

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## THE EDUCATION BILL.

FREETHINKERS gifted with a share of the comic spirit may derive much merriment from the new Education Bill. It may be called the Dishing of the Nonconformists. During the reign of Mr. Gladstone these gentlemen ruled the roost. When the Grand Old Man retired from public life and appointed Lord Rosebery as his successor in the premiership, these gentlemen grew restive, and declared that the Nonconformist Conscience could not tolerate a prime minister who kept racehorses. It never occurred to these gentlemen that the Liberal prime minister, the Liberal party, and the Nonconformist Conscience might all go to pot together. Nevertheless it happened. The Tory party came into power with a lumping majority, pledged to support the Landlords, the Publicans, and the Parsons. The publicans are waiting for *their* support, but the landlords are remembered in the new Budget, and the parsons in the new Education Bill. There is to be a vast fresh endowment of the so-called Voluntary Schools, which are mainly under the control of the Church of England. And all the Nonconformists can do is to bite their thumbs, or weep and wail and gnash their teeth. Oh what a fall was there! Those who "ran" Gladstone, and killed Parnell, and sternly ordered Rosebery to teach in a Sunday-school, and talked as though they were soon going to settle the hash of the Church of England, have to stand, or sit, or lie down, and see themselves made light of, while the hated parsons put their thumbs to their noses and (what is worse!) walk off with bags of cash under their arms. Yes, the Nonconformists are dished, and the Freethinkers, whom they have always treated with such insolence, are free to enjoy the delicious spectacle.

Freethinkers, I say, can *enjoy* this spectacle; for the discomfiture of these Nonconformists is not their fortune in a battle for principle. They have no sort of principle in this Education struggle. What they *call* their principle is merely their interest. They protest against a State Church, and they want to disestablish it. And on what ground? It must be either religious or secular. If they say that State patronage is an insult to the Church of Christ, they are talking theology, or, in plainer language, "shop." Such a matter is to be decided by every Church for itself, and the Church of England may take all the patronage it can get without asking leave of any other Church. If they say that the State should not patronise any form of religion, because religion is a private affair between man and God, we can follow them; but in that case we call upon them to be logical and thorough, and not to tolerate State patronage of religion in one direction while protesting against it in another. Surely it is no worse to establish religion in Churches than to establish it in Schools. In one sense it is *less* wrong; for adults can go to church or stay outside as they please, but children are compelled to go to school; besides, an adult can "wink the other eye" at a silly sermon, and think for himself while the parson imagines he is filling him with sound doctrine; but children are absolutely at the mercy of their teachers, and cannot help taking the twist which is imparted to them.

This was felt by the sturdier Nonconformists who opposed the religious part of Mr. Forster's Education Act in 1870. But times have changed, and Nonconformists have thrown principle to the winds. They see that religious education is *in* the public schools, and they are resolved to make the best of it in the interest of their

various denominations. To this end they wallow in illogicality. Their spokesmen are really pitiable at the present juncture. Take, for instance, the Rev. Dr. Guinness Rogers, who contributed a special article on "Nonconformists and the Compromise" to last week's *Methodist Times*. Mr. Rogers is a man of sobriety, as Nonconformists go, and he was opposed to the introduction of religion in public schools in 1870. But he has "altered his attitude" on account of what he calls "experience" and "the teaching of events." He is not one of "the few survivors of the dead past"—to use the beautiful language of the *Methodist Times* editorial—"who favor a purely secular system." He admits still that these are "logically right," but logic doesn't pay and compromise does. And in this frame of mind Mr. Rogers condescends to write as follows:—

"I may be asked, and properly asked, how, as a convinced opponent of State Churches, I can approve of a system which practically creates one. I answer by denying that it does anything of the kind, and I feel constrained to add that if it should appear to any that in consenting to religious teaching in the school I, in some way or other, compromise my loyalty to the principles of religious equality, it is because they have but imperfectly measured the principles themselves. Of course there may be a religious teaching which wars against the cardinal ideas of true equality, and such we are constrained to oppose at all costs. Where conscience is coerced, we have no option but to resist *à outrance*. Nor are we judges of the consciences of other men whose views as to the full force of a particular idea differ from our own. I express simply my own conviction that, whatever be our judgment as to the wisdom or value of the religious teaching in the Board school, there is nothing in the action of the State which authorises it at all analogous to the establishment of a National Church."

I should very much like the opportunity of discussing this paragraph with Mr. Rogers before a public audience. If it is not an infraction of religious equality to teach religion in a State school, how can it be an infraction of religious equality to teach religion in a State church? I fancy I see what Mr. Rogers really means by "religious equality." I think he means "equality of religious privilege." And it is precisely because he and other Nonconformists mean this and nothing more that they are now at the mercy of the Church party. Men of all shades of opinion, outside the Church of England, would have been with them if they had stood on the old lines of absolute separation between Religion and the State; but in saying that the State shall help Religion *up to a point*, they have sacrificed all principle, and left *the point* to be decided by a struggle between Church and Nonconformity; and in that struggle they have been worsted.

I will go farther, and say there is something positively sickening in the duplicity of these Nonconformists, and more especially in relation to the Conscience Clause. Week after week, for many years, journals like the *Methodist Times* have shrieked against the Conscience Clause and denounced it as the vilest fraud. They never weary of declaring that, in districts where Nonconformist children must be sent to Church schools, there being no other provision for their education, the Conscience Clause is no protection, but a mere mockery of religious liberty. Yet when the Church parsons and the Nonconformist ministers keep school together, as they do through ninety-nine out of every hundred School Boards, they both tell the Freethinker that the Conscience Clause is an ample

protection for him. Nonconformists even assert that the grievance of Freethinkers is imaginary, and point out with great glee that extremely few children—a mere handful—are withdrawn from religious instruction. The fallacy, and indeed the folly, of all this is shown in Mr. Moncure D. Conway's recent letter to the *Times* :—

"The existing conscience clause is nearly a dead letter, because to withdraw one's child from school during the time of religious instruction is to single such child out for remark, for wonder, suspicion, gossip; to deprive it of fair comradeship, and, perhaps, inspire the little victim with repugnance to the parent's peculiar faith. I am convinced that a considerable number of Rationalists and Unitarians do not avail themselves of the conscience clause for fear of such unpleasant results, while taking care to unteach at home what is taught their children in school as religion, but which they may regard as irreligion."

Personally, however, I believe the fear of Rationalist parents, while perfectly natural, is nevertheless excessive. They do not know each other; they are not aware of the number who are sick of Board-school theology; and they have no means of co-operation. They are also apt, in their consideration for their children, to be over tender. A little hardening, a little experience of rough water, is not so bad for children as we are prone to imagine. I have three children at a Board school, and they are all withdrawn from religious instruction. They do not suffer much in consequence. Yet I am ready to make an allowance for other parents who are not circumstanced so advantageously. The head master of the school my children go to is a gentleman, and I (their father) am not obscure and helpless. I do not, therefore, blame other Rationalist parents who hesitate to martyrise their children; on the contrary, I sympathise with them, and I want them to see that their worst enemies in this matter are the Nonconformists. The Church party is logical; it is an open enemy of religious equality. But the Nonconformist party is illogical, and a false friend of religious equality. It has sold its principles for a paltry mess of Board-school pottage.

And now for the new Education Bill itself. My first intention was to discuss it in detail, and at considerable length. But the necessity for this has been obviated by the articles, and letters, and reports of speeches, that have appeared in all the newspapers. It will now be sufficient to say that the Bill has three important features; the first affecting Voluntary Schools, the second affecting Educational Machinery, and the third affecting Religious Education. These three features I propose to consider separately, though not without bearing in mind the fact that they are all connected in the general design of the Government, which is to cripple the School Board system and promote the Voluntary system—and this, of course, means a fresh endowment of the Church of England.

Voluntary Schools are so named facetiously. The only voluntary thing about them is the voluntary stupidity of the people who are bamboozled by specious nomenclature. By far the larger part of the expenses of such schools is defrayed by public money. In 1869 the grant to such schools was 9s. 7d. per head, the fees were 8s. 4d., and the voluntary subscriptions were 7s. 3½d. In 1894 the grant was £1 8s. 3½d., the fees were 2s. 0½d., and the subscriptions were 6s. 6½d. The grant is now to be considerably raised, and the fees will disappear altogether, while the subscriptions will dwindle to a microscopic quantity.

The main advantage of this increased grant to the Voluntary schools will of course accrue to the Church of England. Having started with an immense endowment of from seven to ten millions a year, the Church found it comparatively easy to build schools by subscription. Accordingly, out of a total (in 1894-95) of 19,709 public elementary schools in England and Wales, no less than 11,906 belong to the Church of England. Wesleyans have 509, Roman Catholics 977, and others 1,236. The scholars in Church schools are 2,278,921, in Wesleyan schools 168,463, in Roman Catholic schools 276,079, and in other schools 302,136. The Board schools number 5,081, with 2,174,142 scholars.

The Roman Catholics will profit in their degree by the increased grant to the voluntary schools. Their leaders have impudently demanded that the whole expense of education in their schools should be borne by the State; and, although they do not quite get this under the new Bill, they get it very nearly. The Wesleyans will profit in their degree also, but the number of their schools is so

trifling compared with those of the Church of England that we can understand their hostility. A man who mortally hates another will forego sixpence if the arrangement is to benefit his enemy to the extent of a sovereign.

Catholics will not object to the new Bill. They see that the maintenance of their schools, at anybody's expense, is a vital matter at present; and they live in hopes of some day coming into possession of all the Church property. So the battle against the Bill, as far as the religious parties are concerned, will be mainly left to the Wesleyans.

The Church of England income from grants (1894-5) is £2,613,956, the Wesleyan income £191,648, and the Catholic income £309,902. Nearly half a million more will go to the Voluntary schools at once, and four-fifths of this amount will accrue to the Church of England.

This is a very fine sop to the Church party. "Go on working for us," says Lord Salisbury, "and you shall dip your hands deeper and deeper into the nation's pocket. We know your price, and we are prepared to pay it. Of course the terms are cash."

No wonder the Bishop of London is thoroughly well satisfied with this Bill. The Church of England has from seven to ten millions (no one knows exactly how much) a year—revenues chiefly from national property—for preaching its doctrines to adults in churches; and it will now have another three millions a year, direct from the State, ostensibly to give all the children it gathers into its schools a good education, but really to teach them its doctrines. The education *has* to be given, and it *has* to be of a certain quality; but the voluntary part of the business, the part upon which the Church has set its affections, the part for which it undertakes all the rest, which it would gladly drop if it could—this part is the inoculation of nearly three million children with Church dogmas, so that they may grow up safeguarded against the small-pox of heresy, and finally become guardians of the Church's interests against all its enemies. In short, the three millions spent on the schools is an insurance against the loss of the seven-to-ten millions spent on the churches. It is a heavy premium, but the Church does not pay it. The nation pays, so all is right.

This is extremely good business—for the Church; and I can understand the bitter wrath of Nonconformists, for they are rival tradesmen. They have only themselves to thank, however; they have made their bed, and they must lie upon it. Freethinkers, of course, have their own special point of view; and I propose to regard the matter from it in my next article.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Our book of Genesis is not in the Bible lying before me. The book of Genesis in which we believe, and by which we are guided—and not only we, but all educated Christians, however orthodox they may call themselves—was written by Copernicus, by Galileo, by Newton, by Laplace, by Lyell, by Spencer, by Darwin. Even those who still profess to believe in the old Genesis are doing their best to read in it what the men just named have taught. We do not now regulate our lives by the precepts of the Pentateuch. We follow the teachings of the scientific men of the present age, who have studied the laws of the universe, and have learned wisdom from them. It is the books of these men which constitute the real Book of the Law which guides the modern world, whatever men say or profess about it. Our divine histories which move and influence the world are not the books of the Judges, Samuel, and Kings. They are the histories of Greece and Rome, of the Middle Ages and modern times, described by Froude and Carlyle, Prescott and Lecky, Ranke and Macaulay. Our heroes are no longer Samuel, Jephthah, Gideon, and David, but they are the more modern champions for truth, liberty, and progress. It is a long list, beginning with William of Orange and ending with Abraham Lincoln; and these are the men who are the examples and the inspiration of the world of to-day.—D. P. Faure.

Oh threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise,  
One thing at least is certain—*this* life lies;  
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;  
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who  
Before us passed the door of darkness through,  
No one returns to tell us of the road,  
Which to discover we must travel too.

—Omar Khayyam.

## NEW TESTAMENT DEVILS.

I ATTENDED, on Friday afternoon, the first lecture of a course on "Demonology," delivered by Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., at University Hall, Gordon-square. In this opening lecture Mr. Conybeare dealt exclusively with the New Testament teaching concerning devils. Mr. Conybeare, though still a young man, is a thorough scholar, and his discourse, if it contained nothing new, was accurate and impartial. What was novel was that he took up such a subject—now usually avoided by the men of God—and treated it as a scholar should. At the outset he remarked that "Jesus, his disciples, and all the New Testament writers had a profound belief in the Devil and evil spirits." He gave many instances of this throughout his discourse. Satan was believed to be a fallen angel. Jesus said, addressing the seventy: "I beheld Satan fall as lightning." So the author of the Second Epistle of Peter said: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment"; and similarly Jude said the angels, which kept not their first estate, were reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. In accordance with the belief that the devils knew what was in store for them, they cried out to Jesus: "Art thou come to torment us before our time?"

John and Paul insisted on the entire subordination of this world to Satan. He was "the god of this world." All the kingdoms and glory of the earth were in his gift. The devils and Satan possess great powers of moving about. He was "prince of the power of the air." Luke said a spirit had not flesh and bones, and demons were believed to be akin to moving vapor. So the Holy Spirit was conferred by breathing, and Mr. Conybeare remarked that the Holy Spirit gave rise to the same excited manifestations as an evil one. Just as the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples at Pentecost, so an evil spirit leapt on the sons of Sceva (Acts xix.). The spirit of the Lord flew away with Philip, landing him at Azotus. So in the gospel according to the Hebrews the Spirit caught Jesus up and put him on Mount Thabor, while in the synoptics Satan set him on a pinnacle of the temple.

The devils had vocal organs, for we read in Mark that Jesus said, "Hold thy peace and come out of him," and that "Jesus suffered not the devils to speak." In the age of Clement of Alexandria we read of a language of demons, and, at a certain church, service was held in Greek for Greeks, in Armenian for Armenians, and in the language of demons for those possessed with devils. It was to be gathered from Paul that those who were possessed of the Holy Spirit only expressed themselves incoherently, much like the Irvingites who claimed to possess the gift of tongues.

Satan, it was supposed, had power of sickness and of death. His agents went about, often in groups of seven. Some were unclean devils, as the Gadarean legion, dwelling among the tombs. Some were devils of blindness and dumbness; some fever demons, as in the case of Simon's wife's mother. To be sick was to have a devil. The exorcists took the place of physicians. Madness and epilepsy were ascribed to demons. With Paul, the gods of the heathen were devils, and the sacrifices to those gods were sacrificed to devils. The first rule of the early Church was against eating things offered to idols, because it was believed that blood was the food of the demons, who would enter into those who partook thereof.

Mr. Conybeare was very frank as to the actual belief of Jesus in devils. The first three evangelists aver that he did encourage and sanction the belief. If he knew better, what became of his candor? Mr. Conybeare, however, very judiciously left his audience to draw their own inferences from the facts. He merely pointed out that there were three positions which might be held with regard to the subject: First, that demonic agency was a mistake, arising from times of savage ignorance; second, that it was a fact existing in the times of Jesus Christ, but ceasing after his coming; third, that it was a fact both then and now. He indicated that the remaining lectures of his course, dealing with the demonology of Greeks, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, might serve to show which view is correct.

Having looked up the subject for myself,\* I need not

wait before making one or two comments. To the student alike of history and psychology it is evident that what was of old ascribed to the agency of demons is now referred to natural causes. If Jesus could, and did, err on so momentous a matter as the nature of sin and disease, upon what point can be claimed for him authority over our reason and conscience? If he was wrong with regard to demonic agency, upon what ground can a supernatural character be ascribed to his teachings?

People now-a-days have given up hell and the Devil, while clinging to their corollaries, heaven and God. Mr. Gladstone sees and says that this is virtually giving up religion. "I should not be here," I heard an enthusiastic Salvationist yell the other day, "if I did not believe in hell-fire." This expressed a truth. Christianity would never have made its conquest over men's minds had it not depicted the most awful terrors, from which it promises redemption. When the devils go the angels will soon have to follow suit, and the devils are departing rapidly. No Roentgen rays suffice to disclose their existence.

There was a goodly number of ministers of religion present at Mr. Conybeare's address. I trust it may have contributed to make them ashamed of preaching their savage doctrine of devils to women and children.

J. M. WHEELER.

## THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SECOND STAGE—ENTERPRISE.

"Better wild ideas than no ideas at all."—PROFESSOR NICHOL, at *Horsham*.

THE emancipation of the understanding from intimidation and penal restraint soon incited thinkers of enterprise to put their new powers to use. Theology being especially a forbidden subject and the greatest repressive force, inquiry into its pretensions first attracted critical attention. In every century forlorn hopes of truth had set out to storm one or other of the ramparts of theology. Forces had been marshalled by great leaders, and battle often given in the open field; and unforeseen victories are recorded in the annals of the wars of infantine Rationalism against the full-grown powers of superstition and darkness. In every age valiant thinkers, scholars, philosophers, and critics—even priests, in defiance of power, ecclesiastical and civil—have, at their own peril, explored the regions of forbidden truth. In Great Britain it was the courage of insurgent thinkers among the working classes—whom no imprisonment could intimidate—who caused the right of free speech and free publicity to be finally conceded. Thus, rulers came round to the conclusion of Caballero, that "tolerance is as necessary in ideas as in social relations."

As soon as opinion was known to be emancipated, men began to think who never thought before. The thinker no longer had to obtain a "ticket of leave" from the Churches before he could inquire; he was free to investigate where he would and what he would. Just power is, as a rule, never imparted nor acquired in vain, and honest men felt they owed it to those who had won freedom for them that they should extend it. Thus it came to pass that independence was an inspiration to action in men of intrepid minds. Professor Tyndall, in the last words he wrote for publication, said: "I choose the nobler part of Emerson when, after various disenchantments, he exclaims, 'I covet truth!'" On printing these words, the *Westminster Gazette* adds: "The gladness of true heroism visits the heart of him who is really competent to say this."

The energies of intellectual intrepidity had doubtless been devoted to science and social progress; but, as philosophers have found down to Huxley's day, all exploration was impossible in that direction. Murchison, Brewster, Buckland, and other pioneers of science were intimidated. Lyell held back his book on the antiquity of man twenty years. Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer were waiting to be heard. As Huxley has justly said: "There was No Thoroughfare into the Kingdom of Nature.—By order, MOSES." Hence to examine theology, to discover whether its authority was absolute, became a necessity. It was soon seen that there was ground for scepticism. The

\* See *Footsteps of the Past and Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*.

priests resented criticism by representing the sceptics of their pretensions as being sceptical of everything, whereas they were only sceptics of clerical infallibility. They, indeed, did aver that branches of human knowledge, received as well established, were really open to question, in order to show that, if men could not be confident of things of which they had experience, how could the Churches be confident of things of which no man had experience, and which contradicted experience? So far from disbelieving everything, scepticism went everywhere in search of truth and certainty. Since the Church could not be absolutely certain of the truth of its tenets, its duty was to be tolerant. But, being intolerant, it became, as Julian Hibbert put it, "well-understood self-defence" to assail it. The Church fought for power, the thinker fought for truth.

Freethought among the people may be likened to a good ship, manned by adventurous mariners who, cruising about in the ocean of theology, came upon sirens, as other mariners had done before—dangerous to be followed by navigators bound to ports of progress. Many were thereby decoyed to their own destruction. The sirens of the Churches sang alluring songs, whose refrains were:—

1. The Bible the Guide of God.
2. The origin of the universe disclosed.
3. The care of Providence assured.
4. Deliverance from peril by prayer dependable.
5. Original sin effaceable by grace.
6. Perdition avoidable by faith in crucifixion.
7. Future life revealed.

These propositions were subjects of resonant hymns, sermons, and tracts, and were not, and are not, disowned, but still defended in discussion by orthodox and clerical advocates. Save salvation by the blood of Christ (a painful idea to entertain), the other ideas might well fascinate the uninquiring. They had enchanted many believers, but the explorers of whom we speak had acquired the questioning spirit, and had learned prudently to look at both sides of familiar subjects, and soon discovered that the fair-seeming propositions which had formerly imposed on their imagination were unsound, unsightly, and unsafe. The Syracusans of old kept a school in which slaves were taught the ways of bondage. Christianity has kept such a school, in which the subjection of the understanding was inculcated; and the pupils, now free to investigate, resolved to see whether such things were true. Then began the reign of refutation of theological error—by some from indignation, at having been imposed upon; by others from zeal that misconception should end; by more from enthusiasm for facts; by the bolder sort from resentment at the intimidation and cruelty with which inquiry had been suppressed so long; and by not a few from the love of disputation, which has for some the delight men have for chess, cricket, or other pursuit which has conflict and conquest in it.

Self-determined thought is a condition of the progress of nations. Where would science be but for open thought, the nursing mother of enterprise, of discovery of invention, of new conditions of human betterment? A modern Hindu writer\* tells us that the Hindu is sorely handicapped by customs, which are prescribed by his religious books. Hedged in by minute rules and restrictions, the various classes forming the Hindu community have had but little room for expansion and progress. The result has been stagnation. Caste has prevented the Hindus from sinking, but it has also prevented them from rising.

The old miracle bubbles which the Jews blew into the air of wonder 2,000 years ago delight Churches still in their childhood. The sea of theology would have been stagnant centuries ago had not insurgent thinkers, at the peril of their lives, created commotion in it. Morals would have been poisoned on the shores of theology had not Free-thought purified the waters by putting the salt of reason into that sea, freshening it year by year.

#### CHAPTER V.

#### CONQUESTS OF INVESTIGATION.

"The secret of genius is to suffer no fiction to live."—GOETHE.

Theologians had so choked the human mind with a dense undergrowth of dogmas that it was like cutting through an African forest, such as Stanley encountered, to find the

path of truth. On that path, when found, many things, unforeseen before, became plain. The siren songs of orthodoxy were discovered to have strange discords of sense in them.

1. The Guide of God seemed to be very human—not authentic, not consistent; containing things not readable nor explainable in the family—fictions such as the Incarnation, reluctantly believable as the device of a moral Deity. Men of genius and of noble ethical sympathy do, however, deem that defensible. In any human book the paternal exaction of such suffering as fell to Christ would be regarded with alarm and repugnance. Wonder was felt that Scripture, purporting to contain the will of Deity, should not be expressed so unmistakably that ignorance could not misunderstand it, nor perversity misconstrue it. The Gods know how to write.

2. The origin of all things has excited and disappointed the curiosity of the greatest exploring minds of every age. That the secret of the universe is undisclosed is manifest from the different and differing conjectures concerning it. The origin of the universe remains unknowable. What awe fills, or rather takes possession of, the mind which comprehends this! Theism takes wonder out of the universe.

3. Pleasant and free from anxiety life would be, were it true that Providence is a present help in the day of need. Alas! to the poor it is evident that Providence does not interfere, either to befriend the good in their distress, or to arrest the bad in the act of crime.

4. The power of prayer has been the hope of the helpless and the oppressed in every age. Every man wishes it was true that aid could be had that way. Then every just man could protect himself at will against his adversaries. But experience shows that all entreaty is futile to induce Providence to change its universal habit of non-intervention. Prayer beguiles the poor, but provides no dinner. Mr. Spurgeon said at the Tabernacle that prayer filled his meal barrel when empty. I asked that he should publish the recipe in the interest of the hungry. But he made no reply.

5. There is reason to think that original sin is not anything more than original ignorance. The belief in natural depravity discourages all efforts of progress. The primal imperfection of human nature is only effaceable by knowledge and persistent endeavor. Even in things lawful to do, excess is sin, judged by human standards. There may be error without depravity.

6. Eternal perdition for conscientious belief, whether erroneous or not, is humanly incredible. The devisers of this doctrine must have been unaware that belief is an affair of ignorance, prejudice, custom, education, or evidence. The liability of the human race to eternal punishment is the foundation on which all Christianity (except Unitarianism) rests. This awful belief, if acted upon, with the sincerity that Christianity declares it should be, would terminate all enjoyment, and all enterprise would cease in the world. None would ever marry. No persons with any humanity in their hearts would take upon themselves the awful responsibility of increasing the number of the damned. The registrar of births would be the most fiendish clerk conceivable. He would be practically the Secretary of Hell.

The theory that all the world was lost through a curious and enterprising lady eating an apricot or an apple, and that, 3,000 or more years after, mankind had to be redeemed by the murder of an innocent Jew, is of a nature to make men afraid to believe in a Deity accused of contriving so dreadful a scheme. This reasoning may seem to many an argument against the existence of God, whereas it is merely against the attributes of Deity as ascribed to him by Christianity. If God be not moral, in the human sense of the term, he may as well be not moral at all. It is only he whose principles of justice men can understand that men can trust.

Professor Huxley, conspicuous for his clearness of view and dispassionateness of judgment, was of this opinion, and said: "The suggestion arises, if God is the cause of all things, he is responsible for evil as well as for good; and it appears utterly irreconcilable with our notions of justice that he should punish another for that which he has, in fact, done himself." The poet concurs with the philosopher when he exclaims:—

The loving worm, within its clod,  
Were diviner than a loveless God  
Amid his worlds.\*

\* Pramatha Nath Bose.

\* Browning.

Christianity, indeed, speaks of the *love* of God in sending his son to die for the security of others. But not less is the heart of the intelligent and humane believer torn with fear as he thinks what must be the character of that God who could only be thus appeased. The example of self-sacrifice is noble; but is it noble in anyone who deliberately creates the necessity for it? The better side of Christianity seems overshadowed by its worse.

7. Future life is uncertain, being unprovable and seemingly improbable, judging from the dependence of life on material conditions. Christians themselves do not seem confident of another existence. If they were *sure* of it, who of them would linger here when those they love and honor have gone before? Ere we reach the middle of our days the joy of every heart lies in some tomb. If the Christian actually believed that the future was real, would he hang black plumes over the hearse and speak of death as darkness? No! the cemeteries would be hung with joyful lights; the grave would be the gate of Paradise. Everyone would find justifiable excuse for leaving this for the happier world. All tenets which are contradicted by reason had better not be.

Many preachers now disown, in controversy, these doctrines; but, until they carry the professions of the platform into the statute-book, the rubric, and the pulpit, such doctrines remain operative, and the Churches remain answerable for them. Nonconformists do not protest against a State Church on account of its doctrines, which include all those enumerated. When the doctrines which conflict with reason and humanity are disowned by authority, ecclesiastical and legal, in all denominations, the duty of controverting them as impediments to progress will cease.

It may be said, in reply to what is here set forth as tenets of Christian Scripture, that the writer follows the letter and not the spirit of the word. Yes, that is what he does. He is well aware of the new practice of seeking refuge in the "spirit," of "expanding" the letter and taking a "new range of view." He, however, holds that to drop the "letter" is to drop the doctrine. To "expand" the letter is to change it. New "range of view" is the term under which desertion of the text is disguised. But new "range" means new thought, which, in this insidious way, is put forward to supersede the old. The frank thing is to say so, and admit that the "letter" is obsolete, is gone, is disproved, and that new views which are truer constitute the new letter of progress. The best thing to do with the "dead hand" is to bury it. To try to "expand" dissolution is but galvanising the corpse and tying the dead to the living.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

## THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

(Continued from page 245.)

THE Christian pretension that the death of Christ provided a complete atonement for the alleged transgression in the Garden of Eden is not supported by the details of the scheme as contained in the Bible, or by the exposition of it as given by eminent theological writers. The orthodox position is that the Godhead is composed of three persons of one substance, power, and duration. If this be so, and if an atonement was really necessary, it should have been threefold, inasmuch as the Son and the Holy Ghost, being a part of the Trinity, required to be satisfied equally with the Father; but we do not read of any sacrifice having been made to them. Besides, if the three persons were one in substance, etc., it is difficult to see how one part could be wrathful and another part merciful at the same time. The New Testament speaks of God's wrath, and such Christian writers as the pious Flavel, Wesley, and Dr. Watts state that it was from this wrath that the death of Christ was intended to save the human race. Flavel, who was an exponent of the evangelical school, writes: "To wrath—to the wrath of an infinite God, without mixture—to the very torments of hell, was Christ delivered; and that by the hand of his own Father. God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it" (Works, folio edition, p. 10). Dr. Watts speaks of Jesus's blood turning God's "wrath to grace," and Wesley writes: "Jesus speaks and pleads his blood. He *disarms* the wrath of God."

It is folly to claim, as Christians do, that this priestly-invented scheme of the Atonement manifests a spirit of divine forgiveness. Instead of being a forgiving plan, it is one of exaction and vengeance. According to the story, God demands and receives payment before he grants pardon; Christ exacts belief in himself as the condition of salvation; and he who sins against the Holy Ghost is never to be forgiven. Stockel admits that, "in a strict and proper sense, God does not forgive sin, for Christ hath given him full satisfaction. How, then, can it be justly said that God pardoneth sins and transgressions? Surely that debt can never be *forgiven* that is *paid*" (cited by Dr. Bruce, *Sermons*, 2nd edition, p. 354). From a rational point of view the matter resolves itself into this: Christ either paid the "debt" or he did not. If he *did* pay it, that should settle the account, and we ought not to be bothered with it any further; whereas, if he did not pay the "debt," the whole scheme is a sham and a delusion.

The absurdity of the orthodox view of the death of Christ is further manifested in the supposition that it was a part of the indivisible Godhead that died. This is theological conjecture run mad; for, if it were Christ alone who died and remained lifeless in the grave for three days and three nights, he was not equal in eternity with his father; while, on the other hand, if the whole of the deity expired, then we have the curious spectacle of a dying and a dead God, and the world for a time existing without any "divine" aid in its government. To say that it was only the manhood of Christ which suffered and died is but raising another difficulty in allying humanity with what is termed divinity; thus adding a fourth part to the Trinity, and thereby destroying the perfection of the whole, for where the human element is there can be no perfection. Moreover, according to the orthodox theory, a mere human death was not enough to redeem humanity from the effects of the sin committed against an infinite God. Of course, we do not admit that any such sin ever occurred, for the simple reason that, if a person is compelled to perform an act, it is no sin upon his part. And, as we showed in our article last week, Adam and Eve acted as they did under compulsion. As to enmity existing between God and man as the result of partaking of the fruit, the question arises: Where did the enmity come from? Did God implant it in the minds of his children? If so, he was responsible for the consequences which followed. If, however, man acquired it independently of God, then he was not the creator of all things, as the Bible states he was—even of evil. We are aware it is said that God gave man a free will, but this is only another theological error. There can be no freedom where circumstances impel in one direction, as, according to the account, they did in the Garden of Eden. Besides, we read that the plan was arranged "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians i. 4; 1 Peter i. 19, 20).

Not only is the theory that the world was redeemed through the death of Christ utterly absurd, but it came too late. If the atonement were at all necessary, it should have been made immediately after Adam's alleged transgression, so as to have prevented a single generation from going to the grave with the curse of original sin unremoved. But, according to the Bible story, God allowed four thousand years to elapse, and millions of his children to die, ere the Atonement was made. This, to say the least, was not either just or merciful upon the part of "the Great Father of all." If it be true that no one can be saved except through belief in Christ, then it may be fairly asked, What became of the numberless human beings who died prior to his birth? And, further, what will be the fate of those who are now living who have not heard, and probably never will hear, of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth? To say that the former were saved by anticipation, and that the latter will be excused on account of their lack of knowledge, is only to represent the scheme as being still more absurd, and altogether useless. If a portion of mankind could be saved without the Crucifixion, what necessity was there for Christ to have suffered at all? His sorrow, agony, and bloody sweat might all have been avoided, and many saints might have been spared the tortures of the stake and the rack. Surely, if for thousands of years people could go to heaven without the supposed advantages of the death of Christ, it was superfluous to introduce the "sign of the Cross" to secure an object which had already been achieved.

Besides, if the ignorance of the existence of this "atoning scheme" will exempt a person from "punishment hereafter," is it not cruel and futile to send missionaries to the

heathens with the "glad tidings"? Let them not know of it, and there would be no danger of their being punished for rejecting it; but let them be informed of the scheme, and their happiness in another world becomes very doubtful. Considering the diversity of the perceptive powers, even among "heathens," we cannot reasonably suppose that all to whom the scheme is expounded will be able to receive it as true. Thus the salvation, which was secure in a blissful state of ignorance, is placed in jeopardy by missionary efforts. The truth is, that if the death of Christ were really necessary to redeem a "fallen race," it was unjust upon the part of God to permit so many centuries to pass before the people had the alleged benefit of his atoning blood. If, on the other hand, the death of Christ was not required to restore a "lost race," then it was a reckless and an unnatural act for a father to give his son to a wild mob, to be executed amidst the exultations of a disappointed and fanatical people.

Moreover, if it were desirable upon the part of God to send his son to save the world from eternal perdition, why was it that, when he did arrive, so many nations were kept in ignorance of his mission? Even the Jews, God's chosen people, had no knowledge that an incarnate deity was to expire on the Cross. If the regeneration of the world had been the object of Christ, would it not have been better, instead of ascending to heaven, for him to have remained on earth, teaching practical truths, and showing by his own personal example how the world could be rescued from that moral and intellectual darkness and despair to which it had been reduced by the influence of a degrading theology?

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

### CONFERENCE EXCURSION.

In order to give their English visitors an opportunity of judging, from personal observation, of the beauty and grandeur of Scottish Highland scenery, and to ensure a day's intimate social intercourse between them and their Scottish brethren, the Glasgow Branch has made all the necessary arrangements for a Cheap Circular Tour on Whit-Monday. The route will be from Glasgow, by train, to Loch Lomond; thence by steamer to Tarbert; then by road (walk or drive) to Arrochar, at the head of Loch Long, where a hot luncheon will be ready; and subsequently by steamer down Loch Long to Craigendoran, and home to Glasgow by rail, in good time for the late trains for the South. Tickets for the round 3s. 11d., or including hot luncheon at Arrochar Hotel 5s. 11d. Intending excursionists are requested to communicate early with Mr. D. Black, 332, Duke-street, Glasgow, to whom remittances by Postal Order, etc., ought to be made payable.

Among the more interesting and striking topographical features of the trip are a panoramic view of the valley and estuary of the Clyde; Dumbarton Rock, with its mediæval fortress, the Vale of Leven, and *en passant*; Bonhill, the birthplace of Tobias Smollett, the novelist and historian; Loch Lomond, a dream of loveliness, flanked by the "lofty Ben Lomond"; a storied region—the MacGregor country, described in Scott's *Rob Roy*, and upon the border of the Trossachs, the classic realm of the *Lady of the Lake*; Arrochar, which commands magnificent views of the picturesque Argyllshire hills; Loch Long, a narrow inlet of the sea, overshadowed by gaunt and gloomy heights, upon whose rugged sides the scars left by the primeval fires are as fresh as if they had been made but yesterday. Here and there, in sheltered caves and grassy hollows, quaint, old-world fishing villages; one of them—Portinacple—endeared to Secularists because Mr. Bradlaugh used to stay there, under the humble roof of honest, kindly Findlay McNab, who, too, has gone the way of all flesh. On that rock, near the Carrick shore, Mr. Bradlaugh would sit the live-long day, in shine or shower, fishing with the same grim steadfastness that marked his life-work in the great world beyond; and only when it was too dark to ply his line longer was his voice heard, trumpet-like, awaking the echoes among the hills, as it summoned the boat to take him ashore. Helensburgh, a flashy, modern watering-place, grandiosely called the Brighton of Scotland. Lastly, back over Lower Clydesdale, and into the Black country round Glasgow, from which we so gladly escaped in the morning, but fortified for the renewed struggle in the grimy city with a rich spoil of golden memories of lake, and moor, and fell, supposing always that our treacherous climate gives us one dry, clear, and genial day.

It is only when a man knows little that he knows anything at all. With knowledge grows doubt.—Goethe.

### A BALLAD OF SINS.

A THING hastily spake I:  
 "My love is white and red;  
 Christ wills that my love for my love should die,  
 To live for Him instead.

"But I would rather have a kiss  
 Once of her little red mouth  
 Than have all of His heavenly bliss,  
 As faint as a wind of the south."

A little seraph flew up to heaven  
 And bore my sinful thought;  
 "Yet," said I, "it will be forgiven,  
 For unto God it is naught."

A little red imp bore it down,  
 And it made mirth in hell;  
 I said: "And what an' if God do frown,  
 I live and love her well."

One said: "That man shall be accursed  
 Who His godhead shall doubt";  
 I said: Let dim hell do its worst,  
 His word is dry as drought.

A little white angel took my sin  
 Up unto God in the air;  
 I said: 'Twill make the Lord God grin,  
 It is beneath His care.

A blast came out of the mouth of hell,  
 And scorched me as a brand;  
 And there was there a black devil,  
 Laughed till he scarce could stand.

Then all on a heavy time I spake,  
 Would that my years were run;  
 No good can I do for love's sweet sake,  
 Nor any good have done.

Then there uprose a little green elf,  
 And this word spake he:—  
 "Because that thou hast doubted thyself,  
 God's curse shall cling to thee."

PYRITES.

### A CHRISTIAN MODE OF WARFARE.

THE civilising influence of Christians is felt all over the world, and honest savages will soon have occasion to depart *en masse* for the happy hunting grounds in Hades, since the impostors who force their obnoxious nostrums upon them in the name of Jesus Christ are determined to leave them no grounds for hunting, except where the savages are the game and the pioneers of Christianity the mighty hunters—a la Nimrod. The latest mode of exterminating the aborigines—all children of one great God—is cruel, cowardly, and ingenious. Major-General W. C. F. Molyneux, in his interesting book on *Campaigning in South Africa and Egypt*, gives the following horrible account of a massacre of valiant Zulus, which makes one regret that there is no God to avenge the cruel wrongs inflicted upon virtuous savages by Christian robbers and murderers. The English commander gave the order of attack—two turns of the handle of the Gatlin gun (invented by a Christian)—"and there was a clear lane cut right through the body of Zulus. The effect of the fire of a machine gun is awful if it is served by a cool hand.\* The gun has no nerves, and, provided the man is steady and the cartridges do not jamb, nothing can live in front of it!"

Here is a Christian Major-General, who pens this terrible account without a word of condemnation or regret. How true the saying, that a soldier is a hired assassin. There is but one redeeming feature in this awful business—namely, that Christians employ these infernal-machine guns to exterminate each other! I pity Jesus Christ, and laugh at his so-called gospel of love, which, if he was omniscient, he must have known that a nation of commercialists like the English would never put into practice, although they try to force it upon aliens whom they intend to despoil. "Resist not evil!" "*Vogue la galère!*"

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

The Russian Government has presented a lot of rifles to Montenegro. These were formally distributed to the Montenegrin troops on Monday. The ceremony was preceded by "Divine service." What a sublime commentary on the old text about "peace on earth." The angels who sang that little song were evidently "too previous." They didn't understand Christianity.

\* Lod by a colder heart.

## ACID DROPS.

CLANDON, one of the seats of Lord Onslow, has for some time been "haunted"—at least, the inmates believed so; but his lordship has entered into possession himself, and is "determined not to allow any repetition of such nonsense." All the adult members of his family sleep with loaded revolvers by their bedsides, and will not hesitate to shoot any "ghost" who puts in an appearance. We guess the ghosts will wait for more favorable conditions.

There is a good phrase in Mr. Harold Frederic's new novel, *Illumination*. The Rev. Theron Ware is told by Brother Pierce, one of his congregation, that they don't want book-learning and dictionary words; and that his sermons, like his wife's bonnet, are too flowery. "What we want to hear," says Brother Pierce, "is the plain, old-fashioned word of God, without any palaver of 'hems and ha's'.... What we want here, sir, is straight-out, flat-footed hell—the burnin' lake of fire and brimstone."

"Straight-out, flat-footed hell" is really excellent. And it is just this which Methodists are missing. "We cannot shut our eyes," says the *Methodist Recorder*, "to the fact that neither in the pulpit nor in the pew is there the same belief in hell which was one of the most awful and tremendous incentives to earnestness that Methodism had in the days long gone by." This is assigned as a reason for the decline of Methodism in certain districts.

It appears from the returns of Wesleyan church membership that there is an absolute falling off of members in twenty-four districts, and among these are several of the most important in the Connection. London Methodism only just maintains its ground, and this, relative to the population, denotes a crab-like progress. In Yorkshire five districts out of six show a decrease of between seven and eight hundred members. Methodism has of late been making much progress in Wales, while going back in England. But the completed returns show a net decrease of 2,275. In East Anglia, where large sums have been expended by the Home Mission Committee in the attempt to revive decayed Methodism, there is a decrease of 232.

£15,000 is required to render the crooked spire of Chesterfield safe. It is a question if the result would be worth the money.

Mr. Flinders Petrie, the well-known Egyptologist, has unearthed an inscription of Menepthah I., describing his Syrian wars, and how he nearly exterminated the people of Is-ra-il there. The cream of the joke is that this Menepthah has been written up as the "Pharaoh of the Exodus" by Dr. Sayce and the other "Bible and the Monuments" romancists; whereas it is now proved that the Israelites were in Palestine in his reign, and so neither he nor his father, Rameses II., could have had anything to do with either the Egyptian bondage or the Exodus. Consequently, all the much-trumpeted "finds" of the last few years in Egypt are proved to have no connection with Jewish history. The apologists will now have to explain why Hebrew history is silent about this war with Menepthah, and gives no hint of the undoubted fact that Palestine was ruled by the Egyptians for many years after.

In the case of the Athlone murder all the prisoners seem to have been afflicted with religious mania. They appear to have believed that James Cunningham, the murdered man, had the Devil in him. It would be hard to say how many atrocities this Bible-supported belief has given rise to.

Some prophetic lectures at Holloway Hall are headed "Second Coming of Our Lord and Approaching End of the Christian Dispensation." The first item has been so long delayed that we cannot take much stock therein; but it seems to us the "signs of the times" warrant some expectation of the second part of the program.

The religious papers used to be fond of recording "judgments." But the stories of the sudden deaths of unbelievers do not go down as they did when there was no contra account. The *Truthseeker* says: "No such case has been reported since the Connecticut judge, who issued a body-writ for the arrest of a minister, died of heart disease. That was in December, 1895, since when the *Truthseeker* has published the cases of at least twenty preachers and devotees struck down at prayer or worship, or while attending to duties connected with the church."

The list, it continues, is augmented every week: "(1) At Guthrie, Oklahoma, March 21, two men, James Ford and Harry Somers, were killed by lightning while painting the spire of a Baptist church. (2) At Leavenworth, Kan., March 24, Joseph Perkins, formerly a local preacher, died

with the word 'Amen' upon his lips while praying beside the coffin of a dead friend. (3) At New York, March 31, James Kydd, aged 50, an elder in the Fourth Presbyterian church, fell dead at the door of the sanctuary. He had just spent an hour in the church making preparations for the Easter celebration."

Moses Harman, the editor of *Lucifer*, of Topeka, Kansas, was released from his year's imprisonment at Leavenworth on April 4. He was one of the Comstock gang's victims.

Chu Fong, a Chinese theatrical manager of New York, has been fined \$500 for giving an exhibition on Sunday night. He maintains that his performance was of the nature of a sacred concert.

Rev. W. J. Dawson is interviewed in the *Sunday Magazine* for April. The interviewer notes his "fine specimens of furniture," the "beautifully carved oak," and the "choice oak panelling." In the course of the interview Mr. Dawson said: "I am relatively a poor man"; but the *New Age* regards this as "bitterly humorous," seeing that Mr. Dawson's income is "a good deal over £1,500 a year."

Ballington Booth knows the weak points of the Americans, and, in rounding on the old man, accuses him of objecting to the stars and stripes, and says that he intended to cut the United States in three portions, joining each to a section of Canada. If Ballington cannot run an army of his own, he is at least doing his best to ruin that of his father.

Bishop French, of Lahore, says it is a sad trial that "the Salvation Army lies in wait to draw away and alienate from us some of the best and holiest of our converts. Some of the most faithful and wholly consecrated among them they have lately inveigled and carried off to England for what they call their 'International Congress.' The bragging, vaunting spirit of the body is becoming so offensive and shocking to those in whom is anything of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and the sectarian spirit is taking such almost demoniacal possession of them, that one must fear a terrible collapse some day of the whole system, which would, one fears, bring sad reproach and disgrace to the Christian name."

The *Times of India*, noticing the case of Himmat Singh, says: "The offence of this dismissed Salvationist officer was that he reported of a particular Gujerat district, in which three thousand soldiers were said to be on the rolls, that he could not find a single one." The answer to this was that so many converts had been "claimed in prayer." On the principle, "Ask and thou shalt receive," the S.A. might as well pray for all the world's inhabitants at once, and then claim them.

A burglar entered the Baptist church in Macomb, Illinois, and captured a quantity of tracts, such as picture the duration of eternity, the miseries of the damned, the necessity of a new birth, the joys of the redeemed, with an abundance of other reminders of the fallen condition of humanity. If captured and convicted of carrying away such demoralising literature, the culprit should be doomed to solitary confinement, with the reading, and, if possible, the memorising, of these tracts. Heroic punishment is demanded in such cases.—*Progressive Thinker*.

A new sect has sprung up at Oklahoma, calling itself "The Perfected Body of Christ." Like so many other sects, it claims to restore the purity of primitive Christianity. A prominent practice is that all the members gather round the altar and embrace and kiss each other. This feature of the proceedings is calculated to make them popular with young people. Indeed, the report says: "Vast crowds rush forward every night, kneel at the altar, get religion, and then are permitted to join in the more pleasurable devotions." From this account it would appear the honors heretofore monopolised by the preachers of other sects is to be shared in by all the brothers in this more generous church.

The *Review of the Churches* contains a curious symposium on the question, "Is a Commission on Foreign Mission Desirable?" No one ventures to say that the heathen themselves ought to be placed among the commissioners.

Mr. Gladstone celebrated the Rev. Mr. Baxter's attempt to demolish Wellhausen. Mr. Benn, of the *Academy*, thinks Baxter only worth the lines addressed to a zealous clergy man who felt impelled to answer Renan:—

What! answer Renan! This you cannot do,  
You only answer when you're spoken to;  
And Renan speaks to scholars, not to you.

The Rev. Mr. Knight, of Whitburn, thinks the cry for attractive church services simply means that there should be as little religion in them as possible. How would it do for parsons to preach an occasional sermon on the mysteries of

the offside rule, on the efficacy of May-fly on trout burns in April, on the lowering of the concert pitch, and on the fairness or unfairness of the stymic rule in golf? That would fetch some of the lapsed masses.—*Glasgow Weekly Herald*.

The *Atmik* is an "Anglo-Indian Missionary Monthly," which advocates "an Eastern Christianity." It opposes intoxicants, meat-eating, and the opium traffic, and recognises "that there are rays of Divine Truth in every religion." The number for April contains a letter by Mr. Joseph Collinson on the Vivisection question, and the editor, Mr. P. N. Chakraburty, says: "Some *Secularist Humanitarians* have to teach *Christians* to be kind and just to animals, because *Christians*, being otherwise engaged, have not had time to realise that other animals are our fellow creatures, and that *birds* were not created by God our Father to adorn ladies' bonnets, even in churches and chapels."

The meeting of the Church Missionary Society was a great fiasco, and the *Daily News* suggests that its friends have not yet recovered from the shock of the £20,000 deficit.

Our Church pretends to be the guardian of marriage, but according to the law of Moses, as laid down in Deuteronomy xxiv. 1, all that was necessary for a man to get a divorce, if his wife found "no favor in his eyes," was to "write her a bill of divorcement, and give it to her hand and send her out of his house." Myer Goldstein, of Greenfield-street, White-chapel, faithfully complied with the stipulations of the divine law, and was surprised to find that by the law of England he is still called upon to provide for the wife to whom he gave a bill of divorcement permitting her to go and marry anyone else she liked.

Bishop Temple has vetoed the discussion of the re-marriage of divorced persons at the London Diocesan Conference. He knows that he himself would be called over the coals by the High Churchmen there for obeying the State rather than the Church. Moreover, to discuss the opposition of the two bodies might be inconvenient. The Bishop knows better than to quarrel with his source of revenue.

There were some lively scenes at the vestry meeting of the Kilrush Protestant Church, Ireland, where one of the Town Councillors moved a vote of censure on the Venerable Archdeacon Wolseley for refusing to attend, or to send his curate to, the funeral of a parishioner. The resolution was seconded, but the Archdeacon, who was in the chair, refused to put it, on the ground that it was a vote of censure on the bishop, who had endorsed his action. Scenes of disorder ensued, and the customary vote of thanks was not accorded to the chairman.

The Rev. A. E. Breet, of the Jubilee (Bible Christian) Church, East-road, Hoxton, who recently was successfully sued on an affiliation summons, has determined to go abroad for some time. He still most emphatically denies the paternity of the child, and says that he hopes one of these days he will be able to find the real father, and thereby clear his name.

Boot's *Review of Charities and Missions* points out that in the century of its existence the London Missionary Society has spent between six and seven millions of money. It says: "What has been the result? There are about 95,000 persons gathered from all these heathen peoples into the fellowship of the Church of Christ; nearly half a million more are regarded as Christians by their heathen neighbors because, as the children of converts or as adults, they are under Christian instruction; and about 125,000 children, of whom in the Eastern Mission four-fifths are the children of the heathen, are being educated in the mission schools. At such a rate of progress—200,000, say, in 100 years—how many centuries will it be before the 287,000,000 of India, the 300,000,000 of China, and the teeming populations of other countries are brought to a correct apprehension of the Trinity?"

Boot's *Review* also says: "We have before commented on the fact that the accounts were audited merely by three of the honorary directors. For the year under review a fourth auditor is imported into the business, a Mr. Eliot P. S. Reed—whoever that gentleman may be. In the 'plan and constitution' of the Society thirteen rules are furnished, not one of which contains directions as to the auditing of the accounts, and we maintain that, considering the magnitude of financial transactions, an eminent firm of chartered accountants should coadjutate with the auditing directors."

A telegram from New York says: "Attempts are being made to evade the obnoxious Raines Liquor Law in this State. Saloon keepers are applying for hotel licences, allowing them to sell drink on Sundays. Many of these licences have been granted." Thus Puritan legislation

always becomes a persecution of the poor. The wealthy and influential are able to smile at it.

Streams of pilgrims are again flowing into Lourdes. As they have to suffer much discomfort in the trains and from want of proper accommodation, and as they are brought into contact with those suffering all disorders, it is very questionable if Lourdes is not causing far more disease than it cures.

Father Black again calls attention in the *Church Times* to the unchurchly conduct of the Bishop of London. He advised the Rev. Mr. Webb-Peploe to lend his church recently for the marriage of an American clergyman, whose wife is divorced for incompatibility of temper, and the "marriage" was performed by the clergy of St. Paul's, Onslow-square. For this heinous conduct Father Black, who is an Anglican "Father," threatened the law on him, and pointed out that he, discharging his trust as bishop, prefers his private interpretation of a text of Scripture to the doctrine he is pledged to uphold.

Referring to the paucity of Confirmations, and these mostly of girls, the *Church Times* says: "The fact is that we are not making the headway in communicant life that is commonly supposed; and, unless some great change in our methods takes place very soon, we shall have to face decrease, and perhaps a very serious one."

Arthur F. Underwood, the superintendent of the Methodist singing class at Southend, has been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, with hard labor, for an indecent assault in the chapel upon a girl of thirteen. Underwood was a married man of pious reputation.

The *All Saint's Weekly Gazette*, of South Shields, laments that the School Board, at the opening of the new Stanhope-road Board schools, did not have a single prayer. The Rev. J. Robson apparently thinks things are bound to go wrong where his own services are not brought into requisition.

The New York *Truthseeker* reports a singular case of lynching in the interests of religion. Dr. J. M. Hancock removed from Bonham to Ladonia, in Texas, where he was waited upon by a number of "ladies," who invited him to attend church regularly. He replied that he would consult his own feelings about it, and then they tried to get him to agree to attend prayer meeting for ten consecutive nights; but he would not promise, and later in the week they gave him a peremptory order to leave town. So he packed his grip and went to the depot to take the train. While in the waiting-room fifteen women marched in, armed with cow-hides, and proceeded to apply the lashes to him with all their power. His face, hands, and neck were terribly lacerated, and blood poured from the gashes in streams. After whipping him the women went to their homes, and a great crowd gathered around, intense excitement prevailing. Dr. Hancock insisted on leaving, but his friends would not let him go, declaring that they would kill the first man or woman who attempted to lay violent hands on him again.

Dr. Hancock did not leave; or the contrary, twenty-one of "the leading ladies of Ladonia" have been arrested. Perhaps they will learn that their labors for Christ are too intensely pious for a civilised country.

The Anti-Gamblers' League held a meeting at Armagh, at which one of the speakers, a clergyman, declared that book-makers could neither be pure nor Christian men. Up started a "bookie" and said that he could face God with confidence after making a good book. Another "bookie" endorsed this statement with much emphasis, and the League's resolution was defeated by a considerable majority. This is evidently a case for providential interference. God Almighty ought to settle this problem for the Churches: Can a "bookie" go to heaven? Of course it is possible that some "bookies" don't want to go there.

The Christian Temperance people forget the texts in favor of wine, and the anti-gambling Christians forget that the tribes raffled for their share of Palestine, and lots were even drawn as to who would be the twelfth apostle in place of Judas. Indeed, one of the Proverbs declared that "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

Mr. W. Q. Judge, the gentleman who forged the Mahatma letters which sweetly deceived the innocent Mrs. Besant, seems to have had a sneaking love for Theosophy after all. He has left a third of his residuary estate to the Aryan Theosophical Society. Had it not been for the rumpus in England, forced on by that wicked *Westminster Gazette*, Mrs. Besant's party here might have had that little windfall. Sad reflection! Enough for weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 26, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W., at 7.30, "The Irreligion of Shakespeare."

May 10, Manchester.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 3, 4, and 5, Birmingham; 10, Plymouth; 11, Devonport; 12, Liskeard; 13, Tavistock; 15, Plymton; 17, Plymouth; 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. 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.

H. B.—Thanks for choice extracts, which we shall use as occasion serves.

MR. EDWARD CLODD (President of the Folk-Lore Society) writes: "Had your review of Frazer come under my notice, it should have had honorable mention in my address."

JOHN RICHARDS.—Accept our hearty congratulations.

H. J. BARTER.—See paragraph. We hope the local Freethinkers will all rally round the Branch.

THE PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Acknowledgment of the following (per C. Cohen) has been accidentally delayed:—G. Rawson, 1s.; R. P., 1s.; F. H., 2s.; J. Craven, 1s.; Mrs. Craven, 1s.; S. H., 1s.; Mrs. Ainsworth, 2s. 6d. Per D. Black (Glasgow): Mr. McLeish, 2s. 6d.; R. Scott, 4s.; J. Ronald, 2s.; C. Moore, 1s.; J. Duncan, 1s. Per J. P. Gilmour (Glasgow): Mr. Frame, 10s. Per R. Forder: W. Cross, £1; C. E. Hall, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Spivey, 1s.; T. Stead, 1s.; T. Whitely, 1s.; J. Hughes, 10s.

MANXMAN.—There are some Freethinkers even in the Isle of Man, though we do not know of any at Ramsey. The Secular Burial Service you refer to is not issued by the Society. It was written by the late Austin Holyoake, and was read at his funeral. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, can supply you with a copy, price twopence.

J. G. BRIGGS.—It is hardly worth reopening, though what you say is quite unanswerable.

D. KAY.—William Reddy, who ran amuck at Waterford, may or may not have been an Atheist. We have absolutely no information on the subject. The jury have found that he was insane. His father died a few years ago in an asylum. Of course an Atheist may fall a victim to brain disease as well as a Christian. The fact has no importance from a controversial point of view.

A. W. GRAHAM.—It is not a debate with Ingersoll. Father Lambert simply picks out passages from Ingersoll's lectures and subjoins his answers. Ingersoll has nothing to do with it.

J. SEDDON (Manchester).—No previous announcements of the debate have been received, and your present one comes late.

A. E. ASPINALL.—(1) We are waiting for information, and cannot answer your question until we obtain it. (2) We know the Volney passage you refer to, but it is not decisive. Darwin left the word "Creator" in his writings after he had become an Agnostic.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—Cuttings always welcome.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Progressive Thinker—De Dageraad—Monist—Metaphysical Magazine—Secular Thought—Worker's Friend—Dominion Review—Chatham Observer—South Shields Gazette—Home News—Times of India—Truthseeker—Open Court—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Liberty—Lucifer—Isle of Man Times—Twentieth Century—New York Public Opinion—Chatham News—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Post.

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.

At San Miguel, in Peru, the mayor seized, and caused to be burned in the public square of the city, all the Bibles and stock of the local agent of the American Bible Society. Mr. Foulke, the treasurer of the Society, says: "They have destroyed the Bibles before, they destroy them now, and will probably destroy them again. But, just the same, we shall continue to send our Bibles there." There seems to be fanaticism on both sides. But "it is all good for the printing trade," as a printer of our acquaintance says when he takes religious tracts to light his pipe.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

OWING to the sudden sultry weather, and perhaps more to the brief time for advertising, Mr. Foote's audience at St. James's Hall on Sunday evening was not quite so large as on previous occasions. Mr. Charles Watts presided. The lecture on "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ" was listened to with profound attention and very warmly applauded. There was no discussion, though it was invited. Mr. Foote lectures at St. James's Hall again this evening (April 26), his subject being one that should interest all Freethinkers and lovers of the highest English literature—"The Irreligion of Shakespeare." No doubt the increased advertising will bring a larger meeting. Mr. Watts will preside again.

Friends will note that the entrance to the Banqueting Hall, where Mr. Foote lectures, is in Regent-street. Those who come unprovided with tickets will be able to obtain them before entering.

Mr. Foote's new pamphlet—*The Sign of the Cross, a Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play*—is now on sale. Of course it includes very much more than the articles that appeared in the *Freethinker*. The whole subject of the Neronian persecution is fully discussed, and this part of the pamphlet should be valuable to all Freethought propagandists, particularly on account of the light thrown upon the famous passage in Tacitus. The pamphlet extends to forty-eight large pages. It is beautifully printed, and the price is sixpence. Press copies are being sent to all the leading newspapers, as well as to the literary and theatrical journals.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. It is ten years since the Conference was held in Scotland, and it will be a slight upon the Scottish Freethinkers if the English Freethinkers are at all slack in sending representatives. A very fine hall has been secured for the public meeting in the evening. In another column our readers will find particulars, from the pen of Mr. Gilmour, of the proposed Whit-Monday excursion, in which it is hoped that a large number of the delegates and visitors will join. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts will probably join the excursion, should it be definitely arranged.

The President has a most important scheme to lay before the Conference. Its object is to circumvent the Blasphemy Laws which cripple Freethought financially. It has been worked out under first-class legal advice, and will be fully explained at the Conference.

Mr. John Richards, of Ryhope, near Sunderland, has gallantly stood by the Freethought movement there in times of darkness and difficulty. We are therefore delighted to hear that the new Parish Council of the district, at their first meeting, have elected Mr. Richards as their chairman for twelve months.

Mr. Ralph Chapman, the secretary of the N.S.S. at South Shields, ran as an Independent Labor candidate for the Parish Council, and came out at the top of the poll, being now chairman of that body. Almost everyone in the district knows his views.

No. 2 of the *Dominion Review*, of Toronto, opens with a capital article on "The Fifth Gospel"—meaning the Gospel of Evolution, by Dr. Woods Hutchinson, of Iowa University. Allen Pringle writes on "Hygienic Living," and H. Washington on "Protection and Crime." Among reprinted matter is Professor Boyesen's article on "Woman's Position in Pagan Times," and Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Moon-Lore," taken from our columns.

The *Vegetarian Messenger* for this month has an article by Mr. Joseph Collinson on the work of the Humanitarian League.

The *Chatham and Rochester News* devotes three quarters of a column to a report of Mr. Foote's recent lecture on "The Curse of Creeds." The same paper also inserts a long and telling letter from Mr. Boorman in reply to the Rev. W. H. Bowers.

The *Scotsman*, which in the days of "Sandy" Russel did good work towards the liberalising of the then gloomy Scottish Sawbath, had a good article last Thursday on the cry now being raised by the Sabbath Alliance of "The Lord's Day in Danger." It tells these good people: "Outside of this country—and it has to be borne in mind that there are Christian and decent and right-judging people outside of this country—there will be difficulty in so much as comprehending what the outcry is about." This, however, is not so hard to perceive. "The Sabbath in danger" really means "Our monopoly of the Sabbath in danger."

The gems of the newly-opened National Portrait Gallery are the pictures of Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Rossetti, and Carlyle, by G. F. Watts, R.A. But there are many fine pictures there. Among notable heads are those of Jeremy Bentham (room xxix.), and of Thomas Hobbes at the age of eighty-one (room v.)—the very ideal of an aged philosopher. Room xxi. is of special interest to Freethinkers. On the same wall are portraits of Paine, by Milliere, after Romney, of Robert Owen, Joseph Priestley, Wilkes, Washington, "Orator" Hunt, and Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, a remarkable man, whose portrait is but little known.

The Plymouth Branch holds a special meeting this evening (April 26), at 7, at the Democratic Club, Whimple-street, for the purpose of making final arrangements for Mr. Charles Watts's approaching visit. Mr. Watts is to lecture at Plymouth for the Branch, and in surrounding places under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. We hope all the local Freethinkers will attend this meeting and strengthen the hands of the Committee for a good spell of successful work.

Mr. Cohen holds a public debate in the Manchester Secular Hall this Thursday and Friday evening (April 23 and 24), with the Rev. H. W. Dick, curate of St. James's, Moss Side. The subject is Secularism, which Mr. Cohen will affirm is an adequate guide for mankind; Mr. Dick affirming that it is untrue in its view of the universe, man, and morals. Chair to be taken each evening at 8.

We are printing an English edition of Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture, *The Foundations of Faith*. It is causing a good deal of sensation in the United States. Our edition will be ready next week.

Owing to the pressure upon our space this week, we are obliged to postpone the continuation of our article on 'Ingersoll 'Lies.'

### FOR ME; OR, SELFISH SALVATION.

(Dedicated to Christians in general, and Boothites in particular.)

Up above—although you can't descry it—  
There's a heav'n suspended in the air;  
If you want a seat, belief will buy it,  
I have bought a front one, and I know 'tis waiting there—  
For me, for me, 'tis waiting there for me;  
A penny I've not sacrificed—  
I bought it with the blood of Christ!  
Ha ha! He he! in heav'n I soon shall be,  
An easy chair, is waiting there,  
For me, me, me, me, me!

All my life—and now my hair is hoary—  
I have been a good-for-nothing wretch,  
But I'm "saved," and soon shall go to glory;  
Jesus Christ a golden harp and crown has gone to fetch—  
For me, for me, he's fetching them for me,  
They both are gratis and unpriced—  
They're paid for with the blood of Christ!  
Ha ha! He he! I'm jolly as can be;  
From sin I'm freed, for Christ was "treed,"  
For me, me, me, me, me!

Ev'ry kind of crime I have committed;  
I'm too bad to live upon this earth.  
But I've washed in blood, and so I'm fitted  
For the heavenly regions, and I know there is a berth—  
For me, for me, there is a berth for me;  
For, though of rogues I've been the chief,  
In Jesus Christ I have belief.  
Ha, ha! He, he! belief in Jesus C.  
Turns black souls white, and makes it right  
For me, me, me, me, me!

What care I how many lives I've blighted,  
Through my deeds so devilish and fell;  
Soon with Christ I'm going to be united;  
As for other people, why they all can go to hell—  
For me, for me, can go to hell for me;  
So long as I am with the blest,  
I trouble not about the rest.  
Ha, ha! He, he! I do not care a D.,  
I know there is a heav'n of bliss  
For me, me, me, me, me!

ESS JAY BEE.

### Christian Evidence!

Wood Green Boy—"I know the Bible's true, 'cause we've got a piece of shittim wood at our school wot Noah's ark was made on." West Green Boy—"Gar'n, that's nuffin. Our schoolmaster's got the Cane wot killed Abel." West Green Boy—"Ah, I thought I could *Pale-is* evidence."

### LECTURING NOTES.

THOSE readers of this journal who have watched the progress and expansion of Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme must be quite satisfied with the useful results which have already been attained through its aid. It is the greatest propagandist effort that has been made since the formation of the National Secular Society. It is an up-to-date movement; it provides that the public shall have an opportunity of hearing Freethought views expounded "without money and without price," except what is voluntarily given at the collections. That the scheme has "caught on" there cannot be the slightest doubt, for from all the Branches of the N.S.S. there comes but one unanimous chorus of approval. It is extremely gratifying to see such a large number of strangers—most of them professed Christians—who attend the lectures given under this scheme; and the marked and respectful attention they pay to what is said by the speakers is striking evidence of the increased interest that is being taken in Secular advocacy.

The truth of these remarks was forcibly illustrated during my recent tour in the North. In addition to six lectures which I delivered on two Sundays in South Shields, under the auspices of the local Branch of the N.S.S., I lectured in Stockton, Middlesboro', and Stanley, in the county of Durham, through the aid of the new scheme. All the meetings were well attended by most appreciative audiences. At Stockton the hall was crowded, and a very animated discussion followed the lecture, which was much enjoyed and enthusiastically applauded. The debate did not conclude until after ten o'clock. To me this part of the proceedings was quite a treat, for discussion now is the exception, whereas formerly it was the rule. Nothing is more advantageous to our cause than fair and gentlemanly controversy. It gives the Secular lecturer an opportunity to correct errors that have been formed in the theological mind, either through a lack of knowledge as to what our principles are, or else in consequence of prejudice engendered by pulpit utterances. For this advantage we are indebted to the free admission to the lectures, which is one of the principal features of the new scheme.

At Middlesboro' the local friends of the movement attended, and many familiar faces were present from the surrounding districts. Steps are being taken to form two new Branches in that locality. Here also I had a pleasant and protracted debate, which appeared to be highly relished by both the Christian and Freethought portions of the audience.

At Stanley I broke new ground, and spoke to over five hundred men and women, many of whom had travelled several miles to attend the lecture. An ex-minister asked numerous questions, for the purpose, he said, "of obtaining information." After which, he made a long and good-natured speech; but, unfortunately, it was not relevant to the lecture. I received many pressing invitations to give a course of Sunday lectures in the district, and numerous inquiries were made as to when Mr. Foote would visit the locality. Stanley and its surrounding places are excellent fields for our propaganda. The working men there are well-informed, discreet, and energetic. They appear to know what to do, and how to do it, and their efforts are supported by their wives and daughters, which is of immense service in Secular work. I had promises, from several both old and new friends, that a Branch of the N.S.S. should be formed there immediately.

My next fields of operations, under Mr. Foote's scheme, will be in the districts of Birmingham and Plymouth, where I expect large gatherings. In the West of England arrangements have been made for me not only to lecture in Plymouth and Devonport, but also to break new ground in Liskeard, Tavistock, and Plymton. I earnestly invite all the Freethought friends in these various districts to render all possible support to the members of the Plymouth Branch of the N.S.S., who are devoting much time and labor in the endeavor to make this week of propagandist work a thorough success. Every Secularist in the different localities should regard it as a duty to render what aid he or she can on this occasion. Let us, to begin with, have a good muster on Sunday morning, May 10, at the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth.

Thus I am engaged up to Whit Sunday, when the Conference is to be held in Glasgow. This promises to be the most important annual gathering that we have held for

many years. I hope, therefore, to meet on that occasion a large number of true friends of the "good old cause." Fortunately, the local arrangements for the Conference are in good hands. I know from long experience that the Glasgow friends are composed of the right metal. Whatever they undertake to do they do well; and, personally, I am delighted that Glasgow has been selected for the coming Conference.

With few exceptions, Mr. Foote's scheme has hitherto been applied only to week-night lectures; but it will be a grand thing to extend its usefulness to our Sunday meetings. If this could be done, we should be better able to compete with the Churches. Our audiences would be increased tenfold. I think our President would be favorable to such an extension if the pecuniary means could be provided. I should be pleased to see the Lecture Fund sufficiently supported to allow the experiment of free Sunday lectures to be tried throughout the country. In my opinion, the success of such an "advancement in the right direction" would be certain. I happen to know that many friends, both in London and in the provinces, share my view upon this subject. Wealth cannot be better used than in spreading a knowledge of those Secular truths that will destroy superstition and hasten the dawn of that period when reason shall exercise its legitimate influence, and mental freedom will be permitted to confer its real blessings upon the human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

### MR. W. HEAFORD'S LECTURING TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

MR. HEAFORD is one of the privileged few who take pleasure, and find recuperative virtue, in continuous hard work. Accordingly, instead of dissipating his annual vacation, as many of us do in the most approved, lackadaisical, sweet-doing-nothing style, he spends it lecturing in the provinces three times each Sunday, and nightly through the week, if possible; while Mr. Heaford's predilection for the country North of the Tweed, as the circuit-ground for his missionary labors and recreative wanderings, redounds greatly to his credit as a man of taste and judgment—at least, from a Scotsman's point of view.

On Easter Sunday Mr. Heaford opened his round of engagements at Edinburgh, where he lectured twice to excellent audiences, and enjoyed a reunion with Messrs. Dewar, Brown, and other local veterans. Monday had been originally destined for Dunoon, but as the Glasgow Spring Holiday fell on that date, and Dunoon, in common with all the Clyde watering-places, was inundated with excursionists, a meeting was out of the question. Of course, we were sorry not to have an opportunity of revisiting a town in which Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme has borne such solid, practical results; but, after all, there is little fear that the sensation created by the visits of Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen will subside without leaving a permanent impression. As readers of the *Freethinker* are aware, a correspondence on Secularism is still going on merrily in the local newspapers, and this represents only a fraction of the total output of the controversy which is resounding all over the district, so that echoes of it may even have reached the "noble" author of *The Reign of Law*, in his ugly castle at Inverary. Besides, we have an outpost of clear-headed and self-reliant patrols at Dunoon who may be trusted to jealously guard the interests of the Cause in their neighborhood until we can send another detachment of pioneers from headquarters to extend our line still farther into the enemy's territory.

At Paisley, on April 7, Mr. Heaford lectured to a fair audience on "A Better Creed than Christianity." No one put in an appearance for Christianity, but some Socialists raised objections to the lecturer's presentment of Secularism which exhibited an unaccountable ignorance of the nature and scope of our movement, or a lamentable incapacity to understand them. Mr. Heaford had claimed that Secularism stands for Liberty and Progress, that many of the greatest men of science, social reformers, and humanitarians were on our side, and also that education made for the secularisation of human character and activity. In disproof of these contentions an astute (?) objector asked if it were not a

fact—cheap and artless question-begging vocable—that Mr. Bradlaugh voted for coercion, that Professor Tyndall was a rabid Unionist, and that education often landed the greatest men in the nether pit of religious reaction, as in the case of Newman, Manning, and Gladstone; while a second ingenuous querist wanted to know whether Secularism was anything more than a Bible-banging, parson-slanging apparatus, and, if not, what it had done for humanity? I need not reproduce Mr. Heaford's answers; they were direct and forcible, and his vindication of Mr. Bradlaugh's memory from an aspersion at once cruel and absurd was both drastic and decisive. Some Socialists who profess to be Freethinkers assume a strangely inconsistent, and hardly honorable, attitude towards Secularism. It may be true, as they aver, that the so-called economic factor exercises a preponderatingly inhibitory influence upon liberty of thought and action, although an analysis of this *causa causans* shows that it is a complex of determinants, of which religion is a great part; but I reserve what I have to say on this point for a separate article. The Paisley Branch is making steady progress, and it has creditably distinguished itself during the past season by its hospitable treatment of the Lecture Scheme, and the zeal and loyalty with which it has sought to carry that plan into operation.

Wednesday found us at Motherwell, which has always been bountiful in the matter of audiences, and did not fail us on this occasion. There was a fine inspiring meeting, but only a fiddle-faddling discussion. One mystery-man, consumed with a thirst for useless knowledge, requested Mr. Heaford to oblige him with an exact account of the origin of the universe, of intelligence, of the belief in the supernatural, and like "unconsidered trifles"; and when the lecturer admitted that he had really no positive information to give in reference to some of these topics his interlocutor nodded sagely, and, ejaculating exultantly, "Ah, ha! I thought so; I knew you couldn't answer me," he leaned back upon his seat with a widespread smile of seraphic self-complacency upon his harvest-moon face. A second interrogator, an addle-headed Irishman, was so incoherent as to be barely intelligible; while a third, who was rather more collected and reasonable, couldn't understand how Christianity was palmed off on the world at the beginning of its era, if it were an imposture. The Motherwell friends, who include in their number some exceedingly earnest and capable young men, are doing their best to organise a Branch, and hope to accomplish their object forthwith.

The Hamilton district has been lying fallow for some years, and, as a natural result, there has been a decline of interest in our movement. This, no doubt, accounted to some extent for the comparatively small meeting there, since there was no lack of adequate preparation on the part of the Hamilton friends. Mr. Heaford's lecture, "Is the Bible Reliable?" was evidently much relished, and elicited a few unimportant questions from a Bible Christian, who calmly asserted that the Hexateuch was written 6000 B.C. We were glad to meet some of the Secularists of the district who formerly carried on the work of the Hamilton Branch, and we hope to see it reopened at the beginning of our next season's propaganda.

A visit to Kilmarnock brought the week-night meetings to a close. Unfortunately, the prospects of a large meeting, which our hard-working local correspondent forecast as very good, were ruined by a terrific downpour of sleet and rain at the critical moment when the meeting was going in. However, there was still a moderate gathering, and the lecture, which was very cordially received, provoked considerable discussion. One somewhat whimsical opponent thought it very strange that men died, although they desired to live forever, and was puzzled by the fact that disease should cause death at all. Having propounded the physiological law of death as a condition for the perpetuation of life, Mr. Heaford added that while, as far as we can see, death must always be the effect of some form of disease, there were yet many preventable diseases, which sanitary science could stamp out or mitigate, and so lengthen the average lifetime. He thought that this was a reform much needed in Kilmarnock, where they had a shamefully bad record for virulent epidemics and a high death-rate. Strong as was the odor of sanctity in their midst, it was not a powerful enough deodorant of the other and more carnal stenches, which spoke of defective drainage and a supine Corporation. From accounts received by Mr. Heaford from some of the Kilmarnock friends it seems that the place is demoralised

by theological terrorism. If a man is suspected of heresy, he is almost certain to lose his work, and if he is a shop-keeper his customers will boycott him. It is actually alleged that a minister in the town, who must be a lineal descendant of the Russell or Moodie pilloried by Burns, not long ago solemnly warned the unmarried women in the community not to accept any non-church-goer as a sweetheart, and that this advice has been so largely acted upon that no godless absentee from "divine worship" need go a-courting with any hope of success. Mr. Heaford's statements are confirmed by a passage in a letter from my Kilmarnock correspondent, who says: "In Kilmarnock we have one of the greatest strongholds of orthodoxy and priest-ridden bigotry to be found in Britain. This being a small place, each one is known to everybody else; and to be seen at a Secularist meeting would be a risk the average man would not care to incur." My friend continues that more might be done by outdoor meetings, and suggests that when Mr. Heaford returns he might address an open-air meeting at Kilmarnock Cross with advantage. It is also pointed out that Newmilns, and other towns in Ayrshire, contain a greater percentage of Freethinkers than Kilmarnock, and so might be operated upon to some purpose. It is clear that in this district we have a wide field in which to assail a most oppressive form of clericalism, and to concentrate and utilise Freethought forces at present diffused and relatively unproductive.

On Saturday Mr. Heaford and the present writer passed a delightful day climbing the breezy Arran hills, dominated by snow-clad Goatfell; and on Sunday, April 12, Mr. Heaford concluded his holiday by delivering three lectures in Glasgow.

I have already, in my reports of Mr. Watts's and Mr. Cohen's lecturing tours in the West of Scotland, expressed my deep sense of the supreme importance and serviceableness of Mr. Foot's Lecture Scheme. At the risk of being thought tedious, I desire here to renew my testimony to that effect; and I speak not for myself alone, but also for the members of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. We have carefully tested the capabilities of the scheme by giving it sustained practical application and noting the results, and our deliberate judgment is that it is admirably adapted for the objects which it contemplates—namely, the extension of Secularism into parts of the country not hitherto reached by any of the ordinary methods of propaganda, and the revival and invigoration of Branches which, from various causes, have sunk into a state of comparative lassitude and inaction. Never in the history of Secularism in the west of Scotland has more substantial progress been achieved in the propagation of Secularism than in the last five months, and unquestionably we owe this to the facilities afforded by the scheme, which we have welcomed ungrudgingly as a thoroughly feasible plan, and, as such, a blessed relief from documentary theories or amiable suggestions which never emerge from the pen-and-ink stage. The Glasgow Branch can speak with the authority that springs from, and has its sanction in, experience; and, after giving to the Lecture Scheme both of their substance and their service, they are so fully satisfied with the issues of the experiment that they cordially recommend the scheme to the goodwill and the suffrages of their *confrères* throughout Great Britain.

J. P. GILMOUR.

### Those Cats.

It was near midnight of the fifth day out, and all was peaceful on board the Ark. Wearied by his labors in feeding the animals and navigating the vessel, Noah was wrapped in a profound sleep.

Suddenly there was a commotion among the animals. One of the tigers had succeeded in thrusting his paw through the galvanised iron-wire partition that separated him from the hyena, and had dug his claws into that interesting creature's hide.

There arose a fierce outcry, in which all the beasts of prey in that part of the ark joined; and the noise aroused Noah into partial consciousness.

"Japhet," he said, stirring uneasily, "get something to throw; the neighbors' cats are in the back yard again!"

Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Milton*, defines poetry as "the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason."

### MOTHER THOUGHTS.

FAMILIAR acts are beautiful through love.—*Shelley*.

The living are more and more governed by the dead.—*A. Comte*.

Every heart contains perfection's germ.—*Shelley*.

Great thoughts come from the heart.—*Vauvenargues*.

No creed can contain the whole of truth.

Joy is the great lifter of man, the great unfold.—*Matthew Arnold*.

Knowledge, like food, requires digestion.

God, immortality, duty—how inconceivable the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third.—*George Eliot*.

The greatest piece of good fortune is that which corrects our deficiencies and redeems our mistakes.—*Goethe*.

The fashion of this world passeth away; and I would fain occupy myself only with the abiding.—*Goethe*.

Whoso is content with pure experience and acts upon it has enough of truth.—*Goethe*.

The eye only sees what it brings the power of seeing.—*Carlyle*.

Naught is taught well except what is known familiarly and taught often.—*Matthew Arnold*.

The love of liberty and the love of equality is simply the instinct in man for expansion.—*Matthew Arnold*.

Inequality materialises our upper class, vulgarises our middle class, and brutalises our lower.—*Matthew Arnold*.

Justice insists on obligation, law on decorum. Justice weighs and decides, law superintends and orders. Justice refers to the individual, law to society.—*Goethe*.

Ingratitude is always a kind of weakness. I have never known men of ability to be ungrateful.—*Goethe*.

There are two powers that make for peace: what is right and what is fitting.—*Goethe*.

Calumny can make a cloud seem a mountain; can even make a cloud become a mountain.—*Sir Arthur Helps*.

Truth is within ourselves. It takes

No rise from outward things;

There is an inmost centre in us all

Where truth abides in fulness.—*Browning*.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

—*Shakespeare*.

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.—*Keats*.

Confucius said: "If a State is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a State is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame."

The child gets his first conception of truth when he gets his first conception of falsehood.

Every man has enough power left to carry out that of which he is convinced.—*Goethe*.

Love is a true renovator.—*Goethe*.

The finest hair throws a shadow.—*Erasmus*.

If God made us in his own image, we have amply returned the compliment.—*Fontenelle*.

Beauty can never really understand itself.—*Goethe*.

The errors of a man are what make him really lovable.—*Goethe*.

Thoughts come back, beliefs persist; facts pass by never to return.—*Goethe*.

There is no use in reproving vulgarity, for it never changes.—*Goethe*.

If a clever man commits a folly, it is not a small one.—*Goethe*.

The whole art of life consists in giving up existence in order to exist.—*Goethe*.

Scepticism is a duty, and blind faith an unpardonable sin.—*Huxley*.

Heredity and environment are the two main factors of sin or wrong-doing.

The discovery of what is true, and the practice of that which is good, are the two most important objects of philosophy.—*Voltaire*.

It is not enough to know, we must also apply; it is not enough to will, we must also do.—*Goethe*.

When you lose interest in anything, you also lose the memory of it.—*Goethe*.

Forethought is simple; afterthought is manifold.—*Goethe*

BOOK CHAT.

Two volumes, edited from the notes and lectures of the late Professor Croom Robertson, are to be published in Mr. Murray's University Extension Series. One will be entitled *Elements of Philosophy*, the other *Elements of Psychology*; and both are edited by Mrs. Foley Rhys Davids.

\* \* \*

Dr. Benjamin Jowett's biography is to be written by Mr. Evelyn Abbott and Professor Lewis Campbell, both old Balliol friends. The work will be published by Murray in two volumes.

\* \* \*

*A Plea for the New Woman*, by May Collins (New York: Truthseeker Co., 28 Lafayette-place), is a lecture by a new and most promising accession to the American Freethought platform. Miss Collins is evidently well read, and has thought for herself. She sees clearly that Christianity in the past has stood in the way of the emancipation of her sex. She claims that that question shall be considered, not from the standpoint of either sex, but of that of the welfare of the race; and urges that, with equality of rights and opportunities, there will be no fear that one sex will usurp the sphere of the other, or that the feminine element will rebel against itself. Maternity and nature will assert their claims.

\* \* \*

Miss Collins looks forward to Freethought, and not to Christianity, to raise the status of woman. She says: "In the progress of civilisation and modern enlightenment, the teachings of Paul, unable to bear up under the pressure of religious scepticism, are gradually melting from before our eyes, and the Christian woman is beginning to burst through her prison bars, and to treat Paul's ordinance regarding her sex as 'the baseless fabric of a vision'—'only such stuff as dreams are made of.'"

\* \* \*

We rejoice to think that Frances Wright, Mrs. Stanton, and Mrs. Rose have such successors in America as Miss H. Gardener and Miss May L. Collins. The last-named is, we believe, but nineteen years of age. With the enthusiasm of youth, she looks forward to greater results from legal enactments than experience warrants. But her aims are noble, and the task she has taken up of seeking to enlighten her sisters has our warmest commendation. She has read good authors, like Buckle, Mill, and Lecky. She knows enough to be aware that, like the rest of us, she still has much to learn, and we look forward to her future with great hope that she will not be spoilt by flattery.

\* \* \*

*Songs for the Sons of God* is the rather magniloquent title of a little pamphlet of verse by Griffith Dell (Manchester: Labor Press Society, 57 Tib-street). The "Sons of God" are, it appears, "those that are endeavoring to establish Democracy upon the earth"—to whom the songs are dedicated. They appear to have no connection with "the daughters of men," as the poet begins:—

I am tired of the mellow music that steals from the silver strings  
Of the lute of some plaintive lover who dreams of his love and  
sings.

He then bursts into "A Song on the Way":—

Onward march and raise the chorus,  
Sons of God;  
Waves the flame-red banner o'er us,  
Clear the light is shining for us,  
Sons of God.

The *Songs* have some force and music, and remind us strongly of the influence of Mr. Swinburne.

\* \* \*

The April *Monist*, like so many other publications, treats of the Roentgen rays, the sensational popular interest in which is giving way to a spirit of scientific investigation. Both Professor Mach (of Vienna) and Professor Schubert (of Hamburg) write thereon; and actinograms are given—one of a lady's hand, showing the position of a needle broken off in the thumb; and another of a plaiice with shells in its intestines. Professor Joseph Le Conte contributes a notable article, entitled "From Animal to Man." Admitting the close resemblance and the immense difference; admitting also the genetic connection—the one having come out of the other by a process of evolution—he seeks to find the dividing line where humanity emerges from animality, and fixes this in self-consciousness. There are other philosophical articles, on "The Dualistic Conception of Nature," "Nature and the Individual Mind," "The Nature of Pleasure and Pain," etc.

\* \* \*

The late Anna Bonus Kingsford, according to her colleague, Mr. Edward Maitland, had gone through a most varied career. Previously to her last incarnation she had appeared on this earth in the characters of Mary Magdalene, the Empress Faustine, Joan of Arc, and also Anne Boleyn, shortly

before her friend, the Countess of Caithness, enacted the rôle of Mary Stuart. A lady who had occupied so many distinguished positions should have accumulated a varied experience. But in all her incarnations it was her habit to die young, which may account for the lack of worldly wisdom in her latest appearance.

\* \* \*

The *Tablet*, noticing Mr. Maitland's Life of Mrs. Kingsford, says: "This poor, silly woman, during her last illness, recognised the illusions of her sorry life and called for a priest. She made her confession to Mgr. Moore, and received the last blessing of the Church before she died." We understand that Mr. Maitland puts a somewhat different construction on the last actions of his friend and colleague.

\* \* \*

Professor Max Muller announces in the *Athenæum* that he has been working at a very big book on "Comparative Mythology," which he hopes will be out before the year is over. He still holds that most myths are solar. We trust he will have the courage to devote a section to the mythology which has found its way into Christianity.

PROFANE JOKES.

Gotham Girl—"How do you New Englanders get over the fact that your ancestors believed in witches?" Boston Girl—"We call it hypnotism."

Papa—"Did you ask God to give you your daily bread this morning?" Bobby—"No, papa; I looked in the pantry last night, and saw that there was enough to last for three days."

Applicant—"I have here, sir, a letter of recommendation from my minister; I think you will find it highly satisfactory." Employer—"Yes; it's good so far as it goes; but, as I shall not need your services on Sundays, I should prefer to have a few testimonials from people who know you the other six days of the week."

An itinerant evangelist always carried about with him his own pickles, a very pungent West Indian brand. One day a commercial asked if he might try them; and, upon doing so, remarked: "I knew you sky-pilots traded in hell, but, by Jabers, I did not know you carried samples."

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

"A sailor going to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety." Such was the message as given to the parson. It was read out in church like this: "A sailor going to see his wife, desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety."

A certain reverend sky-pilot preaching a very dull sermon to a congregation not used to him, many of them slunk out of the church, one after another, before the sermon was nearly ended. "Truly," said a gentleman present, "this learned doctor has made a very moving discourse!"

Father O'Rourke—"Michael, my son, I hope you vote as I do." Mike Finnegan—"An' how does your riverence vote?" Father O'Rourke—"Oh, I vote as I pray." Mike Finnegan—"Och, it's for money, thin. Yis, your riverence; Oi am wid yez."

Heedless and Toothless.

"Reeling again, Janet!"  
"Well, ye see, minister, ane canna be aye spinnin'."  
"An' do you know where you are going?"  
"Brawly; I aye gang where I get it best and cheapest."  
"I fear, Janet, if you don't mend your ways you will go where there is nothing but wailing and gnashing of teeth."  
"Let them gnash awa' that hae them, for feint a stump hae I had for the last twenty year."

It Was Not the Cherub.

It is suggested that the creatures butchered by the Lord God, to supply skins to clothe Adam and Eve, were probably the cherubs who were placed at the eastern gate of the Garden of Eden to protect the tree of life. This cannot be correct, for in Psalm xviii. 10 the reader is told of God: "He rode upon a cherub and did fly." This was a later affair. The probabilities are the flood threw the cherub out of a job, then he engaged in the carrying trade, and in due time had the distinguished passenger mentioned by David, all of which indicated he was still in possession of a whole hide.

## 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, "The Irreligion of Shakespeare."  
 BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, social evening. Thursday, at 8, urgent meeting of members.  
 BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Robert Forder, "Bradlaugh as I Knew Him."  
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 6, tea; 7, conversation.  
 PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Voltaire, the French Freethinker."  
 KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute—final arrangements for open-air propaganda.  
 WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (6½ West Ham-lane): 7, H. Spence, "Why I am a Member of this Society."  
 WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Rival Gods."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Harry Courtney will lecture.  
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Christian Religion."  
 EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, a lecture.  
 HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "Christianity or Secularism: Which has Done More for Mankind?"  
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, Lucretius Keen, "Christianity or Secularism: Which has Done More for Mankind?" 3.30, a lecture.  
 ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, a lecture.  
 MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack, "The Resurrection."  
 OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh."  
 VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.  
 WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss will lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, E. J. Sale, "The Crucifixion."  
 FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, quarterly meeting of teachers, scholars, and friends.  
 GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Touzeau Parris; also at 2.30 and 6.30.  
 HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, musical evening.  
 LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, social evening.  
 LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Ross, "Curiosities, Ancient and Modern."  
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Woman, Past, Present, and Future"; 6.30, "Evolution v. Special Creation." Thursday and Friday (April 23 and 24), debate on Secularism between the Rev. W. H. Dick and Mr. C. Cohen.  
 NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 8, monthly meeting of members.  
 PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7, special members' meeting to arrange for Mr. Watt's tour.  
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, lantern lecture, "Ireland and its Scenery."  
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, adjourned discussion, "The New Education Bill."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSELY (May Day Green): 11, a lecture.  
 DERBY (Market-place): J. E. Briggs, "Who or What was Jesus Christ?"  
 MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): 8, O. Cohen, "Miracles."  
 ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3, lecture.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

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

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 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.

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

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

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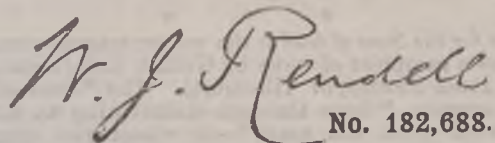
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