

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## INGERSOLL "LIES."

(Continued from page 226.)

THIS "eulogy of whisky," as Ingersoll's teetotal Christian enemies call it, should at any rate be balanced by his denunciation of alcohol in the course of his argument in the Munn trial at Chicago in 1876. This is what he said:—

"I believe, gentlemen, that alcohol, to a certain degree, demoralises those who make it, those who sell it, and those who drink it. I believe from the time it issues from the coiled and poisonous worm of the distillery until it empties into the hell of crime, death, and dishonor, it demoralises everybody that touches it. I do not believe that anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against this liquid crime. All you have to do, gentlemen, is to think of the wrecks upon either bank of this stream of death—of the suicides, of the insanity, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the distress, of the little children tugging at the faded dresses of weeping and despairing wives, asking for bread; of the men of genius it has wrecked; of the millions who have struggled with imaginary serpents produced by this devilish thing. And when you think of the gaols, of the almshouses, of the prisons, and of the scaffolds upon either bank—I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the damned stuff called alcohol."

This is the only "Temperance" speech Ingersoll ever made. It is surely strong enough, in its way; and states one side of the case as the other is stated in the letter to Mr. Brown. The golden mean of wise use, instead of foolish abuse, is the policy of Ingersoll himself, as it is and has been the policy of so many great thinkers and workers.

Matthew Arnold once said that he did not believe teetotalism would ever triumph. What he expected was that Englishmen would drink light wines instead of strong spirits. Ingersoll appears to be of the same opinion. He has likened wine to a cheerful hearth-fire, and spirit to a conflagration.

So much for the "drunkard" Ingersoll. Now let us see about the "coward."

The wretches who cannot answer Ingersoll's arguments ask people to believe that he displayed cowardice in the war between North and South. "He was in but one engagement," they say, "and in that was chased into a hogshead and actually taken prisoner by a sixteen-year-old Confederate boy."

The followers of the Prince of Peace evidently pride themselves on their fighting qualities, and seem disposed to deny all military prowess to Freethinkers. It is perfectly true that Christians are the greatest brawlers on this planet; but, on the other hand, it is curious that they should fancy a Freethinker is likely to be a coward. Julius Cæsar was an Atheist; Lord Peterborough, one of our best generals in the eighteenth century, was a notorious Freethinker; Frederic the Great laughed at Christianity, and Napoleon was a thorough-going sceptic.

The best answer to this malignant nonsense about Ingersoll's "cowardice" is the statement of a recent fact. During the war Ingersoll was Colonel of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry. This body held a re-union at Elmwood in September, 1895. The surviving comrades of six regiments were present. Colonel Ingersoll was the invited guest and orator of the occasion. He was accompanied from Peoria to Elmwood by a delegation of more than five

hundred prominent citizens. As he passed to the stand his old regiment lined both sides of the way, and gave him a grand greeting. Tears were in the eyes of many of them as they shouted "Glad to see you, Bob." The appearance of the Colonel to deliver his oration, after the parade of the veterans, evoked immense enthusiasm. According to the *Peoria Transcript* report, it was "the signal for a mighty shout, which was heartily joined in by everyone present. It was fully ten minutes before the cheering subsided, and when Colonel Ingersoll commenced to speak the cheering was renewed, and he was forced to wait several minutes more."

Now, will any man in his senses believe that veteran soldiers, all those years after the war, would greet their Colonel in this fashion if he had run away in battle, and been chased and captured by a boy of sixteen? Surely the soldiers know the military character of their commander a great deal better than ministers of religion do, or than all the tribe of Christian Evidence libellers.

This cowardly "cowardice" lie about Ingersoll is of old standing, and although it has been indignantly branded as a lie by his army comrades it still goes round the globe wherever the English language is spoken; for contradicting and exposing a lie does not kill it, if it happens to serve the cause of religion. Mr. John W. Kempsey, who was Lieutenant of Company B. in the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry, writing to the *Peoria Transcript* in September, 1889, said: "It makes my blood boil, as it no doubt does that of every survivor of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry, to read the unscrupulous and groundless charges against the bravery of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll." Lieutenant Kempsey then gave an account of the engagement in which Ingersoll was taken prisoner. With some "six or seven hundred men and two pieces of artillery" the Colonel was ordered to oppose a raid by General Forrest (Confederate) in the direction of Lexington. Forrest's whole division, not less than ten thousand cavalry, bore down on Ingersoll's handful. The Colonel, with a portion of his force, broke through the solid mass of the enemy, and came out in the rear of their line, where the little band was finally surrounded and captured. "Call Colonel Ingersoll an infidel," said Lieutenant Kimsey, "say he was reckless, say he was blasphemous under provocation; but do not say in the presence of a member of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry that he was a coward, or that he shirked a post of duty because of its dangers."

A later letter by Lieutenant Kimsey, addressed to Mr. D. N. Harwood, who had made inquiries as to Ingersoll's service in the Union army, was printed in the *Peoria Transcript* of April 11, 1891. Ingersoll's regiment, under his command, took part during two days in the memorable battle of Shiloh, several of its members being killed or wounded. Afterwards it fought for two days at Corinth, and "proved its loyal bravery, like the regiments that fought by its side, by its list of wounded and dead."

In the *Fargo Argus* of December 21, 1895, the editor, referring to the Rev. J. D. Houston's libellous sermon at Aberdeen, wrote as follows: "The writer knew Colonel Ingersoll personally, and the charges against him by the Aberdeen preacher are too silly to talk about. On the battle-field of Shiloh his personal courage was tested and found not wanting. This also the writer witnessed."

Mr. Macdonald gives an amusing extract from the *New York Sun*, which reported an interview with a veteran who served under Ingersoll. "A braver man," this veteran said, "I never saw in five years of service." He corroborated

Lieutenant Kimsey's account of Ingersoll's small force being overwhelmed by General Forrest's ten thousand cavalry, and then added: "But the Colonel kept on fighting. A number of his men saw that he was in imminent peril, and that if he didn't surrender he would be killed, and they yelled at him at the top of their voices to give up. He heeded, but I could see that he did so with regret and disgust. Here is where the humor began. When the Colonel stopped fighting he threw up his hands and screamed out: 'Stop firing! I'll acknowledge your d——d old Confederacy.'"

This veteran added that Ingersoll was taken to a store for safe keeping, and the "people flocked around him, listened to his stories, and declared that they were having more fun than they ever had in their lives." One night a lot of the rebels gathered round him; they overflowed the place, and the Colonel went outside, where he was asked to make a speech. He got on a box and addressed the crowd, which he soon had under the spell of his eloquence. When he reached the subject of slavery, and pictured its horrors, he "brought out streams of tears and bursts of applause from the very men who but a few hours before shot at and captured him." The oration was cut short by General Forrest, who rushed in excitedly, though not angry, and exclaimed: "Here, Ingersoll, stop that speech, and I'll exchange you for a government mule."

The North had just then suspended exchanges, however, and Ingersoll was sent to command a parole camp at St. Louis. Eventually, with the consent of his men, the Colonel, being sick of rusting as a paroled prisoner, resigned, and went back home into civil life.

This is the true story of Ingersoll's service in the Union army. He did his duty and fought like a man. His old comrades honor him, and the pious liars had better not talk about his "cowardice" in *their* presence.

Another lie about Ingersoll is that he used at one time to speak on behalf of slavery. When the Colonel was twenty-six years of age, and running for Congress in the Fourth District of Illinois, he denounced slavery vigorously. This was in 1860. When the war broke out soon afterwards, says Mr. J. K. Magie, for several years a reading clerk in the Illinois legislature, Ingersoll became "more serious and in earnest." "He was in great demand," says Mr. Magie, "as a speaker during the latter part of the war, and no man in Illinois did more for the cause of the Union than did Mr. Ingersoll."

What these liars about Ingersoll should do is to find a pro-slavery speech of his, or produce someone who heard it, specifying both time and place. Until they do this, the readers of Ingersoll in all parts of the world will deride the idea that he ever spoke in favor of "the sum of all villainies."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

## THE GOSPELS AS HISTORY.\*

AN anonymous work, which in its thoroughness is comparable to *Supernatural Religion*, has lately been published by Messrs. Williams and Norgate. The author has set himself to examine, in a calm and temperate spirit, if the Christian Gospels are entitled to credence as trustworthy records of historical events. He is forced, as I have been, to the conclusion that they not only have no claim to be infallible, but that also they cannot be considered historic. But he still appears to consider himself a member of the Church of England, which he claims is not founded on books or on miracles, but on "a living faith or trust in the indwelling and the abiding work of the Divine Spirit." Such phrases as these tempt me to regard the author as probably a beneficed clergyman, who is content to take the emoluments of a Church while undermining its very fabric, and rejecting all that the Christians of old regarded as essential Christianity.†

A book of 533 pages is hardly to be condensed within

\* *The Four Gospels as Historical Records.* (Williams and Norgate.)

† I can make a shrewd guess at the name of the author, but it would be unfair to put it in print.

the limits of a single article, and I shall on future occasions call further attention to the work. I must, however, at once touch upon a few of its salient points. The author shows that, as the Acts of the Apostles professes to relate the early stages of the Christian Church, the testing of that book is a matter of supreme importance. A comparison with Paul's epistle to the Galatians shows that the story of Paul is quite irreconcilable with that of the Acts, and indicates that the latter is garbled for a purpose. Paul knew nothing of the alleged Jerusalem Council. The author says:—

"The result is not merely that the writer of Acts is discredited as a historian. The picture which he has drawn of the internal harmony of the Church vanishes into air. The fabric which he has taken pains to build up falls to the ground; and we see clearly that, if it had not been for Paul, the Society of Judaic Christians at Jerusalem would have remained a mere Jewish sect, or more probably would have come to a speedy end."

It is easy to discern that the effect of discrediting the historical character of the Acts is to cast a strong suspicion on the Gospel story which it is supposed to affirm. The Christ of Paul is an entirely different character from that of the Gospels, and it is a part of the author's work to show that the supposed Pauline corroboration of the Gospels rests on mistakes and interpolations.

In treating of the Gospels the author first disposes of the alleged external evidence in the early Fathers. Here he largely follows in the wake of the author of *Supernatural Religion*. He shows that "Christian writers to the sixth or seventh decade of the second century were either ignorant of the existence of our canonical Gospels, or deliberately preferred other gospels to them." That is, there is no evidence for these documents for a century and a half after the alleged occurrence of the events with which they deal. An inquiry into the age and authenticity of the fourth Gospel proves that it is even in a worse case than the first three. No mention of it is made in the early Christian literature down to the second half of the second century; and still less have we any evidence which lends any countenance to the notion of this semi-philosophical production coming from the apostolic fisherman, John; while it is certain that the author of the harsh Hebraisms and broken grammar of the Apocalypse cannot have written the cultivated Hellenistic Greek in the fourth Gospel, the author of which was absurdly ignorant of all things Jewish. How dubious and untrustworthy is the whole of the evidence cited in favor of the traditional view is noted with care at every stage of the examination.

Of the era in which Christianity arose the author says:—

"It was, in truth, an age of the most degraded and deadening superstition—an age in which an order of the universe was a conception unknown to all except two or three minds at the most, and to them presented most dimly and imperfectly—an age in which men were ignorant, intolerant, and bigoted as they were superstitious, and therefore as prejudiced and cruel as they were intolerant."

In another place he says with truth:—

"In place of Paley's perfectly trustworthy and infallible witnesses, we have a number of uneducated or half-educated peasants, whose roughness and rudeness, materialism and intolerance, are on a par with their ignorance. In fact, there never was an age in which the most upright of men then living could be less depended on for the accuracy of their reports, or the correctness of their impressions, than was the age which we speak of as the apostolic, or any country more steeped in superstitious credulity than that in which the apostles or evangelists lived. Among the Jews of that day, generally, wonders, in Dean Milman's words, 'wakened no emotion, or were speedily superseded by some new demand on the ever-ready belief.'"

He shows that the first three Gospels are founded on common documents, and that internal evidence proves that no one of the three writes from personal knowledge. "The three Synoptic Gospels are manifestly not three independent narratives, but merely different versions flowing out of a common tradition; and what can such versions be worth?" The picture given in them is entirely different from that in the document ascribed to John, and the discrepancies are so great that it is impossible for anyone who has seen their contradictions to avoid the conclusion that they discredit the whole of the narratives, and leave us without any certainty of what the doings or even the teachings of Jesus actually were.

The major portion of the work is taken up with an examination of the narratives of the Gospels. The sections chiefly dealt with are the Nativity, the main incidents of the Ministry, such as the first visit to the Temple, the relation of Jesus with John the Baptist, the temptation, the duration of the ministry, the calling of the disciples, the discourses and narratives in the Synoptics compared with those in John, an examination of all the stories of miracles, and finally of the incidents of the Passion and Resurrection. All these are minutely examined, with the result of showing that contradictions and incredibilities abound in the Gospels, and we are left without anything whatever of the nature of trustworthy historical evidence. The writer says:—

“How these narratives, unhistorical as they have been shown to be, came into existence, or assumed their present form, it is not our business to explain; and once again, at the end of my task, as at the beginning and throughout it, I must emphatically disclaim the obligation. Whether a reasonable hypothesis may be advanced to explain their growth, or whether it may not, the narratives are not narratives of historical fact.”

That this is the just and, indeed, only tenable conclusion I think few who will take the trouble to read the work and examine the question closely will be able to dispute.

How will the clericals deal with such a book as *The Four Gospels as Historical Records*? Doubtless they will ignore it as far as possible, and go on preaching their old legends as if they had never been assailed. If the work is forced into notice, they will attempt to pooh-pooh it, or to cavil at a few of its statements. But serious students who take up the work will find that its main positions are unanswerable. The four Gospels are without any contemporary corroboration, and so inherently self-contradictory and incredible as to be worthless as historical records. If ever the sky-pilots are driven to acknowledge this, they will also doubtless still attempt to hold on to their emoluments by preaching an ideal Christ and a Church which is to be believed on some other ground than its owning a written revelation. When, however, the Church is forced to give up its records, I fancy its ministers will find the ground cut under their feet. The tenacity with which they cling to any accommodations which promise a longer lease of life forcibly suggests that craft was as much concerned in the origin as it has been in the maintenance of their system.

J. M. WHEELER.

## ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FIRST STAGE OF FREETHOUGHT: ITS NATURE AND LIMITATION.

“He who cannot reason is defenceless; he who fears to reason has a coward mind; he who will not reason is willing to be deceived, and will deceive all who listen to him.”—*Maxim of Freethought.*

FREETHOUGHT is founded upon reason. It is the exercise of reason, without which Freethought is free foolishness. Freethought being the precursor of Secularist thought, it is necessary to describe its principles and their limitation. Freethought means independent self-thinking. Some say all thought is free—since a man can think what he pleases, and no one can prevent him. Unfortunately, thinking can be, and is, prevented by subtle spiritual intimidation in earlier, and even in later, life. When a police-agent found young Mazzini in the fields of Genoa, apparently meditating, his father's attention was called to the youth. His father was told that the Austrian Government did not allow persons to think. The Inquisition intimidated nations from thinking. The priests, by preventing instruction and prohibiting books, limited thinking. Archbishop Whately shows that no one can reason without words, and since speech can be, and is, disallowed and made penal, the highway of thought can be closed. No one can think to any purpose without inquiry concerning his subject, and inquiry can be made impossible. It is of little use that anyone thinks who cannot verify his ideas by comparison with those of his compeers. To prevent this is to discourage thought. In fact, thousands are prevented thinking by denying them the facilities of thinking.

Freethought means fearless thought. It is not deterred by legal penalties nor by spiritual consequences. Dissent from the Bible does not alarm the true investigator, who takes truth for authority, not authority for truth. The thinker who is really free is independent; he is under no dread; he yields to no menace; he is not dismayed by law or custom, or pulpits, or society, whose opinions appal so many. He who has the manly passion of Freethought has no fear of anything save the fear of error.

Fearlessness is the essential condition of effective thought. If Satan sits at the top of the Bible with perdition open underneath it, into which its readers will be pushed who may doubt what they find in its pages, the right of private judgment is a snare. A man is a fool who inquires at this risk. He had better accept at once the superstition of the first priest he meets. It is not conceivable how a Christian can be a *Free-thinker*. He who is afraid to know both sides of a question cannot think upon it. Christians do not, as a rule, want to know what can be said against their views, and they keep out of libraries all books which would inform others. Thus the Christian cannot think freely, and is against others doing it. Doubt comes of thinking; the Christian regards doubt as sin. How can he be a Freethinker who thinks thinking a sin? Freethought implies three things as conditions of truth:—

1. Free inquiry, which is the pathway to truth.
2. Free publicity of the ideas acquired, in order to learn whether they are useful—which is the encouragement of truth.
3. The free discussion of convictions, without which it is not possible to know whether they are true or false—which is the verification of truth.

A man is not a man unless he is a thinker; he is a fool, having no ideas of his own. If he happens to live among men who do think, he browses, like an animal, on their ideas. He is a sort of kept man, being supported by the thoughts of others. He is what in England is called a pauper, who subsists upon “outdoor relief” allowed him by men of intellect.

Without the right of publicity, individual thought, however praiseworthy and however perfect, would be barren to the community. Algernon Sidney said: “The best legacy I can leave my children is free speech and the example of using it.” The clergy of every denomination are unfriendly to its use. The soldiers of the Cross do not fight adversaries in the open. Mr. Gladstone, alone among eminent men of piety, has insisted upon the duty of the Church to prove its claims in discussion. In his introduction to his address at the Liverpool College (1872-3) he said: “I wish to place on record my conviction that belief cannot now be defended by reticence, any more than by railing or by any privileges or assumption.” Since the day of Milton there has been no greater authority on the religious wisdom of debate.

Thought, even theological, is often useless, ill-informed, foolish, mischievous, or even wicked; and he alone who submits it to free criticism gives guarantees that he means well and is self-convinced. By criticism alone comes exposure, correction, or confirmation. The right of criticism is the sole protection of the community against error of custom, ignorance, prejudice, and incompetence. It is not until a proposition has been generally accepted, after open and fair discussion, that it can be considered as established, and can safely be made a ground of action or belief.\*

These are the implementary rights of thought. They are what grammar is to the writer, which teaches him how to express himself, but not what to say. These rights are as the rules of navigation to the mariner. They teach him how to steer a ship, but do not instruct him where to steer to. The full exercise of these rights of mental freedom is what training in the principles of jurisprudence is to the pleader; but it does not provide him with a brief. It is conceivable that a man may come to be a master of independent thinking and never put his powers to use; just as a man may know every rule of grammar and yet never write a book. In the same way, a man may pass an examination in the art of navigation and never take command of a vessel; or may qualify as a barrister, be called to the Bar, and never plead in any court. We know from experience that many persons join in the combat for the

\* See *Formation of Opinions*, by Samuel Bailey.

right of intellectual freedom for its own sake, without intending or caring to use the right when won. Some are generous enough to claim and contend for these rights from the belief that they may be useful to others. This is the first stage of Freethought, and many never pass beyond it.

Independent thinking is concerned primarily with removing obstacles to its own action, and in contests for liberty of speech by tongue and pen. The free mind fights mainly for its own freedom. It may begin in curiosity and may end in intellectual pride, unless conscience takes care of it. Its nature is iconoclastic, and it may exist without ideas of reconstruction. Though a man goes no further, he is a better man than he who never went as far. He has acquired a new power, and is sure of his own mind; just as one who has learned to fence, or to shoot, has a confidence in encountering an adversary which is seldom felt by one who never had a sword in hand or practised at a target. The sea is an element of recreation to one who has learned to swim; it is an element of death to one ignorant of the art. Besides, the thinker has attained a courage and confidence unknown to the man of orthodox mind. Since God (we are assured) is the God of Truth, the honest searcher after truth has God on his side, and has no dread of the King of Perdition—the terror of all Christian people—since the business of Satan is with those who are content with false ideas, not with those who seek the true. If it be a duty to seek the truth and to live the truth, honest discussion, which discerns it, identifies it, clears it, and establishes it, is a form of worship of real honor to God and of true service to man. If the clergyman's speech on behalf of God is rendered exact by criticism, the criticism is a tribute, and no mean tribute, to heaven. Thus the free exercise of the rights of thought involves no risk hereafter. Moreover, so far as a man thinks, he gains. Thought implies enterprise and exertion of mind, and the result is wealth of understanding, to be acquired in no other way. This intellectual property, like other property, has its rights and duties. The thinker's right is to be left in undisturbed possession of what he has earned, and his duty is to share his discoveries of truth with mankind, to whom he owes his opportunities of acquiring it.

Free expression involves consideration for others on principle. Democracy without personal deference becomes a nuisance; so free speech without courtesy is repulsive, as free publicity would be if not mainly limited to reasoned truth. Otherwise, every blatant impulse would have the same right of utterance as verified ideas. Even truth can only claim priority of utterance when its utility is manifest; as the number and length of hairs on a man's head is less important to know than the number and quality of the ideas in his brain.

True, Freethought requires special qualities to insure itself acceptance. It must be owned that the thinker is a disturber. He is a truth-hunter, and there is no telling what he will find. Truth is an exile who has been kept out of her kingdom, and Error is a usurper in possession of it; and the moment Truth comes into her right, Error has to give up its occupancy of her territory; and as everybody, consciously or unconsciously, harbors some of the emissaries of the usurper, they do not like owning the fact, and they dispute the warrant of Truth to search their premises, though to be relieved of such deceitful and costly inmates would be an advantage.

An inalienable attribute of Freethought, which no theology possesses, is absolute toleration of all ideas put forward in the interest of public truth and submitted to public discussion. The true Freethinker is in favor of the free action of all opinion which injures no one else, and of putting the best construction he can on the acts of others, not only because he has thereby less to tolerate, but from perceiving that he who lacks tolerance towards the ideas of others has no claim to the tolerance of his own. The defender of toleration must himself be tolerant. Condemning the coercion of ideas, he is pledged to combat error only by reason; vindictiveness towards the erring is not only inconsistency, it is persecution. Thus Freethought is not only self-defence against error, but, by the toleration it imposes, is itself security for respectfulness in controversy.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

## THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

THE sermons preached on Good Friday last, as reported in the various newspapers, afforded strange and peculiar reading to the non-theological mind. The one theme dwelt upon in all the pulpits was the death of Christ with its "complete and sublime scheme of redemption for fallen man." It was urged that Eve and Adam fell from a state of purity and perfection by an act of transgression in the Garden of Eden, and thereby involved the whole of the human family in sin and depravity. To remove the consequences of this alleged act of transgression, it was contended that the death of Christ was necessary in order to atone to God, against whom a sin had been committed. It was further urged that, through our "first parents" partaking of the forbidden fruit, God became estranged from his children, and that the sacrifice of his Son was required to reconcile the Father to his children. As it is put in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, "Christ was crucified to reconcile his Father to us. To be a sacrifice for sins of men" (Article 2). It is also stated in the Confession of Faith that Christ's death "purchased reconciliation" (chap. viii.). The Biblical authority, as accepted by orthodox believers, for this view of the death of Christ is as follows: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" (John i. 29); "he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2); "the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx.); "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans v.); "this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28); "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews ix. 28); and "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv.). Upon these and a few other texts in the New Testament orthodox Christians base their theory of the Atonement.

It may be interesting to note the conflicting character of the theories which professed Christians have held concerning the Atonement, which is supposed to have been made through the death of Christ. The Augustinian school taught that mankind were doomed to hell through the fall of Adam, and that Christ's death cancelled the sin committed, and thus saved them from being utterly lost. The Calvinists believe that God foresaw that Adam would fall, and that posterity would thereby be damned; and therefore he selected a few, who are termed the "elect," to be saved, while the many are deprived of this special provision for their salvation. It seems to us that if God possessed the foreknowledge here ascribed to him, and if he were all-powerful, it would have been more to his credit if he had included the entire human family among his "elect." The evangelical Christians suppose that the vicarious sufferings of Christ secured conditional pardon, the condition being the belief that Christ died as a substitute for sinners—that is, that an avowed innocent person was made to suffer for those alleged to be guilty. The Universalists consider that no one is damned beyond his personal sin in this world. If an individual be ever so bad in the present life, all evil will depart at death, and he will be ushered into heaven pure and spotless. The Unitarians, rejecting all the above theories, contend that the object of Christ's life, rather than of his death, was to reconcile man to God, not God to man. Relying upon such statements in the Bible as "Every man shall die for his own sin," "To punish the just is not good," they consider the popular view of the Atonement fallacious. Such are a few of the conflicting notions held by the Christian sects as to the nature of the "simple plan of salvation."

Some of the early Christian Fathers taught that the death of Christ was a satisfaction to the Devil. The Rev. Scott Porter, in his *History of the Doctrine of the Atonement*, says: "The doctrine of satisfaction, when it was plainly broached, which was not till about two hundred years after the death of Christ, did not represent his blood as satisfying the claims of divine justice, but as a *payment made to the Devil!*" This was the doctrine advocated by the celebrated Origen, who wrote: "It was the Devil who held us in bondage: for to him we had been given over for our sins. Wherefore, he demanded the blood of Christ as the price of our redemption" (p. 19). St. Ambrose states: "We were in pledge to a *bad creditor* for sin; but Christ came and offered his blood for us." Optatus says: "The

There is no right so sacred as the right to one's own thought upon the highest themes.—John W. Chadwick.

souls of men were in the possession of the Devil till they were ransomed by the blood of Christ." According to St. Augustine, "the blood of Christ is given as a price that we might be delivered from the Devil's bonds." He regards the death of Christ, not as a payment of a debt due to God, but as an act of justice to the Devil in discharge of his fair and lawful claims" (*ibid*).

Other eminent Christian divines taught that it was not merely the man Jesus who died, but God himself. Osiander, a friend and fellow-laborer of Luther, maintained that *Christ died and satisfied divine justice, not as man, but as God*. Hooper, a venerable name in the Christian Church, states that he cares "for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered" (*Porter's Lectures on the Atonement*, p. 68). The same belief is expressed by Dr. Watts, who in his hymns exclaims:—

Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When God, the mighty Maker, died  
For man, the creature's, sin.

Behold a God descends and dies  
To save my soul from gaping hell.

Wesley also exclaims:—

Sinners, turn! why will he die?  
God your Savior asks you why;  
God, who did your souls retrieve,  
Died himself that ye might live.

Is it not evident, from the diversity of opinions which is here shown to have existed (and much of that diversity still obtains) in the Christian world as to the character and meaning of the death of Christ, how perplexing any scheme must be that is based upon it?

The fact is, apart from all sectarian and forced interpretations, it appears to us that the Bible plan of redemption through the death of Christ is simply this: About six thousand years ago an all-wise, all-powerful, and beneficent God made man and woman, and placed them in a position surrounded by temptations it was impossible for them to withstand. For instance, he implanted within them desires which, as God, he must have known would produce their downfall. He then caused a tree to bear fruit that was adapted to harmonise with the very desires which he had previously imparted to his children. God, all-good, then created a serpent of the worst possible kind, in order that it might be successful in tempting Eve to partake of the fruit. God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of this fruit, under the penalty of death, knowing at the same time that they would eat of it, and that they would not die. The serpent is allowed to succeed in his plan of temptation, and then God curses the ground for yielding the tree which he himself had caused to grow; further, the Almighty Being dooms both man and woman to lives of pain and sorrow, and assures them that their posterity shall feel the terrible effects of their having done what it was impossible, under the circumstances, for them to avoid. Although at first God pronounced his creative work to be "very good," it proved to be quite the opposite. So bad did the human family become that God determined to bring a flood upon the earth and wash every member, one household excepted, out of existence. This "water-cure" was not, however, sufficient to correct the "divine" errors, for the people grew worse than ever. God now decided upon another plan—namely, to send his son—who was as old as himself, and, therefore, not his son—to die, but who was invested with immortality and could not die, to atone for sins that had never been committed by people who were not then born, and who could not, therefore, have been guilty of any sin. As a conclusion to the whole scheme, this all-merciful God prepared a hell, containing material fire of brimstone, to burn the immaterial souls of all persons who should fail to believe the truth, justice, and necessity of this jumble of cruelty and absurdity.

We now propose to show that this "sublime scheme of redemption" is not only illogical, but that it was unnecessary, supremely unjust, inconsistent, and has been an utter failure in achieving its avowed object.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

## GOD'S GOODNESS.

WE were told that there is a purpose in suffering. Easy words to utter! but they carry no balm of consolation to my mind. I have witnessed suffering: I have felt a little, and witnessed much. This suffering is a grim fact. You say there is a purpose in it. Tell us what you mean by a purpose. A purpose must have some sort of explanation. Do not call it a purpose unless you can give us some indication of what the purpose is. The general theory is that suffering is for the education, and chiefly the moral education, of the race. Ah, but it gets distributed in the wrong way. And there comes a time when suffering, instead of helping you, thrusts you down, degrades you, brings you to impotence, abjectness, and despair. If the suffering is for education in ethics, how is it that the very poorest, who, by the hard labor of their lives, are under less temptation than the idle or luxurious, get by far the most of it, while the idle and luxurious frequently go scot free? I see no purpose in this at all. Why, we actually band ourselves together to abolish or diminish the very suffering which you say is so beautifully designed. God has a purpose in inflicting it, and we put the sufferers into a place we call a hospital, and we say to the men of science "fight it." We appoint nurses, and we say to them "fight it." We ask the public at large to find the money to assist in doing away with it. God is sending the suffering for moral purposes, and we are striving to abolish it, and so to prevent the ethical education which you say God intends by his inflictions.

God, we are told, has a right to take the life he sends. For the sake of argument I will not impugn that. There is no time to discuss it. But, assuming that God has the right to take life, let us see how it works out. Under the law we have a right to take life. A criminal is tried and sentenced to execution. But society insists that, if he is to be killed, he shall be killed in the most painless manner possible. We insist that the hanging shall be done with the utmost dispatch. In America they are trying whether electricity is not even less painful than hanging. In short, although we must (as we say) kill (though I doubt if anybody has that right), still, if we must kill, we are refined enough to say we must kill swiftly and painlessly. But that is not God's method; what we see in nature is not *swift* killing; it is *slow* killing. When man is killed by "the act of God," it is often done very slowly; not in a moment as by the hangman's noose or by electrocution. A lingering disease comes on and kills him week by week, month by month, and year by year. It is an agonising form of cruelty. If God has the right to take life, I deny that he has the right to take it in that way. If life must be taken, it should be taken swiftly and painlessly. All this cruelty in nature, all this killing of human beings by slow disease and long agony, gives the lie to the statement that your God is a being of infinite kindness and love.

G. W. FOOTE.

(In the Foote-Lee debate on "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?")

## GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

THE Jews are God's chosen race. They are sanctified and circumcised, bearing in their bodies the signs of the divine favor. God always had peculiar methods of dealing with his favorites. He blessed Abraham, and with him his posterity. Yet in three generations they were in bondage in Egypt for 430 years—a period of which their historians scrupulously tell us nothing. Their exodus was performed amid many discomforts, and they spent forty years in a little wilderness which they ought to have traversed in as many days, being dependent on miracles for their sustenance, and having fiery serpents to plague them. They were oppressed under their kings, and for the best part of their time have been slaves under Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Syrians, and Romans. Their struggles for independence were quenched in blood. Their Zion was taken from them, and they have been wanderers upon the earth, despised, hated, persecuted, and plundered by the nations among whom they have sought refuge. Archdeacon Jortin says that "the account of the Jews who have been plundered, sent naked into banishment, starved, tortured, left to perish in prisons, hanged and burnt by Christians, would fill many volumes." If God thus serves his chosen people, what better than hell can be the expectation of the non-elect?

CÆLUS.

He is nearer to truth who believes nothing than he who believes what is wrong.—*Sir W. Lawrence, "Lectures on Physiology."*

## ACID DROPS.

THERE is no end to the fraudulent effrontery of the Roman Catholic Church. It is up to any dodge to raise money, or to increase its hold over the superstitious multitude—which is much the same thing in the end. The latest dodge is the "discovery" by Father Esbasch, superior of the French Seminary in Rome, of the ruins of the house inhabited by the Virgin Mary (mother of seven or eight children) after the ascension of Jesus Christ. It is not at Jerusalem, but about three miles from Ephesus, where Mary is said to have died, or whence she is even said to have been translated to heaven. Of course it is very difficult, if not impossible, to prove that Mary did *not* live there; so the ruins will probably be worked for all they are worth.

The Pope and the cardinals are reported to be very much interested in this "discovery." Of course they are. Every new place of pilgrimage keeps up Catholic enthusiasm and brings grist to the Church mills.

Last Monday evening a man was loitering about Nursery-row, Walworth. He knocked at the door of a house and asked the boy who opened it whether his mother and father were in. The boy sharply asked what he wanted to know for. The man said he wanted to "preach the Gospel" to them. When the police arrested him they found on him seven spoons, two purses, a bundle of wire, and a jemmy. This is not the first time the gospel has been found in bad company.

The Rev. Frank M. Goodchild writes in the *Arena* on "The Social Evil in Philadelphia." He says: "The most singular anomalies are sometimes discovered. In one case the madame of an establishment taught a Sunday-school class while at the same time she carried on her nefarious trade. The madames are often pious; markedly so. In one of the best houses of the city, beside the piano and organ there is a music-box in the parlor. It plays nothing but hymns—'Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed,' 'Rock of Ages,' 'Jesus Lover of My Soul,' 'Coronation,' 'Ring the Bells of Heaven,' and so on. If you inquire, you will find that this pious music-box plays only on Sunday evenings. In another house the madame places religious books on the tables on Sundays, as she says she likes her girls to have good Sabbath reading."

The London correspondent of the *New York Sun*, writing on the Sunday question, says: "But for the Sunday saloons the Thames would be clogged with corpses every Monday morning, and the madhouses of England could not contain the poor creatures who would fall victims to the Sunday mania. It is not hypocrisy, therefore, or a failure to appreciate the virtues of temperance, which permits the British people to throng the public bars on Sunday. It is a simple matter of self-preservation for the benefit of the body politic."

The Archbishop of Canterbury is fond of riding, and he generally, before starting, takes a "little drop of Scotch." At Addington Palace are ranges of hot-houses where many orchids are reared, afterwards, we understand, sold at auction rooms in Cheapside and Covent Garden. We are told the workers in the nursery receive, on the average, a wage of 15s. weekly. Is it the fact that the Archbishop closes the park at Addington against the public? Further, are some of the finest trees being cut down and being sold? We await the Archbishop's reply.—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

At several of the Ritualistic churches they have what they call the "Children's Eucharist." Not that the children take the Eucharist. Oh dear, no! They attend the communion service while the priest takes the eucharist. This is a sly, tricky way of introducing the Catholic mass, which, according to Mr. Augustine Birrell, is the main distinction between Catholics and Protestants. Our Romanising Ritualists are fast obliterating all distinctions.

The long-suffering Anglican laity are showing some signs of resistance to priestly intolerance, which, in many parishes, is intolerable. At the meeting of the House of Laymen for the Province of York Mr. T. C. Horsfall moved a resolution affirming the desirability of creating in every parish a Church Council, the object of which shall be to curtail "the autocracy of the clergy."

"A Catholic Convert from Ritualism" writes to the *Cambridge Chronicle*, endorsing the statement of the Rev. T. H. Sparshott that "Ritualism is the highway to Rome," as, he says, "within the last few months I and six of my friends have been brought through the imitation of Catholicism to its reality. Two of the number were Anglican clergymen of the most advanced type."

At the burial of a child who had been killed by being run over at Amington, near Tamworth, the scholars of the Methodist Sunday-school followed. On arriving at the church gate the officiating clergyman refused them admittance, and ordered a policeman to keep the children out. Of such are the kingdom of heaven.

A very grave question has arisen at Blackburn. At the Easter Vestry meeting there on Tuesday a churchwarden gravely announced the resignation of the organist, who had resigned to take a place where he could play more elaborate tunes. This, in the churchwarden's view, was for the organist to lose the value of his soul. Their next organist, proceeded the churchwarden, must be "an out-and-out Christian." This, however, was a proposal which did not find universal acceptance. Another churchwarden thought that organists were, as a rule, not Christians, and he thought "a well-educated musical man was not the man for a Christian place of worship." Whether this means that the character of the music would have such an effect on the well-educated organist as to put his Christianity in peril, or that it is impossible, at one and the same time, to be a good organist and a good Christian, we do not know. If the latter theory is correct, we shall have to reconstruct our theories of heaven, if it is to be quite free from the musically well-educated.—*Westminster Gazette*.

St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Paddington, had a windfall on Easter Eve. £2,000 was placed in the offertory by an anonymous donor to pay off the church debt. The next day a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving was sung for the munificent gift. Perhaps the party who gave that £2,000 reflects that he is not anonymous to God, and counts on a certain reward hereafter. Freethinkers, of course, are not amenable to such motives; if they give to Freethought, they must give quite disinterestedly. However, if there should be a Freethinker able and willing to imitate that anonymous Christian's example, he will earn the gratitude of the National Secular Society, with or without a reserved seat in heaven.

Our heathen Brother Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, is not much attracted by Spiritism. He says: "I would much rather be dead, and stay dead—very dead, than to be in some kind of a place where my ghost would be liable to be called up to talk to a 'mejum' in bad grammar, so that he or she could get fifty cents a head from a lot of nincompoops. I would rather be like Billy Pringle's pig.

When he lived he lived in clover;  
When he died he died all over."

Brother Moore is deficient in reverence for humbug. He says he objects to people "being told that their loved parents and children and friends are burning in everlasting hell because they do not believe that God was born with a Jew nose on him 1,896 years ago, out of a woman whose own husband did not believe in her chastity."

According to Dr. J. E. Brecht, superintendent of the Florida Indians, the Seminoles have a peculiar religion. They say that the white man's God is the same as their God. The father they call "Fanshockohomachey," and the son "Chockatomassee." They believe that there is a future state, but call death "the big sleep." They think that Christ's coming took place in Georgia, and that a great assemblage came to a mountain to hear him. The mountain split in twain, and one people slid northward and the other southward. They do not pray, but, as they express it, "think with God." The Indians are a truthful people. They claim that before the white men came they did not know how to lie; but, since they taught them how, they once in a while resort to deception, though liars among them are held in utter contempt. Dr. Brecht believes that they are the soundest, cleanest people, morally, mentally, and physically, on the face of the earth to-day.

The Catholics are making strenuous endeavors to recover lost ground in Italy. They are founding fresh newspapers, and the priests everywhere offer themselves as authorised teachers in the schools. The mass of the people are only half educated, and their position in this respect will not be improved if the priests can help it.

It is an old story that when Christianity and civilisation are introduced to savages they die out. The Andaman Islands afford no exception. The death-rate there is now higher than the birth-rate. The inhabitants have acquired a Christian taste for whisky. Homes having been established for their benefit by missionary influence, those accommodated at these institutions are fat and lazy, spending days together in singing, dancing, and feasting.

Miss Mary Kingsley, a niece of the late Canon Kingsley, the famous author, having returned safely from exciting adventures in West Africa, has been interviewed by a representative of the *Westminster Gazette*. She has a very low opinion of the natives whom the missionaries convert to

Christianity. This is what she says: "I have had good opportunity of judging. The result of the missionary influence is often to deprive the native of practical deterrents furnished by his fetish-worship, putting in their place the doctrine of repentance, which he interprets conveniently to himself. Before his so-called conversion he believed that if he did certain things he would inevitably 'swell up and burst,' so he usually refrained. The converted native accepts the doctrine of salvation by repentance, but puts off the painful process as long as possible. I've several times been in tight places with these converts. They simply lay on their stomachs howling for forgiveness, leaving me and their heathen brethren to stride over their prostrate bodies and devise means for saving the lives of the party."

Miss Kingsley was asked to what she attributed the failure of Evangelical effort, and this is her reply: "Well, the English Protestant Churches will accept no sort of compromise. They insist upon clothes, teetotalism, and monogamy, and a great deal of nonsense is talked on these subjects. Now, Mohammedanism is gaining ground fast, and produces good results. The Roman Catholic methods, too, are more rational and successful. They accept conditions, and proceed more gradually. The spirit of too much of the Christian teaching is well expressed in a hymn I happened to see last night. The refrain is this:—

No, nothing to do till you're saved from your sins;  
Then the power of doing good only begins.

The negro is inclined to buy his salvation as cheaply as possible."

With respect to the alleged drunkenness of the natives Miss Kingsley says: "I fear the missionaries misrepresent the facts in order to account for their failures." Once, when staying with some missionaries, she heard a tremendous row going on in the village, and the missionaries attributed it all to drink; but, on going to see for herself, she found the people enjoying themselves in an innocent way, and there was no drunkenness at all.

The *Methodist Times* has discovered the true basis of morality. Referring to the Church party and the friends in general of the new Education Bill, it says that "they actually wish to destroy all those schools in which the cardinal verities of the Christian faith—the revelation of God in Christ, His Divinity, His Sacrifice, the Cross, His Resurrection, His Ascension, and His gift of the Holy Spirit—are taught reverently as great historic truths, and as the foundation of morality and true religion."

Now, "true religion" may or may not rest on these Christian doctrines and statements, but to say that "morality" rests on them is professional humbug. Morality existed before Christianity; it cannot, therefore, be the effect of Christianity, nor can Christianity be in any sense its foundation. For our part, we venture to think that if all the men of God were called "home," and religious squabbles banished from the world, there would be far more morality in human life than there is at present.

Up to the present time the only woman who has ever dared to set foot in the cloistered precincts of the Grand Trappe Monastery, at Soligni, in France, was Queen Marie Amelie. After her visit, so the story runs, the monks repaved the cloisters through which she had passed, considering that their abode had been desecrated by the feet of even a royal lady. But now a new church is about to be consecrated there, and for the nine days between August 30 and September 8 persons of both sexes are to be permitted to visit the sacred enclosures of the monks.

The Scotch Archbishop Foreman, in the sixteenth century, was so poor a Latin scholar that, when he was obliged to visit Rome, he found great difficulty in conforming to some of the customs of the Pope's table, to which he was invited. Etiquette required that the Scotch bishop should take part in uttering a Latin benediction over the repast, and the illiterate guest had carefully committed to memory what he believed to be the orthodox form of words. He began with his "Benedicite," expecting the cardinals to respond with "Dominus"; but they replying "Deus" (Italian fashion) so confused the good bishop that he forgot his carefully-conned phrases, and, "in good broad Scotch," said: "To the Devil I give you all, false cardinals," to which devout aspiration Pope and cardinals, who understood only their own language, piously replied: "Amen."

"The Companions of St. John," according to the *Times*, is a secret society founded at Cambridge by the Rev. Ernest John Heriz-Smith. Its object is the spread of High Church doctrines. Every candidate for admission has his hands tied and his eyes bandaged—which is the usual condition of persons under the power of religion; he has then to kneel at a table, and takes an oath to obey the head of the society.

The society itself has a head, but the head of the society cannot have much head himself.

One of the most worshipped of saints in Mexico is a comparatively new one—St. Expedite. It is doubtful if the saint any more represents a real person than did the goddess Fever. The office of the saint is to expedite things, and he is invoked in desperate cases. So popular had his worship become, threatening to displace that of more generally recognised saints, that the Archbishop of Guadalajara has prohibited placing his image in churches.

The bones of eleven thousand virgins, all living at the same time, are said to be preserved in Cologne Cathedral. Jones says: "I shall not travel to see them. I can see all the virgins' bones I wish to see at full dress parties."

The Rev. T. B. Hargrove, pastor of the Methodist Church at Coldwater, Missouri, dropped dead in his pulpit while exhorting his congregation to believe.

Mrs. Minnie L. Cummings tells a sad tale, in the first number of the *Protector*, of a woman who, falling into the hands of a set of pietists, became crazed on the subject of religion. Continually prayed for, her one question to any who spoke to her was this: "Do you think I will go to hell?" Her husband in vain tried to remove her from their influence. When a child was born she would not suckle it, lest it should inherit her sins, and, as a consequence, the poor babe died; and she, regarding its death as a punishment for her sins, became completely insane.

"H. A. B." writes to the *Times* that at Brighton "a clergyman refused to accept a girl as candidate for confirmation because she refused to resort to the confessional."

Religion always combines easily with hypocrisy. Japan will commemorate its victory over China by erecting at Kioto a gigantic statue of Buddha, 120 feet high, out of cannon captured in the war. It will cost one million yen. Buddha is even more emphatically the God of peace and goodwill than Jesus Christ.

Andrew D. White, ex-United States minister to Russia and at present a member of the Venezuelan commission, said recently: "Americans who are interested in foreign missions should bear in mind one thing—that, if the Czar takes possession of Armenia, all American and other foreign missionary work in that country must cease; for, while Russia claims to be especially tolerant towards all religions, she allows no proselyting between them, nor does she allow clergy of outside nations to come into the country without special permit. So far is this doctrine carried out that I recall one case when an American missionary to Persia was not allowed to pass through southern Russia in order to reach the district to which he was sent."

The wife of the Rev. Dr. Gunning, of Brooklyn, has procured a separation from him on the ground of cruel and inhuman treatment.

The clericals preach, "Owe no man anything," and nearly all the churches and chapels are in debt. According to the *Independent*, it is a bad case with the American Missionary Society. The Methodist Missionary Society is \$239,000 in arrears; the Presbyterian Home Mission Board is burdened by a sum almost as great; the American Baptist Missionary Union owes \$190,000; the Presbyterian Foreign Board, \$175,000; the American Board, \$115,000; the Baptist Home Missionary Society, \$102,000; the Methodist Episcopal Church, south, \$109,000.

The funds for missionary purposes are likely to continue falling off as people become acquainted with the facts as to the futility of missions. If the almost universal testimony of intelligent, veracious travellers in so-called heathen lands is to be taken for anything, the whole missionary system in China, Japan, Turkey, and farther India is a weak and unprofitable farce. It gives, it is true, place, support, and something of a position to a considerable number of men and women, who are, to a greater or less extent, zealots in the cause; but that it has displaced the religion of Confucius, of Buddha, or of Mohammed to any appreciable extent by the religion of Christ there is little reason to believe.

The latest Paris sensation has been the appearance of the angel Gabriel in the Rue Paradis. At least, a young lady resides there, Mdle. Couesdon, who pretends to be in constant communication with Gabe. So many people go to see her that the landlord tried to summarily eject the family, but the tribunal was not sure that the annoyance caused by the "Angel Gabriel" came within the meaning of the lease. There was nothing contrary to good manners or respectability in an angelic visitation.

Zola went to see Mdle. Couesdon. She fell into a trance

at his desire, and the "Angel Gabriel" spoke through her mouth; but he did not seem to know in the least that he had for an interlocutor the author of *Lourdes*. He seemed to think M. Zola a good Catholic—which he is not—congratulated him on going regularly to Mass, and enjoined him to give more time to pious thoughts, prayers, and readings. Most of what he said would apply just as well to anyone else as to M. Zola. That novelist thinks that Mdlle. Couesdon has been influenced by all the talk there was about Joan of Arc a few years ago, and now apparently fancies she has a mission like Joan. The girl is nice looking. Her age is twenty-three. "Gabriel" is rather an ominous name for an angel who visits a young lady.

Dr. Conan Doyle is writing some very interesting letters from Egypt in the *Westminster Gazette*, from one of which we extract the following passage on Mohammedans and Mohammedanism: "Be the cause what it may, there is no religion which fills its devotees so completely with the conviction of truth as does the creed of Mohammed. They are eager to give their lives for it in war, and, what is more difficult, they are scrupulous in times of peace to fulfil its exacting and most inconvenient ritual. A creed which can induce its devotees to absolutely fast from food and drink from sunrise to sunset for a month on end in every year must be a very real one to those who profess it. As to the vices of Mohammedanism, it is interesting to consider how far lust and cruelty are matters of climate rather than of creed. A religion which produces cities which contain neither drunkards nor harlots is certainly worthy of graver consideration than is usually given to it."

The *Methodist Times* (Price Hughes's paper) doesn't like the Sunday opening of our national museums and galleries. Of course not. Nobody expected it would. But why does it write nonsense about the "handful of people who visit them"? Did it suppose that all London would go on the same Sunday? Nearly 7,000 people visited South Kensington last Sunday—only 300 less than on the first (Easter) Sunday. Certainly it doesn't seem right that Methodist ministers should be able to deprive these people of their pleasure, and the nation has now recognised this. That is why the good, tolerant Methodist ministers are weeping and gnashing their teeth.

Mr. Reader Harris, an Exeter Hall evangelist, says that "after a century of missionary activity there are 198,000,000 more unconverted heathen than there were in 1800." This is a fine result for a religion claiming God for its author and the sole monopoly of divine truth.

During a gale last Monday a quantity of scaffolding erected round the steeple of the parish church at Lydney, Gloucestershire, was blown on the roof of the church, doing very great damage.

The Easter vestry meeting at Hoo-street, Werburgh, Kent, was characterised by prolonged squabbles with the vicar, the Rev. P. G. Benson, against whom a petition had been presented to the Bishop. The vicar said the Bishop had sent him a private letter which amounted to this: "Dear Mr. Benson, you are quite right—only don't tell anybody I told you so." The people's warden, Mr. Stunt, resigned, and several of the vestry indicated that they should not continue to pay church rates.

Archdeacon Wilson, the vicar of Rochdale, illustrates the new attitude of the broader-minded clergy in face of Free-thought criticism. Speaking of the resurrection in an address to men, he is reported as saying: "Honesty compelled him to admit that to one who, without any predisposition to faith in Christ, and with a strong sense of the improbability of a resurrection, examined this as a purely historical question, the evidence was insufficient. He was bound by intellectual honesty to admit that the fact was unproven on purely historical and critical grounds." He went on to say that the evidence was strong. But what does the Archdeacon mean by strong evidence? and what use is it if it is insufficient for those without a predisposition to faith?

Another latitudinarian and lay divine is the Rev. R. F. Horton, who has been speaking against the supposed inerrancy of Scripture. He is reported as saying: "If in reading the Bible you came across sentiments of fierce retaliation or deeds of savage bloodthirstiness, against which a man of ordinary morality might naturally revolt, it was your duty to justify these sentiments because they were the Word of God, and to find excuses for the deeds because they were recorded without censure in the Word of God. You were not allowed to argue that because the sentiment was not godly it could not come from God, or because the deed was un-Christian it could not be approved by God. That was treated as presumption, as judging God, as setting up the intellect against its Maker." Mr. Horton ridiculed this state of mind. But will he tell us what is the use of a

revelation which errs so notably in regard to the very character of God, and will he further inform us how he distinguishes between what he believes to be revelation and what he believes to be error?

Herbert C. Buck, president of the Society of Christian Endeavor, at Fort Wayne, has been captured by the police. The telegram says: "Only last night Buck was an enthusiastic speaker at the church prayer-meeting, and it is supposed was deliberately planning the burglary while his Christian associates were offering prayer.....He was an exemplary Christian, and took an active part in church socials and charity work."

*All the World*, the monthly organ of the Salvation Army, in its April issue gives a curious tale about Bradlaugh. Adjutant Ozanne states that at Dukinfield "Bradlaugh was accompanied by a number of rough men whose duty it was to sing 'Rule Britannia' whenever there was any opposition from the bystanders." Adjutant Ozanne's hero, Seth, however, contrived to get in the words, "You can sing 'Britannia' till Christmas, but you shan't speak against my Savior." The idea of Mr. Bradlaugh having a chorus to drown opposition is rather rich. The writer evidently thinks that he needed to take a leaf out of the tactics of the Salvation Army.

*Tit-Bits* reassures a correspondent whose faith in the Jonah story has been shaken. There are whales, it says, that can swallow a man; but it does not give any authority for the statement. When it is given, the correspondent should ask *Tit-Bits* whether it is scientifically possible for a man (supposing him swallowed) to subsist for three days and nights in a whale's intestines.

If Christians were wise, they would not try to explain their miracles. A miracle explained ceases to be a miracle.

An astrologer predicted the death of Queen Victoria in December last. As the event did not materialise, he now tells the world the course of Fate was changed by prayer. Prayer has wondrous powers if charlatans can be believed.

In the *Guardian* (April 8) Canon Driver writes on the nebulous old Melchisedek, who, according to the veracious epistle to the Hebrews, was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." The Rev. A. H. Sayce identifies this mythical gentleman with Ebed Tob, king of Jerusalem. But, says Canon Driver, all his inferences "rest upon a most insecure and precarious foundation"; and, adds the Canon, "he has failed to show that the monuments corroborate the narrative of Genesis xiv. in any single particular which had been questioned by the critics."

A good old story on the confessional may be new to some of our readers. In a clerical gathering a priest remarked that it was curious that the very first person he confessed was a murderer. Shortly after a venerable ecclesiastical dignitary entered. "I am so pleased to meet Father Blank," said he; "do you know I was the very first person who confessed to him after he was ordained?"

In a visitation recently held by the Bishop of Lucknow he called attention to the growing irreligiousness of the upper classes among the Europeans in his diocese. Men of moral and philanthropic excellence, he said, were neglecting public worship. In India Europeans learn the worth of other religions than Christianity, and usually lose the prejudice that it alone has the monopoly of worth. Those most brought into contact with the natives frequently become Freethinkers.

#### THE MISSIONARY'S AWFUL FATE.

He sailed away to the Fiji Isles,  
But he was not slain on the shore,  
Nor fattened ahead for a cannibal spread  
As others had been before;  
But he met with a far more terrible fate  
Than those who had lost their lives,  
For the chieftain grim took a fancy to him,  
And gave him a hundred wives.

Tyrants, knowing full well that their power arises from ignorance, are most careful in maintaining it, for to overthrow all their card-castles but a breath of reason is necessary. They protect superstition, because superstition stultifies men, and takes away their courage and energy. So long as his head is filled with tales of angels, ghosts, and images of the Devil and hell, he will have no thought of the real hell—the hell of slavery. Hence, the greatest crime, in the eyes of despots, is to preach truth and to talk reason.—*Hébert*.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 19, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W., at 7.30, "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ."

April 26, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 3 and 4, Birmingham; 10 and 17, Plymouth. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. G. LEVETT.—Thanks. Always glad to receive good jokes.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: H. Pottinger, 2s. 6d.

S. R. THOMPSON.—Hope you will be able to revive the Rochdale Branch. In any case, you deserve credit for your zeal.

SHILLING MONTH (for Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme).—J. Barry, 5s. Per R. Forder: P. Gibson, 1s.; J. Hicks, 1s.; J. Harvey, 1s.; Jack and Jim, 2s.; C. Deane, 1s.; Mrs. Deane, 1s.; T. Dundar Harris, 2s.; per Mr. Thompson, 2s.; J. F. Finn, 10s.; W. Tipper, 2s.; J. Langford, 5s.; A. Brown and Two Friends, 2s. 6d.; J. Carter, 1s. Collected at Mr. Watts's lecture at Stanley, 20s.; J. Wildman, 1s.; W. Lancaster, 1s.; V. Page, 1s.

J. G. BRIGGS.—Whatever date Mr. Wilson Barrett put on his playbills of *The Sign of the Cross* in the provinces, the date on the playbill we obtained at the Lyric Theatre, London, is A.D. 64. The fifteenth verse of Acts xxviii. has not been overlooked. It is referred to in our pamphlet, the publication of which is postponed till next Wednesday.

J. NICHOLL.—Glad to hear you like our "Book Chat." The magazine, *Progress*, edited by Mr. Foote some years ago, could only be obtained now in the second-hand market. Perhaps you might hear of a copy for sale by applying to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

J. G. DOBSON (Stockton-on-Tees) writes: "We have had two more good lectures from Mr. Watts under your grand scheme, and both were very successful, the collections nearly covering the local expenses. There was a lot of opposition, and Mr. Watts's masterly replies have been the topic of conversation ever since."

DANIEL BAKER, our veteran Birmingham friend, sends £2, being his subscription for March and April to the President's lecture scheme. Mr. Baker is subscribing £1 per month during 1896.

E. H.—(1) Instinct and reason are too large a subject to be dealt with in this column. It is absurd, however, to say that the lower animals do not reason. (2) The object of *Bible Romances* was not to answer Christian objections, but to present the absurd and impossible (and therefore romantic) side of the Bible narratives.

G. CRUDDAS.—See "Sugar Plums." We are not aware that Mr. Bradlaugh ever refused to debate with Dr. A. J. Harrison. To our knowledge, he debated with that gentleman twice. We do not think they ever met in public discussion after Mr. Foote's debate with Dr. Harrison in 1877.

V. PAGE.—Mr. Foote reckons himself all right now, though he means for some time yet to be extra careful of his health.

P. SHADWELL (Hull).—You are too far behind the fair. The Ballard incident is now stale.

A. H. HAWKE.—We don't believe Guizot ever said anything of the kind, but, of course, we cannot prove a negative.

PYRITES.—Mr. B. Dobell, bookseller, Charing Cross-road, London, W. Shall appear.

A. B. MOSS.—We cannot understand why that correspondent troubles you with such communications, especially as he is a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, and is therefore in a position to know that the fact he wishes you to explain is no fact at all. He sent us a long letter of rumors and complaints a few weeks ago, and when we asked him pointedly who had poured all that stuff into his ear, he thought it best to let the subject drop.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rochester and Chatham Journal—Chat—Nya Sanningar—Rochdale Observer—Crescent—Baltimore Herald—Echo—Sun—Twentieth Century—Progressive Thinker—Clarion—Presbyterian—Lancashire Daily Post—Two Worlds—Liberty—Liberator—Secular Thought—Metaphysical Magazine—Truth-seeker.

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

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.

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

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

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.

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.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

LONDON friends will note that Mr. Foote is delivering two more lectures at St. James's Hall. His subject this evening (April 19) is "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ." The great Russian writer is made much of in Christian Socialist circles, and his teachings find great favor with the *Daily Chronicle*. This new form of Christism needs criticism from the Freethought standpoint, and the lecture should be interesting to Freethinkers and Christians alike. Next Sunday's (April 26) lecture will be on "The Irreligion of Shakespeare," with copious references to, and extracts from, the principal plays.

Less than a shilling is not allowed to be charged for tickets at St. James's Hall. The seats are priced at one shilling and two shillings, but a ticket for both lectures can be purchased for 1s. 6d. or 3s. Those who have not procured tickets before the meeting will be told where to obtain one at the Regent-street entrance.

Piccadilly-circus is easily accessible from all parts of London, and the metropolitan Freethinkers should make an effort to crowd the Banqueting Hall on both occasions. Outside advertisement of these meetings is secured through the leading newspapers. Of course the expenses are very heavy, and cannot be covered without a good sale of tickets.

Mr. Charles Watts takes the chair at Mr. Foote's lecture at St. James's Hall this evening (April 19).

Mr. Foote has engaged a West-end hall for regular Sunday evening lectures for six months, and of course the meetings will be continued there or elsewhere after the expiration of that period. Arrangements are being made for taking money at the doors, Mr. Foote giving the proprietor a legal indemnity against any action that may be taken in consequence. Fuller details will be given in due course. The meetings will commence at the end of May.

Mr. Foote lectured in the Secular Hall, New Brompton, on Sunday evening, and is none the worse for the effort. The hall was filled with a most enthusiastic audience, and the lecture appeared to be very highly relished. Opposition was invited, but none was offered. The Christian Evidence people got up a rival meeting, which probably drew off the more zealous Christians who might otherwise have tackled "the infidel." It should be added that the collection taken up was the largest on record at New Brompton, and was very gratifying to the committee, who had of course incurred extra expenses on this occasion.

Mr. Boorman, at whose house Mr. Foote took tea, naturally told the President as much as possible about the condition of the Branch. Matters are going on very satisfactorily. The Sunday-school flourishes, Sunday evening meetings are excellent, and the debt upon the hall is being gradually cleared off. Of course, the officers and committee have to work hard, but they are well repaid by the success of the movement, which is recognised as a force to be counted with in the locality.

The experience of the Chatham Branch confirms the view that Freethought has everything to gain by public debates, and explains the reluctance of the Christian Evidence Society to promote such encounters. A year ago Mr. Foote debated with the Rev. A. J. Waldron at New Brompton on the question of the Resurrection. It is not reported that any Freethinker has turned Christian in consequence of that debate, but it has been the means of bringing over several Christians to Freethought—not as mere sympathisers with Freethought, but as members of the Chatham Branch of the National Secular Society.

Last week Mr. Charles Watts had three capital audiences at Stockton, Middlesbro', and Stanley, where he lectured under Mr. Foote's scheme. On Sunday he concluded his course of six lectures at South Shields. In our next issue Mr. Watts will give an account of his visit to the north.

Mr. George Cruddas, writing from Stanley, where Mr. Watts recently addressed a meeting of five hundred people under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, says that the friends there regard the scheme as "the best idea ever propounded for propagating and organising Freethought." Mr. Watts was "in splendid form," and was listened to "with rapt attention." The Stanley friends are anxious to hear Mr. Foote when he visits the Tyneside again, and they shall certainly have an opportunity.

Mr. A. B. Moss delivered two open-air lectures to large audiences on Sunday. The afternoon lecture was given in Victoria Park. Some boisterous Christians were present

but were kept in check by an inspector and two constables. Mr. Moss got through his lecture all right, in spite of interruptions. When the time came for opposition, Providence sent down the rain and stopped the defence of the Bible.

Mr. Heaford has returned from Scotland, where he has been addressing meetings (among others) under the President's Lecture Scheme. Mr. Gilmour will give an account of this tour. Meanwhile we may state that Mr. Heaford's meetings were all orderly and mostly very well attended, and the attitude of the audiences was invariably one of sympathy.

Mr. S. R. Thompson is trying to revive Freethought propaganda in Rochdale. He delivers two open-air lectures to-day (April 19) in the Town Hall Square, at 11 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon. At 4.30 there will be a meeting in No. 2 Board Room, Co-operative Buildings, Toad-lane, for the purpose of re-forming the N.S.S. Branch. We hope this meeting will be well attended. Perhaps a visit from Mr. Cohen could be arranged while he is in the district.

\$100 was offered to Dr. Rusk, of the Church Militant, Chicago, for a box to hear Ingersoll lecture there on April 12. Ingersoll wrote to Rusk: "Now, my dear friend, be sure and do nothing that will give you trouble. If I speak, I must give my honest thought; but this will be done with perfect kindness. I have no objection to you asking an admission fee. That is for you to decide, but I want nothing for myself." We should think other ministers might be glad to have "our Bob" on these terms.

This Dr. Rusk seems a very decent fellow. He has recently been lecturing on the Mormons, among whom he has lived. He said: "Theirs is the only religion which compels every man to own his own home. Their religion teaches that no man has a right to own one more acre of land than he can use—a great lesson of unselfishness. They found a desert and made it a paradise."

We are pleased to notice from *Nya Sanningar* that a strong committee has been formed for the erection of a monument in memory of Victor E. Lennstrand, the Swedish martyr for Freethought.

Scotland no longer stands where it did with regard to the Sabbath. Glasgow has long had Sunday tramways, and the Town Council has now authorised the opening of the public baths for four hours on Sunday mornings all the year round. At Haddington the Bowling Club is to be open on Sunday afternoons, and the Dundee United Presbyterian Presbytery are deploring the non-observance of the Sabbath, and declaring that Saturday football playing leads to Sunday travelling and non-attendance at church.

Bethnal Green Museum and South Kensington Museums, including the Art Galleries, Science, and Indian Museums, are now open on Sundays from two till dusk. It is to be hoped the public will take full advantage of this, or otherwise the Sabbatarian party will urge that Sunday opening is undesired.

*De Dageraad* (April) has a notable article on "God-Worship and Devil-Worship," by G. van Beerse, who illustrates, by the case of exorcism by Father Aurelianus at Wemding in 1891, the fact that the active agency of the Devil is still a cardinal belief in the Catholic Church.

Mr. Herman Cohen, writing in the *Fortnightly* on "The Modern Jew and the New Judaism," urges that Judaism to-day is a species of materialism. "But this is not the antithesis of idealism; it is rather a form of it." He says: "We believe that the old classical Biblical faiths have been dead for centuries, and the people now worship, but do not pray."

Nelson Secularists should support Mr. James Greaves as a School Board candidate. He is the only one in favor of Secular Education. Mr. Greaves is a Freethinker.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake has entered upon his eightieth year. He was seventy-nine on Monday. Mr. Holyoake enjoys fairly good health, and his pen is as active as ever. When we first knew him he was thought to be almost dying, and he has been more or less a dying man ever since; but somehow or other he goes to funeral after funeral of his robust friends, and flourishes himself while the grass is growing rankly over their graves. Several years ago Mr. Holyoake's friends bought him an annuity, which at least frees him from financial worry, and he says it would be shabby if he did not gratify them by living as long as possible.

Owing to press of other matter, our special article on the new Education Bill stands over till next week. It will occupy several columns of the *Freethinker*.

## PROVIDENCE.

TIGHTLY to a post they bound him,  
Out upon the furrowed sand;  
Doomed to death by those around him,  
Waiting on the moaning strand.

Now the tide has reached his middle;  
Soon he'll be o'erwhelmed and dead:  
All because the cosmic riddle  
Puzzles every thinking head.

He had guessed an answer to it,  
Though the priest for all men thinks;  
So the Church, as soon's she knew it,  
Clutched him, like the fabled sphinx.

Will the moon and gravitation  
All his tearful pray'rs deride?  
Or will Heav'n vouchsafe salvation,  
Holding back the rising tide?

Will the sun's and moon's attractions,  
For a time, be neutralised,  
Through some heav'nly counteractions,  
By the Lord of Heav'n devised?

Hark! a shout in volume growing!  
God of Boothites! what a din!  
See! the tide has ceased its flowing,  
Scarcely reaching to his chin!

God, said some, has heard his pleading;  
Heav'n its mighty pow'r displays;  
Lo! the tide is now receding;  
God has checked it; sound his praise!

"Fools! your triumph is a cheap one!"  
Roared a priest with spiteful eyes;  
"We forgot, the tide's a neap one;  
Heads must dip if tides won't rise!"

"Seize him! if beneaped, and bend him  
Down beneath the water's swell;  
Now, let's see! I thought we'd end him!  
God be praised! he's now in hell!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## Bunco-steerers.

The New York *Tribune* says: "John L. Sullivan said the other day in San Francisco: 'I travelled with Sankey, the evangelist, recently, and I had a bit of argument with him on the subject of pugilism *versus* the pulpit. He said a good many things that I couldn't contradict, and I guess I got back at him. I said to him: "Now, Mr. Sankey, we all know you're sincere, but don't you think that even in your game there are a lot of bunco-steerers?" Well, sir, he laughed and took it good-naturedly, but I noticed he did not come back at me with a general denial.' The term "bunco-steerers," as applied to the ministry, is not a bad fit. A bunco-steerer, as we understand it, is one who takes the stranger in and introduces him to some game of chance or some proposition offering, apparently, large returns from a small investment, but in the end the stranger finds himself fleeced. No houses and lots promised by this class of sharpers were ever more mythical than the heavenly mansions promised by the clergy to those who take stock in religion and the Church.—*Truthseeker*."

CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Mr. Casey, 2s.; Mrs. Casey, 2s.; per Mr. Leate, 11s.; Battersea Branch, 1s.; T. D. Harris, 6d.; F. Wilson, 1s.; per Mr. Neate, 3s.; collected at Mr. Watts's Lecture, £1 12s. 8d.; per H. Courtney, 7s. 7½d.; per W. Loafer, 5s. 6d. The Committee desire to thank Messrs. Streiner, Church, Hurren, Quinton, and an unknown friend for toys, confectionery, etc., for the party.—ROBERT FORDER, *Treasurer*.

DIED on Good Friday, Joseph Hampson, aged five years, son of Frank Hampson, of Lower Grimshaw Farm, Eccles Hill, Darwen. He was interred in the Blackburn Cemetery on April 7, the Secular Burial Service being used.—M. KNOWLES.

## MISSIONARY JOTTINGS.

My last report in the *Freethinker* of February 29—in which I omitted to mention two very good meetings held at West Auckland—described my wanderings up to March 8. From March 8 until the 17 I was engaged in delivering a course of lectures in the neighborhood of Glasgow, an account of which has already appeared in these columns from the pen of Mr. Gilmour. All that I have to add to that report is to express my thanks for the gallant manner in which the members of the Glasgow Branch supported my efforts. On the occasion of each lecture I was accompanied by a number of the Glasgow friends, who were fully prepared for whatever emergencies might arise; and, although some of the clergy of Dunoon were kind enough to offer up prayers on my behalf, it was largely owing to the presence of these stalwarts that the rowdy element was kept under control. Altogether I have to thank the friends in the west of Scotland for their help during one of the hardest week's work I have done for some time. It is a long while since I had such continuous fighting, and I enjoyed myself thoroughly. The three lectures given in Dunoon—one by Mr. Foote, and two by myself—seemed to have turned the town upside down. Never, I fancy, since the Reformation had there been such excitement concerning the truth of the Christian creed. People were discussing the lectures in all directions; the clergy dealt with them in their sermons—a much safer way than dealing with them on the platform; and a discussion is still being carried on through the medium of the newspapers. What the result of this questioning will be it scarcely needs a prophet to foretell. Men die of many diseases; religions die of one—being found out; and nothing brings about this more certainly than discussion.

On March 19, 22, and 23 I lectured at Edinburgh to audiences that were a marked improvement upon those of my previous visit. The Edinburgh Secularists have not escaped the prevailing desire to extend the area of our propaganda, and accordingly a lecture was announced for Musselburgh on March 20. It was the first Freethought address ever given in the town, and, owing to some mistake in connection with advertisements, the lecture was not so well attended as it might have been. Those who were there, however, appeared to be fully satisfied; a hope was expressed that more meetings would be arranged in the near future, and several offered to co-operate for that purpose. Meetings would have been arranged for Portobello, Leith, and other places, but halls were not obtainable.

From Edinburgh I took a long stride to Leeds, lecturing there on March 25, 26, 27, and 29, and again on April 1. The three first meetings were held in the large St. James's Hall, and were attended with the most gratifying results. The same hall was not, however, available for Sunday lectures, and the one we did get was altogether too small for the audience that assembled. It was a warm day, and the place was simply packed. Nevertheless, the audience stood it like bricks, and by the time the lectures were concluded some of them must have felt as though they were pretty well baked ones. The opposition at these meetings ran through the usual stages. I had three opponents the first evening, one the second, a question the third, and then—silence. On March 30 and 31 I lectured to good audiences at Blackburn. The success of the meetings here seems to have at length induced a clergyman to come forward and speak in defence of his creed. A reverend gentleman, whose name I have forgotten, spoke in opposition at both meetings, and during the course of his remarks made the somewhat startling statement that "Mill regarded the argument from design in nature as unassailable"; but, as Herbert Spencer was also paraded as a supporter of Theism, and Lord Kelvin as an authority upon Biology, that need cause little surprise. The meetings at Blackburn continue to show a steady improvement, and those who a few months since were strongly opposed to Secularism now give it a patient, attentive hearing; while the membership shows a regular, if not a rapid, increase.

On April 1 I returned to Leeds, and after the lecture a business meeting was held to put the new Branch into working order. As a result of the meeting, I was enabled to bring away with me thirty membership forms fully paid and signed, and the secretary has a list of about an equal number who have given their names, but have not yet paid

their subscriptions. This, I take it, is not a bad record as the result of two visits and the delivery of seven lectures. So far as I can judge, the new members have plenty of go in them, and are determined to push the cause for all it is worth in Leeds. I shall be very much surprised if the Leeds Branch does not more than justify its existence within the next twelve months.

On April 2 I reached London once more, having been absent a little over ten weeks and delivered seventy lectures, besides other work. The constant strain was not without its effects, and I was beginning to feel very tired towards the end of my trip. A few days' rest will, I have no doubt, put me in fighting trim once more.

One very pleasing feature of my tour has been the steady increase in the size of the audiences. With hardly an exception, wherever I have been giving a series of lectures there has been a perceptible increase in the number of attendants at each meeting—a phenomenon pleasing both to lecturer and audience. At most of the meetings new members have been enrolled, and literature put into circulation—two things eminently satisfactory to all who are interested in the spread of Freethought ideas. I must not omit to thank all those friends who have lent me their assistance in the various towns I have visited. Their earnestness and devotion to the cause does, perhaps, more to encourage one than anything else. I have experienced naught but kindness all the way round, and I take this opportunity of thanking them for their many acts of goodwill towards myself, and for their labors on behalf of the cause we are alike interested in.

Altogether, the new Lecture Scheme has succeeded much better than I anticipated. It has been the means of opening up many new Branches, and of putting fresh enthusiasm into old ones. Thousands have listened to Freethought speeches who but for it would never have done so; and when we bear in mind at what little financial cost this has been achieved, the result is gratifying in the extreme.

C. COHEN.

## MR. SAYCE'S LAST WORK.\*

THE present work is not written in quite such a slipshod style as the other recent productions of this gentleman, but it contains the usual lack of footnotes, so that one is hampered in arriving at the authorities for the author's statements. Mr. Sayce feels it necessary to explain why he should add to the mass of Egyptological literature, and says it is intended to put in the hands of tourists information which is not readily accessible, or else forms part of larger and more cumbersome works. A captious critic, however, in one of the religious newspapers, has expressed his opinion that a tourist would be better off without this book of 342 pages, which is likely to be much too cumbersome in the traveller's wallet. And those who have access to trustworthy works on Egyptology are likely to look with considerable distrust upon the majority of the author's assertions. Like all the obscurantist writers of the present hour, Mr. Sayce has a great deal to say about the Hyksos, for the simple reason that next to nothing is known about them. He is far from being "up to date," for he is content to repeat the exploded notions about the so-called "Hyksos sculptures" of San, when even Mr. Flinders Petrie, in his recent *History of Egypt*, admits that these sculptures really date from the twelfth Egyptian dynasty.

We are glad to observe that Mr. Sayce has derived some profit from Chilperic Edwards' *Witness of Assyria*, and he now admits that the story of Joseph claims too much in saying that the seven years of famine were felt in Canaan at the same time as in Egypt. "A famine in Egypt and a famine in Canaan were not due to the same cause, and the failure of the waters of the Nile would have no effect upon the crops of Palestine." That is just the point. The famine is only introduced for the purpose of bringing Jacob into Egypt, and the machinery reduces itself to an absurdity when we consider the natural phenomena of Egypt.

Mr. Sayce admits that the present uncertainties of Egyptian chronology are due to the attempts of the Christian epitomisers of Manetho to force his figures into accord with the numerical statements of the Septuagint.

\* *The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus*, by the Rev. A. H. Sayce (1895).

He also alludes to "the rich and highly-educated Greeks, like the poet Nonnus, who was tortured to death by St. Shnūdi; and the gifted Hypatia, whose flesh was torn from her bones with oyster-shells by the monks of St. Cyril"—facts which should be borne in mind by those who imagine that Christianity is a friend of education.

"Herodotus" occupies about a third of the book, and we are told that his "travels" are now followed for the first time in the light of recent discoveries. After a perusal of this part of the work, however, the cautious student will certainly substitute "imagination" for "discoveries"; for most of the statements merely rest upon the unsupported assumptions of Mr. Sayce, whose imaginative faculties are well known.

We are prepared to hear that the major part of the writings of Herodotus were really extracts from earlier authors. "He only acted like other Greek writers of his time, and if his plagiarisms exceeded theirs, it was only because he had read more and made a more diligent use of his note-book." That being the case, it is surely unnecessary to suppose that Herodotus travelled at all. There is nothing that he could not have compiled in his own study from the works of his predecessors. Furthermore, on Mr. Sayce's own showing, Egypt was a very unsafe place for Greek travellers in the time of Herodotus. The country was torn by the Perso-Egyptian wars and revolts, and it was precisely in the Delta, where he supposes the Greek to have travelled, that the chief seat of disturbance was to be found.

In conclusion, we would say that, as regards the Hebrews, Mr. Sayce tells us nothing upon which the slightest reliance can be placed; and as regards the Greek writer, Herodotus, his statements must be received with the utmost caution.

E. P.

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### THE PARSON'S SOCIALISM.

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AN announcement had been made that a certain clergyman would preach a sermon on "The Socialism of Christ." The preacher was eminent for his work in political reform, and people would be interested in anything he would have to say. So my editor sent me to interview him, and to get an epitome of his address.

I found him in his study writing busily. When I turned to close the door by which I had entered, I saw that it had sagged from its hinges, and struck the sill, when half way shut, so that considerable force was necessary to close it, and then a horrible squeak was produced.

I was courteously received, and readily secured what I was sent for. The doctor prefaced his remarks by saying: "I have found as the results of my studies of the social and economic conditions of the times," etc.

"Yes," said he, when I had completed my notes, "I feel it quite as much my duty to teach sociology as sanctity. I assure you I read political economy as much as I do exegesis."

Just then he rang a bell, and, handing a coin to the man who answered the call, said: "William, get me a quarter's worth of cigars at the drug store, and be quick, please." William returned in a few minutes with two cigars, and announced that there was "a man sir, below, as would like to see you, sir. He looks like a charity case, sir." The doctor answered, between puffs at lighting a perfecto: "Bring him up. I have to see these people, you know, though I can't do anything for them." A minute later a tall, gaunt man, unmistakably marked by consumption, stood before us, and told us his story of misery.

He was a carpenter, had fallen ill a year before, had spent his savings for physicians, been taken to a public hospital, and discharged while still weak, to make room for others. He was unable to find work of any kind, at any price, and had been without food for two days. He did not want charity, but work; "anything to earn twenty-five cents with which to get a meal." "For," said he, "if I don't get some keep somewhere, I shall go crazy and kill myself." The Christian Socialist replied in the approved fashion, using the phrases "Dispensation of Providence," "Temporal afflictions," "Whom God loveth He chasteneth." All between puffs of tobacco smoke. He ended by saying: "I am sorry to see you in such an unfortunate state, and hope you will find work and have success. Don't get despondent and think of killing yourself, as many un-

fortunates do; that is an awful crime against God. Bear his trials with patience, and in His own good time he will relieve you."

The carpenter said nothing, but left the room with his face fixed in an expression that spoke volumes.

"Poor fellow," sighed the parson, as he lighted another cigar, "there are so many frauds asking for alms that it is not safe to give anything to a stranger. Charity pauperises them rapidly. It is the fault of the poor themselves that they are poor. They have no proper conception of the science of economics." Then he went on to tell me of his program for liberating humanity from its economic chains.

I soon took my leave, and, as I pulled the sagging door-shut, I thought that the carpenter could have mended it, and the parson given him for it the quarter that he spent for the cigars. The parson would then have had a proper door, and the carpenter a dinner, and revived hopes. But, by such a transaction, there would have been no encouragement of the cigar industry, and cumbering of fertile ground with poisonous plants; and the air of the study would not have been made foul by nicotine.

The parson had studied the science of sociology and had written a sermon on "The Socialism of Christ," and he sent the carpenter away.

I have not studied social science in a university, and have written no sermons or essays on Socialism. But I have seen many things in the lives of the people I meet every day that make me think that, somehow, the "proper conception of the science of economics," that the parson said the poor lacked, would have been boosted forward almost as much by that quarter getting into the pocket of the carpenter for mending the door as it would by the sermon. And I can't get over thinking that the door would have been stopped from squeaking, and the workman from fainting.

G. W. DAVIDSON.

—*Twentieth Century.*

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### The Church and Slavery.

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Our esteemed contributor, Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, sends us a long, interesting letter from a Mr. J. C. Mack, an American who was born and brought up among New England puritans. Mr. Mack mentions the fact that when Lloyd Garrison sought to lecture against slavery at Boston, Mass., he could obtain no hall or church from the religious people there, but was offered one by the infidels. Mr. Mack says: "This fact I have never heard denied in Massachusetts; it was a fact too well known to deny. I have heard religious pietists regret that this was the actual truth. I have known them to try to explain, excuse, and condone it; but never knew them to deny it. No; they could offer excuses and apologies, but none of them had the effrontery to deny it." Mr. Mack attests that the like treatment was accorded to Frederick Douglass long after. In his own district Hiram Blanchard, a Freethinker, entertained Douglass when the innkeeper "would not have a nigger in his house"; and Blanchard took for Douglass a public hall when the Churches would not have him. Mr. Mack says that from 1850 to 1859 Douglass would have been insulted in almost every town in New England if he gave a public lecture, and in most of the middle and western States his life would have been in great danger. Douglass lectured three times in Mr. Mack's district, but no preacher went on the platform. He says: "In my boyish remembrance it seemed to me that all the pious people defended slavery. Clergymen were mostly against the anti-slavery movement. Theodore Parker, of Boston, was one exception; but he was called 'The Infidel Preacher.' The Roman Catholics were invariably Democrats and in favor of slavery. The Irish to a man hated the negro."

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SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREE THINKERS.

DR. MESSENGER MONSEY.

MESSENGER MONSEY was an infidel doctor of the old school. Born over two hundred years ago, in 1693, he lived to be ninety-five, and is chiefly known by his eccentric will. He came of good family. His father, the Rev. Robert Monsey, was a Norfolk rector, who forfeited his living by throwing in his lot with the Nonjurors. After spending five years at St. Mary's Hall, Cambridge, Messenger studied physic for some time under Sir Benjamin Wrench, at Norwich. Starting on his own account, he practised for a while at Bury St. Edmunds. Here he had the fortune to attend Lord Godolphin, son of Queen's Anne's treasurer; came to London, and became a popular court physician. Sir Robert Walpole always extolled the merits of his "Norfolk Doctor," but never advanced his interests. Instead of covering the great minister with adulation, Monsey treated him like an ordinary individual, telling him when his jokes were poor, and not hesitating to worst him in argument. "How happens it," asked Sir Robert over his wine, "that nobody will beat me at billiards, or contradict me, but Dr. Monsey?" "Other people," put in the doctor, "get places; I get a dinner and praise." The Freethinking Lord Chesterfield was one of Monsey's patrons, and zealous in trumpeting his praises.

Mr. J. Cordy Jeaffreson, in his *Book About Doctors*, says of Monsey: "Lively, sagacious, well read, and brutally sarcastic, he had for a while a society reputation for wit scarcely inferior to Swift's; and he lived among men well able to judge of wit. Garrick and he were for many years intimate friends, until, in a contest of jokes, each of the two brilliant men lost his temper, and they parted like Roland and Sir Leoline—never to meet again. Garrick probably would have kept his temper under any other form of ridicule, but he never ceased to resent Monsey's reflection on his avarice to the Bishop of Sodor and Man. 'Garrick is going to quit the stage,' observed the Bishop. 'That he'll never do,' answered Monsey, making use of a Norfolk proverb, 'so long as he knows a guinea is cross on one side and pile on the other.'"

Monsey greatly admired Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and waited on the historian to thank him for the pleasure and instruction received. Gibbon's altercation with Davis was spoken of. "Mr. Davis," said Gibbon, "accuses me of not having a sufficient number of books: if he will call any day when I am not at home, the servant shall show him my library."

Among the anecdotes told of Monsey is that, once riding in Hyde Park with a Mr. Robinson, that gentleman, after deploring the corrupt morals of the age, said: "But, doctor, I talk with one who believes there is no God." "And I," retorted Monsey, "with one who believes there are three." Mr. Robinson was so horrified that he clapped spurs to his horse, galloped off, and never spoke to the doctor again. Monsey was particularly partial to the works of Bernhard Mandeville, the Anglo-Dutch doctor and author of *Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church, and National Happiness*, and of the yet more notorious *Fable of the Bees*. "Thou, Nature, art my goddess," Monsey used to say, should be the motto of every doctor. Monsey became physician to Chelsea College, and died in his rooms there on December 26, 1788. His will created much comment, he being one of the first to direct that his body should not be insulted by any religious service or funeral ceremony, but should undergo dissection by a competent anatomist, "after which the remainder of the carcase may be put into a hole, or crammed into a box with holes, and thrown into the Thames." In accordance with this direction, Mr. Forster, surgeon, dissected the body, and delivered a lecture on it to the medical students in the theatre of Guy's Hospital. This discourse is given at length in the fifty-eighth volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In his will Monsey inveighed against priests, bishops, deans, and chapters, and left an annuity to two clergymen who resigned their preferment on account of want of theology. The bulk of his fortune he left to his only daughter and her female descendants. Lord Chancellor Cranworth was his great-grandson. Monsey's epitaph, written by himself, was even more curious than his will. It ran as follows:—

Here lie my old bones; my vexation now ends;  
I have lived much too long for myself and my friends.  
As to churches and churchyards, which parsons call holy,  
'Tis a rank piece of priestcraft, and founded on folly.  
What the next world may be never troubled my pate;  
If not better than this, I beseech thee, O Fate,  
When the bodies of millions rise up in a riot,  
To let the old carcase of Monsey lie quiet.

J. M. W.

"One soweth and another reapeth" is a verity that applies to evil as well as good.—*George Eliot*.

The only medicine for suffering, crime, and all the other woes of mankind is wisdom.—*T. H. Huxley*.

BOOK CHAT.

George Schumm contributes to *Book Reviews* an excellent notice of the works of that strange genius, Frederick Nietzsche, the most important of which are being translated into English. If any books deserve the epithet of spiritual dynamite, they are those of this gifted madman.

\* \* \*

*The History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, by Professor Andrew D. White, many chapters of which appeared in the *Popular Science Monthly*, is now being issued in book form by D. Appleton & Co. The work is a powerful indictment of theology, and deserves place in every Freethought library.

\* \* \*

Evolution has directed attention to the importance of child study, which has been taken up by Perez, Preyer, and Sully in a scientific spirit. Another important work dealing very fully with the child in primitive culture is issued by Dr. A. F. Chamberlain. It is entitled *The Child and Childhood in Folk Thought*.

\* \* \*

The fine sonnet, "A Flight from Heaven," by Eugene Lee Hamilton, has been so admired that we give another from *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours*. The poet has been confined to a wheeled bed for many years, and the sonnet is strictly personal:—

Make me in marble after I am dead,  
Stretched out recumbent just as I have lain,  
That those who care may see me once again  
Such as they knew me on my hard, wheeled bed.

Save that the motionless and marble head  
Will never ache with hope for ever vain;  
And down the marble limbs the waves of pain  
Will never race, but all be peace instead.

And this be writ: The same blind silent weight  
That moves the planets kept him on his back,  
And forced him in his misery to create.

He lay for years upon a daily rack;  
He grudged to none their freer, happier fate;  
He hoped no heaven, nor deemed the world all black.

\* \* \*

The *Truthseeker* (April 4) calls Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* "one of the most valuable of recent works," and says: "Many devotees will doubtless be surprised and grieved to learn that their pious forms and observances to-day are as rudimentary as the now disused muscles which moved the ears and tails of their ape-like ancestors."

PROFANE JOKES.

"Did you go to church yesterday?" "No; I slept at home for a change."

Sky-pilot—"My boy, do you know it's wicked to fish on the Sabbath?" "Isn't fishin'; I'm teaching this 'ere wurm ter swim."

Mrs. Yeast—"I understand our minister is going to preach a sermon to bicycle riders next Sunday." Mr. Yeast—"I suppose he'll call it the Sermon on the Mount."

At a Cross Road's Store out West. Peters—"I see them Spaniards has been throwin' stones at our consul at Barcelona, and rippin' up the old flag." Wattles—"Is that so? Who did ye say done it?" Peters—"Th' Spaniards over to Spain." Wattles—"Taint them Armenians agin?" Peters—"No; it's the Spaniards." Wattles—"I'm glad o' that. I was afraid at fust that it was goin' to give th' parson 'nother chance to pester us fer subscriptions."

Mrs. Wickwire—"Dear me! Those awful Abyssinians are not heathen, after all. It turns out that they are Christians." Mr. Wickwire—"Well, you ought to have known that from the fight they put up."

Christianity and Civilisation.

The great factors in the evolution of civilisation have undoubtedly been the love of money, political freedom, and knowledge. Trade and commerce led to improved means of communication between communities and distant nations. Hence our railways, steamships, telegraphs, and all those scientific discoveries which add to the sum of human happiness by the diffusion of the comforts and conveniences of life. Universal brotherhood has been practically enforced by these means. Christianity has looked on and profited, although but a short time back she would have burned or denounced as sorcerers or magicians the great benefactors of mankind.—*Hon. Boyle Travers Finniss*.

## 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.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall, Piccadilly, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ."  
 BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, R. Shaw opens discussion against Socialism; 9.15, social gathering.  
 BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Dr. E. B. Aveling, "Mr. Bradlaugh's Objections to Socialism." Wednesday, at 8.45, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture XIII., The Virgin (continued)." Thursday, Shakespeare's birthday party—speeches, concert, and dancing.  
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "Foods, and How they Affect Us."  
 EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, J. W. Martin, "Silas Marner."  
 PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Teaching of Spinoza."  
 WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Councillor Ward, "The Ethics of Socialism."  
 WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Rival Gods."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. Guest, "The Bible and Woman."  
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Dead Gods."  
 EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. James will lecture.  
 HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Conversion of the Devil."  
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Recollections of Charles Bradlaugh."  
 ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, Harry Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."  
 MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Life After Death."  
 OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."  
 VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.  
 WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, a lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, a meeting.  
 BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Hawker, "Æsop's Fables: their Moral Teachings."  
 GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—S. Downie, "What Must we Do to be Saved?" 6.30, Neuron, "Notions about Deity, etc.," with reference to the Gifford Lectures.  
 HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Captain Monro, "The Dying Creed."  
 LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Read, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"  
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Spinoza"; 6.30, "What is there Left of Christianity?"  
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, H. Scorsah, dramatic and other recitals. Wednesday, at 8, members' dance.  
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, S. M. Peacock, "The New Education Bill."  
 STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSELY (May Day Green): 11, a lecture.  
 MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): 3, C. Cohen will lecture.  
 ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, S. R. Thompson, "The Gods"; 3, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?" 4.30, meeting at No. 2 Board Room to elect officers.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 19 and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

## POSITIVISM.

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

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