

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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THE FLIGHT OF JESUS.

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ would have been a very awkward thing for the Apostles if it had not been rounded off by his ascension. Preachers of the "risen Christ" would have been asked, "Where is this Son of God now? Why cannot we see him? Why is he only visible to you? Or has he ceased to appear to anyone, and is it likely that he will never be seen again? If so, what has become of him?" Such questions would have been very embarrassing if the preachers had not an ace of trumps in the ascension. To all inquiries after their Master, who had been dead and was alive again, they could give a most satisfactory reply. When they were asked, "Where is your Jesus?" they could answer, "He is gone up." That settled the matter. He could not be followed or brought back, and no one could prove that he had *not* ascended into heaven.

Nor was there anything very novel and startling in the story of these preachers. The career of all the great Saviors or Sun-Gods of antiquity had been rounded off with a similar incident; and even in the comparatively cultivated city of Rome, the capital of the civilised world, in the very century before the birth of Christ, the people had lent a ready ear to marvels attending the death of Julius Cæsar. "The enthusiasm of the multitude," says Mr. Froude, "refused to believe that he was dead. He was supposed to have ascended into heaven, not in adulatory metaphor, but in literal and prosaic fact." Even the Jews, who had less mythology and a sterner faith than the Gentiles, were beyond the reach of surprise in this matter. Their greatest prophet after Moses, namely Elijah, had ascended into heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by flaming coursers.

Anybody who looks at the Christian story with common-sense eyes must see how well it is guarded against practical exposure. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was unattested by a single independent witness. His post-mortem appearances were all made to his own little party. His arrest, his trial, and his execution were all public; but the demonstrations of his resurrection were all private. This fact was not overlooked by the great Newman, who argued that it was a necessity of the situation, since it was requisite that a chosen body of men, instead of the general public, should be the custodians of a truth which was to form so large a part of the basis of the Christian Church. Whatever may be the force of this argument, the fact itself is obvious that the risen Christ never appeared except to his personal followers. Evidence was absolutely denied to the people who were to be called upon to believe.

The evidence of the ascension is of the same private character. It reminds us very forcibly of the old Jewish story of the ascension of Elijah, which rested entirely on the witness of Elisha. That gentleman returned alone from an expedition in which he had accompanied his master. He declared that Elijah had gone up to glory, leaving his disciple his mantle and the goodwill of the business. In the same way, the disciples of Jesus declared that he had flown up to heaven, after giving them a commission to carry on his work on earth.

How they actually told the story we shall never know. All we have is the story as it appears in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles after passing through many channels. Curiously enough, the ascension is not related in Matthew and John, although the writers of those gospels, according to the orthodox theory, were personal

disciples of Jesus and actual witnesses of the occurrence. They say not a word about what they are supposed to have seen. All the details are given by Mark and Luke, who were not present. Nor do these hearsay witnesses agree with each other. According to Luke, Jesus ascended from Bethany, a place near Jerusalem, and on the very day of the resurrection, or the next morning at the latest; while, according to Mark, he ascended at some time, which is not specified, from Galilee, the most southern part of which is sixty miles from Jerusalem. Of course the ascension could not have occurred at two different places, and this is a fatal discrepancy. A man could not be hung for committing one and the same murder in two different towns. Everything happens in time and space. What happens at *any time* and *anywhere* is not history, but romance.

The author of the Acts of the Apostles, who is said to have been Luke, differs from both the authors of the gospels of Luke and Mark. He represents Jesus as spending forty days on earth after his resurrection, passing most of the time with the apostles, and finally taking them to Mount Olivet to witness his ascension. After promising them the Holy Ghost, which he appears to have given them before, and treating them to a last speech, he "was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Some think it was not Jesus who was lost in a cloud, but the apostles themselves, and all who afterwards believed this romantic story.

How remarkably the wonders of the career of Jesus Christ are copied from the Old Testament! Jesus was a supernatural child; so was Isaac, so was Samuel, and so was Samson. Jesus fasted forty days and nights; so did Moses, and so did Elijah. Jesus multiplied food, and cured diseases, and raised the dead; all which things were done by the Hebrew prophets. Jesus ascended into heaven, and so did Elijah. Nay, the ascension of Elijah was a magnificent affair in comparison with the ascension of Jesus Christ. Elijah was taken up in a fiery chariot with fiery horses, while Jesus Christ was taken up in a miserable damp cloud—which is a perfect wet blanket on the imagination.

Altogether the story of Jesus Christ's ascension is one of the thinnest that ever was imposed upon human credulity. It is contained in writings of unknown authorship, and the different versions of the "inspired narrative" are utterly irreconcilable with each other. And the most singular thing is that two men, who are said to have witnessed the ascension, and also to have been authors of two of the four gospels, are entirely silent in those very books (if they wrote them) about this very occurrence.

The "cloud" in the story, which received Jesus out of the sight of his apostles, seems an artful arrangement. Had it been declared that he ascended in broad daylight, under a clear sky, people might have asked how it was that no one in the vicinity of Mount Olivet, except those eleven favored mortals, caught a glimpse of the performance. The event took place on a cloudy day, and a special cloud enveloped Jesus Christ, so that the people below could not have seen his exit even if they had been on the tiptoe of expectation. That cloud was a capital piece of stage-business, and an admirable shelter against all pressing inquiries.

When the Christians talk to us, in the language of Scripture, about the "cloud of witnesses" to the truth of their faith, we admire the appositeness of the expression. The evidences of Christianity are decidedly *cloudy*.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

THERE have been many attempts to Christianise Japan since the days of St. Francis Xavier, who seems to have attained a greater measure of success than any of his successors. Recent events, which have shown the Western World that Japan is henceforth to be reckoned with among the comity of nations, have given renewed interest to the question of the religious faith of the land of the Rising Sun, and of the likelihood of Christianity replacing the older religions of Shintoism and Buddhism.

It is now possible for a mere stay-at-home English reader to form some fair estimate upon this question. The editor of the *Kokumin-No-Tomo*; or, *The Nation's Friend*, the leading Japanese periodical, issues a monthly edition of the magazine in English, entitled *The Far East*.* In the first number of this very interesting publication there is an article on "Christendom and Heathendom," by Ukita Kazutami. This gentleman, as we learn from an editorial note, is Professor of History and Philosophy in the Doshisha College, Kyoto. What makes his article of special interest is that he was educated for the Christian ministry in Yale University, in the United States, and for some time he was chief editor of the *Kirisutokyo Shimbum* (the *Christian Journal*), of Tokyo. Now, like other Japanese converts, he has discovered that Christianity, as seen in practice, is far from satisfactory, and that its historical pretensions are false. He sets out by noticing how the Pope Alexander VI. calmly assigned all one hundred leagues west of the Azores to Spain, and all eastward to Portugal, imagining that, as the earth was flat and boundless, the two nations could never after this come in collision.

"In those days," says Mr. Ukita, "the Christian nations of Europe never recognised that there were men outside of Christendom whose right and freedom they were under obligation to respect. The Roman Popes, who were revered as the highest moral authority on earth, have repeatedly recommended the most abhorrent maxim, that no Christian is bound to keep faith with unbelievers. They looked upon the lands of the so-called *heathen* people as if they were properties belonging to nobody." After advertizing to the horrible barbarities which attended the Christian conquests of Mexico and Peru, he contends that the practice of Christendom is still "universal robbery." Behold its anointed kings and sovereigns, its baptised presidents and ministers, who are, in the phrase of Hobbes, "in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointed, and their eyes fixed, on one another—that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbors; which is a posture of war." This is the reason why the expectation of war is one of the principal phenomena of our present civilisation. It manifests itself in the system of armed peace.

Needless to say, Gautama Buddha, Laotse, Confucius, and Mencius have accustomed those of the far East to a higher ideal than this. Our Japanese writer says: "Modern Christendom, with all its enlightenment and its scientific appliances, is thus in reality a disguised barbarism. It is, in fact, a gigantic double-faced monster. On the one hand, it sends out its missionaries to preach the gospel of peace to *heathen* nations, and, on the other, it dispatches armored ships and torpedoes to destroy and conquer them. Sometimes the former enter the *heathen* lands by the very door which is forced open by means of the latter. Thus the missionaries got into China, which was compelled by Protestant England, by means of guns and bayonets, to buy opium and receive Christian missionaries at the same time. Sometimes the opposite method is employed to attain the same end. Such were the cases in Hawaii and Madagascar, first Christianised by the missionaries, and afterwards swallowed up either by revolution or by conquest."

The missionary, he points out, always wants to be backed up by the gunboat. To-day, he says, "all the causes of war among the civilised nations exist only in Christendom. Heathendom is not responsible for war." He urges that "the only hope for the future of mankind is in the progress of liberty and enlightenment, promoted by science and arts, and especially in the growth and development of America and Asia." Sooner or later, he thinks, the Monroe

doctrine will bring America into conflict with Europe. "The system of the balance of power among the European nations will be destroyed, and, perhaps, in its place a European Republic will arise." Mr. Ukita holds that the capacity of China to reform and improve is not broken by the late war, and urges that the true policy of China and Japan is to unite against Christian aggression, "to stand up for the principle of 'Asia for the Asiatics,' and put an end forever to that damnable European system of plunder and tyranny."

From the prominence given to this paper there can be little doubt that it expresses a sentiment already largely prevailing, and which, in my opinion, is likely to increase as the history of Christendom and its practices and politics become more widely known. It will be remembered that a Commission sent out some years ago by Japan to investigate the religions of the West reported adversely to Christianity, which was found to be accompanied by a larger share of crime than Buddhism.

The late encounter with China, while it stimulated Christian endeavor, also aroused national patriotism, with the result that, whereas Christianity had in the previous generation made considerable progress together with all other European ideas, it is now considered unpatriotic and unsuited to the Japanese people. Mr. D. C. Greene, a Christian contributor to *The Far East*, admits that it cannot be denied that there has been a reaction against Christianity; and, he adds, "neither can it be denied that it has checked the progress of organised Christianity. In many cases churches have hardly gained enough to repair the normal waste. Some of the pastors, too, have become disheartened by the apparent lack of results, and in the community at large there has been much abatement from the sanguine hopes of earlier years." The reason is not far to seek. The religion of the people with telegraphs and ironclads at first sight appeared the necessary concomitant of their civilisation. It was embraced by many as the necessary sign of a progressive spirit. But it has since been seen that Japan can master all Western science without, in doing so, taking up any of its religion. Nay, in becoming imbued with the scientific spirit they find its influence decidedly adverse to the faith of Christendom. Mr. Greene says: "Another influence which is acting powerfully upon Japan at the present time is that which comes from the general acceptance of the doctrine of evolution, and its gradual application to the various departments of learning. One need not be a close observer to see how profoundly religious thought has been affected, that of Japan even more, probably, than that of Western lands, because of the relatively small inertia of the Christian community. Even in Christian lands it has led to an insistence upon the divine immanence, the side of Christianity which looks towards pantheism. It is not strange that in Japan it should lead to a type of faith in many minds which seems to imply a denial of the divine personality." Evidently it is not all plain sailing for Christianity in Japan.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XI.

SECULAR INSTRUCTION DISTINCT FROM SECULARISM.

"A mariner must have his eye on the rock and the sand as well as upon the North star."—*Maxim of the Sea*.

It is time now to point out what many never seem to understand, that secular instruction is entirely distinct from Secularism. In my earlier days the term "scientific" was the distressing word in connection with education; but the trouble of later years is with the word "secular." Theological critics run on the "rock" there. Many persons regard secular teaching with distrust, thinking it to be the same as Secularism. Secular instruction is known by the sign of separateness. It means knowledge given apart from theology. Secular instruction comprises a set of rules for the guidance of industry, commerce, science, and art. Secular teaching is as distinct from theology as a poem from a sermon. A man may be a mathematician, an architect, a lawyer, a musician, or a surgeon, and be a Christian all the same—as Faraday was

* Published at No. 4 Hivoshicho, Tokyo, Japan.

both chemist and devout Sandemanian; as Buckland was a geologist as well as a dean. But if theology be mixed up with professional knowledge, there will be muddle-headedness.* At a separate time theology can be taught, and any learner will have a clearer and more commanding knowledge of Christianity by its being distinctive in his mind.

Secular instruction neither assails Christianity nor prejudices the learner against it; any more than sculpture assails jurisprudence, or than geometry prejudices the mind against music. If the secular instructor made it a point, as he ought to do, to inculcate elementary ideas of morality, he would confine himself to explaining how far truth and duty have sanctions in considerations purely human, leaving it to teachers of religion to supplement, at another time and place, what they believe to be further and higher sanctions. Secular instruction implies that the proper business of the school-teacher is to impart a knowledge of the duties of this world; and the proper business of chapel and church is to explain the duties relevant to another world, which can only be done in a secondhand way by the school-teacher. The wonder is that the pride of the minister does not incite him to keep his own proper work in his own hands, and to protest against the school-teacher meddling with it. By doing so he would augment his own dignity and the distinctiveness of his office. By keeping each kind of knowledge apart a man learns both more easily and more effectually. Secular training is better for the scholar and safer for the State; and better for the priest if he has a faith that can stand by itself.

If the reader does not distrust it as a paradox, he will assent that the secular is distinct from Secularism, as distinct as an act is distinct from its motive. Secular teaching comprises a set of rules of instruction in trade, business, and professional knowledge. Secularism furnished a set of principles for the ethical conduct of life. Secular instruction is far more limited in its range than Secularism, which defends secular pursuits against theology, where theology attacks them or obstructs them. But pure secular knowledge is confined to its own pursuit, and does not come in contact with theology, any more than architecture comes in contact with preaching.

A man may be a shareholder in a gas company, or a water-works, a house-owner or landlord, a farmer or workman. All these are secular pursuits, and he who follows them may consult only his own interest. But if he be a Secularist, he will consider not only his own interest, but, as far as he can, the welfare of the community or the world, as his action or example may tell for the good of universal society. He will do "his best"—not, as Mr. Ruskin says, "the best of an ass," but "the best of an intelligent man." In every act he will put his conscience and character, with a view so to discharge the duties of this life as to merit another if there be one. Just as a Christian seeks to serve God, a Secularist seeks to serve man. This it is to be a Secularist. The idea of this service is what Secularism puts into his mind. Professor Clifford exclaimed: "The kingdom of God has come; when comes the Kingdom of Man?" A Secularist is one who hastens the coming of this kingdom; which must be agreeable to heaven if the people of this world are to occupy the mansions there.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DISTINCTIVENESS MADE FURTHER EVIDENT.

"The cry that so-called secular education is Atheistic is hardly worth notice. Cricket is not theological; at the same time, it is not Atheistic."—REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D., *Times*, October 11, 1894.

Nor is Secularism Atheism. The laws of the universe are quite distinct from the question of the origin of the universe. The study of the laws of Nature, which Secularism selects, is quite different from speculation as to the authorship of Nature. We may judge and prize the beauty and uses of an ancient edifice, though we may never know the builder. Secularism is a form of opinion which concerns itself only with questions the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life. It is clear that the existence of Deity and the actuality of another life are

questions excluded from Secularism, which exacts no denial of Deity or immortality, from members of Secularist societies. During their day only two persons of public distinction—the Bishop of Peterborough and Charles Bradlaugh—maintained that the Secular was Atheistic. Yet Mr. Bradlaugh never put a profession of Atheism as one of the tenets of any Secularist society. Atheism may be a personal tenet, but it cannot be a Secularist tenet, from which it is wholly disconnected.

No one would confuse the Secular with the Atheistic who understood that the Secular is separate. Mr. Hodgson Pratt, a Christian, writing in *Concord* (October, 1894) a description of the burial of Angelo Mazzoleni, said "the funeral was entirely secular," meaning the ceremony was distinct from that of the Church, being based on considerations pertaining to duty in this world.

In the indefiniteness of colloquial speech we constantly hear the phrase, "School Board education." Yet School Boards cannot give education. It is beyond their reach. Most persons confuse instruction with education. Instruction relates to industrial, commercial, agricultural, and scientific knowledge and like subjects. Education implies the complete training and "drawing out of the whole powers of the mind."* Thus instruction is different from education. Instruction is departmental knowledge. Education includes all the influences of life; instruction gives skill, education forms character.

The Rev. Dr. Parker is the first Nonconformist preacher of distinction who has avowed his concurrence with Secular instruction in Board schools. When Mr. W. E. Forster was framing his Education Act, I besought him to raise English educational policy to the level of the much-smoking, much-pondering Dutch. "The system of education in Holland dates from 1857. It is a secular system, meaning by secular that the Bible is not allowed to be read in schools, nor is any religious instruction allowed to be given. The use of the school-room is, however, granted to ministers of all denominations for the purpose of teaching religion out of school hours. The schoolmaster is not allowed to give religious instruction, or even to read the Bible in school at any time."† No State rears better citizens or better Christians than the Dutch. Mr. Gladstone, with his customary discernment, has said that "secular instruction does not involve denial of religious teaching, but merely separation in point of time." It seems incredible that Christian ministers, generally, do not see the advantage of this. I should probably have become a Christian preacher myself had it not been for the incessantness with which religion was obtruded on me in childhood and youth. Even now my mind aches when I think of it. For myself, I respect the individuality of piety. It is always picturesque. Looking at religion from the outside, I can see that concrete sectarianism is a source of religious strength. A man is only master of his own faith when he sees it clearly, distinctly, and separately. Rather than permit secular instruction and religious education to be imparted separately, Christian ministers permit the great doctrines they profess to maintain to be whittled down to a School Board average, in which, when done honestly towards all opinions, no man can discern Christianity without the aid of a microscope. And this passes, in these days, for good ecclesiastical policy. In a recent letter (November, 1894) Mr. Gladstone has re-affirmed his objection to "an undenominational system of religion framed by, or under the authority of, the State." He says "It would, I think, be better for the State to limit itself to giving secular instruction, which, of course, is no complete education." Mr. Gladstone does not confound secular instruction with education, but is of the way of thinking of Milton, who says: "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." Secular instruction touches no doctrine, menaces no creed, raises no scepticism in the mind. But an average of belief introduces the aggressive hand of heresy into every school, tampering with tenets rooted in the conscience, wantonly alarming religious convictions, and substituting for a clear, a frank, and manly issue a disastrous, a blind, and timid policy, wriggling along like

* Edward Baines (afterwards Sir Edward), who was the greatest opponent in his day of National schools and secular instruction, sent his son to a secular school because he wanted him to be clever as well as a Christian. He was both, as I well know.

* Henry Drummond gave this definition in the House of Commons, and it was adopted by W. J. Fox and other leaders of opinion in that day.

† Report from the Hague, by Mr. (now Right Hon.) Jesse Collings, M.P., May, 1870.

a serpent instead of walking with self-dependent erectness. This manly erectness would be the rule were the formula of the great preacher accepted who has said: "Secular education by the State and Christian education by the Christian Church is my motto."* Uniformity of truth is desirable, and it will come, not by contrivance, but by conviction.

Someone quoted lately in the *Daily News* (September 19, 1895) the following sentences I wrote in 1870:—

"With secular instruction only in the day school, religion will acquire freshness and new force. The clergyman and the minister will exercise a new influence, because their ministrations will have dignity and definiteness. They will no longer delegate things declared by them to be sacred to be taught secondhand by the harassed, overworked, and oft-reluctant schoolmaster and schoolmistress, who must contradict the gentleness of religion by the peremptoriness of the pedagogue, and efface the precept that 'God is love' by an incontinent application of the birch.....It is not secular instruction which breeds irreverence, but this ill-timed familiarity with the reputed things of God which robs divinity of its divineness."

The Bible in the school-room will not always be to the advantage of clericalism, as it is thought to be now.

Mr. Forster's Education Act created what Mr. Disraeli contemptuously described as a new "sacerdotal caste"—a body of second-hand preachers, who are to be paid by the money of the State to do the work which the minister and the clergyman avow they are called by heaven to perform—namely, to save the souls of the people. According to this Act, the clergy are really no longer necessary; their work can be done by a commoner and cheaper order of artificer. Mr. Forster insisted that the Bible be introduced into the school-room, which gives great advantage to the Freethinker, as it makes a critical agitation against its character and pretensions a matter of self-defence for every family. Another eminent preacher, Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, wrote, not openly in the *Times* as Dr. Parker did, but in *The Sword and Trowel* thus: "We should like to see established a system of universal application, which would give a sound secular education to children, and leave the religious training to the home and the agencies of the Church of Christ." It is worthy of the radiant common sense of the famous orator of the Tabernacle that he should have said this anywhere.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

CHRIST AND MODERN REFORM.

IN one of my recent articles upon "The Christ has Come," which appeared in the *Freethinker* dated March 29 of the current year, the following two sentences occur: "Assuming that he [Christ] came as stated, he left the world in much the same condition as he found it. All great reforms and improvements have been achieved since he left, and in many instances in direct opposition to his teachings." Referring to the above allegations, Mr. Thomas Pateman Barrow (of Leicester) denies their accuracy, and adds: "There never has been, and never can be, any reform, of whatever nature, antagonistic and in direct opposition to Christ's teachings." My correspondent invites me to point out in these columns "only some of the instances" that would prove the truth of my assertions. This I propose to do as briefly as possible; but for a full justification of my statements Mr. Barrow is referred to my two pamphlets, *The Claims of Christianity Examined* and *Was Christ a Political and Social Reformer?*

If my correspondent still denies what I assert in the first sentence to which he takes exception, let him show us what reforms Christ secured during the supposed time he was on earth. To put the same questions in reference to Jesus as are put by Christians to Secularists, it may fairly be asked, What science did Christ initiate? What hospitals did he establish? What libraries did he institute? What societies for social reform did he organise? What association did he form to obtain the domestic rights of women, the political equity of man, and the kind treatment of the

lower animals? What movement did he originate to relieve the world of the pangs of poverty and the curse of slavery? Finally, what principles did he lay down to inspire within man the spirit of self-help and of self-reliance, which are the basis of all personal and general improvements? Is it not the fact that reforms, connected with all the above subjects, have been won since the alleged death of Christ? Is it not also true that the reforms here mentioned have taken place principally during the present century, the very period when practical dependence upon the teachings of Christ has steadily but surely declined?

Now for proof that many modern reforms are antagonistic to certain teachings ascribed to Jesus. The foundation of all national progress is a correct system of education; but Christ nowhere propounded such a system. His advice to the people was to take no thought "what ye shall say," for the Holy Ghost shall "teach you what ye ought to say" (Luke xii. 11, 12). So long as "instruction" was left to the Holy Ghost, gross ignorance among all sections of society prevailed. The schoolmaster with his secular instruction (which is not found in the New Testament) has done more during the last twenty-five years to educate the people than the third person of the Trinity has accomplished through all time. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ's idea of "education" is set forth, and what is it? A number of meaningless platitudes, without any instruction as to their applicability to daily life; the inculcation of poverty of spirit, and a mournful disposition; the teaching of what Christ himself did not comply with; the sanction of self-mutilation, and the non-resistance of evil; and the recommendation to do that which it is impossible for human nature to carry out. The keynote of Christ's method of "education" was to teach people how to die; the object of modern educationists is to instruct the rising generation how to live, so that they may become good and useful citizens.

One of the greatest reforms at the present day, which affect the intellectual progress and happiness of mankind, is the cessation of punishment for heresy. Persecution for disbelief has proved itself to be one of the greatest curses that ever robbed humanity of its freedom; yet Christ, so far from condemning it, actually sanctioned and recommended it. For proof of this see Matthew x., Mark xvi., and John xv. In these passages the bitterest spirit of persecution is enjoined towards those who did not accept the Christian faith. For ages men—believing that what Jesus said was right—imprisoned, tortured, and put to death those whom they deemed "heretics." And although we have still legal enactments upon the statute book, which were placed there by the followers of Christ, the Secular love of justice prevents such enactments being put in force as they once were. Christ exacted uniformity of belief in himself, and, unless this uniformity was observed, hell-fire was the threatened penalty. Modern reformers have shown that such uniformity of opinion is impossible, and, therefore, mental freedom is held, in spite of Christ, to be an inalienable right of every member of the human family. The present age is pre-eminently one of Freethought; but thought cannot be free if it is forced in one direction, under the influence of the threat of the severest penalties that it is possible for the mind to conceive.

Co-operation, which is the very essence of self-help, forethought, and prudence among the masses, is a very important reform of the present century. But it is nowhere mentioned by Christ as being needful; on the contrary, its principle is condemned by his teachings as reported in the sixth chapter of St. Matthew. It is there plainly taught that those very things which are necessary to life and social comfort (such as food, drink, and clothing) are not to be even thought of; for we are told to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." To seek after the requisites of existence was to be left to the "nations of the world" (Luke xii. 30). A similar antagonism is shown by Christ to improved sanitary measures when he said: "Take no thought for your life," and when he assured his followers that they could have whatever they desired by praying for it (Mark xi. 24). But the opposition of Jesus to the reforms here mentioned is apparent in his teaching that the necessities of life are supplied by God, without the exercise of thought upon the part of man, and that relief from sickness and death is provided by miracle. Hence Jesus

* The Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.

relied upon the very opposite of physiological facts to cure disease, which he thought was caused through the patients being possessed with devils. The cure was supposed to be affected, not by medical skill and the science of medicine, but by faith in Christ (Matthew ix. 22), and by exorcism of evil spirits from the poor sufferers (Mark v., ix.; Luke iv., v., and viii.). The present generation has so much improved upon Christ's method of "healing the sick" that, when certain enthusiasts attempt the "faith cure," they are punished by law.

Many social reformers have arrived at the conclusion that husbands and wives, who cannot live happily together, had better separate; but Christ was opposed to this, for he said: "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery" (Mark x. 9-11). Further, he said Moses allowed divorce "for the hardness of your heart." Our Post Office Savings Bank is found to be a very useful institution, but it would not be required if Christ's injunction were obeyed: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Let the commands of Jesus, "to resist not evil," and "whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," be strictly carried out, and but little progress would be made in the suppression of despotic power. But Christ gives the explanation why he had no concern for the reforms of society, when he said: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36).

I have now stated a few of the modern reforms to which, it appears to me, the teachings of Christ are opposed. There is, however, a kind of test, laid down by Christ himself, by which his relation to reforms may be judged. He says: "He that is not with me is against me" (Luke xi. 23). He certainly does not exemplify by his teachings that he was in sentiment *with* the reforms that have aided the civilisation of the world; therefore, according to his own standard, he was against them. It is not here denied that men calling themselves Christians have assisted in bringing about recent reforms; but the question is, Are such reforms based upon the teachings of Jesus? My allegation is that they are not. Nothing seems clearer to my mind than that, if only Christ's teachings had prevailed in Europe for the last hundred years, civilisation to-day would have been comparatively unknown, and that those beneficent influences which now embellish social life would be absent. Ignorance, superstition, and lack of self-reliance, that, according to history and the Gospels, once so extensively abounded, would still mar the happiness of the human race.

Fortunately, science has transformed the relations of nations, and changed the aspect of the various phases of society. Reforms in government and in law have enlarged human freedom, and increased the opportunities for the attainment of justice. The agencies, however, by which these reforms have been established were not among the "things generally known" by Christ. Happily, the political and social forces, created by human energy and intellectual activity, are now sufficiently strong to resist impediments to further progress.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE BIBLE AND THE EAST.*

THIS work may be characterised, in the words of Dean Farrar, as "one of those slovenly treatises which only serve to throw dust in the eyes of the ignorant." As in all works of this character, no references are given to assist the student in judging what weight is to be attached to the arguments advanced; but a number of statements are made upon the authority of the writer (which is not very great).

The chief argument of the book is that the primitive documents of the Jews were written upon clay tablets in the cuneiform character, and that this explains the variations and anomalies of the Scripture narratives; for, when these cuneiform documents came to be transcribed into

alphabetical characters, the polyphony of the cuneiform syllabary caused the scribes to vary in their transcriptions. In support of his theory that the earliest Hebrew books were "tablets," he refers us to Habakkuk ii. 2; but a reference to that passage will show any sane person that the prophet is not speaking of cuneiform tablets at all. He says: "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Anyone who has seen a cuneiform tablet will be quite certain that it is impossible to run and read it; it is difficult enough to read when you are sitting down quietly. Such statements and theories as these of Colonel Conder's are only insidious attempts to get out of the glaring fact that there are *no* references to writing upon clay tablets to be found in the Old Testament. Clay was used only for sealing (*cf.* Job xxxviii. 14). Whenever writing is mentioned, pens, ink, and rolls are spoken of; and it is unnecessary to remark that ink is useless on a clay tablet, and that you cannot make terra-cotta into a roll. Furthermore, when a prophecy of Jeremiah was read before Jehoiakim, King of Judah, we are told (Jeremiah xxxvii. 23) that the king cut it with a penknife, and then put it in the fire, where it was consumed; so that it is clear that clay tablets were not used by the Jews for writing, for it would be quite useless to put a terra-cotta block into the fire to destroy it. When we look at the letters of the Moabite Stone, the oldest known specimen of the Hebrew language, we see at once that the letters in use were habitually written with ink upon paper, or similar material; for many of the letters are formed in curves, or have curly tails, which would be difficult or impossible to draw with precision upon wet clay. Then, again, we find that several of the Psalms are written alphabetically, with each line or section commencing with some letter of the Hebrew alphabet; positive proof that the authors used the Semitic alphabet, and not any cuneiform syllabary. A similar alphabetic arrangement occurs in Proverbs and Lamentations, while in Genesis xiv. 1 the names of the kings are arranged in alphabetical order. It is self-evident that the authors of the books of the Old Testament wrote with the Semitic alphabet, and knew of no other system of writing Hebrew.

Colonel Conder also repeats the exploded notion that the variations in the numbers mentioned in various parts of the Bible are to be explained as due to the use of figures instead of writing the numbers in full, when it is notorious that there is no trace of the use of figures, or symbols, but that in every known Hebrew MS. of the Bible the numbers are written in full.

The gallant Colonel repeats several other long-exploded hypotheses, and professes to refute some of the conclusions of the Higher Criticism, of which he appears to possess only a second-hand knowledge. It is significant, however, that, like all other modern writers, he admits the book of Daniel to be spurious. He shows that no part of it is of earlier date than the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and seems to imagine that the Aramaic portion of the book may probably have been written after the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey in the year 65 B.C. He also admits the late date of Esther, but makes a feeble attempt to believe that it may have some historical basis! The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles are also partially given up.

With regard to the New Testament, Colonel Conder admits that Cyrenius did not govern Syria in the time of Herod the Great, and that the Angora inscription disproves the "taxing" mentioned in the Gospels. When, however, we are calmly told that "Exploration of Palestine has done much to establish the genuineness of the fourth Gospel, by showing its accuracy in matters of geography," it is evident that the gallant officer has yet to master the elementary principles of Biblical criticism. E. P.

* *The Bible and the East.* By C. R. Conder, Lieut.-Col. R. E. (William Blackwood & Sons; 1896.)

RAMSEY-KEMP TESTIMONIAL FUND.—A. Tripp, 10s.; Mr. Knight, 1s.; W. S. M., 5s.; C. J., 3s.; W. Ingham, 1s.; H. Smith, 1s.; E. Bater, 2s. Per J. H. Ridgway (Birmingham): H., 4s.; S., 4s.; J. L. M., 2s. 6d.; J. P., 2s. 6d.; W. H. Wood, 2s. 6d.; W. T. Pitt, 2s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; C. H. Cattell, 2s. 6d.; T. Wild, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Ridgway, 2s. 6d.; W. A., 2s. 6d.; G., 2s. 6d.; M. Christopher, 2s.; J. C. Bridges, 2s.; Donaldson, 1s.; J. Terry, 1s.; T. Martin, 1s.; H. D., 1s.; A. B. C., 6d.; Friend, 3d.; Friend, 3d. Per C. Stocker, (Liverpool): R. Brooks, 2s. 6d.; J. W. B., 2s.; A. Anderson, 2s.; Allen, 2s.; W. H. Holman, 1s.; J. Pruett, 1s.; W. H. P., 1s.; A. Corley, 6d.; Russell, 6d.—G. WARD, *Hon. Treas.*

JURISPRUDENT JEHOVAH.

In days of old, Jehovah told the Jews a thing or two ;
The things they often, seldom, always, never ought to do ;
He taught them how to pray and steal, to worship and to
fight,
And regulated all their lives from morning until night.

He wrote a list of lawful food, and food that was taboo :
The "Bill of Fare," or what is called in Peckham French,
"menoo";
He solemnly commanded them to shun, lest harm result,
The esoteric saveloy, and "sassenjer" occult.
To eat a pig was *infra dig.*; all pork they must eschew—
The unassuming "trotter," and the mild poloney too.

The rite of circumcision he did ruthlessly enforce—
That is, upon the Jews themselves, and not the pigs, of
course.

He also ordered them to cut the throats of lambs and sheep,
That he might glut his gaze on gore, and thus his temper
keep ;
The sweetest pleasures to his ears, his nostrils, and his eyes
Were gushing streams of reeking blood, and tortured victims'
cries.

On Sabbath he compelled them all to rest from work and
play,
By doing all their hardest to do nothing all the day—
In short, he forced the Jews to be, on pain of lapidation,
A strictly-pious, godly, cruel, slavish, brutal nation.

But, later on, he told the world, through Jesus Christ, a
Jew,
That all those laws were foolish fads that would no longer
do ;
He saw—when fresh experience had changed his mind and
mood—
That stoning folk to death was bad, and Sabbath trips were
good ;
And said he must at last admit—though "climbing down"
was sad—
That sacrifice was not so good, and pork was not so bad.
In fact, his words implied, or said, that all his priestly rules
Were products of his "salad-days," and only fit for fools.

Said he : "I've got a scheme at last by which I'll manage
man—
A God-belauding, hell-delighting, man-deluding plan !
I'm tired of Moses and his code ; the whole affair's a pest !
Simplicity's my motto now ; simplicity and rest.
I'm sick of watching people's deeds, and noting all that's
said,
Of ceremonies, rules, and rites, and priestly tape that's red !
Instead of telling men to do a *score* of silly rites,
That only serve to worry me, and spoil my rest o' nights,
I've hit on *one*, more hard for man than all the rest combined,
But easier for me, because I'll only have to find
If men perform this single one, instead of keeping count
Of all the fussy ancient ones—a pretty good amount ;
'Tis this : Believe that I and Christ and Ghost are one in
three ;
That I, as Christ, was nailed to death, to bribe the Ghost
and me ;
That I, as Christ, began to be, yet always was, my son ;
That each, yet none, is I, and I am each, and all are one !

"These statements—strange to those who ne'er for godly
knowledge thirst,
Are simple when you know them ; but you've got to know
them first.

"Take notice ! all ye creatures who possess immortal souls !
That henceforth I have done with 'works' and priestly
rigmoroles !
Believe the Gospel story of myself and Ghost and Son ;
And then, no matter how you've lived, your place in heav'n
is won !
Believe the simple story of the Jewess and the Ghost ;
Or else, no matter how you've lived, your soul in hell will
roast !"

It took but fifteen hundred years to show the great "I Am"
The uselessness of temples, and the usefulness of ham ;
To show that golden candlesticks and choicest kidney-
grease
Can never "hold a candle" to belief in God's decease.

The time will likely come when God *again* will change his
mind,
And start a dispensation of an *anti-Christian* kind ;
He might, when civilised enough, leave earth's affairs alone,
And thus, in some small measure, for his sad mistakes atone ;

Or, very likely, he'll restore the ancient code of Moses,
And estimate all moral worth by curvature of noses ;
Establish bloody works again—he's just the God to do it—
And substitute for faith in Christ the fumes of burning suet

However, for the present, we have all, if bound for glory,
To credit his incredible, discreditable story.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

It is amusing to watch the antics of the Nonconformists
who have been stung by the Irish members' vote on the
Education Bill. Dr. Joseph Parker formally announces
that he "withdraws his interest" in Home Rule. Dr. Berry
and Rev. Hugh Price Hughes both declare that Home Rule
must now take a back seat at least. All these irate gentle-
men assert that the Irish vote on an English bill is a
violation of the Home Rule principle. This is true enough,
but, then, Home Rule has not come yet, and Englishmen
still go on legislating for Ireland. Besides, as Mr. William
Redmond points out, the Nonconformists were not so anxious
that each country should settle its own affairs when they
denounced Parnell and labored to deprive him of the leader-
ship of the Irish party.

The Nonconformists complain that the Irish members are
Catholics first and politicians afterwards. But what on
earth did these gentlemen expect? Are not the Noncon-
formists themselves Christians first and citizens afterwards?
They insist on having religion taught in the State schools,
where it has no right to be taught on the strict principle of
Nonconformity; and their only cause of complaint is that
they cannot decide the exact quantity and quality of that
religion *themselves*.

Freethinkers should all remember Mr. Balfour's declaration
in the House of Commons that he hoped to see School Boards
abolished. This was letting the cat out of the bag with a
vengeance, and we must see that the animal is not put back
again.

Sabbatarianism is strong in Cornwall. The fishermen
there will not fish or land fish on Sunday, and they naturally
hate to see other people making a profit when they refrain
from making any themselves, for your true bigot always
likes to make others share the cost of his own convictions.
Accordingly, the Newlyn fishermen, aided by their women
folk and neighbors, have "gone for" the Lowestoft men who
tried to land their catch on the holy Cornish quayside on
Sunday morning. Fifteen thousand mackerel from one
boat, thirteen thousand from another, and other hauls from
other craft were tossed into the harbour, which they will
help to sweeten rarely in this warm weather. The police
were unable to stop the row, and the authorities requested
the assistance of a gunboat.

Further details of the Orfah massacre are published in the
newspapers. One scene is worth a special notice: "About
a hundred stalwart young Armenians were thrown on their
backs and held down by their hands and feet, while a Sheikh,
reciting verses of the Koran, proceeded to cut their throats
after the Mecca rite of sacrificing sheep." Everyone can see
the beautiful part played by religion in these atrocities.

The coronation of the Czar is a big affair, and will cost a
lot of money. Of course the Czar is a sincere Christian,
but, as a matter of fact, he is directly responsible for the
continued massacre of the Christians in Armenia. It is the
Russian government which frustrates the efforts of other
governments to put effective pressure on the Sultan.

John Wesley is credited with the saying that the Chinese
language was an invention of the devil to keep Christian
missionaries out of China. At any rate, they often make a
sad hash of it. Long controversies went on as to how the
word God should be rendered in Chinese; the word for Lord
is usually pronounced as if it represented the word pig, so
that Jesus Christ is known throughout the Chinese Empire
as the pig Jesus. The Rev. J. F. Masters says he once heard
a missionary preaching on the heavenly father. The
Chinese word for heavenly is teen, with an aspirate on the
vowels. The preacher left out the aspirate, with disastrous
results. Teen without an aspirate means "crazy." He
wondered what the pigtailed were smiling at.

Rockefeller, the Standard Oil monopolist and millionaire,
advertised himself by giving a large sum of money to the
University of Chicago. He is now much concerned that
the president, Dr. Harper, is alleged to be an Atheist.
Rockefeller says he shall henceforth let it be known that his
money must be used for religious purposes only.

Thomas Harris, a distinguished member of the local Salvation Army at Jarrow, will spend six months in Durham jail, with hard labor, for assaulting his wife in a brutal manner. He was letting her know that, according to the Bible, the man is the head of the woman, and he did this in striking fashion.

The Rev. G. Moore, vicar of Cowley, is always at loggerheads with his parishioners. At a meeting of the local county council he called out, "Blackguardism!" "Ruffianism!" Personalities were freely indulged in, and such colloquies as the following:—Vicar to Mr. James White: "You're a devil." Mr. James White: "Don't you call me a devil, or I'll punch your head. What do you mean, you blackguard?" The Vicar: "You only come here to abuse me." Mr. James White: "No, I don't." The chairman had to close the meeting amid great disorder, and the report in the *Oxford Times* ends: "A chorus of hoots saluted the vicar as he walked from the room in a contemptuous and defiant manner."

At Brooklyn, N.Y., Harry M. Covert, an evangelist, and a very active and pious member of the Hanson Place Baptist Church in that city, deserted his wife and eloped with Mrs. Helene Springer, a wealthy and dashing widow whom he met about two years ago at a religious meeting.

The Church party at Ipswich has had a lady down to lecture on "Flaws in the Theory of Evolution." There was "not a large attendance," though Miss Nina Layard has a large belief in her own ability to shatter the teachings of Darwin, Huxley, and all the rest of that school. Canon Garrett, in moving a vote of thanks to the lecturers, assured the small audience that "the Darwinian delusion was on its last legs." Of course the wish was father to the thought. Darwinism has as many stout legs as there are branches of science made fruitful by the theory of evolution.

The Rev. Charles Voysey—a well-meaning man with very decided intellectual limitations—has published a recent sermon of his on "The Prosperity of the Wicked." The wicked are the *priests* who are always aiming after fresh tyranny, as they are doing through the new Education Bill. There is a clerical reaction, and Mr. Voysey undertakes to explain it. "At the bottom of it," he says, "lies the fear, a deep and real and, as I think, even a justifiable fear, lest the foundations of society should be overthrown by Atheists, Anarchists, and would-be plunderers." This catalogue is "Voysey" all over. Atheists, however, are not necessarily Anarchists, and they are not particularly strong on "plunder," except in the way of denouncing it. Mr. Voysey appears to dread "a deluge of Atheism." We fear there is no ground for his apprehension. Passion may, but reason cannot, sweep along in a flood.

Religion seethes under political issues even in the United States, as seen in the recent attempt to get God into the Constitution, happily thwarted for a time by friend Putnam and his co-workers. Another illustration is seen in the Presidential campaign. The Democrats will have, as usual, the Catholic vote; but the leading Republican candidate, McKinley, may lose his chance through the opposition of the American Protective Association, because of his alleged friendliness to Catholics, though he is a Methodist Episcopal and Freemason. Those behind the scenes back a dark horse—Senator Cullom, of Illinois.

The *Journal and Messenger* says that it is "sorry to see" an esteemed contemporary, the *Baptist News*, "repeating the old and exploded story about Thomas Jefferson and the little Baptist church in the vicinity of his home—that he was accustomed to attend its business meetings, and from them got his idea of our federal Government. That story has had its day, and ought now to be let alone. It is not true now, and never was true. Do let it drop." But if religious journals let exploded fictions drop, they will considerably diminish their stock-in-trade.

It appears from a work published in New York, entitled *The Failure of Protestantism*, by Mr. T. Dixon, of the People's Church, that the slump in Methodism and among the Baptists is more than paralleled in New York. Mr. Dixon gives statistics showing that none of the religious bodies are holding their own, the increase of membership among the Baptists being less than quarter the increase of births, and among Methodists less than half. The Lutherans show an actual decrease. They have not only failed to hold their own children, but have lost 625 of the older ones.

"But," says Mr. Dixon, "these figures do not tell all the pitiable story. Every one knows, who knows anything about the history of New York churches, that the rolls are not kept to-day as they were twenty or thirty years ago. Then church enrolment meant a pretty accurate summary of the members on the field; now some of our churches keep even the dead on their rolls, on the ground that their establishment

extends over this world and the next! One of these mushroom records collapsed the other day by a fire, and out of a roll of over 4,000 there could not be found 200 members! This is undoubtedly an extreme case, but it is to the point. There are actually fewer Baptists in New York to-day than there were twenty years ago; there are fewer Methodists than there were twenty years ago."

"The churches," says Mr. Dixon, "represent fashion, pride, wealth, and social caste. The best attended of these great churches are crowded simply by the social attraction of the wealthy families who rule them. To keep out the herd of vulgar social aspirants who wish to scrape acquaintance by jostling the children of the rich, some of these churches have separate Sunday-schools for the rich and the poor."

Well, then, according to Mr. Dixon, Protestantism is a failure in New York. Is Catholicism any better? No, he says. "The foreign population of New York—that is, foreign-born and the children of the foreign-born—is eighty per cent. of the total. The Catholic population of the city, by the census of 1890, is 380,000—twenty per cent. By a careful examination of the sources of our immigration it will be found that at least fifty-four per cent. of it is Roman Catholic. This should give the Roman Catholic Church an aggregate of 972,000 in New York City. It actually is only 380,000, showing a loss in New York alone of 592,000! Protestantism has not held its own in New York. The record of Roman Catholicism is even worse." Of course, Mr. Dixon thinks the statistics indicate a bright future for his own, the People's, Church. But do they not indicate that the people are beginning to look elsewhere than to churches of any description?

Exeter Hall has set its face against the mummies. In the course of the May Meetings it has been discovered that the Sunday opening of museums is a State recognition of the desecration of the Sabbath. Dear, dear me! So you may stay at home on Sunday afternoon and read about the Pharaohs, but you must not indulge in the giddy, secular joy of gazing upon their poor, mortal remains until Monday morning. But why and wherefore? Surely, while Exeter Hall goes on inventing additions to the Decalogue in this high-handed fashion, the May Meetings had better be called the Mayn't Meetings.—*Pick-Me-Up*.

The *Churchman*, ignoring that Christianity has on its shoulders the burden of more religious wars than any other faith, has an alarmist article on the dangerous element to the peace of India from the mighty force of sixty millions of Moslems there who might be aroused by the cry for a religious war. "This," says the *Churchman*, "will remain a source of danger to the peace of the world, as long as the precepts of Mohammed endure." The *Churchman* surely forgets the bloodthirsty precepts of the Old Testament, and the fact that Jesus said he came not to bring peace, but a sword.

The West London Mission, of which Hugh Price Hughes is superintendent, has just held its ninth anniversary. The function seems to have been very successful, and the Mission is now "marching forward with quickened step to the completion of its great ideal—a saved London." But this is a very large order. We reckon that London will drop out of the map of the world before it is "saved" in the Methodist sense of the word.

For a good while before the anniversary the Methodist public was informed, again and again, that the West London Mission wanted £3,000. A fortnight beforehand the principal agents of the Mission held a midnight prayer-meeting and begged the Lord to let them have that £3,000. They got it, and they call it an answer to prayer. But how about the big preliminary advertisement?

"Now that by God's mercy we have the £3,000 asked for, let us make a bold push for £2,000 more," says the *Methodist Times*. These people approach God as a man approaches a doubtful dog—first patting his head to see whether he will stand it, and then stroking him all down the back.

The West London Missionaries also prayed for fine weather for their anniversary. They got it, and so did cricketers and racing men. As an answer to prayer, the weather was singularly impartial. Besides, it was put on at the expense of the farmers, who badly want rain, especially for their hay crops. The £3,000 obtained by the West London Mission is nothing to the loss inflicted upon agriculturalists by the drought.

Donahoe's Magazine, an American Catholic organ, has a paper on "Shakespeare's Authorship and Religion," a conversation between Ignatius Donnelly and Rev. John Conway. It is hard to say which of the interlocutors is more ridiculous. Ignatius says Shakespeare's real name was Jack Peter. He gets this from his cryptogram, a subject upon which he is as daft as Delia Bacon. Ignatius thinks his cypher the eighth wonder of the world, and fancies that Bacon was the

founder of the Rosicrucian Society, which, mistaking it for that of the Illuminati, he says was "established to protect liberty of thought against the encroachments of kings and Churches." Ignatius is either misreported, or he makes an unpardonable mistake, or tells a downright falsity about the British Museum library catalogue.

Father Conway does not swallow Donnelly's nonsense, having to support a case of his own—viz., that Shakespeare was of the true Church, which Bacon evidently was not. He attempts to get over the mistake in *Romeo and Juliet* of alluding to evening mass by supposing that vespers were so-called. He says of Shakespeare: "Every allusion of his to sacred subjects is made in the most reverential tone." How reverential is Sir John Falstaff's allusion to the oil that is in him setting hell on fire? And how reverential is Mistress Quickly's allusion to his going to Arthur's bosom—substituting the mythical English hero for the Jewish one? How reverential is Richard of Glo'ster's saying, "For you shall sup with Jesus Christ to-night"?

"Further," says Father Conway, "when the great dramatist deals with distinctly Catholic personages he gives them their due respect throughout." Let it be noted, on the other hand, that he invariably makes his prelates worldly. The words of religion are on their lips, but ambition influences their lives. Cardinal Pandolph, the holy legate of the Pope, in *King John*, is a specimen of the real ecclesiastic as seen by Shakespeare.

The *Daily News* Vienna correspondent says that during the solemn millennial service on Sunday at Lipto St. Miklos, in Hungary, the Roman Catholic chaplain violently attacked the Hungarian Government, the civil marriage law, and all Liberal institutions. His remarks caused indignation among the congregation, and all the educated persons present rose and left the church. By common accord they went across the Market-place to the Jewish Temple, where a millennial service was also being conducted, and heard the sermon of the Rabbi, who was eulogising the patriotic aspirations of the Hungarian nation.

Another case of clerical intolerance is reported from Olmutz, where it has caused great indignation. The clergy of Olmutz refused to attend the funeral of the wife of Herr Carl Berghof, a theatrical director, on the plea that she was not a "good" Catholic. Frau Berghof had lately attended church as the godmother of a little girl, and had signed herself in the church register. On Wednesday all the Liberal citizens of Olmutz turned out, and an immense procession followed the coffin to the cemetery. Here fresh indignation broke out, for the grave had been dug in unconsecrated ground without the cemetery proper, and the deceased woman was laid side by side with a man who lately murdered his wife and committed suicide. The coffin was placed in the grave upside down, notwithstanding all the family could say to prevent it. The reader has possibly already guessed that Frau Berghof, though a Roman Catholic all her life, was the wife of a Jew.

The Lord's Day Observance Society must not continually neglect the duties for the fulfilment of which they collect money from the public. The next Drawing Room, or dress show, "by the command of the Queen," is to be held on a Monday. This will necessitate the florists, dressmakers, and hair-decorators working the whole of the preceding Sunday. We await with interest the denunciation of the Court by the Lord's Day Society.—*Reynold's Newspaper*.

Little "Christian Evidence" jokes go a long way at Exeter Hall! There was a doubting Rationalist who had presumably swallowed the snake story, the fish story, and the donkey story, but boggled at the Ark. That Mr. Noah got in the animals two by two, and all the rest of it, presented no difficulties to this honest doubter; but "when he was asked to believe that the children of Israel carried it about with them for forty years in the wilderness, well, his faith broke down!" The Christian Evidence lecturer's kind explanation made things clear at once. These are just the deep problems I should expect the average Christian Evidence lecturer to be able to solve.—*Weekly Times and Echo*.

Mr. Ernest T. Hargrove, an Englishman, has been chosen President of the American Theosophical Society, in succession to the Mahatmic messenger, William Quan Judge. Hargrove has only spent twenty-nine years in his present incarnation, but then he has been incarnated exactly four hundred and ninety times—that is, the seventy times seven required to bring supernatural wisdom. The new President announces that he only needs endowments to establish a Theosophical University. The Mahatmas never send cheques themselves, but only messages exhorting the faithful to supply the needful.

The *New Age*, in a carping notice of Mr. H. S. Salt's *Percy*

Bysshe Shelley, says: "He appears seriously to believe that Atheism is rapidly spreading, and that free love is hard upon us. Surely the very slightest observation of the actual facts of contemporary life would convince him that never since the foundation of Christianity has the belief in 'God, Freedom, and Immortality' been more potent than now in the minds and actions of men." Mr. A. E. Fletcher is a sentimental Christian, with a faculty for seeing just what he wishes to see. It is natural for people to impute their own character to others, but he goes beyond the mark when he says of Mr. Salt that "it is extremely doubtful whether, did he not think that Shelley was an Atheist, a vegetarian, and a free lover, he would discover the slightest appreciation of Shelley's poetry."

The most celebrated shrine in Moscow is that of the Iberian Virgin, whose chapel few Russians pass without crossing themselves. This virgin—that is to say, her icon—like the Bambino of Ara-Coeli in Rome, frequently goes to visit the sick at their homes. She has carriages and horses for the purpose. During such absences a substitute takes her place in her niche. She brings in from 400,000 to 500,000 roubles a year.

The proceedings in connection with the Czar's coronation cost over a million pounds. The dear people cannot expect to have such a blessing as a head of the Church and State without paying for it.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, Beecher's successor at Plymouth Church, is slowly hobbling after Ingersoll. He calls himself "a theistic evolutionist," and it seems to mean an evolutionist who clouds his real belief with verbiage. He rejects the Atonement, and speaks of eternal life, not as a continuation of human existence, but as the immortality of God himself brought into God's children.

The *English Churchman*, the organ of the very Low Church, is much discouraged. It laments: "Men are ever more and more bent on going their own way instead of God's way. They are turning from his Sabbaths, and encouraging that fearful heresy of sacerdotalism, which, whether Anglican or Roman, is contrary to God's Word." All the poor old Evangelical organ can do, however, is to bid the world beware of the wrath to come.

Sir Robert Peel said nearly half a century ago: "The battle of the Reformation will have to be fought again in this country." Certainly the Church is getting more Romanised yearly, and last Sunday, when the Catholics had a procession round the West-end of London, a number of people thought they were witnessing merely a procession of Ritualists.

The *Baptist* says: "Robert Browning has a great deal to answer for in some of our Congregational pulpits. He is all very well in his way, but he is very much out of his way when his poetry takes the place of the New Testament." We guess the pastors only supply Browning to meet a demand; and that congregations prefer *The Ring and the Book* to the Apocalypse is an encouraging sign.

"I am concerned," Mr. Gladstone writes to a Belfast correspondent, "to hear that the passion of unbelief in any degree prevails in Belfast, for I hoped that the town was, like Ireland in general, exempt from its sway." We do not know the name of Mr. Gladstone's correspondent, but we do know that there is a good deal of "unbelief" in Belfast. There ought also to be a strong Branch of the National Secular Society. The old Branch there was fairly strong at one time, but some of its leading members went into the Labor movement, and a few of them appear to have gone out of their way to injure the Branch which they had no further time or occasion to support.

"They say, 'God sends the little babies.' Of all the dastardly, revolting lies men tell to suit themselves, I hate that most. I suppose my father said so when he knew he was dying of consumption, and my mother when she knew she had nothing to support me on, and they created me to feed like a dog from stranger hands. Men do not say God sends the books, or the newspaper articles, or the machines they make; and then sigh and shrug their shoulders, and say they can't help it. Why do they say so about other things? Liars! 'God sends the little babies!' When people are married, though they should have sixty children, they throw the whole onus on God. When they are not, we hear nothing about God's having sent them. When there has been no legal contract between the parents, who sends the little children then? The Devil, perhaps! Odd that some men should come from hell and some from heaven, and yet all look so much alike when they get here."—*Olive Schreiner, "Story of an African Farm."*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 24, Glasgow Conference; 31, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society. 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.

LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston).—Many thanks for *Literary Digest*. Ingersoll's text, "There is no darkness but ignorance," is from *Twelfth Night*, act iv., scene 2. Hearty greetings.

JOHN BRADLEY.—Branch excursions in the summer are good agencies for holding the members together.

W. KYLL.—It would be rather absurd to discuss Darwinism, at any rate in pure biology, before an audience ignorant in all probability of the elementary facts of the science. Of course, a debate on Religion as affected by Evolution is a different matter.

KETTERING FREETHINKER.—Pleased to hear from you. You are at least a person of courage. Let us know the sequel in due course.

X.—The remedy for all such grievances—at least the chief remedy—is the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal. It seems to us useless for the public at large to discuss cases like that of Mrs. Maybrick.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—R. T. Jones, 3s. 6d. Per Miss Vance: Edinburgh Branch, 9s. 6d.; J. F. Dewar, 2s. 6d.; Cohen, 1s.; McLeish, 1s.

GOLIATH.—(1) We never saw Mr. Woodman's pamphlet, and never heard of the *Infidel's Catechism* he refers to. The ridiculous samples you give from the reverend gentleman's heap of rubbish are certainly not extracts from Edgar Montei's *Catechisme du Libre Penseur*, which is a serious book by a man of position and ability, who received some assistance from M. Littré, the great French scholar—a member of the Academy, and the author of the famous Dictionary. (2) Good and evil are relative terms. There is no absolute morality. Nature—or God, if he controls nature—is perfectly indifferent whether a sailor hooks a shark or a shark eats a sailor. It all depends on the point of view. Morality simply means conduct which is beneficial to men, which increases their happiness or diminishes their misery.

J. SAUNDERS (Reading) laughs at Marie Corelli's nonsense about Atheistic nostrils being offended by the perfume of flowers, and will be happy to show the lady four dozen varieties of roses grown by himself as an amateur. This correspondent promises to send us a box of roses presently. They won't offend us, anyhow.

F. SAYERS.—Miss Vance, secretary, has sent you particulars. Pleased to hear you are joining the N.S.S.

JOHN GRAHAME (Paisley) wants to know how many gods the Bible represents. Does he mean all the gods mentioned in the Bible—or what?

J. PROCTOR.—Fresh cards will be forwarded. Thanks.

THE Plymouth Branch desires to acknowledge 10s. 6d. from "A Friend."

J. G. CROZIER (Sunderland), who has £1, a subscription to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, lying at the Birkbeck Bank, authorises its appropriation to Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, which will be done in due course.

W. S. CLOGG.—We wish Mr. Neate all happiness in his marriage. He has been a most loyal and devoted soldier of Freethought for many years.

S. BURTON.—No apology is needed. We are always pleased to hear from readers, and especially from lady readers. Glad to know you like the *Freethinker* yourself. Of course it is impossible to keep out everything that might frighten a timid Christian. That would not satisfy our special public.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Land and Labor—Consett Guardian—Oxford Times—Consett Chronicle—New York Public Opinion—New York Sun—Weekly Digest—Far East—Freethought Ideal—Truthseeker—Open Court—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Jarrow Guardian—Liberty—Kansas Lucifer.

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.

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

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SUGAR PLUMS.

PICTON HALL, Liverpool, which was refused by the Town Council for the National Secular Society's Conference in 1894, was granted for a lecture by Mr. Foote on Saturday evening, May 16. It was the first local meeting under the Lecture Scheme, and it was a great success. A fine meeting, consisting of nearly a thousand people, listened to Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Foundations of Faith" with deep interest, and, judging by the applause, a great deal of sympathy. Mr. Laurence Small, who took the chair, had a fairly easy task, though many questions were asked, and several Christians took advantage of the opportunity for discussion. The Liverpool friends are delighted with the result of this experiment, which they intend (if possible) to repeat in the near future.

It was nearly half-past ten when Mr. Foote left the Picton Hall platform, and the next day (Sunday) he had three lectures to deliver in the Oddfellows' Hall. Four lectures in twenty-four hours made a pretty stiff bit of work in such weather. However, Mr. Foote was in first-rate form on Sunday night, and the applause was tremendous. A feature of the Sunday meetings was the presence of an unusual number of strangers, probably attracted through the Picton Hall experiment. One lady, in the afternoon, rose to contradict a male speaker who said that Christianity was the best friend of women. She remarked incidentally that she had never heard an Atheist lecture before, and was very agreeably surprised.

One result of Sunday's meetings is the certainty of Liverpool being represented at the Glasgow Conference. There was some doubt about it before—there is none now. One delegate is sure to go, and there will probably be a second.

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.

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.

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.

The Shadow of the Sword, by Mr. Foote, is reviewed by the *Vegetarian Messenger*, which says: "The publications of the Humanitarian League have always been distinguished by a sound common sense, and this pamphlet is no exception to the rule. . . . The author disclaims any intention of attempting to alter human nature, but shows that self-interest, humanity, and reason all point to the advantage of substituting arbitration for the sword in international disputes." The Rev. J. Page Hopps writes in *The Coming Day*: "No. 19 of the Humanitarian League's publications is a militant tract against the military interest, blazing with right feeling, and strong in good sense. It gathers together, and forces into one strong bolt, a hundred electrical emotions and arguments. We only wish it could be made to hit the mark."

Reynolds's Newspaper (May 17) calls Mr. Foote's *Sign of the Cross* "a scathing criticism," and says: "We commend this criticism as a telling exposure of unlearned methods."

The Heine fountain, which was rejected by New York City, will be placed in the picnic ground at North Beach, a pleasure resort on Long Island across the East River from Harlem. Members of the Heine Memorial Committee have contributed the site, which is within the boundaries of the Greater New York, and will pay the expense of erecting the fountain.

The British Museum has purchased a hitherto unpublished letter from J. S. Mill to Thomas Carlyle. It is dated from the India House, 30 June, 1837, and, referring to Heraud, the author of *The Descent into Hell*, which Jerrold said he would like to see, Mill remarks of Heraud's disregard of contemporary opinion, "which would be greatness if he were not so sure of living forever": "He reminds me of the dying penitent's answer to his confessor, who proposed to him as a motive for patience the example of Christ. 'Ah,

father, when J. C. died on Friday he knew well he would rise again on Sunday." Mill tells Carlyle that he is busy with a book "which you will think very little worth doing—a treatise on Logic."

On Sunday last the new N.S.S. Branch at Leeds had its first Sunday excursion. About a hundred members and friends went by rail to Ilkley, where they spent some hours most delightfully. Other excursions are under consideration.

Mr. A. B. Moss has been re-elected on the Camberwell Vestry, this time for three years. Mr. Moss delivered three open-air lectures on Sunday, which proves that he intends to make no abatement in his Freethought propaganda.

"My annual holiday," Mr. Moss writes, "commences this year on Saturday, July 25, and I propose to spend about a fortnight in Rhyl, North Wales. I desire, also, to make a week's tour around about Manchester and the neighbourhood. On week evenings I shall lecture under Mr. Foote's scheme, commencing at Blackburn on July 27, and I propose to go to Bolton and other towns and spread the gospel of Freethought. Societies needing outdoor lectures should communicate with me at once at 44, Credon Road, London, S.E."

Mr. J. G. Neate, secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch, has been elected a member of the Bethnal Green Vestry. There were fifteen candidates in the South Ward, and Mr. Neate headed the poll with 595 votes. Among the unsuccessful candidates was Mr. Alley, of the Christian Evidence Society, who polled 333 votes, and was twelfth on the list.

Colonel Ingersoll's address to the Church Militant, Chicago—published at our office in pamphlet form as *The Coming Civilisation*—was telegraphed verbatim all over the United States. Four hundred copies were used by the press, and the address must have been read by several millions of people.

We have received the annual report and balance-sheet of the Huddersfield Secular Sick and Funeral Society. There has been a decrease in the sick expenditure, and a corresponding increase in the bonus account. Altogether, it is an extremely healthy document.

The National Secular Society's Executive had a final special meeting on Thursday, May 14, to receive and pass the annual report and balance-sheet. Mr. John Samson raised the matter of the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, the balance of which (about £50) is still on deposit at the Birkbeck Bank. On the motion of Mr. Samson, seconded by Mr. Hartmann, the following resolution was passed on the lines of the reply given to Mr. Samson in the *Freethinker*:—"That the subscribers to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund who ordered their subscriptions to stand over in the Birkbeck Bank be asked through the *Freethinker* how they now wish their money to be disposed of, and that the trustees be desired to carry out their wishes, and that after the expiration of two months the unclaimed balance be paid over to the National Secular Society." This was carried unanimously.

London Freethinkers, especially in the West-end, are once more reminded of the Sunday evening lectures which will begin at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday, May 31. Mr. Foote will deliver the first lecture, and Mr. Watts will take the chair. Full details will appear in our next issue, and in the advertisements.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a full report of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference at Glasgow.

How to Help Us.

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

The Church is at rest only when she has everything her own way, or is able, without let or hindrance, to trouble the tranquillity of others.—*Voltaire*.

LECTURING NOTES.

I HAVE just concluded an eight days' lecturing tour in Devonshire and Cornwall, where Secular propaganda is sadly needed. During my thirty-five years of Freethought advocacy I have never found districts wherein so much ignorance and priestly influence abounded as exist at the present time in these two Western counties. Apart from a few of the larger towns, the people appear to lie under the absolute control of the Church; and what is the result? An entire absence of all intellectual aspiration and mental freedom. In the rural districts a forced obedience to the dictates of the clergy is lamentably apparent. The church and the public-house are the principal institutions which seem to command adherents in the small towns and villages of both Devonshire and Cornwall. The degraded spectacle presented in these places is an evidence of what the general condition of the rural population will be if the education of the young is once more placed under clerical control. Talk of civilising the "heathens" abroad! Those who have had similar experience to that of mine during the past week will know that there are heathens at home who are existing in a semi-barbaric state. Let attention be directed to these unfortunate people, with a view of securing for them personal freedom, and exciting within them a desire for self-elevation and self-reliance. The Church has failed to do this, therefore other means must be evoked.

It is the mission of Freethought to aid in this noble work, and, through Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, more is now being accomplished in this direction than has ever even been attempted in the history of the Secular movement in this country. Our efforts are not confined, as formerly, to towns, where Freethought happily abounds, but we go to country districts, the very hot-bed of orthodox supremacy, and attack the enemy upon his own ground. The Lecturing Fund enables us to carry the Secular Gospel to thousands who previously had not heard of it, and thus practical and useful work is being done. If Lord Salisbury and his Church allies are determined to endeavor to "capture the Board schools," we must be persistent in striving to rescue the helpless victims of theological domination from the snares of priestcraft. Those persons who suppose that religious persecution is at an end should visit the outlying districts of Cornwall and Devonshire, and if such persons are open to conviction they will soon discover their mistake. During my tour in the West I learnt with pain that many men, who acknowledged that they had no faith in the teachings of theology, dared not attend my lectures in case they should be deprived of the means of providing for their wives and families. At Liskeard, in Cornwall, friends who had promised to assist in the local arrangements were compelled to withdraw their aid at the last moment on account of Christian intimidation; and in Plympton, only a few miles from Plymouth, a tradesman lost all his business, and was driven from the place, simply because he refused to attend church and profess a faith in which he could not believe. Such attempts to enforce hypocritical profession, and such persecution of those who resist the immoral action, are disgraceful, and show the pernicious influence of Christian theology. A man who has only himself to consider may make himself a martyr to religious persecution, but it is hard to expose one's wife and children to want in consequence of the honest avowal of opinions sincerely held.

My four Sunday lectures in Plymouth were given under the auspices of the local Branch of the N.S.S. The audiences were good, and much larger than those I had at my previous visits. Friends attended from surrounding districts, and all present were most enthusiastic in their approval of the lectures. Thanks to the persistent activity of Messrs. Barter, Smith, Rennolls, and Pascoe, the prospects of the local Branch have much improved, and I am glad to record the fact that the Branch will be represented at the Glasgow Conference. In Plymouth and the two adjoining towns, Stonehouse and Devonport, Freethinkers are very numerous, and I earnestly hope that they will give practical help to the local Branch. Arrangements are being made by the Plymouth friends to carry on an extensive propaganda during the coming season, and if all Secularists will render what aid they can good results will be sure to follow.

All my week-night lectures were under Mr. Foote's scheme, and meetings were held where Secular views were

previously unknown. The opposition offered was (with two exceptions) very thoughtful and gentlemanly. Numerous questions were asked, and the greatest possible attention was given to the lectures. The exceptions were at Devonport and Tavistock. At the former place a wild and incoherent exhorter, by the name of Thomas, created much amusement by throwing about a huge Bible, declaring that he believed every word of it. Fortunately, his folly was somewhat counteracted by a calm speech from the local Unitarian minister. In referring to this incident, the *Western Evening Herald*, of May 12, has the following editorial note:—

“Mr. C. B. Courtney Thomas has lain low for some time. But he is popping up again. He was present at a lecture by Mr. Charles Watts, the Secularist, at Devonport last night, and made his presence felt, as 'tis his nature to. Mr. Watts's lecture was not very aggressive, and could hardly have offended anybody who went to hear it in the full assurance that he was to hear an exposition of Secularist doctrines. This was the view that the Rev. Tysul-Davies, who took part in the discussion, adopted. He was able to keep cool. But Mr. Thomas was not. He became excited, and interrupted Mr. Watts in his reply to the criticism passed upon his address.”

The *Western Daily Mercury* gave a fair report of my lecture. At Tavistock a long debate followed the lecture, and, strange to say, the policeman who was on duty to keep order asked, in a very inquisitorial style, if I dared to deny that “Jesus possessed all power on earth and in heaven”? He seemed quite astonished when I informed him that his New Testament stated that Christ was limited in power, and that he confessed that of himself he could do nothing. On leaving the hall with my friends, this “protector of the law” hissed us most vehemently. His Christian fanaticism was evidently more potent than his love of duty.

On each evening a party of Plymouth friends, including Mr. Barter and his two daughters, Mr. Pascoe and his sister, Mr. Rennolls, Mr. Couch, Mr. Searle, and Mr. Smith, the energetic president of the Plymouth Branch, accompanied me to the place of meeting, and one and all worked hard to make the lectures a success. As soon as the Lecturing Fund will allow it, these towns must be again visited, when no doubt the seed that has been sown in truly orthodox soil will have borne good fruit.

The pleasure of my tour has been considerably enhanced by the kindness shown me by the Plymouth friends. Mr. Barter and his wife made a capital host and hostess, who, with their two charming daughters, did everything for my comfort. It was indeed pleasant to be entertained by such a happy family, where the halo of Secular joy illuminates the domestic circle.

CHARLES WATTS.

BUDDHISM AND GOD.

A PECULIAR lesson is involved in the fact that Buddhism, the greatest non-Christian religion, which is distinguished for inculcating the noblest moral maxims, such as love of enemies, chastity, sincerity of heart, and charity towards all suffering creatures, knows nothing about God. Unfriendly critics have on that account branded Buddhists as Atheists, and yet they face the same facts of life and have derived therefrom the same rules of ethical conduct. The main difference between Christians and Buddhists consists in the employment of different systems of comprehending and symbolising the facts of experience. Both religions, Christianity as well as Buddhism, recognise an authority for moral conduct. The former call it Christ, the latter Buddha. Christ reveals to Christians the will of God; Buddha teaches men enlightenment. There is this difference: that Christ appears as the son of God, and therefore his teachings must be accepted as revealed truth, while Buddha is a man, who, after a diligent search, at last obtained the highest wisdom, that will deliver mankind from evil. In Christianity the sonship of Christ vouches for the truth of Christ's message, while in Buddhism Buddha's enlightenment constitutes his Buddhahood. Now, Buddha teaches that enlightenment is the same, and that all Buddhas teach the same religion, which consists in the abandonment of the vanity of self-hood, of all hatred and envy, and of lust, implying at the same time a far-reaching

and unbounded love (which refuses none, not even those who hate and despise us), compassion with all those that suffer, and holiness. Enlightenment is a living recognition of the truth seen in its moral application to practical life, and truth is a summarised statement of facts, or rather the laws pervading the facts, and constituting a comprehensive aspect of their eternality. And this essence of Buddhahood, the eternal laws, the recognition of which constitutes enlightenment, has been formulated by the later Buddhists under the name of Amitabha, which means illimitable light, and is conceived as eternal, immutable, and omnipresent. It is the *Sawbhoga-Kaya* (the body of bliss) among the three personalities of Buddha, the other two being the *Nirmanakaya*, the apparitional body of Buddha the teacher, and the *Dharma-Kaya*, the body of the law, which is Buddha's religion in its historical development.

The facts are the same in Buddhism and in Christianity; only the modes of formulating them in symbolical expressions vary. Both religions recognise an authority of conduct which, in a word, we may call “the ethical law of the universe, as manifested in the evolution of life.”

According to Buddhist notions, every man is responsible for his fate, for every living creature is the incarnation of his karma. We are our own makers. We reap what we have sown. In this conception every single creature is no longer regarded as an individual being whose fate begins with its birth and ends with its death. Every creature is regarded in its connection with the whole world of life as the continuation of preceding life. Every creature is the result of the karma done in its former existences.

The aim of the Buddhist is to understand the law of life, and to act in agreement with it. Enlightenment concerning the problems of man's soul, implying the right attitude of mind with regard to our duties, constitutes Buddhahood. Thus, to the Buddhist, there is no problem of a conflict between the existence of evil in the world and the goodness of Amitabha, the external conditions of Buddhahood. The existence of evil in this world is the result of our own doing. We are the builders of our own fate, and we must be our own saviors.

If a bridge breaks down under the weight of railroad cars too heavy for its construction, is the law of gravitation responsible for the lives that are lost in the wreck? According to the Buddhist conception, the engineer is responsible. There is no Brahma responsible for our mistakes, or even for our ignorance; but we ourselves are guilty of both. The constitution of life, and the laws of life, are no secrets. They are open to all, and can be investigated and obeyed; and if the bridge be constructed by an intelligent engineer, it will carry the passengers over the river to the other bank. He who understands his own being and the laws underlying the development of life will no longer throw the responsibility of his misfortunes on others, be they gods or men; but will, like Faust in Goethe's grand drama, seek salvation in helpful deeds that will live after him, and preserve the bliss of his life in all generations to come.

—The Open Court.

P. CARUS.

A PRECIOUS TEXT.

“THOU shalt not suffer a witch to live!”
So runs the Hebrew law;
And we must implicit obedience give,
Or else with the devils for ever we'll live
In a country which can't be called “braw”!

Now, I know a witch, and her spells I have felt—
Indeed, she is one living spell;
Her bonnie blue eyes, where the love glances melt,
Her cherry-ripe lips, whose soft pressure I've felt,
All, all, her dire witchery tell.

'Tis pity old Moses had not seen her once,
When the love-light shone bright in her eye;
He'd have listened to justice (if but for the nonce),
And altered his bloodthirsty law right at once
To “A witch thou shalt never let die!”

AMIGO.

The prayers that God answers are those that require somebody else to do something.

TALMAGE THE TURGID.

MR. TALMAGE is quite sure that God was on the side of the allies at the Battle of Waterloo; that he was on the side of the Russians during the French invasion. Mr. Talmage does not take it upon himself to explain, however, how the deity chanced to be on the other side at Marengo and Austerlitz! No wonder that war is a risky business, if the God of battles changes his allegiance so erratically, and without apparent provocation! Mr. Talmage should advise the Government to cease expending money for ironclads and coast fortifications. In case of a foreign complication it were "all day with us" if the Autocrat of the universe were swinging a battle-axe against us; while, if we chance to have him with us, we could send Baby McKee out with the jaw-bone of a hen, and put the armies of the world to shame!

Mr. Talmage should retire to some secluded spot and make a careful analysis of his sermons before firing them out to the press. They may sound all right in the big tabernacle, where a great volume of noise is the chief desideratum; but they make very poor reading. Like a flap-jack, they may tickle the palate when served hot and with plenty of "sop"; but, when allowed to grow cold, are stale, flat, and unprofitable.

Mr. Talmage is troubled with the diarrhoea of words, and should take something for it. Perhaps the best possible prescription would be a long rest—of a couple of centuries or so. How, in God's great name, the American people ever became afflicted with the idea that he is a great man is a riddle which might make Oedipus cudgel his wits in vain. He is not even a skilful pretender, shining, like the moon, by borrowed light—for he does not shine at all. His sentences are neither picturesque, dramatic, nor wise. His so-called "sermons" are but fragmentary, and usually ignorant allusion to things in general. He seldom or never encroaches upon the realms of science and philosophy, although he frequently attempts it, and evidently imagines that he is succeeding admirably, when he is but sloshing around, like a drunken comet that is chiefly tail, in inane limboes.

I can find no other explanation of Mr. Talmage's distinction than that, like Elliot F. Shepard, he can be more kinds of a fool in a given time than any other man in his profession. That were indeed distinction enough for one man, well calculated to cause the world to stand agape! Notoriety and fame have, in this age, become synonymous, if not exactly the same. The world gauges greatness by the volume of sound which the aspirant for immortal honors succeeds in setting afloat, little caring whether it be such celestial harp-music as caused Thebes's walls to rise, or the discordant bray of the ram's horn which made Jericho's to fall; and Mr. Talmage is emphatically a noise-producer. From the lecherous but learned and logical Beecher to the gabbling inanity now doing the drum-major act is a long stride.

—*Brann's Scrap-Book.*

Natural Forces not Laws.

No philosophical speculation should begin with a fiction, and it is altogether a fiction to represent natural law (*i.e.*, the qualities of objects around us) as commands. No commands are issued, and none should be assumed. It is equally indulging in fiction to speak of observing and transgressing the said laws; of reaping the reward attendant on the first, and incurring the punishment appointed for the second. The truth involved in this verbiage is nothing more than that similar causes uniformly produce similar effects, and that it is a knowledge of these uniform successions which enables us to adjust our conduct to them so as to avoid evil and to secure good.—*Samuel Bailey, "Letters on the Philosophy of the Human Mind," third series, p. 73.*

François Peyrard, a French Mathematician and Revolutionist (1760-1822), wrote *Nature and its Laws*. He asks the pertinent question: "Si Dieu n'a pas voulu rendre ses creatures completement heureuses dans ce monde, quelle raison ont ils de croire qu'il le voudra dans un autre?"—"If God never cared to make his creatures completely happy in this world, what reason can they have for believing he wills it in another?" When people are rational that question will destroy all their faith in future happiness. If man is ever happy, it is in spite of God, whose torturing instruments surround and fill him from his first moment to his last. And the God who made and conducts this world is certainly not the God to make and conduct a good one. It would be more rational to expect beasts, birds, and reptiles of prey to enter into compact to preserve animal life, or Popish priests to become friends of truth and practical teachers of morality. God has always behaved as badly as possible. What reason can men have for expecting him to repent, reform, and become good in future?—*J. Symes.*

AT THE MOUTH OF HELL.

BOB INGERSOLL PROMISES TO POSE FOR A PICTURE REPRESENTING HIM THERE, WITH MEPHISTO BY HIS SIDE.

New York, May 3.—It is not every man who would care to stand up and be pictured as entering the infernal regions, but that is what Robert G. Ingersoll is going to do very shortly.

So much of Mr. Ingersoll's life has been spent in mentally struggling with hell-fire that he doesn't mind having himself illustratively injected into the midst of it, even though it be such lurid hell-fire as is shown in the painting soon to be put on exhibition by G. S. Perhacs, a Brooklyn artist. All that is necessary to put the finishing touch to Hades is the figure of the noted infidel, and he will pose for that purpose within a short time.

The idea of painting a picture of hell struck Mr. Perhacs some years ago while he was travelling through Europe studying art in the various galleries. It seemed to him that the subject had not received that attention from painters which it deserved, so he decided to embody his ideas of the region in a picture of great size.

Two years ago he began the work of painting it, and it is now finished but for the two main figures. It represents the mouth of hell.

Hell is represented as a vast chasm surrounded by lofty mountains, between the peaks of which can be seen stretches of pale, cool sky, in effective contrast to the fiery depths below. Over the chasm hover demons armed with bows to drive back such of the damned as attempt to rise above their sphere in the future life, and a body tumbling into the gulf transfixed by an arrow serves as an awful warning to others meditating escape.

A large flat rock stands in the most conspicuous position, and it is on this rock that Mr. Ingersoll will stand, accompanied by Mephisto, who plays Virgil to the infidel's Dante. Mr. Ingersoll's attitude will be that of a spectator, which is not the rôle that many people would pick out for him under such circumstances.

He will have his pick of several emotions to depict: Horror, pity, distress, or incredulity.

Before taking steps to place Mr. Ingersoll at the mouth of hell, Mr. Perhacs took steps to obtain his permission, which proved to be an easy matter. Furthermore, the lecturer consented to pose, even though it involved wearing a Roman toga.—*Boston Daily Globe* (May 4).

However positive anyone's persuasion may be, not only of the falsity, but of the pernicious consequences—not only of the pernicious consequences, but (to adopt expressions which I altogether condemn) the immorality and impiety of an opinion; yet if, in pursuance of that private judgment, though backed by the public judgment of his country or his contemporaries, he prevents the opinion being heard in its defence, he assumes infallibility. And, so far from the assumption being less objectionable or less dangerous because the opinion is called immoral or impious, this is the case of all others in which it is most fatal. These are exactly the occasions on which the men of one generation commit those dreadful mistakes which excite the astonishment and horror of posterity. It is among such that we find the instances memorable in history, when the arm of the law has been employed to root out the best men and the noblest doctrines; with deplorable success as to the men, though some of the doctrines have survived to be (as if in mockery) invoked in defence of similar conduct towards those who dissent from them, or from their received interpretation.—*John Stuart Mill.*

The following "verses" were discovered the other Sunday by a gentleman on the flyleaf of a hymnal in a city church:—

Saith Coleridge, "Sleep's a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole";
So in this place, when we don't sing,
The drowsy god o'erspreads his wing—
We snore through sermons whole.

The parson fulminates in vain,
The sleeper sounder grows;
Thus while he's in the house of God
He travels in the Land of Nod,
And tells this by his nose.

Two infinite entities are impossible. God, if he exists, must be an infinite entity. The universe is an infinite entity. Hence—draw your own conclusion.

The priest does the cackling, but the congregation lays the eggs.

"Where will you spend eternity?" menacingly inquires the parson. Where we spent it before we were born.

BOOK CHAT.

Christ and the Creator Glorified; or, Our Savior and Science Reconciled, by One Oppressed (Glasgow and Edinburgh: Menzies and Co.), is the very orthodox title of a very heterodox book. The writer is evidently a person who has in childhood been deeply impressed with religious doctrines, has encountered many difficulties in their literal acceptance, and has sought, like so many others, to reconcile the conclusions of reason and science with the teachings of the Gospels. The result is a bulky book of 653 pages, with another 181 pages of an anthological excursus culled from all sorts of authors. We find cheek by jowl Jesus Christ and Kingdon Clifford, Aristotle and Mr. Haweis, Cicero and *Science Siftings*, Plato and Thomas Paine.

The whole book is, indeed, a museum of curiosities, full of extracts from the works of great masters, with occasional items of rubbish from such charlatans as Prophet Baxter. In one instance, at least (p. 570), a verse from Thomas Moore is mislabelled Sir Thomas More. A surprising variety of topics in connection with religion, philosophy, and sociology is dealt with, and the manner in which the author contrives to effect his reconciliation of incompatibles reminds us of some recipes for salad-making. He prepares an immense quantity of the most diverse ingredients, and by dint of much stirring forms a mixture which you may fancy amalgamated if you do not examine the various particles. Yet it must be confessed we have gone through the book with some pleasure. One is always lighting on a good thing generally taken with acknowledgment from other works, and these are so numerous that the book is probably more suggestive than any well-arranged and easily-digestible treatise would be.

The author of *Christ and the Creator Glorified* is evidently a well-read man, of large sympathies, touched, as so many are in these days, with the mania of reconciling the old fictions of religion with the new facts of science. He has discarded the worst features of theology, but runs an ideal Christ of his own, who is the perfect embodiment of natural science. He tells us "the world only needs to turn to science to re-discover Christ," who is "the protagonist of Nature," and the exponent of the true relation of man to the cosmos.

We have no objection to "One Oppressed" "re-conceiving the Christ," and running, as so many others do, one of his own brand; nay, we confess his conception is vastly superior to the little tin Jesus on wheels who receives the devotion of the multitude; but he must not expect us to identify his ideal with the thaumaturgic Jew of the Gospels, any more than with the theological Christ whom he repudiates. His theosophic reconciliation is buried beneath a dense mass of discussions, and those who dive for it are just as likely to bring up some pearls of Freethought as the old theological mud.

Vol. 1 of the new translation of the Sacred Books of the Buddhists, edited by F. Max Müller, and published at the cost of the King of Siam, is the *Gâtakamâla, or Garland of Birth Stories*, translated from the Sanskrit by J. S. Speyer. These stories profess to relate the lives of Gautama Buddha previously to his attainment of Buddhahood, and illustrate the boundless compassion and charity towards all creatures which attended him on the road. Teetotalers may not know that one section is devoted to a discourse against intoxicating liquors—an item found also in the Koran, but not in the New Testament.

The Old Light and the New, dealing with the chemistry of color and the new photography, is an illustrated little manual by William Ackroyd, Headmaster of the Chemistry Department at the Halifax Technical School. Mr. Ackroyd regards the X-rays as probably of the nature of ultra-violet rays, propagated by movement of the ether particles. The brochure contains some original views on the chemistry of color.

Is there a Devil? is the printed report of an address delivered in Anerley Congregational Church by the Rev. Joseph Halsey. This man of God uses his carnal reason to question the existence of the Devil, without any qualms that he may thereby throw in doubt the existence of his Deity. Indeed, he argues from the supposed existence of an all-good being for the non-existence of a devil. But if the latter is an invention to account for the phenomena of evil, is not the former an invention to account for the opposite phenomena? Mr. Halsey glides gently over the Scripture evidence for the Devil, and conveniently forgets that his existence was taught by the Church, and believed in by all Christians, in the days before scepticism flourished.

John Burroughs is unswerving in his devotion to the

memory of Walt Whitman, whom he was one of the first to make known to the wide reading world. He has recently delivered an address on Whitman before the Phi. Beta Kappa Society at Yale, in which he says the poet's purpose was "to lead the way to a larger, saner, more normal, more robust type of men and women on this continent, to prefigure and help develop the new democratic man—to project him into literature on a scale and with a distinctness that cannot be mistaken. To this end he keeps a deep hold of the savage, the unrefined, and marshals the elements and influences that make for the virile, the heroic, the sane, the large, and for the perpetuity of the race. We cannot refine the elements—the air, the water, the soil, the sunshine—and the more we pervert or shut out these from our lives, the worse for us. In the same manner, the more we pervert or balk the great natural impulses—sexuality, comradeship, the religious emotion, nativity—or the more we deny and belittle our bodies, the further we are from the spirit of Walt Whitman, and from the spirit of the All."

PROFANE JOKES.

A little girl in a small town watched the putting in of electric lights with much interest. They had been completed for about a week when she looked out of the window and saw the moon. She leaned out on the sill and said: "Now, Mr. Moon, you may go back into heaven and tell Mr. Jesus that we don't need you any more. We've got electric lights now."

"I was surprised, Willie," said his Sunday-school teacher, "to see you keep your seat when the superintendent asked those who wanted to go to heaven to rise. Don't you want to go to heaven?" "Yes'm." "Then why didn't you rise?" "Cos he didn't have no right to tell me to rise, ma'am," answered Willie. "He ain't no Angel Gabriel."

Colonel George Christ, of Arizona, who was collector of customs at Nogales, tells a story aimed against himself with gusto. "I was a candidate," said he, "for the governorship of Arizona, and came up to Washington to see about my prospects. I had plenty of backing, but secretary Noble had decided upon giving it to another man. My first experience with the secretary was not very pleasant. On going to have a conference with him I sent in my card, which simply read 'G. Christ.' Pretty soon the messenger came back and reported that the secretary could not see me. I was somewhat indignant, because of this flat turn down, and wanted an explanation. 'Why won't he see me?' I asked of the man. 'Well, I don't exactly know, sir,' he answered, 'but I has an idea the secretary was a little bit huffy at you for spelling Jesus with a G.'

A country farmer once excused himself for sleeping during the vicar's sermon by observing: "Lor, sir, when you are in the pulpit we know it is all right."

A little girl was to recite a verse of Scripture in Sunday-school, but failed to remember it. She said: "Mamma, what is my verse? Oh, I know now—'Blessed are the dressmakers.'"

"Boys," said a teacher in the Sunday-school, "can any of you quote a verse from Scripture to prove that it is wrong for a man to have two wives?" He paused, and after a moment or two a bright boy raised his hand. "Well, Thomas?" said the teacher, encouragingly. Thomas stood up, and said: "No man can serve two masters."

It was a north-country colliery proprietor, and he was instructing his five-year-old daughter in the doctrine of future punishment. The little girl was extremely anxious to know the exact nature of hell. Her father explained that it was a fiery gulf of unlimited extent. The child reflected a moment. Then "Father," she said, "couldn't you persuade the Devil to take his coals from you?"

HOT-WEATHER PHILOSOPHY.—"Do you fear death?" "No" —mopping the perspiration—"not in some forms." "What, for instance?" "Oh, well; say freezing."

APPEALING TO THE RECORD.—"As to the right mode of baptism," argued Deacon Baconside, "I reckon everybody knows how John the Baptist used to do it; and John the Baptist was a man with a great head." "He was," replied Uncle Bungley; "but he couldn't keep it."

To speak your honest thoughts, to teach your fellow men, to investigate for yourself, to seek the truth—these were all crimes, and the "Holy Mother Church" pursued the criminals with sword and flame. The believers in a God of love—an infinite father—punished hundreds of offences with torture and death. Suspected persons were tortured to make them confess. Convicted persons were tortured to make them give the names of their accomplices. Under the leadership of the Church, cruelty had become the only reforming power.—*Ingersoll*.

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, Ball's Pond): 7.15, E. Calvert, "Is Free Speech Conducive to Truth and Progress?" Saturday (30), concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Margaret Fuller."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Hell and its Ethical Substitutes."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, S. C. H. Carter, "The Wants of Man."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Hell and its Ethical Substitutes."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "Life of Lessing."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Tales of Heroes."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Ethics and Theology."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr. Jones, "Christian Religion."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, E. Pack, "Christian Infidels"; 3.15, H. Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?" Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, F. Haslam will lecture; 3.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed." Wednesday, at 8, J. Fagan will lecture.

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, F. Haslam will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, Mr. St. John, "Has Man a Soul?"

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "A Plea for Secular Education."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Rowney will lecture; 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

COUNTRY.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): Annual Excursion to Welton Dale—leave Hall at 9.30.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): No meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, A Professional Gentleman will give a series of character-delineations of notable persons, with special recitals, musical and otherwise, in which Mrs. F. V. Pearson will also take part.

Lecturer's Engagements.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 24, New Brompton; 31, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

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