

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## THE MIGHTY ATOM.

WOMEN have done some excellent work in literature, but somehow or other they do not keep pace with their improved opportunities. Charlotte Bronte was a Titaness, and George Eliot's writing was full of intellect and power. But the best women writers of fiction to-day do not come near the level of such mighty predecessors. And as for the "lady novelist," who supplies the circulating libraries with endless small reading, one feels that she is a curious product of this scripturient age. No doubt she fills some useful, or necessary, purpose in the subtle economy of this mysterious universe; but what it is, besides making a little money for herself, and providing a stimulus to the trades of paper-making, printing, and binding, one must wait to know until the "great day" when all secrets will be revealed.

Among the lady novelists there are few, if any, more distinguished than Marie Corelli. Judicious puffs in the press keep us all informed of the vast circulation of her books within a few days of their being placed upon the market. The advertisements in literary and other journals tell us that eminent ministers of religion have strongly recommended her writings from the pulpit. She is considered, in every respect, a "safe" authoress. Sex does not run riot in her pages, there is no intolerable dabbling in breaches of the seventh commandment, and, above all, she is an ostentatious Christian.

Having seen much laudation of Marie Corelli's last novel, bearing the startling title of *The Mighty Atom*, and having noticed that it was considered a strong and beautiful defence of religion against the prevalent spirit of "infidelity," we resolved to see whether it deserved all these praises. After reading it carefully from title-page to imprint, we are bound to say it does *not* deserve them. In our opinion it is a very foolish book, and its pretentiousness only accentuates the writer's ignorance.

Let us begin with the lady's dedication, which is pretty long-winded:—

"To the Self-styled 'Progressivists,' who by Precept and Example assist the Infamous Cause of Education Without Religion, and who, by promoting the idea, borrowed from French Atheism, of denying to the Children in Board Schools and elsewhere the Knowledge and Love of God as the True Foundation of Noble Living, are Guilty of a Worse Crime than Murder."

It is to be hoped that the "Progressivists" will take warning in time. No blame will attach to Marie Corelli if they pursue their wicked course to its awful end, and find themselves at the finish in the everlasting bonfire. "Woe betide those," she elsewhere exclaims, "who crush the high aspirations of innocent and hopeful youth by the deadening blow of Materialism! Worse than murderers are they, and as a greater crime than murder shall they answer for it." They may be ever so honest and well-meaning, but it is "infamous" to differ from Marie Corelli and the deity she patronises. "Me and my God" will make it hot for those who have the amazing impudence to think for themselves in opposition to our teaching.

Atheism for the young, so to speak, is the monster whom this book is written to expose and vanquish. Hear the lady inveighing against a little French book, published many years ago, with a preface by Littré:—

"In *The Freethinker's Catechism* (*Catechisme du Libre Penseur*), by one Edgar Monteil—a code of ethics which has been circulated assiduously among children's schools in France for the past ten years—the unhappy little beings whose ideas of morality are engrafted upon this atheistical doctrine are taught that 'the passions of man are his surest and most faithful guides,' and that 'God is a spectre invented by priests to frighten timid minds';—this, too, in utter and wicked oblivion of the grand truth proclaimed with such a grand simplicity—'God is Love!' 'As the soul,' writes the self-deluded compiler of *The Freethinker's Catechism*, 'no longer constitutes for us an independent and imperishable individuality, there is no future life.'"

This is a ridiculous misrepresentation of Edgar Monteil's book, which Marie Corelli only knows, perhaps, by references to it in religious journals. And the following is in some respects on the same level of accuracy:—

"In almost every educational department the principles of the *Libre-Penseur* are sowing the seeds of ruin to the nation, and making of the average human being a creature worse than the lowest and most untamable of ferocious beasts. And these principles, largely adopted by the Freethinking societies in England, are being gradually disseminated among the children of our own secular schools—for the agents or 'missionaries' of Freethought are to the full as active in distributing their tracts and pamphlets as the most fervid Salvationist that ever tossed the *War Cry* in the faces of the public; more stealthy in their movements, they are none the less cunning; and in our once God-fearing country many can now be found who passively accept as truth the deadening and blasphemous lie uttered in the words—'As the soul no longer constitutes an independent and imperishable individuality, there is no future life.'"

Edgar Monteil's book has never been used in the French schools; therefore it could not have sowed "the seeds of ruin" in them. Nor is it true that the French youth are becoming worse than the lowest beasts. This is the kind of nonsense which had its long day in English pulpits, but it is almost played out even there, and is apparently becoming the property of the pious lady novelist, who is silly enough for anything.

Starting from this absurdity, Marie Corelli proceeds to illustrate her "principles" by a story. There is an Atheist father, and an Atheist tutor, and an only son trained up wrongly, who cannot help thinking about religion, and who finally hangs himself to find out the great secret. The reader will be interested to know that this self-slaughterer is only eleven years of age. But then he has been forced in the Atheistic hothouse; he is well versed in all the philosophies, and quotes Marcus Aurelius in conversation.

The Atheist father is (of course) a nasty, bad man. He alienates his wife's affections, so that she runs off with a wicked baronet; and he crushes out the life of his boy with cold, hard treatment, and unlimited cramming, designed to make him an intellectual prodigy. Mr. Valliscourt (notice the fine names these lady novelists affect!) has no taste for anything natural. A beautiful landscape under moonlight is to him "stagey." He regards Love as "a mere figure of speech," and declares that no reasonable father "loves" his children. And when he leaves the room, where his little son lies dead, slain by his own hand, he does so "with a firm, easy step and unruffled demeanor—the materialistic 'Positivist' asserting itself in every line of his stiff figure." "Positivist," by the way, is an ineffably ridiculous touch in this wholly ridiculous picture. No teacher ever equalled Comte in subordinating

intellect to feeling. Miss Corelli should read (say) Comte's *Catechism*, and realise the depth of her ignorance.

Now for the Atheist tutor. Professor Cadman-Gore is a grovelling Materialist, and his personal appearance and habits of life harmonise with his philosophy. He is tall, gaunt, and bald—though he thinks of marrying a spectacled Girton girl and breeding a litter of Atheists. He has "bony shoulders" and "long ears." He has "leathery hands," and his knuckles "emit a sharp sound like the cracking of bad walnuts." He has "lantern jaws" and "ferret eyes." He is such a coward that he thinks he is dying when he has a mild attack of dyspepsia, and considers himself seriously wounded if he runs a pin into his finger. Of course he hates nature, just like Mr. Valliscourt. The delightful smells of a blowing garden positively "offend" him; he never climbs a hill or enters a boat, and his sole idea of a walk is a silent tramp on a straight, dusty road.

Mr. Valliscourt is a character that could hardly exist outside a Christian novel, and Professor Cadman-Gore is a mere turnip death's-head lit up with a stinking candle. On the other hand, all the Christian people in this book—like the Christians in *The Sign of the Cross*—are well-nigh impeccable models of virtuous humanity. Even the village idiot, with his distorted face and figure, is a good soul at bottom and an excellent Christian—ininitely superior to hard-hearted Atheists, who hate the smell of roses, and detest fine scenery, and play the devil with their wives and children, and look upon the corpses of their nearest as so much dead meat.

It would be an absurd waste of time to discuss the dish made up from such ingredients. We will just treat the reader to a few samples of the cook's knowledge and ability in other directions.

The scene of this novel is all laid in North Devonshire, and some of the characters talk what Marie Corelli supposes to be the local vernacular. Their language would startle a real Devonian. They use such words and phrases as "towzley," "childer," "nowt," and "muck o' lies"—which are all north-country expressions. Marie Corelli has not even mastered the commonest Devonshire idiom. "Come" is a test word everywhere, and here it is spelt "coom." But a Devonian does not pronounce the word in this fashion. He leaves that to the Lancashire folk. What he says is "kum," sounding the vowel a little like the French. "Kummin" is as frequent in Devonshire as rosy apples and creamy complexions.

Miss Corelli has not mastered the Devonshire dialect, but she might have learnt a little of ornithology. Fancy a nightingale singing at the end of August! The lady's physical science is still worse. She actually speaks of the earth and the sun as "friendly planets." She also introduces a Mr. Skeet, a Positivist, and "a great friend of a person named Frederic Harrison," who tells the boy Lionel all about the Atom, and shows him an "enlarged drawing" of it "as seen through the microscope." Poor Marie Corelli! Someone has been "kidding" her. Atoms are not visible under the microscope. Nobody has ever seen one. They are hypothetical existences, too minute for visibility. In the physics of Marie Corelli, however, they are quite visible, and there are enlarged drawings of them—as though they were microbes. "A curious twisty thing," it is, "with a sort of spinal cord running through it." And this remarkable Corelli atom has a power of reproduction. The lady imagines it is the belief of the Materialists that there was "a little First Atom," which produced other atoms—and so, as the parson said who cut the genealogy short, they went on begetting each other to the end of the chapter.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us! We shall have rare science teaching in our schools when the "knowledge and love of God" is pushed to the front by the friends of Miss Corelli. The earth will soon be flat again, and then the children will be flat too, and everybody will be pious and ignorant enough for the Dark Ages.

Miss Corelli's views on the "Socialist workman" of Nazareth, on the absolute perfection of the character of Jesus, and on the transcendent benefits of Christianity to the human race, are not worth criticising. Nor will Agnostic women care for her censures. They know that it is not Christianity which has lifted her sex from "the low place of bondage and humiliation formerly assigned to them in the barbaric periods." Their elevation is the result of Science and Freethought.

G. W. FOOTE.

## WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY IS.

AN important work on the Bible has been published simultaneously in London and New York. It is by Amos Kidder Fiske, and entitled *The Jewish Scriptures: The Books of the Old Testament in the Light of their Origin and History*. The English edition is published by David Nutt, 270 Strand. The work is a popular exposition of the results of rational criticism. A quarter of a century ago such a work might have evoked a howl of horror and consternation. Now-a-days it will only be regarded as another attempt to put off from the neck of modern religionists what Professor Goldwin Smith calls the millstone of belief in the inspiration of the Jewish writings.

Mr. Fiske states his aim to have been "to present the history and literature of the ancient Hebrews, as contained in the Old Testament, in a clear, concise, and candid way, accepting the benefit of the light revealed by modern research and learning, and applying the same calm judgment to which we are accustomed in dealing with the productions of other ancient peoples."

At the outset I have one grave fault to find with Mr. Fiske. He cites no authorities in support of his views, and gives his readers no opportunity of verifying or disproving his conclusions. This is to be the more regretted since, although Mr. Fiske is evidently a capable, impartial, and dispassionate student, it will be open to the orthodox to question him at any point. He admits this is so, but thinks it a lesser evil than the encumbering of his book—meant only to summarise, for the benefit of the general public, a vast amount of more or less inaccessible material—with innumerable footnotes and citations, the only real effect of which would be to distract the reader's attention and increase the size of the volume. In this matter I must express my dissent from the author. On a question so much the subject of controversy it was essential to the value of his book, especially in England, where his own authority is unknown, to refer, at least in an appendix, to his principal authorities. The work should also have been provided with an index.

After this criticism let me say at once that, in my judgment, Mr. Fiske has made an admirably clear narrative concerning what is known of the religion of Israel and the composition of its sacred books. How far removed from the old view are his narratives will be seen from a few extracts.

Mr. Fiske begins his book by declaring that it was some five centuries after the time of Moses when Hebrew writers first tried to make a record of the origin and early experiences of their race; and that, for three centuries after the "peculiar people" settled in Canaan, they had no written language which can be traced in inscriptions or other graphic records of any kind. "The oldest fragments of the documents used by the first writers whose productions have survived, embedded like primitive or metamorphic rocks in strata of later origin, date not less than five hundred years after the escape from Egypt, and yet another century or more passed before the two compilations were made in which these fragments appear, and which were at a still later time imperfectly fused into one. Even this one was subsequently modified and overlaid with new material" (p. 7).

Mr. Fiske finds the first glimpse of Israel as a nomadic race, who gathered in various quarters the legends which were afterwards to appear as parts of their own history. Of their legendary ancestors and stories of the patriarch he says: "Out of the fables to which these names and traditions gave rise no historic facts can be elicited, but only historic conjectures" (p. 16). He finds some nucleus of history in the account of the servitude in Egypt, but says: "Tradition unquestionably exaggerated greatly the number of the Hebrews in Egypt, the length of their stay, and the perils of their escape." He rationalises the miracles of the Exodus and those in the wilderness, the period spent wherein he reduces from forty years to more probably three months. On the other hand, the conquest ascribed to Joshua probably extended over a long interval of time.

In his chapters on *Early Conceptions of Deity* and *The God of Israel* Mr. Fiske points out that there are signs of an early belief in a mysterious set of beings called Elohs, or Elohim, representing the powers of nature after the manner of the divinities of polytheistic races; but these were gathered into a single personification, and Elohim became the

designation for one all-pervading deity. "The conception of Jehovah, formed at the time of the long struggle from bondage to conquest, and designed to carry that struggle to success, represents a tribal deity not greatly different in characteristics from the Chemosh of Moab and the Baal of Ammon" (p. 35).

Telling of the invasion of the Promised Land, Mr. Fiske says (p. 43):—

"Deceit, perfidy, treachery, and barbarous atrocities were attributed to divine command. Reverses were always due to the displeasure of Jehovah, whose will had been misunderstood or disregarded; and victories gained by ruthless slaughter were credited to his beneficent favor. The basest and most cruel acts were in some cases said to have been commanded by the deity, who even intervened with miraculous aid to give them effect."

With the establishment of the Davidic dynasty the first approximately accurate date in the history of Israel is fixed—1025 B.C. Under Mr. Fiske's candid pen the man after God's own heart appears as a successful brigand. He says (p. 88):—

"If we penetrate the illusion cast over the antique records by the later writers, and by the gloss of centuries of veneration, we shall find that David's religious character was no higher than his moral standard, and that neither was above nor beyond his race and time."

As for the poetical gifts attributed to King David, the author says that a few of the older Psalms may be David's, but that is not certain, while it is beyond doubt that nearly all of the collection are of a later date (p. 89).

Of David's successor Mr. Fiske remarks: "The real Solomon could hardly have been a devout person, and his attachment to Jehovah as the national God was somewhat perfunctory and easy-going." Most of his wisdom was legendary. "There is no ground for regarding the illustrative episode of the visit of the Queen of Sheba as having any authenticity."

With the troubles which followed the division of the kingdom arose the race of prophets who are the glory of Jewish literature, and who really founded Judaism. "The Nabi first appeared as a kind of sorcerer, and later as a seer, to whom great personal wisdom or clairvoyant powers were attributed." As in Samuel, he assumed a political rôle and became a personage of great importance, finding culmination in Isaiah, at once poet, teacher, and statesman.

In the second part of his work, to which the first serves as background, Mr. Fiske takes up the books of the Old Testament, first mentioning that the thirty-nine books "were not finally accepted as the canon of Jewish scriptures until two or three centuries after the beginning of the Christian era." The purport and probable date of each of the books are adverted upon briefly, the author's aim being rather to give a general idea than any minute details. A few extracts chosen here and there will show his point of view. Of the descendants of Noah given in Genesis x. he says: "The names are mainly those of places and of tribes, and cover most of the geography within the writer's knowledge" (p. 232). Of the Torah:—

"The bulk of the proscriptions and prohibitions of the ancient Jewish law have no application to modern life, and are only of historic interest. So far as a moral standard can be derived from the general mass, it is not a high one. The idea of justice did not attain a broad or exalted level, and of the gentler virtues there was hardly a dim notion. The God of the Torah was created in the image of man; not kindly benignant or magnanimous, but harsh, jealous, and revengeful" (p. 259).

"The David and Solomon of the Chronicles are beings of quite a different mould from the David and Solomon of the old legends embodied in Samuel and Kings, though the latter book underwent much pious editing. They are the idealised founders, not of the kingdom which, in the days of the Levite scribes, had passed away beyond hope, but of the temple and its worship" (p. 284).

Of the *Song of Songs*, which is not Solomon's, he says (p. 366): "Not only could it never have been written by Solomon, but it exhibits that monarch in the unpleasant light of being discomfited by a simple country maiden, whose charms he attempted to add to the attractions of his harem, but who persisted in her ardent fidelity to the rustic lover left in her native village, in spite of the allurements of the seraglio at Jerusalem."

The book of Daniel is placed in the time of Antiochus. The writer's purpose "was not historical, and he was as

careless of facts as he was ignorant of details." I have by no means picked all the plums out of Mr. Fiske's work, which I welcome as a vivid and most interesting presentment, in brief compass, of what is most certainly known about the Old Testament. It is to be hoped that the author, or some other, will make an equally candid and impartial examination of the books of the New Testament.

J. M. WHEELER.

## THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### HOW SECULARISM AROSE.

"We must neither *lead* nor *leave* men to mistake falsehood for truth. Not to undecieve is to deceive."—ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.

BEING one of the social missionaries in the propaganda of Robert Owen, I was, like H. Viewssiew—a writer of those days—a "student of realities." It soon became clear to me, as to others, that men are much influenced for good or evil by their environments. The word was unused then—"circumstances" was the term employed. Then, as now, there were numerous persons everywhere to be met with who explained everything on supernatural principles, with all the confidence of infinite knowledge. Not having this advantage, I profited as well as I could by such observation as was in my power to make. I could see that material laws counted for something in the world. This led me to the conclusion that the duty of watching the ways of nature was incumbent on all who would find true conditions of human betterment or new reasons for morality—both very much needed. To this end the name of Secularism was given to certain principles which had for their object human improvement by material means, regarding science as the providence of man, and justifying morality by considerations which pertain to this life alone.

The rise and development (if I may use so fine a term) of these views may be traced in the following records:—

1. "Materialism will be advanced as the only sound basis of rational thought and practice."\*
2. Five prizes awarded to me for lectures to the Manchester Order of Oddfellows. These degree addresses (1846) were written on the principle that morality apart from theology could be based on human reason and experience.
3. "The *Reasoner* restricts itself to the known, to the present, and seeks to realise the life that is."†
4. A series of papers was commenced in the *Reasoner* entitled "The Moral Remains of the Bible," one object of which was to show that those who no longer held the Bible as an infallible book might still value it wherein it was ethically excellent.‡
5. "To teach men to see that the sum of all knowledge and duty is *secular*, and that it pertains to this world alone."§ This was the first time the word "Secular" was applied as a general test of principles of conduct apart from spiritual considerations.
6. "Giving an account of ourselves in the whole extent of opinion, we should use the word 'Secularist' as best indicating that province of human duty which belongs to this life."¶ This was the first time the word "Secularist" appeared in literature as descriptive of a new way of thinking.
7. "Mr. Holyoake, editor of the *Reasoner*, will lay before the meeting [then proposed] the present position of Secularism in the provinces."|| This was the first time the word "Secularism" appeared in the press. The meeting above mentioned was held December 29, 1851, at which the statement made might be taken as an epitome of these papers.\*\*
8. A letter on "The Future of Secularism" appeared in the *Reasoner*.†† This was the first time Secularism was written upon as a movement. The term was the heading of a letter by Charles Frederick Nicholls.

\* *My Prospectus of the Movement* (1843).

† Preface to the *Reasoner* (1846).

‡ *Reasoner*, vol. v., no. 106, p. 17; 1848.

§ *Ibid*, Nov. 19, 1851; article, "Truths to Teach" (p. 1).

¶ *Ibid*, Dec. 3, 1851; p. 34.

|| *Ibid*, Dec. 10, 1851; p. 62.

\*\* *Ibid*, no. 294, vol. xii.; p. 129 (1852).

†† Feb. 4, 1852; p. 187.

9. "One public purpose is to obtain the repeal of all Acts of Parliament which interfere with secular practice."\* This is exactly the attitude Secularism takes with regard to the Bible and to Christianity. It rejects such parts of the Scriptures, or of Christianity, or Acts of Parliament, as conflict with or obstruct ethical truth. We do not seek the repeal of all Acts of Parliament, but only of such as interfere with secular progress.

10. "The friends of 'secular education' [the Manchester Association was then so known] are not Secularists. They do not pretend to be; so they do not even wish to be so regarded; they merely use the word 'secular' as an adjective, as applied to a mode of instruction. We apply it to the nature of all knowledge."† We use the noun "Secularism." No one else has done it. With others the term "Secular" is merely a descriptive; with us the term is used as a subject. With others it is a branch of knowledge; with us it is the primary business of life—the name of the province of speculation to which we confine ourselves. When so used in these pages, the word "Secularism" or "Secularist" is employed to mark the distinction.

A Bolton clergyman reported in the *Bolton Guardian* that Mr. Holyoake had announced as the first subject of his lectures, "Why do the Clergy Avoid Discussion and the Secularists Seek it?"‡

These citations from my own writings are sufficient to show the nature and origin of Secularism. Such views were widely accepted by liberal thinkers of the day as an improvement and extension of Freethought advocacy. Societies were formed, halls were given a Secular name, and Conferences were held to organise adherents of the new opinion. The first was held in the Secular Institute, Manchester, October 3, 1852. Delegates were sent from societies in Ashton-under-Lyne, from Bolton, Blackburn, Bradford, Burnley, Bury, Glasgow, Keighley, Leigh, London, Manchester, Miles Platting, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oldham, Over Darwen, Owen's Journal, Paisley, Preston, Rochdale, Stafford, Sheffield, Stockport, Todmorden. Among the delegates were many well known, long known, and some still known—James Charlton (now the famous manager of the Chicago and Alton Railway), Abram Greenwood (now the cashier of the Co-operative Wholesale Bank of Manchester), William Mallalieu of Todmorden (famously known as the "millionaire" of the original Rochdale pioneers), Dr. Hiram Uttley (of Burnley), Thomas Hayes (then of Miles Platting, now manager of the Crumpsall Biscuit Works of the Co-operative Wholesale Society), Joseph Place (of Nottingham), John Crank (of Stockport), James Motherwell (of Paisley), Dr. Henry Travis (Socialist writer on Owen's system), Samuel Ingham (of Manchester), J. R. Cooper (of Manchester), and the present writer.

#### CHAPTER X.

##### HOW IT WAS DIFFUSED.

"Only by varied iteration can alien conceptions be forced on reluctant minds."—HERBERT SPENCER.

In 1853 a six nights' discussion took place in London (Cowper-street School-room) with the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A. A report was published by Messrs. Partridge and Oakley, at 2s. 6d., of which 45,000 copies were sold, which widely diffused a knowledge of Secularistic views. Our adversary had been appointed, with clerical ceremony, on a "three years' mission" against us. He had wit, readiness, and an electric velocity of speech, boasting that he could speak three times faster than anyone else. But he proved to be of use to us without intending it. His acrid words turned the "sweet milk of kindness into curds," whereby he set many against the cause he represented. He had the cleverness to see that there ought to be a "Christian Secularism," which raised Secularism to the level of Christian curiosity. In Glasgow, in 1854, I met Mr. Grant again, during several nights' discussion in the City Hall. This debate also was published, as was one of three nights with the Rev. J. H. Rutherford (afterwards Dr. Rutherford) in Newcastle-on-Tyne, who aimed to prove that Christianity contained the better Secularism. Thus that new form of Freethought came to have public recognition.

\* *Reasoner*, no. 325, Aug. 18, 1852; article, "Nature of Secular Societies" (p. 146).

† See article, "The Seculars—the Propriety of their Name," by G. J. Holyoake, *Reasoner*, Sept. 1, 1852 (p. 177).

‡ *Reasoner*, no. 328, vol. xii., 1852; p. 294.

The lease of a house (147 Fleet-street) was bought (1852), where was established a Secularist Institute, connected with printing, bookselling, and liberal publishing. Further Conferences were held in July, 1854; one at Stockport. At an adjourned Conference Mr. Joseph Barker (whom we had converted) presided.\* We had a London Secular Society, which met at the Hall of Science, City-road, and held its council meetings in Mr. Le Blond's handsome house at London Wall. This work, and much more, was done before and while Mr. Bradlaugh—who afterwards was conspicuously identified with the movement—was in the army.

It was in 1854 that I published the first pamphlet on *Secularism the Practical Philosophy of the People*. It commenced by showing the necessity of independent, self-helping, self-extricating opinions. Its opening passage was as follows:—

"In a state of society in which every inch of land, every blade of grass, every spray of water, every bird and flower, has an owner, what has the poor man to do with orthodox religion, which begins by proclaiming him a miserable sinner, and ends by leaving him a miserable slave, as far as unrequited toil goes?"

"The poor man finds himself in an armed world, where might is God and poverty is fettered. Abroad the hired soldier blocks up the path of freedom, and the priest the path of progress. Every penniless man, woman, and child is virtually the property of the capitalist, no less in England than is the slave in New Orleans.† Society blockades poverty, leaving it scarce escape. The artisan is engaged in an imminent struggle against wrong and injustice; then what has he, the struggler, to do with doctrines which brand him with inherited guilt, which paralyse him by an arbitrary faith, which deny saving power to good works, and menace him with eternal perdition?"

The two first works of importance controverting Secularist principles were by the Rev. Joseph Parker and Mr. J. A. Langford. Dr. Parker was ingenious, Dr. Langford eloquent. I had discussed with Dr. Parker in Banbury. In his *Six Chapters on Secularism*‡ (which was the title of his book) he makes pleasant references to that debate. The *Christian Weekly News* of that day said: "These six chapters have been written by a young provincial minister of great power and promise, of whom the world has not yet heard, but of whom it will hear pleasing things some day." This prediction has come true. I told Mr. Freeman that the "young preacher" had given me the same impression in the discussion with him. Dr. Parker said, in his first chapter, that "If the New Testament teachings oppose our own consciousness, violate our moral sense, lead us out of sympathy with humanity, then we shall abandon them." This was exactly the case of Secularism, which he undertook to confute. Dr. Langford held a more rational religion than Dr. Parker. His answer (which reached a "second thousand") had passages of courtesy and friendship, yet he contended with graceful vigor against opinions three-fourths of which justified his own.

In an address delivered September 29, 1851, I had said that "There were three classes of persons opposed to Christianity—

- "1. The dissolute.
- "2. The indifferent.
- "3. The intellectually independent.

The dissolute are against Christianity because they regard it as a foe to sensuality. The indifferent reject it through being ignorant of it, or not having time to attend to it, or not being able to attend to it through constitutional insensibility to its appeals. The intellectually independent avoid it as opposed to freedom, morality, and progress." It was to these classes, and not to Christians, that Secularism was addressed. Neither Dr. Parker nor Dr. Langford took notice that it was intended to furnish ethical guidance where Christianity—whatever might be its quality, or pretensions, or merit—was inoperative.§ The New Form of Free-

\* *Reasoner*, no. 428, vol. xvii.; p. 87.

† Not entirely so. The English slave can run away—at his own peril.

‡ Published by my then neighbor, William Freeman, of 69 Fleet-street, himself an energetic, pleasant-minded Christian.

§ In 1857 Dr. Joseph Parker published a maturer and more important volume—*Helps to Truth Seekers; or, Christianity and Scepticism*, containing the "Secularist Theory—a Critique." At a distance of more than thirty-five years it seems to me an abler book, from the Christian point of view, than I thought it on its appearance.

thought, under the title of "The Principles of Secularism," were submitted to Mr. John Stuart Mill, to whose friendship and criticism I had often been indebted, and he approved the statement as one likely to be useful to those outside the pale of Christianity.

A remarkable thing occurred in 1854. A prize of £100 was offered by the Evangelical Alliance for the best book on "The Aspects, Causes, and Agencies of" what they called by the odious, apostolic, defamatory name, "Infidelity."\* The Rev. Thomas Pearson, of Eyemouth, won the prize by a brilliant book, which I praised for its many relevant quotations, its instruction, and fairness; but I represented that its price (10s. 6d.) prevented numerous humble readers from possessing it. The Evangelical Alliance inferred that the "relevancy" was on their side altogether, whereas I meant relevant to the argument and to those supposed to be confuted by it. They resolved to issue 20,000 copies at one shilling a volume. The most eminent evangelical ministers and congregations of the day subscribed to the project. Four persons put down their names for one thousand copies each, and a strong list of subscribers was sent out. Unfortunately, I published another article, intending to induce readers of the *Reasoner* to procure copies, as they would find in its candid pages a wealth of quotations of Freethought opinion, with which very few were acquainted. The number of eminent writers—dissentients from Christianity—and the force and felicity of their objections to it, as cited by Mr. Pearson, would astonish and instruct Christians, who were quite unfamiliar with the historic literature of heretical thought. This unwise article stopped the project. The shilling edition never appeared, and the public lost the most useful and informing book written against us in my time. The Rev. Mr. Pearson died not long after; all too soon, for he was a minister who commanded respect. He had research, good faith, and courtesy—qualities rare in his day.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

## THE "PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS" EXPLODED.

PROFESSOR SAYCE, in his recent works, has repeatedly warned the Higher Critics not to be too certain of their theories, as they were liable to be overthrown at any moment by monumental discoveries. A monumental discovery has been made, but, as usual, it has not affected the position of the Higher Critics, but has overthrown one of the pet theories of Professor Sayce.

For a long time past we have been continually informed that the "Pharaoh of the Oppression" (or the Egyptian king who set the Jews to work) was Rameses II., of the 19th dynasty; and that his son Menephtah† was the "Pharaoh of the Exodus." A few years ago, when the mummy of Rameses II. was discovered, copies of the photograph were copied into a number of illustrated journals as the exact lineaments of the author of the Egyptian bondage; and whenever a European excavator came upon any brickwork of the time of Rameses II. he immediately announced that he had discovered an authentic relic of the labors of the Children of Israel. In 1885 Mr. Naville explored the ruins of a city apparently built by Rameses II., and bearing the common hieratic name of Pa-Tum—the place of the God Tum; which would, of course, apply to any city that contained a temple to Tum. He therefore announced that he had discovered the authentic site of the Pithom mentioned in Exodus; and this statement has been repeated *ad nauseam* by controversial writers who profess to deal with the evidence of the "monuments."

But this month's *Contemporary Review* contains an article by Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie, entitled "Egypt and Israel," which gives a translation of a monument of Menephtah, which at one blow overthrows all these elaborate

theories. It is an account of the reign of Menephtah, and it concludes:—

"The Sun of Egypt hath wrought this change; he was born as the fated means of revenging it, the King Merenptah. Chiefs bend down, saying, 'Peace to thee'; not one of the nine bows\* raises his head. Vanquished are the Tahenu [North Africans]; the Khita [Hittites] are quieted; ravaged is Pakanana [Kanun] with all violence; taken is Askadni;† seized is Kazmel; Yenu [Yanoh] of the Syrians is made as though it had not existed; the people of Ysiraal is spoiled, it hath no seed; Syria hath become as widows of the land of Egypt; all lands together are in peace. Everyone that was a marauder hath been subdued by the King Merenptah, who gives life like the sun every day."

It is a pity that Professor Petrie does not give us a *fac-simile* of the group of hieroglyphs that he renders as "people of Ysiraal," as the decipherment of Egyptian inscriptions often raises disputable questions; but he and the other scholars who have seen the monument are quite satisfied that it means the "people of Israel." Here, then, the assumed "Pharaoh of the Exodus" expressly mentions the people of Israel as being in his time among the cities of Palestine, and in connection with the nations of Syria. If the Israelites were inhabitants of Canaan in his reign, he could not have been "the Pharaoh of the Exodus"; his father, Rameses II., could not have been the "Pharaoh of the Oppression"; the bricks which enthusiastic explorers have dug up could not have been made by the Israelites. Professor Petrie has to face this Frankenstein of his own creation. He himself was a warm advocate of the "Exodus" theory, and he therefore temporises, and hesitates to accept, the full consequences of his own discovery. He indicates five different views that may be taken of the italicised words in the inscription:—

(a) That they refer to the destruction of the Hebrew children in Egypt.

(b) That the Exodus had taken place, and the Jews were then in Palestine.

(c) That all the Children of Israel did not accompany Jacob into Egypt, but some remained behind to be smitten by Menephtah.

(d) That some Israelites went back to Canaan shortly after Jacob went down into Egypt.

(e) That Menephtah smote some scattered Israelites that had left the main body under Moses, and had penetrated into Palestine.

He admits that (a) is totally opposed to the tenor of the inscription, which undoubtedly places the people of "Ysiraal" in Canaan. He objects to (b) because the Book of Judges says nothing about the war with Menephtah. But he inclines to (c) (d) or (e), although he admits that, "to those who attach the fullest value to every word of the books of Numbers, Joshua, and Judges, some of these hypotheses that I have named will be somewhat hard." So that the accuracy of the Bible has got to be given up in any case.

Now, Rameses II. in 1340 B.C.‡ took his army into Syria, and occupied Moab, Judea, and Galilee, as Mr. Petrie also states. This monument of the fifth year of Menephtah (1276 B.C.) informs us that he spoiled the people of Israel. Rameses III., of the 20th dynasty (1220 B.C.), reconquered the whole of Syria as far as the Euphrates; and, as Professor Petrie says, "went through Judea as well as the North." None of these campaigns are mentioned in the Bible, and therefore it is assumed that the Israelites did not occupy Palestine till after the reign of Rameses III. If they were in Palestine in the reign of Menephtah, then Joshua, Judges, and Samuel do not give us a reliable history of the people of Israel, but suppress facts of the first importance. This is the dilemma, and we shall see a great deal of wriggling on the part of the controversialists in their attempts to get out of it. CHILPERIC.

The old notion, that where nothing else could be found there was God, leaves but little room for the deity.—L. K. Washburn.

\* A term of intentional offence, as here used. "Infidelity" means treachery to the truth, whereas the heretic has often sacrificed his life from fidelity to it.

† Menephtah should really be Meren-Ptah [Egyptian—*Mer-n-Ptah*; i.e., "beloved by Ptah"], but his name has been persistently misspelt to support the theory that he was the "Pharaoh of the Exodus."

\* A generic name for the nations surrounding Egypt.

† Professor Petrie supposes that this is a mistake for "Askalni" or Askalon; but it is extremely unlikely that such mistakes would be made in an important royal inscription.

‡ These dates are only approximate, and might be some fifty years earlier. Mr. Petrie puts the date of Menephtah at 1200 B.C.

## ACID DROPS.

AN awful account of the "Urfa Horrors" appeared in the *Daily News* of May 8. Thousands of Armenians were deliberately slaughtered, and the Christian part of the city was simply wiped out of existence. Torture, mutilation, and ravishing went on for days. Then came the crowning villainy: "Three thousand unfortunate persons had taken refuge in the cathedral, mostly women and children, where the priests conducted a continual service, calling on God to hear their cries. The Turks broke down the door with axes, rushed inside and took out the ornaments, then had large quantities of petroleum brought, which they poured inside and on the walls, and the cathedral was set on fire. The entire congregation was destroyed in the flames."

Just imagine those poor women and children crying to God for help! And then realise the help he sent them! Just think, too, how Christian Europe eats and drinks and makes merry while all this devilry goes on! The armies and navies of Christendom can only be employed to promote selfish interests; they cannot be employed to save men and women from massacre and hellish outrage. Oh, what a grand and glorious thing it is to be a Christian!

The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews has just held its annual meeting—of course at Exeter Hall, the great home of crazy causes. Its gross income for last year amounted to £39,393. The report states how all this money was expended in salaries, printing, etc. What the report does *not* state is the number of Jews who were converted. However, the Society is hopeful. It will convert a real live Jew some day.

Saint Isidore, the patron saint of Madrid, has had a stroke of good luck—or rather the priests have had it for him. His carcase (probably a mythical one) was carried about the streets with a view to giving efficacy to the prayers of the faithful for rain, and slight showers fell a few days afterwards. We congratulate the Spanish priests on this happy coincidence. It will be worth many thousand pounds to their reverences. They will be able to purchase Saint Isidore some fresh jewels for his shrine.

Holmes, the Chicago murderer, who did to death more women than will ever be known, has been duly hanged. Before his neck was stretched he knelt down and gazed steadily at a crucifix which he clasped in his hands. He was attended by two white-robed priests, one on either side of him, saying the prayers for the dead. No doubt Holmes has gone to glory, and joined the man after God's own heart and other sanguinary worthies.

While under sentence of death, Holmes wrote a long confession, in which he said: "I was born with the Devil in me. I could not help the fact that I was a murderer. I was born with the evil one standing as my sponsor, beside the bed where I was ushered into the world, and he has been with me since. The inclination to murder came to me as naturally as the inspiration to do right comes to the majority of persons." Theologians will probably regard this as an illustration of original sin; but will they tell us why a good and wise God ever created such a monster?

This now glorified murderer, who confessed that he has killed twenty-seven persons, had been admitted to the Roman Catholic faith through the rite of baptism. On April 16 the Rev. Father P. J. Dailey, accompanied by the Rev. Fathers Cantillon, Higgins, and McCabe, visited the county prison, Moyamensing, Pa., and performed the ceremony. The baptism was made "conditional," because Holmes had been previously immersed in the Protestant tank. He committed his crimes as a Protestant, but goes to glory as a Catholic.

Mr. Claude Falls Wright explains why the name of the successor of the late W. Q. Judge in the Mahatma agency has not been announced. He says: "If he were known, the tremendous thought-waves that would come at him from all over the world would, in his sensitive condition, kill him, just as they killed the late Mr. Judge and Madame Blavatsky. On the other hand, if knowledge of his identity is deferred for a while, there will be less curiosity, and the thought-waves will have become settled." Under these sad circumstances it is to be hoped that curiosity will be restrained.

The Rev. Murdo Macaskill, Jehovah's chief henchman in the Highlands, and the terror of all heretics in Dingwall, is again on the warpath against Sabbath-breakers. This time he fights the Highland Railway, who, it appears, do not stop the day traffic, but do their repairs on the blessed Sabbath. The Rev. Murdo Macaskill possibly forgets the passage of

Scripture which tells how his chief succeeded in the mountains, but did not prevail against chariots of iron (Jud. i. 19).

The Rev. H. Lloyd and his wife, who keep an Orphanage, have been charged with cruelty to a child, aged two years, who had been entrusted to their care. The evidence showed that the little one had two black eyes, a nose terribly swollen, bruises on the arms, legs, and body, besides other marks of ill-treatment. The man of God's favorite text seems to have been, "Let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs xix. 18).

Bansemer, the Harlem church treasurer who defaulted with church funds and a woman, and who was arrested in Chicago and brought back to New York, has ended his career by committing suicide in the Tombs.

In the case of Mr. J. B. Wise, of Kansas, who sent a post-card to the Rev. Mr. Vennum whereon was inscribed the text of Scripture found in 2 Kings xviii. 27 and Isaiah xxxvi. 12, Judge Foster has found Mr. Wise guilty of obscenity and sentenced him to a fine of fifty dollars. The Bible is thus declared by a United States judge to be obscene, and its texts non-mailable.

The case is to be taken to the Supreme Court. If that court confirms the decision of Judge Foster, its pronouncement will be an important blow to the supposed immaculateness of God's holy word. It is not likely that the fine will be added to, and a decision by the Supreme Court that a Bible text is obscene should be well worth fifty dollars to American Freethinkers. Whichever way the case goes, it is sure to be a show up for the Bibliolaters.

The *New York Sun*, April 27, after a lot of nonsense about the Hall of Science, says: "General Booth looks forward with confidence to the time when Mrs. Besant will wear a poke bonnet and twang a Salvation guitar on the Hall of Science platform; and, considering the lady's intellectual gymnastics in the past and her always emotional nature, the thing is not wildly improbable."

The late Peter Mackenzie used to tell a story about a Yorkshire farmer and his son, who were both good Methodists. The farmer fell ill, and the son went to the prayer meetings and pleaded for his sick father at home. And this is how he did it:—

Heavenly Father, glorious King,  
Look upon my faather Jim;  
Tak' him to thy heavenly throne,  
Then farm and stock'll be my own.

A Scottish minister (says Mr. Thomas Shaw, M.P.) once submitted an account for tithes to a blacksmith, whose exclamation, "But I don't go to church!" was met by the rejoinder, "No, but the door of my church is always open." Next day the blacksmith submitted an account for shoeing to the minister, whose exclamation, "But my horses are not shod at your smithy," was met by the rejoinder, "No, but the door of my smithy is always open."

When a missionary is not "Ju Ju"—which presumably means tender and succulent—the Cameroon cannibals will not eat him. The Rev. F. Auchtenreith, of the Basel mission, who has recently arrived at Liverpool, owes his life to this fastidiousness on the part of the natives. He was condemned to be killed and eaten, but the black gentlemen whose stomachs were to become his tomb did not like the look of him—at least for gastronomical purposes. They said he was not "Ju Ju," and he was therefore spared a roasting. It is to be hoped that missionaries who are "Ju Ju" will be sent to non-cannibal countries in future. Tender missionaries ought not to be eliminated by savage epicures, leaving only the tough ones to carry on the work of conversion.

Clericals have queer ways of raising the wind. Rev. W. C. Minifle, of Bournemouth, came up to preach at Raleigh Park, London, recently, and the chapel was crammed to its utmost capacity. The text for the evening was "Show me a penny." After the service the preacher offered to sell the penny he had used as the object-lesson for his sermon. When the congregation recovered from the shock the bidding went on briskly. The penny was first offered for half-a-crown, and was finally sold for a sovereign.

The vicar of St. Anne's, Kensington, is very anxious about the honor of the Holy Communion. The body and blood of Christ ought to be taken on an empty stomach (to match an empty head), so that it may not mix with food; and the vicar reminds his flock that "a cup of tea before the Communion breaks the fast as much as a beefsteak." He also advises gentlemen who wear moustaches to take precautions against dipping them into the Precious Blood. It would never do for a man to walk out of church with the

Blood of Christ dripping from the hair on his upper lip. That is really worse than the Crucifixion.

"Onward, Christian Soldiers" is a popular hymn among muscular Christians. According to a dispatch from Vice-Consul Newton at Angora, published in an official Blue-Book from the Foreign Office, its translation into Armenian has served to increase Turkish suspicion and hatred. Mr. Newton says: "I have seen a literal Turkish translation of it, and as it reads in the Turkish language it breathes a martial spirit, and by the uneducated, or by those who may be unable to comprehend its real meaning, may appear to be an exhortation to the people to arm themselves to fight against the common enemy. Of course, almost all Christians here look upon the Turk as a common enemy. In a country like this, where social and religious differences are so intense and easily aroused, the use of this hymn in its literal translation by the Armenians may lead the Turks to take it in its literal sense, and I much doubt whether some of the Armenians themselves comprehend its meaning." Mr. Newton further regrets that the compilers of the Armenian Protestant hymn-books should have included some of the most fiery-worded hymns out of Moody and Sankey's collection.

Consul Newton is not alone in this belief as to the Turkish suspicion of hymns. A poor native teacher from the American college at Marsovan, whose release was procured by Consul Longworth, owed his imprisonment to the possession of a New Year's hymn. This Consul says: "The hymn is in Turkish words, with Armenian characters. It is purely religious in expressions in all but its refrain, which does not harmonize with the context. This is, in English, as follows: 'Onward, brave soldier, on the battle-field; Christ is commander ("Saraskir") on earth as he is in Heaven.' Now, ignorant Moslems, taught from their childhood to fight for their religion, are apt to construe the meaning of these lines as sinister in aim and militant in spirit."

Fanaticism appears to have been the sole cause of the murder of Dr. Leach, the missionary, and his family, near Sfax, in Northern Africa. The victims were not searched, and money and valuable papers were found in the house undisturbed.

According to the *Queen's Regulations*, section vii., par. 316, "No soldier of any religious belief differing from that of the Established Church is to be compelled to attend the divine worship of the Church of England." But this clause, as at present interpreted, gives no relief to Freethinkers. *Truth* mentions that at an Indian station a soldier boldly applied to be registered as an Agnostic, and to be released from attendance at church, "being," as he expressed it, "of the settled opinion that we know nothing of God or the supernatural." The application went before the Commanding Officer and the General, but neither of them would release the brave soldier from compulsory attendance at church.

A military correspondent of *Truth* points out that, if you look at the cost of the Chaplain's Department, you will see that compulsory Church Service in the army costs the nation upwards of £32,000 per annum. It would never do to let Thomas Atkins proclaim himself exempt as an Agnostic, or very soon the services of the gentlemen in black might be dispensed with.

The writer in *Truth* says: "Precisely the same difficulty, to my personal knowledge, arose not long ago on board one of H.M. ships in the Mediterranean Squadron. A blue jacket, armed with a volume of Huxley (to such a point have we arrived), declared to his captain his disbelief in revelation. He and a comrade were released from the Church service. Up came another batch of sceptics in no time with a similar demand; whereupon the captain, doubtless thinking more of discipline than religion, told them that if every man on board was a Huxleyite he would make them go to church." This implies, as *Truth* says, that "in the army and navy a large proportion of men are ready to publicly repudiate the Christian religion to-morrow if by so doing they can escape attendance at public worship."

This reminds us of a story of a church parade of the militia. One man was loitering about, and the sergeant asked him in forcible terms why he did not fall in. He replied that he was a Unitarian. "Unitarian?" asked the sergeant; "what's that? There are only three religions. Fall in with the Roman Catholics."

The Rev. M. R. Fisher, who left Waco, Tex., under charges of immoral conduct, turned up a few days later at Golden, Col. There he was confronted with his record, and immediately quitted the town. He posed as a converted infidel, but is unknown among Freethinkers.

The Rev. C. O. Brown, of San Francisco, was on April 21 suspended from membership in the Congregational Conference. He had previously been found guilty of ministerial misconduct. Brown is a notorious "infidel smasher."

The *Sunday Chronicle* poet remarks:—

When now they are told of a case of divorce,  
Whoever may lose it or win it,  
The public assume, as a matter of course,  
That a parson is sure to be in it.  
He may, now and then, the petitioner be,  
But the chances are far more than double  
That, when some poor husband demands a decree  
A parson has caused all the trouble.

The Rev. John Dickson, of St. Ninian's, Leith, risked a journey to Paris to observe for himself the haunts of evil. His greatest trial appears to have been the art galleries. Otherwise, like Balaam, he went to curse, but had to bless instead, for he says during all the five weeks he was on the Continent he never saw a person under the influence of drink. They keep the Sawbath better in Leith, but, then, they imbibe a tremendous quantity of whiskey.

Rev. Dr. Allen, in the Presbyterian General Assembly at Sydney, called his teetotal brethren "a crabbed, cranky, and miserable lot of mortals," and added that "their houses were made to look through, and not to live in." A Presbyterian who forswears whiskey is false to Scotland.

Rev. Mr. Maxwell, of Coatbridge, preaches Hell on Sunday, and naturally objects to the cool rivalry of the ice-cream vendors, against whom he is crusading with professional zeal.

Dr. John P. D. John, ex-president of De Pauw University, described as "one of the most logical thinkers in the Methodist Church," engaged Steinway Hall, Chicago, to answer Colonel Ingersoll's address to the Church Militant, which we have just reprinted for English readers under the title of *The Coming Civilisation*. Dr. John opened by deprecating abuse of Ingersoll: "I have not come to abuse Mr. Ingersoll. Abuse is not argument. He has proposed some difficult questions to the defenders of the Christian faith. It is not a sufficient answer to say that he is a blasphemer. That is to beg the question. Let him be a good man, that will not serve as a crutch for his logic if it be lame. Let him be a bad man, that will not make his logic limp if it be sound. Truth is in a sorry plight if it must rest on epithets. It is old enough to stand alone. The truth is worth its face though uttered by the Devil, and sophistry does not become logic in the mouth of a saint."

So far so good. But when we come to Dr. John's arguments we are astonished that the newspapers describe them as "masterly." For instance, Ingersoll urges the evil things done in the Bible at God's command, and the terrible suffering often inflicted on men by nature, as objections to the beneficence of the Christian God. Dr. John's reply comes to this—God made us all, and can do as he likes with us; which is an assertion of his power, and not a defence of his goodness.

"Ingersoll hates hell," said Dr. John, "and so do I; but neither of us can hate it out of existence." But the hell that Ingersoll hates was "long ago rejected by intelligent Christians." Hell is simply the natural result of sin. Which is all very pretty, in its way; but if hell be not a place, but a temper (as an old English divine wrote), it is played out for all practical purposes.

General Booth has been having "Two Days with God," and occasionally more, in various towns. At Leeds he is reported to have "saved" two hundred people at four meetings. The General may be sure of the number when he sees them properly seated in heaven. Until then it is well to remember the old proverb about the slip twixt cup and lip.

The old ladies of the Victoria Institute have had Dr. Kidd to assure them that the doctrine of evolution is perfectly compatible with design. It seems that the Almighty spends his eternity in hatching out improvements on his early inventions. He hasn't got very successful results after all these millions of years, but he has smashed up an awful number of creatures in the process.

The Dean of St. Paul's thinks that school teachers are paid quite enough already, if not too much. The *Daily News* says they "are not, however, paid nearly so much as deans, and they are far more useful to the community in which they live."

Sir Charles Elliott, K.C.S.I., who has been some forty years in India, speaking at the annual meeting of the Church Missionary Society, said the Government in India had to be impartial as between the various religions existing

there, and the missionaries were filling a gap in supplying religious education. They had solved the problem. But the inquiry naturally arises, If the missionary societies can supply religious education in India, why cannot the churches which support the missionary societies abroad themselves pay for their religious education at home?—*Daily News*.

The Rev. J. F. Tinling declared, at the meeting of the Congregational Union on the Education Bill, that he would refuse to pay the education rate when used to support the churches. "If," said he, "a hundred ministers refused in London, and five hundred in the country, as the only method of opposition left open to them, no Government could long survive the effect." If Nonconformists had solid backbone instead of an india-rubber conscience, which accommodates principle to interest, they would all along have kept to the axiom that the State has nothing to do with the teaching of religion, by which they successfully overcame the imposition of church rates.

The Rev. Hardy Harwood, at the same meeting, declared they emphatically protested against endowments out of public money to men who were teaching ideas of religion which they believed to be false. So do we. But we protest also against public money being used to subservise the interests of Bible Christianity and the Nonconformist modicum of religion, which we believe to be as false as that of the Established Church.

Mr. Yoxall, M.P., the secretary of the National Teachers' Union, being interviewed by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, declares his belief that the extra five shillings per child to be given to "Voluntary" schools will be balanced by five shillings in subscriptions withdrawn. Mr. Yoxall also points out that the churches and chapels are mainly the landlords of these schools, and that the increased grant—if not all balanced by a decrease in subscriptions—will be absorbed as rent. No advantage will accrue to the hard-worked, and often underpaid, teachers.

Mr. Price Hughes, in the same journal, expresses himself as follows on the twenty-seventh section of the new Education Bill: "We want the Bible taught, but how would a school prosper with a Roman Catholic in one corner, an Anglican in another, and a Dissenter in another?" Well, the school might prosper, but religion might suffer. Perhaps the Catholic, the Anglican, and the Dissenter would not keep to their corners; they might draw to the middle of the floor, and settle their differences there—which would be rare fun, at least for the boys.

The merry May meetings are in full swing, and white chokers are as plentiful in the Strand as ladies of easy virtue. Most of the missionary societies show decreased income, and a usual feature is excess of expenditure over income.

"Five parsons who have been at Exeter Hall during the week had tea at a local coffee-shop, and after the waitress had run up and down stairs several times for bread, butter, bath-buns, etc., they actually gave her a tip—it was a penny tract."—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

Rome is making headway in England by calmly ignoring its past and putting on an aspect of holiness and tolerance. It is well, then, to be occasionally reminded of that past, as we are by a picture of Urban VI. in the Royal Academy. It represents the following passage from Lea's *History of the Inquisition*: "The Pope paced the garden under the window of the torture chamber, reading his Breviary aloud that the sound of his voice might keep the executioner reminded of his functions."

The *Catholic Weekly Register* (May 9) incidentally mentions Cromwell as "the fanatic and regicide"—an indication of how history looks in Catholic eyes.

The *Tablet* (May 9) says: "The miracle of St. Januarius has taken place at Naples, with an accompaniment of more than ordinary devotion on the part of the people." Anyone who knows what a fraud the miracle is, and that the devotion of the people is expressed by such terms as "Bravo, yellow belly," will be surprised at the audacity of Cardinal Vaughan's organ.

Deploring clerical poverty, the *Church Times* says: "In no other profession do men seek to take upon themselves the responsibilities of married life until they have at least a fair competence, enabling them to provide for a family. But young curates, scarcely priested, rush in where wiser men fear to tread, with the terrible result too often of life-long beggary." What is this but an admission that our moral guides are the worst examples of improvidence?

Father Black writes to the *Church Times* again on the Bishop of London permitting the re-marriage of divorced

persons. He says: "There is a conspiracy of silence on the part of the bishops. They fear a disturbance of their relation to the State. There is, I believe, hardly anything they would not sell to preserve that relation." Father Black seems to have accurately gauged the moral standing of the heads of his Church.

Father Ignatius has been rigorously protesting against the practice of Christian people attending theatres. He says: "Is *The Sign of the Cross* a device of Satan to attract the people of God to his own temple?" Modern Christians, according to Father Ignatius, are half heathens. On Sunday they take the Sacrament, and on Monday visit the theatre to enjoy a burlesque or ballet.

George Macdonald, in the New York *Truthseeker*, notices the *Idler* attack on Mr. G. W. Foote on account of his St. James's Hall lecture on "The Sign of the Cross," and, on the supposition that the writer was Mr. Hall Caine, remarks that "England and the world lost a pious and exemplary, though hysterical, old lady when he turned out to be of the opposite sex."

Ingersoll often speaks about the poetry of Robert Burns. Somebody says that the name of the Scottish poet will make a good epitaph for Ingersoll. You just lay the emphasis on the second word—Robert Burns.

The British and Foreign Bible Society's income for last year was £126,372, being a decrease of £11,403. The receipts from sales fell from £93,552 to £87,590. Evidently the Bible is not in such demand as it was, even when offered at half-price.

The sooner Ireland gets Home Rule the better—in the interest of Home Rule in England. The new Education Bill does not extend to Scotland or Ireland; nevertheless, the Irish members are supporting the Government, at the bidding of the Catholic Church. The Bill is regarded as paving the way for Catholic colleges, maintained out of imperial taxation.

According to the *Daily Record*, a Kentucky editor said: "If there be one spot on earth nearer the warmest radiance of hell than another, it's that little Methodist church." The leading members of that church waited for him one night, and set about him as he went home. Now he goes about on crutches.

At the annual meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Bishop of St. Albans said that Britain was destined to be the missionary nation, and "where her flag was unfurled the Cross was planted too, whatever her motives in going." Comment would only spoil the delicious unction of this utterance.

According to the *Church Times*, in Sheffield only 1,099, or a proportion of only 1 to 300 of the population, were confirmed. Yet the Church claims to be the Church of the people.

### A Museum of Barbaric Deities.

"The collection of Hawaiian idols belonging to the American board, which were sent to this country as curiosities by the early missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, have been sent back to Hawaii to be deposited in the national museum. They are said to be the only specimens of the original deities of the islands now in existence."

Had the barbaric gods of all countries been preserved, a world of light would have been thrown on all systems of religion. The one to whom David made sacrifices of oxen and fatlings, following up the entertainment with shouting, the sound of trumpets, and leaping and dancing, which the translators rendered Lord (see 2 Samuel vi.), and which was confined in an ark—chest—and was drawn by oxen, would be a novelty in these times, and, possibly, it would give us a correct idea of the sort of God the Jews always worshipped.

W. S. Lilly tells this story about John Henry Newman in the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1894: "Shortly after he was made a Cardinal a witty person said to me, 'Dear old man! what a comfort that hat will be to him!' I asked for an explanation of this dark saying. My friend replied: 'Why, I take it that Newman is an inveterate doubter. God, the soul, immortality—they are all for him a Great Perhaps. But he will hang that hat up in his bedroom, and will turn to it the last thing at night, and will say: "Whatever is doubtful, this is clear—that there is a Holy Roman Church, and that I am a Cardinal of it; there's the hat."'" Of course Lilly says this is quite an erroneous view of J. H. N.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Saturday, May 16, Picton Hall, Liverpool:—8, "The Foundations of Faith."

Sunday, May 17, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool:—11, "The New Education Bill"; 3, "The New Woman and the Bible"; 7, "The Curse of Creeds."

May 24, Glasgow Conference; 31, London.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 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.

L. LEVINE (Charleston).—Never fear. We are not discouraged. On the contrary. We note your good work in supporting all the Freethought press, and thank you for sending us American papers.

BRIGHTON.—Will some friend inform us what newsagents sell the *Freethinker* in London-by-the-Sea?

J. PARTRIDGE, on behalf of the Committee of the Birmingham Branch, thanks Mr. Foote for the two lectures recently delivered by Mr. Watts under the Lecture Scheme. "Good audiences," he adds, "assembled at each lecture, the lecture at Aston breaking new ground with most satisfactory results."

JOHN SAMSON.—The amount of money still on deposit at the Birkbeck Bank, representing the unappropriated balance of the old Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, is, in our opinion, at the ultimate disposition of the subscribers who desired their money to be so retained. They should make application, and their communications will be dealt with by the N.S.S. Executive. The three trustees, in whose names the balance is banked, will of course honor the order of the Executive which appointed them.

J. BROWN.—We do not discuss party politics in the *Freethinker*. There is doubtless some truth in your contention.

W. KYLL.—Thanks for the cuttings. "Scrutator's" letters on the Education Bill are excellent. Your request noted.

H. C.—We don't know the circumstances of the reverend gentleman's bankruptcy. Perhaps he has been unfortunate. He was always a gentleman in his opposition to Secularism.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Huddersfield Branch, 7s. 6d.; North-West London, 2s. 6d.; Paisley, 8s.; Manchester, £2 3s. 9d.; East London, 2s. 6d.

D. GLOAK.—Glad to hear you are holding your own at Dundee, in spite of all disadvantages. Perhaps it will be possible to carry on an active propaganda during next winter. We hope to see some of your members at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. There is every likelihood of a capital Conference.

K. W. B.—Thanks.

S. J. B.—There is no Branch of the N.S.S. near Chalk Farm. The North-West London Branch holds open-air meetings in Regent's Park. Apply to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS writes: "I feel, as a Freethinker of 64 years' standing, that, poor as I am, I must strain a point to assist in a small degree in promoting Mr. Foote's masterly Lecture Scheme."

J. R. WILLOCK.—The clause referring to Rochdale in the Executive report should have been placed at the end of the sentence instead of in the middle. We have repeatedly referred to Mr. Thompson's labors at Rochdale, and he is well aware that we should be the last to rob him of any credit.

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Collected at Mr. Watts's evening lecture at Plymouth, 10s. Three Dundee Friends, 3s.; T. Dunbar Harris, 10s.; J. D. Messor, 4s. Per C. Watts: Mr. Cartwright, 4s.

A. J. H.—*Great Thoughts* is rather a goody-goody paper. What the editor means is that he doesn't want any heterodox articles.

J. GALLOWAY.—Of course money could be left to a person, with a private understanding between him and the testator; but any reference to it in the will would render it invalid. The *Crescent* and *Islamic World* are published at 32 Elizabeth-street, Liverpool.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Echo—Nya Sanningar—Whitby Gazette—Isle of Man Times—Newcastle Chronicle—Yorkshire Post—Truthseeker—Freidenker—Rochester and Chatham Standard—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—New York Sun—Literary Digest—Sunday School Companion—Freedom—Progressive Thinker—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Open Court—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Lucifer—Western Independent—Daylight—New York Public Opinion.

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.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THE sudden fine weather on Sunday somewhat thinned Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences at Manchester, but there was a capital audience in the evening, and the lecture on "The Curse of Creeds" was most enthusiastically applauded. A young clerical gentleman offered some opposition to the afternoon lecture on "Count Tolstoi's Christianity," and a ridiculous Christian, who is really not fit to speak at all, aired his pious nonsense in the evening, keeping the audience in convulsions of laughter, not *with* him, but *at* him.

The Manchester Branch would have been happy to assist the poor people who are being harried by the local police under the Sunday Trading Acts, but it is impossible to withstand the magistrates' orders, and all that can be done is to raise an agitation on the subject. Public opinion is the only check to the bigotry of Sabbatarians.

When the National Secular Society's Conference was held at Liverpool, the local Branch applied for the use of the Picton Hall for the evening public meeting. It was refused, however, and a heated discussion took place on the Town Council. The pretence was that the hall was "engaged," and with this fact in mind the Branch has once more applied for the use of Picton Hall—this time with a more successful result. Its use has been granted for a lecture by Mr. G. W. Foote on "The Foundations of Faith." The lecture is to be given on Saturday evening, May 16, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, and the admission is free. As the time for advertising is rather brief, it is to be hoped that the Liverpool Freethinkers will do their best to fill Picton Hall on this occasion by urging the attendance of their Christian friends and acquaintance.

Mr. Foote lectures the next day (Sunday, May 17) three times in the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street. The subjects are attractive, and will doubtless draw good audiences.

Mr. Watts commenced his ten days' lecturing tour in Devonshire and Cornwall last Sunday, when he had two good audiences at Plymouth. Many friends were present from surrounding districts, and both lectures were enthusiastically applauded. During this week Mr. Watts breaks new ground in Cornwall and Devonshire, under Mr. Foote's scheme, and he will give in next week's *Freethinker* an account of his tour.

To-day, Sunday, May 17, Mr. Watts again lectures, morning and evening, in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth.

The Glasgow friends are looking forward to meeting a large number of their English brethren on Whit-Sunday—the date of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. Excursions run from all parts of the country. A return ticket from London, for four or eight days, only costs 25s., and a ticket to return any day within sixteen days costs 33s.

A good London friend, who does not desire publicity, will entertain the delegates to a hot luncheon at the North British Hotel, George-square, at one o'clock.

The Glasgow Committee-men, wearing a rosette (Northampton colors), will await the arrival of English trains—ordinary and special—afternoon and evening, on Saturday, 23rd inst., at the three railway termini. Friends coming by other trains, or from places in Scotland, who wish to be received at the station, should send particulars as early as possible to Mr. J. P. Gilmour, 439 Victoria-road, Govanhill, Glasgow.

In order to obviate delay and possible confusion on Sunday morning, delegates and members of the N.S.S., resident and non-resident, are particularly requested to visit the Committee-room, 110 Brunswick-street, on Saturday, any time between 2 p.m. and 10, when they can have their credentials viséd, and receive admission tickets for the business meetings of the Conference.

Friends who intend to join the excursion on Whit-Monday are reminded that, if they want hot luncheon (1s. 9d.) at Arrochar, it is imperative that they should have their names registered at once by Mr. D. Black, 332 Duke-street, Glasgow, as the hotel-keeper must know the number to be provided for, not less than a week in advance.

Under the title of *The Coming Civilisation* we have reprinted the two-hours' address which Colonel Ingersoll delivered to the members and friends of Rev. Dr. Rusk's "Church Militant" in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, on Sunday, April 12. The pamphlet is well printed and stitched in a neat wrapper. The price is threepence. We may add that the address contains Ingersoll's views on other questions

than religion—such as marriage, labor, and the treatment of criminals.

The meritorious work of the Humanitarian League has been extended by the establishment of a special department in order to advocate much-needed reform in our Criminal Law and Prison System, and a manifesto has been published by a sub-committee. Mrs. C. Mallet, 132 Cromwell-road, is devoting attention to this part of the work of the League, and will be happy to hear from those interested.

The Secularists at New Brompton had a meeting last Sunday week on the Education Bill. Councillor Lewington and Mr. W. B. Thompson were the principal speakers, and the proceedings were well reported in the local press.

London Freethinkers are again reminded that Mr. Foote's tenancy of the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, commences on Sunday, May 31. Sunday evening lectures will be delivered regularly there by the leading Freethought advocates. Mr. Foote opens the ball on May 31, the first Sunday after the Conference, and will be supported on that occasion by Mr. Charles Watts. There will be a charge for admission at the door, Mr. Foote having guaranteed the proprietor against any prosecution on that account.

Metropolitan friends who would like to visit the Athenæum before May 31 will have a good opportunity of doing so next Thursday (May 21), when an entertainment takes place in aid of the Lecture Scheme. Full details of this will be found in our advertisement columns. Mr. Watts takes part in a dramatic scene, and Mr. Foote gives a reading from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. The tickets are sixpence and one shilling.

## THE BIBLE AND THE PEOPLE.

THE people of England, it is said, are the people of a book, and that book, forsooth, is the Bible. I challenge the veracity of the statement, however. I admit that a comparatively small portion of the English public are virtually Bible-ridden; but, I aver, they are not, in any real sense, Bible readers, much less Bible students. The only people, I maintain, who have seriously studied the sacred volume in all its parts are the Sceptics or Freethinkers. Strange to say, the average church or chapel-goer is practically ignorant of its real nature and contents; all that can be said is that they hear it read or gabbled, as the case may be, on Sundays only, and there, for the most part, the matter begins and ends. The average man and woman, outside the Churches, is practically ignorant of its existence. The cultured people, for the most part, utterly repudiate its so-called divine authority and authorship, and regard it only as Hebrew and Christian tradition, or merely as ordinary literature, which is about all that can be truly or honestly alleged concerning it.

—T. Oswald Detchon.

## The Church Christ.

In his name, millions and millions of men and women have been imprisoned, tortured, and killed. In his name, millions and millions have been enslaved. In his name, the thinkers, the investigators, have been branded as criminals, and his followers have shed the blood of the wisest and the best. In his name, the progress of many nations was stayed for a thousand years.

In his gospel was found the dogma of eternal pain, and his words added an infinite horror to death. His gospel filled the world with hatred and revenge; made intellectual honesty a crime; made happiness here the road to hell; denounced love as base and bestial; canonised credulity; crowned bigotry, and destroyed the liberty of man.

It would have been far better had the New Testament never been written—far better had the theological Christ never lived. Had the writers of the New Testament been regarded as uninspired; had Christ been thought of only as a man; had the good been accepted, and the absurd, the impossible, and the revengeful thrown away, mankind would have escaped the wars, the tortures, the scaffolds, the dungeons, the agony and tears, the crimes and sorrows of a thousand years.—R. G. Ingersoll, *"The Foundations of Faith."*

RAMSEY-KEMP TESTIMONIAL FUND.—Mr. George Anderson, £5 5s.; W. P. Ball, £1; Dickinson, 5s.; R. H. Wharrier, 2s. 6d.; S. Holmes, 2s. 6d.; W. Ross, 2s. 6d.; J. Ross, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Dibbon, 2s.; W. Cooper, 2s.; Mrs. Wharrier, 1s.; James Latty, 6d.; Thornton Dixon, 6d.; Peter Harle, 6d.; John Heron, 6d.; Edward Laughaud, 6d.; James Smith, 6d.; William Fairtaine, 6d.; William Andrews, 6d.—G. WARD, *hop. treas.*

## CHRISTIAN CRITICISM.

(Concluded from page 299.)

THE editor of the *Consell Chronicle* says: "Mr. Watts appears somewhat doubtful as to what the soul really is." Now, the fact is that with me it is not a question of doubt. I frankly confess that I know nothing about the existence of an entity called soul, and I have never met anyone who could give me any trustworthy information upon the subject. We have had numerous speculations as to what the soul is; but that is not knowledge. I agree with Th. Ribot, the French professor of comparative and experimental psychology, who says the ego, or soul, "is not an entity acting where it chooses or as it pleases, controlling the organs in its own way, and limiting its domain according to its own wish. On the contrary, it is a resultant, even to such a degree that its domain is strictly determined by the anatomical connections with the brain, and that at one time it represents an entire body, less an undivided part, and at another time the half of a body, and in parasitic monsters such a limited domain that it does not suffice to support life, and accordingly is expelled prematurely" (*The Diseases of Personality*, p. 45). Dr. Cromwell also writes: "His [man's] proper ego is his whole self—his entire organism with all its faculties. His ego must be imperfect, even though it should be still an ego, if deprived of any part of his original organism, or of any faculty originally belonging to it; and the philosophical (or rather logical) ego framed for him must be alike imperfect if we do not embrace the conception of the proper organic man, with every faculty properly pertaining to him. Man, I again say, is the ego" (*The Soul and the Future Life*, p. 48). Here it is contended that the soul, or vital principle, in man is a force resulting from the combination of the material parts of which our bodies are composed. As Professor Graham observes: "Our modern physiologists have ascertained that thought is but a function of the brain and nerves; why should it not perish with these? . . . Why should it not collapse with the general break-up of the machinery? Why should it not cease when no longer supported by the various physical energies whose transformations within the bodily machine made its existence possible?" (*The Creed of Science*, p. 149).

Those who allege that man has a "soul" which is not dependent upon the body should be able to tell us what it is; when it enters, and when it leaves, the human frame; whether it leaves the body at death; and, if so, where it remains until the judgment day. Again, where are the "souls" of the unfortunate inmates of our lunatic asylums, who have diseased brains, and whose reason is gone? Have their "souls" lost all power of control? If so, of what value is the "soul" as a controlling force? When a drunkard becomes intoxicated, and loses all command over himself, where is the "soul" at that particular time? Has it been overcome by the drink? If yes, then it is not impervious to material conditions; if no, why does it not protect the intellect of the intoxicated person? Some of the leading scientists both of England and America have admitted that it cannot be proved that there is a life beyond the grave. For instance, Professor J. P. Lesley says: "Science cannot possibly either teach or deny immortality." Professor Lester F. Ward observes that, "So far as science can speak on the subject, consciousness persists as long as the organised brain, and no longer." And Professor E. S. Morse writes: "I have never yet seen anything in the discoveries of science which would, in the slightest degree, support or strengthen a belief in immortality" (*Knowledge*, October 1, 1888). The late Professor Tyndall wrote: "But to return to the hypothesis of a human soul, offered as an explanation or a simplification of a series of obscure phenomena. Adequate reflection shows that, instead of introducing light into our minds, it increases our darkness. You do not, in this case, explain the unknown in terms of the known, which is the method of science, but you explain the unknown in terms of the more unknown" (*Lecture on Science and Man*, pp. 27, 28).

The editor finds fault with me because I asserted that the lower animals are capable of thought. He says it is "a vexed question among the foremost scientists of the century." It is to be regretted that the names of those scientists were not given. Dr. W. B. Carpenter says that, though "in man we find the highest development of the

reasoning faculties, it is quite absurd to limit them to him, as some have done, since no impartial observer can doubt that many of the lower animals can execute reasoning processes as complete in their way as those of man, though much more limited in their range" (*Gen. and Comp. Physiology*, p. 999). Sir Benjamin Brodie observes: "The mental principle in animals is of the same essence as that of human beings. . . . I am inclined to believe that the minds of the inferior animals are essentially of the same nature with that of the human race" (*Psychological Inquiries*, pp. 164, 166). Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, deals with this subject at considerable length, and on page 147 he writes: "Spiritual powers cannot be compared or classed by the naturalist; but he may endeavor to show, as I have done, that the mental faculties of man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree." It seems to me hardly possible for anyone to watch the doings of many of the lower animals without arriving at the conclusion that they have the power of thought, which they exercise at times with marked precision.

The "safest belief argument" is made to do duty once more. In my article last week I pointed out that Secularists are on the safe side, whether there be a future life or not. The editor assumes that among the many religions in the world the only true one is that of Christianity. He seems to forget that he has only one chance out of many; for he rejects all the others, and I, as a Secularist, go one better and reject all. But future rewards, supposing there will be any, will not depend upon beliefs, but rather upon deeds, and some of the best of these are performed by men of every religion, as well as by those of no religion.

Let me assure the editor that Secularists do not believe in such nonsense as "that matter has created itself," and that the universe is the "result of chance." Those who accuse us of holding such preposterous views must be entirely ignorant of what our teachings are.

We Secularists are taunted by the editor with not having founded hospitals, etc. Is he aware that Secular organisations have not existed longer than about fifty years, and that during that time Christian-made laws have deprived us of money left for Secular work? Is he aware that the first Christian hospital was built by a Roman lady named Fabiola in the fourth century A. D.? It therefore took some time for Christianity to begin to develop this good fruit, though Egyptians, Greeks, and Hindoos had long before shown the value of it. If it is true that the world is indebted to Christianity for benevolent institutions, it would be a sad reproach to the supposed "Heavenly Father," who, until less than two thousand years ago, failed to inspire his children with active sympathy for those who required help.

The editor says that the one principle that is strong enough to regenerate mankind is love; but surely it will not be urged that this virtue is confined to Christianity. The great principle of love, humanity, and the brotherhood of man was understood and practised long before Christianity existed. "Love," says the great teacher of the Academy, "is peace and goodwill among men, calm upon the waters, repose and stillness in the storm, and balm of sleep in sadness." "Independently of Christian revelation," says Merivaie, "the heathen world was gravitating, through natural causes, towards the acknowledgment of the cardinal doctrines of humanity" (*Conversion of the Roman Empire*, p. 118). In Mencius we have the noble statement that "Humanity is the heart of man." Lecky writes: "The duty of humanity to slaves had been at all times one of those which the philosophers had most ardently inculcated. . . . But these exhortations (on the duty of abstaining from cruelty to slaves), in which some have imagined that they have discovered the influence of Christianity, were, in fact, simply an echo of the teaching of ancient Greece, and especially of Zeno, the founder of the sect who had laid down, long before the dawn of Christianity [italics are mine], the broad principle that all men are by nature equal, and that virtue alone establishes a difference between them" (*History of European Morals*, vol. i., pp. 324-5).

It is not true that Secularism has neglected the elevation of woman. The endeavor to secure for her justice has been, and still is, among our foremost work. But what has Christianity done for her? The position of woman, according to the Bible, is low and humiliating in the extreme. It teaches that "Thy desire shall be to thy

husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis iii. 16). It enjoins that, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything (Ephesians v. 22-24). Women are not to speak in public, but to be under obedience, as also saith the law; they are not permitted to teach, but to learn in silence with all subjection, for the reason that "Adam was first formed, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Timothy ii. 11-15). These notions are not, when accepted, calculated to elevate the character, or better the condition, of woman. Herbert Spencer says: "In England, as late as the seventeenth century, husbands of decent station were not ashamed to beat their wives. Gentlemen arranged parties of pleasure for the purpose of seeing wretched women whipped at Bridewell. It was not until 1817 that the public whipping of women was abolished in England. Wives in England were bought from the fifth to the seventeenth century."

I have now noticed some of the editor's errors and misrepresentations, and my earnest hope is that he will obtain a knowledge of those principles and teachings which he attempts to depreciate.

CHARLES WATTS.

## CREATION.

MR. LEE says that God explains all—does it? (I say "it," because I take God now as an hypothesis.) God explain all? Not to me; God does not, to me, make anything any more intelligible. Here is an atom, you say; minute, invisible; how did it originate? The very question, "How did it originate?" involves the statement that it *did* originate. I deny your right to make the statement that the atom originated. I say that you have to prove that it *did* originate before you have a right to ask the "how."

Then, in the next place, if we assume, for the purpose of argument, that the atom did originate, I deny that you can think—you may believe, but you cannot *think*; that is, you cannot think out, you cannot realise in your own mind the idea—of a mind creating an atom. I deny altogether that anybody has the power to conceive creation in the religious or metaphysical sense of the word. All man can do by the exertion of his utmost powers is to shift matter—pre-existent matter, matter that will exist after he is dead—from one position to another. All creation is to us the re-shaping of pre-existent matter. I deny that the human mind is capable of realising creation in any absolute sense of the word.

It is no explanation of the atom to tell me that God made it. That is offering me one mystery as the explanation of another mystery. The origin of the atom is a mystery; a Being is brought in hypothetically, who is a greater mystery than the atom itself; and how can this mystery explain the other? I will tell you how a thing is explained. A thing is explained when Science shows us exactly its origin, its growth, its development, and possibly its decay and disappearance; tracing it from its initial stage to the completion of its career. That is a scientific explanation; and, when Science explains a thing like that, we understand it; but it is not a scientific or a rational explanation of a thing to say, "God did it." That is what ignorance has said in all ages.

It used to be asked, "Who made the world?" until the nebular hypothesis explained to us the history of worlds. Then the question was shifted farther back, and it was asked, "Who made all the various species of life upon this planet?" Darwin explained the Origin of Species—I will not say to the satisfaction of all parties, but to the satisfaction of scientific men. And now the question is put farther back—"Who made life? Or who made the atoms?" In other words, the banner of Theology is always planted at the point where knowledge ends and ignorance begins. It is driven farther and farther back. It is the banner, not of Knowledge, but of Mystery. It is the flag of Superstition, under which all the priesthoods of the world have gathered for the exploitation of the people.

G. W. FOOTE.

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

## THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGES.

(ACCORDING TO "GOD'S WORD.")

As Yahveh looked down from his heavenly box,  
He angrily tugged at his long, flowing locks ;  
And his lips he did gnaw,  
For the sight that he saw  
Made him think it was time that he "pulled up his socks."

For the Lord from his window, I'd have you to know,  
Can distinctly perceive *terra firma* below ;  
And as Yahveh looked down,  
With an ominous frown,  
He exclaimed : "Well, I'm hanged, here's a deuce of a go !"

Now, the object of which the Lord God had caught sight  
Which had so raised his dander and upset him quite,  
Was a building of stone,  
Which appeared to have grown  
From the earth towards heaven to a very great height.

Said the Lord : "I'll go down to discover what's up" ;  
So after he'd swallowed of wine just a cup,  
Towards earth he did tear,  
Without ladder or stair,  
For the Lord's like a bird, and can fly through the air.

When he reached *terra firma*—in less than an hour,  
He discovered that men were erecting a tower ;  
Thought the Lord : "With its aid,  
They intend to invade  
My heavenly mansion, and me overpower."

"If I let them continue to act in this way,  
I expect there will be just the Devil to pay."  
And he muttered : "Great Scott,  
I will show them what's what ;  
In their own proper sphere I'll compel them to stay."

So he made them strike work by confounding their speech  
(Hitherto had one language been spoken by each).  
'Twas a deuce of a fix,  
For if one asked for bricks,  
His request was no more understood than a screech !

Now, it seems that some sceptical scoffers surmise  
That this narrative's built up with nothing but lies ;  
That a God with such power  
Could have thrown down the tower  
Without taking the trouble to come from the skies !

But I trust that the tale is believed in by you,  
For 'tis taken from Scripture, and so *must* be true ;  
And though infidels sneer  
At the Bible, 'tis clear  
That it truly depicts how all languages grew !

ESS JAY BEE.

## A KING'S VALUE IN HARD CASH.

(DANIEL, BOOK V.)

"Expende Annibalem !"—*Juvenal, Satira, x., 147.*

"MENE, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" is a mere expression of value, such as may be found chalked on a piece of furniture in a broker's shop. M. Clermont Ganneau has shown that these Chaldee words should be rendered : "A maneh, a maneh, a shekel, and a fraction."

The wag (*farceur*) who wrote the words on the wall of Belshazzar's dining-room appraised the king at £15 3s. 1½d. A maneh is about 60 shekels. Poor Belshazzar ! I cannot imagine a more flagrant case of *lèse majesté*. The wily Scotch got rid of Charles I. at a much higher figure—£400,000. They are a mercenary race. Even their ministers like to do a good stroke of business. When Prince Charles Edward Stuart was a fugitive, and hiding at Benbecula, the laird received him kindly. The Christian minister, McAulay, called upon him, and said : "You harbour a man for whose head £30,000 has been promised by the English Government. I propose that we should give him up and divide this money." The honest laird drew his sword, and swore he would take the minister's life if he divulged the secret. The prince found a refuge in a robber's cave. Seven of these outlaws, to whom the poor pretender made himself known, provided him with food, and would have died rather than betray the unhappy fugitive. Among the *basest* of needy Scotchmen was not a man more base than this minister of the Gospel who made such an infamous proposal. What a pity that lynch law was not in vogue in those days

—1746

C. K. LAPORTE.

## MOTHER THOUGHTS.

A MAN'S real faith is never contained in his creed, nor is his creed an article of his faith.—*Thoreau.*

The language of friendship is not words, but meanings.—*Thoreau.*

Goodness is the only investment that never fails.—*Thoreau.*

He that feeds man serveth few ;  
He serves all who dare be true.—*Emerson.*

The time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so.—*Ingersoll.*

The wise have much in common with one another.—*Eschylus.*

Worldliness is better than other-worldliness.

As the final word of nature is man, the final word of man is love.

If a man spreads my failings abroad, he is my master, even though he were my servant.—*Goethe.*

No teaching is, or can be, final : "let knowledge grow from more to more."

What shelter to grow ripe is ours ?  
What leisure to grow wise ?—*Matthew Arnold.*

How fair a lot to fill  
Is left to each man still.—*Matthew Arnold.*

Our business henceforth is not with death, but with life.—*G. Sand.*

The truest liberality is appreciation.—*Goethe.*

Live pure ! Speak true ! Right wrong !—*Edna Lyall.*

Live openly. Live for others.—*Auguste Comte.*

Our finest hope is finest memory.—*George Eliot.*

Choose equality and flee greed.—*Menander.*

Heredity is the scientific doctrine that "like begets like"—in other words, that what we are, that in a measure will our children be.

So many gods, so many creeds—  
So many paths that wind and wind,  
While just the art of being kind  
Is all the sad world needs.—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

Disagreeableness is more tolerated than insignificance.—*Goethe.*

All true work is unpaid.—*Comte.*

Work and despair not.—*Goethe.*

Man is placed as a real being in the midst of a real world, and endowed with such organs that he can perceive and produce the real and also the possible.—*Goethe.*

Generosity wins favor for everyone, especially when it is accompanied by modesty.—*Goethe.*

For life to be fruitful, life must be felt as a blessing.—*G. Sand.*

To most people, I imagine, God is "the mystery made darker with a name."—*T. Oswald Detchon.*

A man may be as wise as any other man, but he cannot be wiser than all.—*L. Stephen.*

What a true saying it is, that he who wants to deceive mankind must before all things make absurdity plausible.—*Goethe.*

## Pious Gambling.

The Baptist Missionary Society has profited by the rise in the value of Consols. A large proportion of the Centenary Fund, which was raised two years ago to commemorate the society's centenary, was invested in Consols, which have, however, been sold at a profit of £1,200, and the proceeds invested in Metropolitan Consolidated Stock. The announcement of this smart business transaction created some amusement and considerable satisfaction at the society's meeting on April 20. It is not often that a religious organisation benefits from Stock Exchange fluctuations, and the Baptist missionary authorities are naturally proud of their novel achievement.

## Obituary.

On Monday morning last, at his residence, 140 Old Kent-road, Mr. G. Cheal died, after a short and painful illness. Mr. Cheal was a sturdy Freethinker, and an earnest worker in most progressive movements. He was a great admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and of Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the N.S.S. He was a very energetic member, also, of the National Sunday League. He died as he had lived, free from superstition and an ardent worker for human progress. He leaves a wife and many friends to mourn his loss.—ARTHUR B. MOSS.

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. E. F. KNIGHT, in his interesting work, *Madagascar in War Times* (Longmans, Green & Co.), says that the Nonconformist Christianity of the Hovas is "a matter merely of teetotalism, non-smoking, Sabbatarianism, and chapel-going, and is absolutely unconnected with the higher rules of conduct." Mr. Knight is not one of those "who believe in the sudden conversion and permanent reform of a scoundrel at an hysterical revival meeting," and he has no belief in the reports of the missionaries, whom he finds characterised by ignorance and spiritual arrogance, while their converts he calls "conceited and hypocritical prigs."

\* \* \*

Told at the Booksellers' Dinner: A lady entered a bookshop in search of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's Universalist story, entitled *Burglars in Paradise*. What he asked for was "Smugglers in Heaven."

\* \* \*

In the *Academy* of May 2 Mr. Alfred W. Benn contributes a translation of the last lines by the great German Free-thinker, David Friedrich Strauss. They were sent to a lady a few weeks before his death, and are found, in the original, in the recently-published correspondence of Strauss, edited by his friend, Professor E. Zeller:—

Let me not bewray it,  
Call not this a wail;  
She to whom I say it  
Feels I do not quail.

As a spent note sighing  
Breathes itself away,  
As a low light dying,  
Life goes out to-day.

Yet, though weak and weaker,  
May my last note here,  
May my light's last flicker  
Still be pure and clear.

\* \* \*

The *Athenaeum*, reviewing Lady Mary Lloyd's translation of the letters of Ernest and Henriette Renan, says: "There is one matter in the history of these years in Renan's life which is strongly brought out in these letters, and which cannot fail to impress the English reader, and that is the extraordinary facilities offered by the public system of education in France to a young man desirous to pursue serious studies." After many years we have not caught up to "infidel" France in this respect, nor are we likely to do so while the clericals retain control.

\* \* \*

The *Scotsman*, noticing Mr. Dobell's publication of James Thomson's *Biographical and Critical Studies*, says: "The frankness of his disbelief in established religions renders him obnoxious to respectability. But his writing is so much better and healthier than the goody literary appreciations of ecclesiastical orthodoxy that it is to be hoped the present volume and its successors will win readers for this sincere writer even among those whom his contentions in matter of religion cannot reach."

\* \* \*

The Litany of Loreto has been supposed to be one of the most ancient of Christian liturgical documents. The Rev. J. Sauren, a Catholic of Cologne, has, however, critically examined the authorities, and found that the Litany does not go back beyond the fifteenth century, and that it did not take its rise in Loreto itself, but was carried there by pilgrims to the bogus Holy House.

\* \* \*

Mr. George Gissing has some reputation as a realistic novelist. *His Brother's Keeper*, which we notice as an attempt to connect romance with Freethought, will not add to this. The story is, briefly, of the lunatic brother of Mark Ellerton, a Secularist lecturer, who follows him about lecturing in opposition, and finally, believing it to be his mission to prevent his brother doing mischief, shoots him. We do not think much of the story, but the moral is good.

\* \* \*

A pamphlet entitled *The Claims of the Jews' Messiah*, by M. L. Rossvally, of Leeds, would deserve no notice but from the fact that it claims to have circulated 750,000 copies. More barefaced effrontery in putting forward spurious Christian evidence we have rarely seen. It sets out by citing the notorious forgery in Josephus, which it follows with the bogus *Acta Pilati* "transmitted by Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius." It then coolly says: "The facts, therefore, in the New Testament must be admitted to have really happened." It says, what every Jew knows is false, that David distinctly calls the Messiah Jehovah. Of Christ's genealogy it says "not even the slightest taint of a suspicion of its genuineness can in any conceivable possibility be attached to it." These are but a few specimens of

the "arguments" used to show that the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah are incontrovertible. Mr. Rossvally does not tell us why intelligent Jews refuse to accept Jesus, but an answer might be found in the flimsy and fictitious character of his own arguments.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FREETHOUGHT SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Every Freethought Society ought to have its Sunday-school. Christianity in this country rests on the Sunday-school. As fast as we draw men and women out of the church by one door a stream of new disciples passes into the church through the Sunday-school avenue. I am astonished at the short-sightedness of so many Freethinkers in this matter.

Where there's a will there's a way. Aided by a few loyal colleagues in the East London Ethical Society, I have for years kept going a school in which the children never pray, never lift a word of praise to God, and never shudder at the word Hell. This school is full, and no more children can be enrolled at present. But I should be glad to draw attention to the South London Ethical Sunday-school, which meets every Sunday morning at a quarter past eleven in a room attached to the Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New Road. The Secretary is Miss F. A. Law, daughter of the well-known and esteemed Mrs. Harriet Law. We teach the children plain moral lessons on a purely rational and human basis. The school banner bears Thomas Paine's motto, "To do good is our religion." Miss Law and I will be happy to receive into the school the children (between the ages of 6 and 13) of Camberwell Freethinkers. The entrance is by the right-hand door, and the class-room is upstairs.

F. J. GOULD.

12 Meynell-road, Hackney Common, London, N.E.

PROFANE JOKES.

Aunt—"Why did you stare at that gentleman so rudely, Ethel?" Little Ethel—"Oh, he's a drefful man; he never goes to church or nothing. I heard father say he was an acrostic."

New Housemaid—"Eh, Janet, lassie, I let the teapot fa' jist the noo, an' it brak tae bits. The maister saw it, an' he didna' say onything!" Cook—"Wheesht; it's Sunday, an' the maister's far ower conscientious a man tae gie vent tae his feelin's on siccan a day. Bit wait tull the mornin', ma wummin, an' winna ye get a sweerin'!"

A German in Rahway, N.J., noted years ago for his ability to compose and carve epitaphs, received the following from a German, which he carved on the tombstone as requested: "My wife, Susan, is dead. If she'd had life till next Friday, she'd been dead shust two weeks. As a tree falls so must she stand. All things is impossible mit God."

An ardent evangelist on a Pullman train became interested in the porter, a jolly African, and attempted his conversion. "Are you a Christian?" he feelingly asked. The porter grinned and replied: "Well, you don't take me for a Jew, do you?"

A new church having been built for a parish in a certain Western county of Scotland, the materials of the old one were disposed of under the hammer of the auctioneer. Attending the sale was a country laird of a good-natured disposition, but as he was supposed to be deficient intellectually he was often made the object of his neighbors' harmless banter. When the pulpit was put up for sale the minister addressed him: "Man, Sandy, you should buy the pulpit; it would make a fine calf's crib." "Na, na," said Sandy, "let it gang for something else noo; it's been a calf's crib lang enuch!"

"Bruddahs an' sistahs," began the Rev. Jackson Jones "I fine dat de collection for dis ebbing am jus' one dollar an' fo' cents. Shame on yo'! Shame on yo'! Foh, while ebery one ob yo' pays yo' lan'lord from one to fo' dollars ebery week fo' de loan of a po', shaky, disappointed home here, yo' expect de good Laud to gib yo' a beautiful an' glorious eberlastin' home—a manshin in de skies—fo' two cents a week. Ah, my deah bruddahs an' sistahs, I feah dat de future eberlastin' homes ob some ob yo' won't be no biggah than hen-coops. What hab been said hab been said in all mannah of lub. Let us all ingage in silent prah."

'Tis better to live like a man though you die like a dog, than to live like a dog and die like a saint.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

### LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, Robert Forder, "Bradlaugh's Parliamentary Struggle." Saturday (23rd), concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Creation and Modern Criticism."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, J. A. Hobson, M.A., "Property: True and False."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Belief in a Personal God."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, J. F. Green, "The Struggle for Freedom in Russia."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Belief in a Personal God."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, meeting to discuss Conference agenda.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible of the Future."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. James, "Can we be Saved?" EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, C. Cohen, "What Think Ye of Christ?" 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Jesus Christ."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "Joshua Davidson; or, Christianity in Practice." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, L. Keen, "Evolution"; 3.30, A. B. Moss, "The Day of Judgment." Wednesday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 10.45, A. Guest, "The Bible and Woman."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, L. Keen, "Evolution."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Now the Birth of Jesus was on this Wise."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Thomas Paine."

REGENT'S PARK: 3, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 8.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, special members' meeting.

BARNSELY (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 11.30 and 6.30, Willie Dyson will lecture.

BRISTOL BRANCH: 2.30, members and friends meet at the Fountain, top of Blackboy Hill, Durham Down, for ramble to Coomba Dinga, Penpolepoint.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, annual meeting of members; 6.30, social meeting.

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbar's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, N. P. Billany, "How the Spirit Moves Me."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Mr. Cook opens discussion on "Vaccination."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, W. Heaford, "The Glorious Uncertainties of Christianity"; 3, "Is the Bible Reliable?" 7, "Religion at the Bar of Reason." (The morning lecture will be given near the Monolith—weather permitting.) Saturday (16th), at 7, in the Theatre, Woodhouse, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business; 7.30, the Conference agenda.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3 and 6.30, lectures.

## Lecturer's Engagements.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London—May 17, m. Camberwell, a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 24, New Brompton; 31, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

## POSITIVISM.

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