in wealth, while I must starve,  
Or beg from door to door.

The Christian Creed and Insanity.

If a person should believe that a man now living had a virgin for a mother and a ghost for a father, and that he was a god, and the ghost was a god, and that the two had another father who was a god, and that the three gods were only one god, and that the son and the father and the grandfather were all of an age; and that he died and is still living, that he got up eclipses and earthquakes to order, and split rocks and could raise the dead, and even call up a whole troop of dead folks from their graves, and then, contrary to the universal law of gravitation, ascend from the earth with bones, flesh, and full stomach, would not such person be judged insane?—*John Peck.*

INVESTIGATING.

FROM what the Bible says of Gawd  
We think Jehovah is a fraud.

When creed's sky-pilots cease to lie  
How soon Faith's ghostly myths will die.

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
Take the lead of folly's host.

One road of bleak Sahara's sand  
Is worth ten farms in the promised land.

The warning star in ignorance's night—  
The ghost-begotten Israelite.

"Ducks" who depend on prayer for food  
Were hatched from superstition's brood.

Christians profess full faith in prayer,  
But straightway rise and show good sense  
By acting as though each would swear  
That every prayer is false pretence.

No creed can stretch to such a size  
That it will cover all the lies  
Which the poor pagan preachers tell  
About the heat and hate of hell.

—*J. T. Reynolds.*

RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENT SUPERSEDED BY  
SECULAR.

MOST of us read in our earlier days the story of "The Pitcairn Islanders," which relates how some of the seamen who mutinied on the *Bounty* and turned their officers adrift "reformed" after exhausting themselves with murders and debauchery, and set up a religious community on Pitcairn's Island. The Pitcairners have been much petted by the Admiralty, and were settled many years ago upon Norfolk Island. It has appeared for a long time past, from the hints of passing travellers, that these pious people were not acting as they should; and matters have now become so intolerable that the Australian Government has had to interfere. The incident has given rise to a question in the House of Commons. We clip the report from the *Daily News*: "Mr. HOGAN asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government of New South Wales had been requested to assume the direct control and administration of the affairs of Norfolk Island; and, if so, whether he had any objection to state the grounds on which it was sought to deprive the inhabitants of that island of the large measure of local self-government they have hitherto enjoyed.—Mr. CHAMBERLAIN said the answer to the first part of the question was in the affirmative. As to the second part, he had to say that up to the present time the administration of justice, which was in the hands of two magistrates elected by the community, had been partial and unsatisfactory. Crime was rarely punished, and debts were not recovered. These circumstances, coupled with the fact that public buildings had been allowed to fall into a ruinous condition, and no effort had been made to develop the resources of that island—the condition of which was rapidly deteriorating—afforded, in the opinion of her Majesty's Government, sufficient grounds for effecting a change in the administration of its affairs."

PROFANE JOKES.

"Mamma, do you think our minister will go to heaven?"  
"I hope so, Johnny. Why?"  
"'Cause he won't if the Lord knows him as well as I do."

Sunday-school Teacher—"And the prophet rent his clothes." Johnny, what does that mean?  
Johnny—"I s'pose he didn't have the price to buy 'em."

"Did you enjoy the sermon, dear?" said Mrs. Collingwood to her husband, after church. "No; I dreamt that a note for \$1,000 was due, and I hadn't a cent to pay it with."

She—"I hope, dear, you were not thinking of business in church this morning. You know your thoughts should be of higher things." He—"Well, I was thinking of that three-guinea bonnet of yours. Is that high enough, think you?"

Tommy—"You don't know nothin' at all about how folks ought to be baptised. What does St. Paul say about it?"  
Sammy—"St. Paul! Yah! He don't say nothin'; he's dead."

Marley—"What did Mrs. Flyer ask the rector to pray for rain this morning for?"  
Parley—"Her four daughters have just received a new importation of stunning Parisian hosiery."



## 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.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, lecture, followed by social gathering.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, R. Forder, "The Devil's Pulpit." Tuesday, at 8.45, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture X., Leo."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Harry Snell, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist and Reformer" (with lantern illustrations).

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "The Apostle Paul as an Ethical Teacher."

ISLINGTON BRANCH: 8.30, special general meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute.

LAMBETH BRANCH: 7, important business meeting at Mr. Rogers's, 114 Kennington-road.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Methodist Idolatry."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Life, Death, and Immortality."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Higher Criticism of the Bible."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Herbert Burrows, "Evolution and Ethics."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

## COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, S. Armfield will lecture.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Kenith Hunt, "The Objects of the N.S.S." Monday, at 8, soiree and dance. Tuesday, at 8, committee meeting at 60 Conduit-place, Ashley-road.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, C. James, "Science v. Creeds."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—Henry Moffat, "Olive Schreiner's Philosophy"; 6.30, A. Paul, "The Women of the Bible."

HULL (St. George's Hall): 11, Charles Watts, "The Religious Man"; 8, "The Bible and Civilisation"; 7, "A Plea for Unbelief."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Ernest Newman, "The Evolution of Humanity."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Haydon, "Machinery and Ethics." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, Joseph Hyder, "Can England Feed Herself? or, How to Make the Best of the Land"; 6.30, "Land Nationalisation: Its Necessity, Aims, and Methods."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 8, Robert Law, F.G.S., "Is the Moon a Dead World?" 7, "Extinct Mammals of the Tertiary Period, and their Relation to those of the Present Day" (with lantern illustrations). Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, "Voltaire."

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—March 22, Edinburgh; 29, Leeds. April 6, Balls Pond; 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 5, m. Westminster; 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 22, Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow. May 3, Fallsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

## POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

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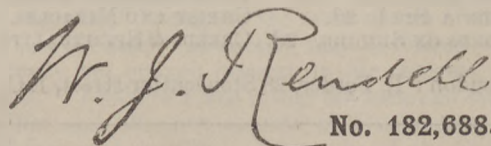
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