

# The Free Thinker

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## THE DEVIL DISCOVERED.

ONE result of the study of comparative religion is the discovery that devils were once deities. Men outgrow their gods and they become devils, as Paul calls the gods of the heathen (1 Cor. x. 20). The Gnostics regarded the Jehovah of the Old Testament as a bad being more worthy of the name of a devil than of a god, in which opinion some modern Agnostics are found to concur. The gods of antagonists are usually regarded as devils. The devas of the Vedas becomes the demons of the Avesta. Alien races themselves are devils, as the Christian missionaries are "lie-speaking devils" to the Chinese.

In the eyes of the etymologist, as in those of the philosopher, God and the Devil are one and the same. Deus, Dyaus, Zeus, deuce, divus, divine, and devil have a common Aryan root. The Gipsy word for God is "divel." The very spelling of the Devil's name in English is a matter of long and curious evolution. In the earliest extant form (*circa* A.D. 800) it appears as diobul, dioful, or deoful, and the subsequent stages of its progress are somewhat as follows: Deofol, deofel, deouel, deuel, deuil, devel, divel, and so at last to its final crystallization as devil. The Devil himself, from being a most important personage (second only to the Creator of the universe), who wandered about as a roaring lion, as a serpent, or man, has come to be a mere expression or figure of speech, and people are asking, Who the devil is the Devil? Like the quaint old man of God who preached from 1 Peter v. 8, and had the habit of putting the pronoun after the noun, they inquire: Who the devil he was, where the devil he walketh, and what the devil he was roaring about?

I have discovered the Devil where a good many other things are to be found—in the dictionary. A dictionary makes capital reading—to any word-dealer; a little inconsecutive perhaps, but, then, what splendid materials, what enshrined histories, what curiosities of literature, what by-paths of thought, what wealth of information, what concentrated essence of our glorious language! People talk about what volumes they would take to a lighthouse, or on a long voyage; but give me a dictionary. As with all the best books, it is not to be read through at a sitting, but dipped into, like the Bible, Marcus Aurelius, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Bacon, and Emerson. If this is true of an ordinary dictionary, what shall be said of such an extraordinary work as Dr. J. A. H. Murray's *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, the work of an entire generation, and for the making of which the whole range of English literature has been ransacked by a staff of studious assistants.\*

Looking for the Devil in Murray, I found he had a place befitting his position in the thoughts of our ancestors. 17½ columns are consecrated to his name, with its various senses, phrases, and derivatives. Nor is this all. Under the head of "diablerie," "diabolism," and their cognate words, there are added another three columns. A former instalment had a long entry under "demon." Future instalments will deal with Satan, Lucifer, and other aliases; so that, before the Devil is dropped by Dr. Murray, he will probably have a quarter of a hundred columns consecrated to his memory. God, perhaps, will not have half the space.

Lieutenant Peter Lccount anticipated many of the calculations and conclusions of Bishop Colenso in an

amusing book, which he entitled *A Hunt After the Devil*. He chased Old Nick over the Bible and theological literature. Yet I am of opinion that the very best place to look for the Devil is in Murray's *Dictionary*, for here he is treated historically, and so seen in all his former greatness and in his present decay.

Murray thus defines the Devil: (1) "In Jewish and Christian theology, the proper appellation of the supreme spirit of evil, the tempter and spiritual enemy of mankind, the foe of God and holiness, otherwise called Satan. He is represented as a person subordinate to the Creator, but possessing superhuman powers of access to, and influence over, men. He is the leader or prince of wicked apostate angels, and for him and them everlasting fire is prepared (Matthew xxv. 41).

"(2) From the identification of the demons (*daimonia*, *daimones*), of the Septuagint and New Testament, with Satan and his emissaries, the word has been used from the earliest times in English as equivalent to or including demon, applied (*a*) (in scripture translations and references) to the false gods or idols of the heathen; (*b*) (in Apocrypha and New Testament) to the evil or unclean spirits by which demoniacs were possessed.

"(3) Hence, generically, a malignant being of angelic or superhuman nature and powers; one of the host of Satan, as 'prince of the devils,' supposed to have their proper abode in hell, and thence to issue forth to tempt and injure mankind; a fiend, a demon. Also applied to the malignant or evil deities feared and worshipped by various heathen people."

Thus Dr. Murray goes cheerily on through the twenty-five different heads under which the subject is grouped, each head further divided into numerous sub-heads, every head and every sub-head being copiously illustrated by quotations from poets, scholars, divines, and popular writers, arranged in chronological order.

All the early references show that the Devil was conceived as a person. As Trench says: "All gathers up in a person, in the Devil, who has a kingdom as God has a kingdom."\* The first notable writer to treat the Devil philosophically and profanely is Shakespeare. He sometimes uses devil as a mere expression of superlativeness. Thus, in *Twelfth Night*, at the end of Act ii., Sir Toby Belch calls Maria "thou most excellent devil of wit." So Goldsmith, in his *Retaliation*, wrote of Richard Burke:—

In short, so provoking a devil was Dick  
That we wish'd him full ten times a-day at Old Nick;  
But, missing his mirth and agreeable vein,  
As often we wish'd to have Dick back again.

Even Thackeray uses "a devil to play." The word "devilish" came so much in use last century that Foote, the comedian, satirised it in his *Devil on Two Sticks*, when he says: "They are devilish rich, devilish poor, devilish ugly, and devilish handsome." Lord Byron, even when writing to a lady (Miss Pigot), said: "I should be devilish glad to see him"; and Mrs. Carlyle wrote (Letters i., 360): "I think it devilishly well done." So the late R. L. Stevenson, in his *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, uses: "I have seen devilish little of the man."

But to get back to Shakespeare's poetic, philosophic, and proper use of the term as a mere figure of speech, a personification of undesirable qualities in man himself. How finely is this expressed by Cassio when he says: "It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil,

\* Yet I, even I, pointed out to the editor the omission of the children's word, "fanils."

\* Ample proof will be found in my pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*.



wrath: one imperfectness shows me another to make me frankly despise myself!" So in *Troilus and Cressida*: "How the devil Luxury.....tickles these together." These metaphorical devils are the veritable real devils that each has to cast out for his or her own self. The Atheist Shelley so uses the term, and says: "The devil was rebuked that lived in him"; and Tennyson finely ends his lines on *The Sailor Boy*:—

A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.

The metamorphosis of the Devil from a monster into a metaphor is probably symbolical of the fate of his divine antagonist, for it is hard to see how the deity can be an actual person if the Devil is a mere figure of speech.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

## THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

WE have recently heard much in reference to the attitude of the Church towards those social problems which are now engaging so large a share of public attention. Unfortunately, for ages the general masses manifested little or no interest in their social regeneration; the result was a state of moral and physical degradation upon their part, which was truly appalling. Within the last two decades, however, the toiling millions have awakened somewhat from their lethargy, and are now making laudable efforts to raise themselves into a higher and nobler condition in the social scale. True to its history in connection with other reforms, the Church comes forward and boasts that it is willing and anxious to play an important part in this improvement; forgetting that its clergy have ever followed, not led, the progress of the people. The question may be fairly asked, What has the Church done to inaugurate and encourage any movement having for its object the removal of those social evils that so long kept the masses in a state of ignorance and mental subjection? The answer, no doubt, will not be so favorable as the supporters of the Church expect and desire.

The incapacity of the clergy to deal thoroughly with social questions may be accounted for by the fact of their exclusive training. They have never been educated in commercial affairs, and but few of them are acquainted with the laws that regulate the relationship between employer and employed. If they had had the direction of a few hundred working men, say for twenty or thirty years, and had now to deal with the markets of the world and the competitive strife which exists on every hand, it would doubtless be impossible for them to write and speak as they frequently do upon the difficult problems involved. It may be good policy upon the part of the clergy to show sympathy for the working men, of whom nine-tenths in the great centres of intelligence and industry display no particular affection for the Church, and many of whom are directly antagonistic to its teachings. But the question arises, Why was that sympathy withheld so long? How did it happen that, until the working classes determined to help themselves, no assistance towards their emancipation was rendered by the clergy? Every advance that has been made to enlarge personal freedom, which is so essential to social happiness, has been in opposition to the wishes of the holders of privileges secured and sanctioned by Church-and-king-made laws.

The clergy, no doubt, now see that certain aspects of the social problems in some measure affect themselves, and therefore in self-defence they "assume a virtue if they have it not." The Church, like most other institutions, subsists upon the product of land and labor. The incomes, the livings of the clergy, are derivable from these sources; hence a falling market and a demand for increased wages visibly affect their incomes. They may endure the absence of the people from church on Sundays, but the diminution of their stipends would be a week-day calamity which they would sadly deplore. The question of "a living wage" is easy to talk about; but existing without one is a totally different matter, and one which the clergy, above all people, most dread. They preach "Blessed be ye poor," but they prefer riches all the same. It may be that "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven," but where is the follower of Christ who will not

secure what riches he can, upon the principle that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"? It is amusing to see how these "servants of the Lord" exhort the poor to be patient, and to "be content with such things as ye have," while they themselves are ever anxious to obtain a superabundance of the good things of this life. When will the masses learn who are really their friends and who are their foes?

The social problems never can be solved by so-called spiritual agencies. If the solutions ever come, it will be through secular means. The Church has never contributed anything worth speaking of towards solving the difficulties of our social life. And, be it remembered, its teachings upon this subject are of an unchanging nature, and have been so throughout its entire history. The changes in the Church have been only external—that is, pertaining to ceremonies and variable interpretations of incomprehensible dogmas, which have no bearing whatever upon social progress. Even in matters of the right of personal opinion upon religious subjects, which has a direct influence upon individual happiness, the Church has never been progressive, except under pressure. The intellectual and moral laws, upon the operation of which social advancement largely depends, have been ignored, or repudiated, by the Church as being inimical to its interests and dangerous to its spiritual domination. Besides, the Church has not only abstained from furnishing the agencies by which social problems may be solved, but it has persistently opposed, and often prevented, the adoption of measures whereby this desirable result could be achieved. The basis of all possible social progress is the enlightenment of the people, yet the Church left the son of a Quaker and Robert Owen to establish schools for the teaching of the poor. The most potent factor in modern history for the elevation of the masses is our national system of education, which the Church never supported, and which it is now seeking to depreciate in order to get the direction of the education of the young under its own control. In this matter the Church appears to be like the members of the Bourbon dynasty—it has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. This indictment can be amply sustained by an appeal to statistics, which show that before the year 1870 the Church allowed millions of the rising generation to grow up without even elementary education. It was also silent upon general reforms, when it was the only power that could have aided their advancement. Nay, more, when the working classes sought to obtain the franchise, whereby they could be enabled the more readily to redress the wrongs inflicted upon them, the Church was their most determined opponent.

Moreover, what has been the condition of the agricultural laborers, among whom, for many ages, the Church was the principal agency that could affect their welfare either for weal or for woe? What message had the clergy for these docile, industrious members of the human family? True, they taught them to obey and reverence their pastors and masters, the king, and all in authority under him; but no lessons were enjoined inculcating personal dignity, self-reliance, and intellectual development. The result was that the abject condition of these people, under Church rule, was the very opposite to all that the higher feelings of humanity required. To speak, before agricultural laborers, of the Church solving our social problems is only to evoke derision. Whatever improvement has been effected among the poor country people may be traced to the efforts of the pioneers of their own order, and not to the parson and squire. The Church, with all its organization, learning, and wealth, made no practical endeavor to promote the social progress and personal comfort of those who were living under the shadows of its own steeples; but, on the contrary, it allowed them to exist and die in hovels far less decent and comfortable than the squire's stables and kennels. The people were even left in ignorance of the best features of that religion which the clergy were paid to teach. Further, the Church did not seek to enhance its own interests by reason and argument, but it sought to maintain its position against its opponents by an appeal to the law, and to the power given them by Parliament.

The main social problems to-day are how to supplant the great evil of ignorance, which blocks the way to social happiness, by knowledge of a useful kind; and how to prevent the further perpetuation of the curse of poverty, which is so extensively limiting the comforts of the millions, who are, at the present time, subjects of privation and all its



attendant miseries. These are the two evils to obtain remedies for which our immediate attention is demanded. The panacea for the first evil we have shown the Church has never encouraged, and the second evil it increases by absorbing the earnings of those who have to endure the pangs of poverty. Honesty and truth are indispensable to all social improvement, and any institution that impedes the practice and growth of these virtues is useless as a means of solving the problems of our time. Now, we contend that the Church, by connecting honors and emoluments with the holding of its particular opinions, and by imposing social penalties upon those who do not profess such opinions, encourages hypocrisy and falsehood. It vitiates the moral and social health of any community to offer interest and prosperity, advancement and distinction, as a premium for the profession of any religious belief. To do so interferes with the personal liberty and mental freedom which are necessary to all who are engaged in the struggle to secure rights and independence for the whole of the community, irrespective of theological considerations.

Much has been said in recent years about the relationship of Christianity to social problems, and Jesus has been put forward as the great social reformer. It certainly appears to us to be very inconsistent to claim this title for one who never referred to the subject of either politics or sociology, even in an indirect manner. In the face of what the New Testament alleges Christ taught, how intelligent Socialists can claim him as their leader is beyond our comprehension. To us it seems a most unjustifiable pandering to the theological hypocrisy of the day. Moreover, many of Christ's supposed sayings contradict that for which some Socialists contend—namely, that his allusions to the kingdom of heaven (where marriage is to be abolished, suffering will be unknown, labor is to be superseded by eternal idleness, and praising the Lord is to go on for ever) apply to our terrestrial existence. We refuse to accept the theory of such an earthly communion of saints until we know how it is proposed to dispose of competition, co-operation, and communism. In the meantime we will

Learn to labor and to wait.

CHARLES WATTS.

### WITH INGERSOLL.

MANY great orators who charm the multitude by their utterances from the platform are poor conversationalists, and fail in private to impart that magnetism which in public they always spread around them. One such person just occurs to my mind, who, though a very effective speaker, and able to enthuse large audiences, is generally the most silent of the social circle, except that he is a boisterous laugh; and his hilarity is so flattering to those who converse that he is always an acceptable companion.

Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll is not one of these, for he is, if anything, more eloquent, fluent, and charming in the home or private circle than he is when speaking in the presence of admiring thousands. His wonderful memory, ready wit, keen perception, flow of words, and marvellous rhetoric make him one of the foremost conversationalists of the day, as he is the leader in the eloquence of the public platform.

A meeting with Ingersoll in his home is an occurrence never to be forgotten. The stranger in New York, wearied with its noise and distances, and lonely in its throngs, receives an intimation that Colonel Ingersoll holds a reception on a Wednesday afternoon. He timidly enters, is cordially received, is made to feel at home at once, and is introduced to some of the ladies and gentlemen of cultured minds and polished manners who surround the noble apostle of Freethought and the charming ladies of his household. A few converse together aside, but always with one ear open towards the central circle where the Colonel is giving a spontaneous burst of feeling about some question of the day, or is speaking appreciatively of poets or writers of the past, or is narrating some droll anecdote that convulses the hearers with merriment. Pope would say of him—

Formed by thy converse, happily to steer,  
From grave to gay, from lively to sincere.

As the company disperses, the genial hostess considerably

invites the stranger to escape from the loneliness of his hotel and join in the family dinner. Here is a scene never to be forgotten. The elegant matron presides, the Colonel sitting at her right and the guest at her left. Then come the two daughters, so famed for their beauty, accomplishments, and sterling character. Then come gentlemen and ladies of the family or visitors, one always pre-eminent, the charming sister of the hostess, the wife of the cordial and noted publisher, who, if there is to be a day of orthodox judgment, may expect at least as severe a sentence as the orator whose words he has so widely circulated. But propriety forbids the mention of further details of the graceful life in the palatial home; it may only be said that nowhere can be seen a more delightful picture of what wealth, beauty, brightness, refinement, and good sense can do to heighten social existence than is displayed at Colonel Ingersoll's table. Even if the Colonel does sometimes use a strong expression, it is so sanctified by aptness that it does not seem inconsistent with refinement. Amid the desultory conversation, bright sallies and stories escape from the Colonel's lips, and *bon-mots* flash out spontaneously such as most people might sit up nights trying to compose, and then fall far short of. One allusion to Canadian affairs was noted. A year ago the manager of a theatre in Montreal engaged Colonel Ingersoll to lecture. His portraits and bills were sent on by express, but when the manager took the advertisement to the leading daily evening paper its publication was refused. The theatre manager showed the greatest possible timidity and the poorest kind of judgment in cancelling the engagement; for it is certain that no conspiracy of silence on the part of the press could have prevented the assemblage of a larger audience than any hall in the city could hold to hear the foremost orator of the age. Colonel Ingersoll's quietly emphatic comment upon the occurrence was this: "I don't deny the right of the proprietor of the *Star* to publish such things as he thinks will pay, or to refuse such business as he thinks would be unpopular; but when he says that the advertizing of a lecture—a matter of public interest like this—would be injurious to him, he simply holds up both hands to emphasize the damned meanness of the community he lives in."

Mrs. Ingersoll told of their tour in the South, and how surprised they were at their cordial reception, especially in Texas, where no buildings could be found large enough to accommodate the crowds that desired to hear the Colonel speak. The changed attitude of the clergy was mentioned, for they now are turning from abuse to prayers and courtesy. The arch-infidel has won the respect of his opponents, for they know he tells the truth, and does it also with a power and persuasiveness that they envy. They see the triumph of his cause, and in their haste to save the church by wheeling it into the line of progress they seek now to get the endorsement of their sanctuaries by the man whose common sense is greater than all their creeds.

The married daughter talks of her favorite theme—the rational education of children, and we agree that there is no better work that one can do than to start a kindergarten. Anti-vivisection has a strong hold upon the circle, attendant upon an enthusiasm for kindness to animals. So the chat goes on, embracing a great diversity of themes; and, when all is over, and the delightful experience is recalled, the most prominent reflection is the question, Is it possible that any religion teaches that such people as these are to be damned? Colonel Ingersoll's home is as liberalizing as his lecture. No one can dine with the Ingersoll family and believe in hell.

A call upon Colonel and Mrs. Ingersoll on a Sunday afternoon, at the hotel in Boston where the Colonel awaits the evening lecture, affords an hour of intense enjoyment and intellectual stimulus. Though a forceful and ready talker, with seemingly limitless resources, he is not a monopolist of conversation, and is ever ready to give courteous attention to the response, and to accord another person his turn. His remarks are so suggestive, and his vivacity so catching, that one who considers himself a poor talker is surprised at the smart things that come to his lips; and he is flattered into the thought that he is a bright fellow after all, though he is only following up the train of thought that the Colonel's brilliant mind has originated. Rules of life were discussed—how to be good without God. The Colonel said: "The best rule of conduct was given by Zoroaster, which is to the effect that, when there is any



doubt as to whether courses of action are good or bad, give the benefit of the doubt in favor of the good." After much serious discourse, he gave this humorous anecdote. He said: "Colonel Tom Corvin once told me that he asked a Western gambler if he had any rules of living. 'Yes,' said the gambler, 'I have three rules. The first is, Never ask anyone to drink, because it might do him harm, and it would cost fifteen or twenty cents; the second is, Never refuse to take a drink, because you might make an enemy, and it saves money; and the third is, I don't care a damn what happens so long as it doesn't happen to me.'"

The Colonel still believes in miracles, for he says: "There are three miracles: that, after all that is known about them, God keeps his reputation, the Bible keeps its reputation, and Jesus keeps his reputation."

Discussing the question of an immanent divine Providence, in deep, impressive tone he slowly said: "God cares no more for you than he does for a leaf in the forest." I thought of a sermon I had heard in the morning, when each hearer was flattered to believe that his little self was the direct concern of an Infinite Being, and I did not wonder that egotistic saints denounced this disturber of their dreams.

At night three thousand people were in Boston Theatre to hear the lecture, "Why I am an Agnostic." For an hour and fifty minutes the audience was held spell-bound, while the lecturer described his early education, the awful orthodox dogmas he was taught, the doubts that arose in his mind, the course of reading that he pursued, and the final outcome of the struggle. A more brilliant exercise of the powers of description, reason, wit, and denunciation I never heard. I fairly pitied the old doctrines as he slaughtered them, and felt a tinge of compassion for the parsons as ineffable scorn was heaped upon those who at this era of the world's history teach these cruel absurdities, either because they are too stupid to know better or too mercenary to declare their convictions. The applause was very frequent, and it was cheering to hear the merry laughter of women at the bright sallies of wit that scorched the old creeds. Truly, liberal thought is winning its way!

The mother of a young man that I invited to the lecture wrote to me as follows. After alluding to the farewell sermon of Minot J. Savage, which described the broadening of religious thought, she said:—

Does it not go to prove that an Ingersoll has no longer any reason for being? He is fighting windmills now—only drawing crowds by his pleasing personality, his marvellous command of language, his natural knack at turning a sentence in a droll way, which tickles the ear of the multitude, but fails to satisfy the intellect of any man who thinks and reasons, much less to warm his heart or fill him with the love which is our immortal part, and the only thing we can take with us when our days on earth are ended. Ah, me, the pity of it! Such powers prostituted to base ends, when they might have been so wonderful in lifting up humanity!

In my reply, I asked if she had ever heard Ingersoll speak, or had read any of his lectures. Would she go to hear him once and read his lecture, "Liberty for Man, Woman, and Child," and the address before the Militant Church in Chicago? Then let her write again. I said: "I know of no living man who has done more good than Ingersoll." Only consideration for her feelings prevented me from writing the words, "I consider him a better man than Jesus Christ." Does it not "satisfy the intellect" to follow Ingersoll's reasoning against belief in the inspiration of the Bible and the reality of miracles? Does it not "warm the heart" to hear his disproof of the existence of a vengeful God? Does it not "fill a man with love" to listen to his exaltation of liberty and his plea for the brotherhood of man? Is it a "base end" to destroy superstition; and is there any better way to "uplift humanity" than to teach it to help itself? Has anyone done all this more "wonderfully" than Ingersoll?

It is encouraging to hear that religious ideas have so broadened in the United States that "an Ingersoll has no longer any reason for being." If the Colonel is aware of this fact, and is inclined to regard it as a reason to practise his well-vindicated right to commit suicide, we would like to remind him that he could find abundant "reason for being" if he would remove to Canada; and we can assure him that in the Province of Quebec he will never feel the reproach of uselessness, even if he confines himself to the elementary teachings of Liberalism.

—*Secular Thought.*

ROBERT C. ADAMS.

## METHODISM ON THE ROCKS.

JUDGING by events at the recent Wesleyan Conference, things are not very bright in Methodism just now. The old ship is evidently on the rocks. Of course there is no lack of advice as to what should be done, but the trouble is, everybody says something different to everybody else. On this, as on all other subjects, there is the usual Christian disagreement. It is a melancholy tale the worthy brethren tell. Folks won't go to chapel, and they don't like preaching, and they won't go to class meeting, and the young people will go cycling on a Sunday instead of Sunday-school, and they go in so much for recreation on a Saturday that they unfit themselves for the sacred hours of the Lord's Day.

Just note these statements, culled from the *Methodist Times* of July 30:—

"Rev. S. Chadwick:—Throughout the whole Church, in towns like Leeds, Bradford, and Liverpool, and the great towns of the North, we are failing to keep march with the progress of the times.

"Dr. Jenkins:—Scepticism was in the air. They could not ignore it. It was fed by popular literature, but he did not think the preacher need trouble about it. Let him preach the Gospel, and he would meet the difficulties of the case

"Dr. Rigg:—Their position deserved serious and anxious consideration.

"Rev. W. D. Walters:—There were more people in Christian England to-day outside the churches than ever.

"Rev. J. Posnett:—Twenty-four out of thirty-six districts report decreases. During the past ten years the population has been increasing beyond us. The increase in the population has been 11 per cent.; ours has not been more than 3½. I am troubled.

"Rev. W. E. Sellers:—The fact stared them in the face, their people would not go to class.

"Rev. F. W. Macdonald:—There is that in the spirit and temper of our times which is unfriendly to spiritual and evangelical religion.

"Rev. C. Garratt:—None of us can hide from ourselves that there is a mist of infidelity spreading over all the Churches."

Now, if the *Freethinker* had made such statements as the above, the *Methodist Times* would have been highly indignant. But they are not the statements of an opponent. They are the deliberate words of eight of the foremost ministers of the Wesleyan body. The fact is Methodism is rapidly getting out of date. Its membership is decreasing. So is the circulation of its publications. Its class meeting is getting more unpopular every year. Everywhere it fails, except in the big town missions, and here it is the band that draws, not Methodism. Yet Mr. Hughes, I suppose, will continue boasting that his is the greatest Church in the world, and that the Methodists can be numbered by millions. Only the ignorant will swallow that.

ALERT.

## PRAYER.

"WHATSOEVER ye ask in my name, believing, that ye shall receive," reads the plain and straightforward injunction of the Bible. It is unmistakable, and so, if you ask and do not receive, as is the rule with most praying people, it is not a proof of the inefficacy of prayer, but, on the contrary, that you do not pray "believing." From this one might draw the inference that, were I, in a mocking tone, to ask the Lord to give me my week's wages next week as usual, not "believing," he would stop it altogether; but, if that were so, I think we should witness many more miracles and wonders than we do. This is a funny world. Often we find the scoffer blessed and the believer cursed, the wicked prosper and vice to reign supreme, while virtue is beaten down and compelled to take a back seat, as the Bible itself elsewhere declares to be the case. "Faith removeth mountains" is another pious epithet. As it is generally accepted by the devotees of the Bible—namely, in the sense that with faith in God we can accomplish any feat—that cannot be tested, for nobody really believes in the assurance; and, as faith is required as a warrant for starting, we might as well not try it; besides, if anyone *does* try and is disappointed, the accusation of insincerity is unmercifully flung in one's face. In the



sense, however, that, if we have faith in ourselves and our task, it will stimulate our energies to remove mountains of difficulties, there is a good deal of truth in it. The disciples of the Lord were given as a token of their being real believers, that their prayers should cure disease, that they should be able to touch living snakes and take poison; "even unto the end" was he (the Lord) to be with them. But all this is done away with now, and that proves either what I have just said, that nobody believes, or else that "word of God" is without avail. Or is it that Christians do not follow the simple precept of Jesus—to say the Lord's Prayer every time they want to pray, and to go into their closet, lock the door, and pray secretly, that their heavenly Father might reward them openly; but indulge in their long, wearying, babbling, and hypocritical glorification of the deity, whom they thus flatter under the pretext of adoring, and, instead of praying in the modest way indicated by their Head and Master, go to church and pray together in thousands?

The only instance of my life that would seem like a direct answer to prayer occurred when I was a boy. I had to walk five miles in the middle of the night along a country road. It was raining, and my boots pinched my feet so much that I sat down at the road side and prayed fervently that God would send a van to my assistance. I sat for a while, and at last I heard a vehicle at a distance; but it rolled by along the main road, instead of turning off into the road whereat I was sitting in my helpless position. Once more I felt dissipated and doubtful. Again there was the sound of wheels, and this time the conveyance really came my way; but it trotted past, and, though I called out, it left me behind. But yet a third one was to come the same way; and these were the only three vehicles that ever passed on this road in the night, though I often walked it at night time. The last one trotted at a sharp pace till it was at a few yards' distance, whereupon I asked to be taken up; my request was granted, and I was driven to within a quarter of a mile's distance of my home. But, after receiving the answer to my prayer, I confess that I still doubted, and do now, as to the source of the help. Certain it is that the van hailed from a far-off village, and must have started on its journey before I ever thought of praying. Further, I have since then cried out to God with tears for help in such a far more important matter as the salvation of my soul. He did not hear it, for I turned out a Freethinker. Why did he hear the frivolous prayer, and not the other of such vital importance? But I shall return to that presently.

Another incident of my life I might relate. When quite a young man, and just beginning to sever myself from orthodoxy, I remember reading in a weekly paper about a boy that had been reported in the newspapers to have gone astray at the time on the country on a stormy winter night, and who was found the next day still alive, though buried in snow. And the commentation of the pious journal was this, that perhaps the prayers of his aged mother at home did more to save the boy than did the efforts of the searching men. This is a quite common thing to hear. But it is robbing the human saviors of the praise and appreciation due to them, besides being a mockery to an almighty, all-good, and all-wise God—supposing he exists—as if his eternal decrees could be blighted by a finite being's petition. If God be all-wise, so must be his decrees. Then how can it be equally wise to withdraw them at a moment's notice? If he designs that a human being shall die, how can he otherwise design the next moment (still being unchangeable) at the request of a short-sighted mortal? Has he *not* so decreed, but only threatens with it to make us pray? How dare you insinuate that the supreme being of the universe should thus mock his children and cruelly play with their subtlest sentiments in order to obtain a flattery which he does not always get?

One of Denmark's greatest scientists is, besides being an inventor in physics, a childish, emotional Christian. Recognising, as a man of his speciality ought to do, the indestructibility and everlastingness of natural laws, he still attributes their existence to God. He thus believes, as Jesus did, in the doctrine of predestination, and argues that prayers form part of the natural law, being pre-ordained by God to fit in with the answer to them. But this makes the whole world seem like a stage with so many acting dolls, with old Yahveh pulling the strings, for his own, and sometimes for the Devil's pleasure, or like a mimic theatre without meaning. Then the prayer is not the cause

of events, and events can never happen as a result of prayer. God had designed both before the foundation of the world was laid; the law of causation is a delusion, for seeming cause is not a cause, and what appears as an effect thereof is not so. There is only one great cause, and everything else is effects thereof; so the whole thing becomes a farce. And yet that is what every logical Christian must come to; for omnipotence and omniscience combined are absolutely identical with design. Nothing can escape its notice, and nothing can escape its power—without permission. For instance, if a man commits murder, God must have known that he would do so before he created him. If it was not so decided, why was this man put into the world, as God knew that he would not follow the course appointed to him?

Indeed, the eruption of the volcano, the devastation of the hurricane and the earthquake, all are and must be designs carried out by the Almighty, if a God Almighty there be. Aye, then, what is the good of prayer? Experience shows that prayers avail nothing, from the flood, right down to the latest disaster on the sea. After nearly every ship that has gone down, after every earthquake and every cyclone that have outraged the land, we hear that there were heartrending scenes; husbands and wives embrace and kiss each other, while the children cling to their knees; piercing shrieks are heard from the women, and "many were engaged in prayer." But Nature is inexorable—and Nature's God looks on without pity, without mercy, without one sign of his existence. But I have heard it suggested that God prefers to "catch us up" while we are in the act of praying, as he is then better able to snatch us away from the Devil; and that seems to account for his placing us in such a position, in order to make us pray. This suggestion is made in forgetfulness of the words of the text—"Whatsoever ye ask.....that ye shall receive." The people on the wreck are praying to stand once more on *terra firma*, and instead of that they are flung into eternity. They are praying to once more see their beloved friends, instead of which they are consigned to the cold and watery grave. Besides, surely he could find other means to rescue them from the Devil.

God never fed one hungry; never clothed one naked; never cured one sick; never educated a child; never righted a wrong; never wrested the whip out of the hand of the tyrant; never arrested the sword in its bloody work; never stilled the storm of persecution; never extinguished a fire of the Inquisition; never answered one single prayer. Men did all that, and they would do much more, if they would look more to themselves and less to the sky for help, while thieves break in and steal, and moth and rust destroy their energies. Men! rely upon yourselves! Stand erect and fight the good old fight for progress, freedom, and prosperity, beating back all attempts to establish relief to landlords and denominational teaching, coercion, usury, and usurpation.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

#### INFIDELITY AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

THE latter part of the eighteenth century was marked by the greatest revolution the world ever saw. It redressed the evils of centuries, and abolished the last relic of feudalism in Europe. Its benefits no man not steeped to the lips in ignorance will deny. Buckle calls the French Revolution the grandest event in all history. It was bloody and long, but we can expect nothing else when the wrongs of ages are permitted to accumulate and press down the masses until they can bear them no longer.

Some of the men, whose writings opened the eyes of the French people to a knowledge of their rights, were infidels, and in the history of the world there are no grander names than those of Voltaire, Turgot, Danton, Helvetius, Mirabeau, and Rousseau. In an age of corruption and tyranny in government, and ignorance and superstition in religion, these men pointed out the road to liberty, and exposed the fraud and injustice of the society of their day. As they were unbelievers, the Christian pulpit has held them and the teachings of Freethought responsible for the terrible excesses into which the French nation was plunged during the conflict. The ignorant pulpiter, with more voice than knowledge and ability, continually refers, as "the fruits of infidelity," to the horrors of the French Revolution. Even the clergymen of ability and learning, wilfully or otherwise



fall into the same error. The assertion by either party indicates gross ignorance of the history of the period, or a wilful attempt to mislead his hearers. As we all know, after many vain attempts to reform the evils of government by legislation and petitioning the Crown, revolution was inevitable. With the exception of a few very justifiable manifestations of force, such as the destruction of the Bastille, the reformation of abuses was comparatively peaceful. It is wonderful to think of the radical changes made in the Government in so short a time, and with so little loss of life. Hereditary titles were suppressed; all offices were thrown open to Frenchmen of every rank; all religious denominations were declared equal before the law; primogeniture was abolished; the franchise was given to all citizens, and the country governed by representatives of the people. All this was done, and yet a peaceful period was in view for the French nation when two most unfortunate things occurred. Here is the first lesson for our modern pulpiteers. They should remember that the causes of the excessive bloodshed of the Reign of Terror were entirely political, and that religion had nothing whatever to do with them. While all looked fair, the king undertook to escape from France, and put himself at the head of an army to crush out the new reforms. The sovereigns of other European nations, fearing that their subjects would overthrow them, declared war against France, and began to invade that country. If anything would exasperate a people, it is the thought of being crushed out by a foreign nation while struggling for their natural rights and liberties. Had the other countries held their peace, history would not record the unsightly spectacles of the Reign of Terror. The rebuke which Paine gives Edmund Burke in *The Rights of Man* applied with equal force to all European nations.

Having seen that the cause was not Freethought, let us inquire, Who were the leaders in this bloody work, and who tried to stay the hand of assassination? Robespierre, the greatest monster of all, was a Catholic, and he it was who made the feast to the "Supreme Being" (see Thiers's *History of the French Revolution*). Marat, who as a monster was scarcely his inferior, was a Christian, and used the Bible, like the Puritans of Cromwell's time, to justify murder. It is a well-known fact that the Atheists and Infidels of the time belonged to the Girondist party, the party that urged moderation; and, when Robespierre fell and they came into power, the Reign of Terror ended. Danton, an Atheist, and Thomas Paine, Deist, both belonged to this party. Danton lost his life in opposing the rash measures of the religionists; and Paine, for opposing the execution of the king, was himself sentenced to be executed, and escaped merely through a mistake of the jailer. It is an error, also, to presume that any considerable part of the people of France at the time were infidels. The great statesmen of France during the last century, as a rule, cared little for the Christian religion, and some of them were unbelievers at the time of the revolution. The mass of the people were Catholics; and, as they were responsible for the great bloodshed, who can say that infidels were responsible? It is true that the Catholic Church was disestablished but a very short time after. Before Napoleon came to power a French Church, independent of Rome and subservient to the Government, was formed. Can anyone be surprised that the Romish Church was abolished? That Church had been the means of keeping the people in slavery, poverty, starvation, and despair. But the fact that they established an independent church shows that the majority of the people did not rebel against religion *per se*, but only against the form of religion which had kept them in such degradation.

After all, Christianity must be held responsible, not only for the cause of the excesses, but for the revolution itself. As Charles Bradlaugh said, in his debate with the Rev. T. D. Matthias: "Here was a nation taught to be humble, taught to be poor in spirit, taught to mourn and be comforted, taught to be meek and they should inherit the earth, taught all this for years, and, finding out the deceit practised upon them, rose up in the agony of the moment; and, then, who can wonder that these men, priest-taught, and therefore ill-taught; priest-ridden, and therefore ill-developed—these men, badly educated and doubly wronged, should, in the excitement of passion, do that which, if well taught, they would never do or try to do?"

F. STEINER.

—*Boston Investigator*.

## ACID DROPS.

WILLIAM PUGH, a collier, was hanged at Derby on Wednesday, August 5, for the murder of Elizabeth Boot, nineteen, housekeeper to a farmer at Brackenfield. During the three weeks he spent in the condemned cell Pugh conducted himself piously. He sang hymns, and was very attentive to the chaplain's ministrations. All the while he protested his innocence, and those who do not know the ways of such vermin, and that religion is often made to cover a multitude of sins, would have been apt to believe him. But the pious Pugh was lying in the midst of his prayers and hymns. When he found he was really going to be hung—that there was no reprieve, no escape—he made a full confession of his guilt, and avowed that the motive of his crime was mere robbery. However, the chaplain appeared to think it was all right at last; anyhow he administered the last sacrament before Pugh's neck was stretched. But the body and blood of Christ was not enough to stay the fellow's stomach. He ate a hearty breakfast on the top of it, and sang some more hymns with great cheerfulness. It was a very edifying end—to Christians, though enough to make Freethinkers sick.

Of course the pious Pugh has gone to glory. He had three weeks' preparation, lying included; and is well qualified to hobnob with Jacob and David. But how about the poor girl he murdered? She had no time for preparation; as the clergy say, she "died in her sins," and is presumably gone to hell. While she roasts there eternally her murderer will have the satisfaction of looking down upon her from heaven. Yes, it is a beautiful creed, this Christianity. There was never anything like it before, and let us hope there never will be again.

The introduction of bull-fighting in the south of France is a bad sign of the times. It is obvious that the motive of the spectators is a thirst for blood, a passion which, if gratified, leads to the most terrible degradation. The authorities were wrong in tolerating such shows at all. They allowed the mob to taste blood, and now the cry is for more. On Sunday last, at Marseilles, the performers in the bull-ring were all women—a shocking spectacle! They were forbidden by the Prefect's decree to kill the bulls, but the mob wanted to see them killed, and because this gratification was refused the said mob wrecked a great part of the building and set fire to the arena, which was completely destroyed. A Government which cannot summon courage to put down such performances is doomed, whether it call itself Empire or Republic. The mischief should be firmly arrested, even if Marseilles had to be put under martial law. We believe in freedom, but we also believe in good government, and strong government too if necessary.

A letter from M. F. Lovell in the *Echo* (August 10) shows the barbarity that goes on under the name of sport in Spain and Portugal. Mr. Lovell asks, if religion converts savage nations from barbarism, why is the Spanish nation now in a state of semi-barbarism? Where is the true Christianity, the gentleness, and mercy which its ecclesiastical guides should have taught. We are glad to know that Spanish Freethinkers set themselves against bull-fighting and brutal forms of sport. One of them, Adolf de Maglia, denounced bull-fighting in terms we should hardly have expected from any Spaniard. Yet this gentleman was sentenced to imprisonment for insulting the Pope!

J. Nunn gives a specimen of empty churches and fat tithes in the parish church of Cold Norton, Essex. The value of the living is £395 per annum, the population 182, and the church attendance on a recent occasion consisted of sixteen adults and a few children. In this parish land has been seized for tithe.

Mr. Nunn says: "I found at the same time the adjoining parish—viz., North Fambridge—had a population of 150; estimated value of living, £280. The next parish, South Fambridge (adjoining), the living was estimated to be worth £240; population of the parish, seventy-nine. I attended a Sunday service at South Fambridge on one occasion; the congregation consisted of an aged man, a woman, and a child, besides the parson. The adjoining parish to South Fambridge is Ashington; population, ninety-seven; value of living, £292. At this church I have sometimes counted five persons present on Sundays." A number of these parishes are little paradises for the parsons, but little purgatories for the parishioners.

Roman Catholic churches lit with electricity are curious phenomena—science enlisted in the service of superstition. Priests are even allowed, on certain occasions, to ride bicycles. But what shall we say of the news that the Pope has got "a typewriter of the newest pattern"? Is she tall or short, plain or pretty? Is her hair blonde, auburn, or



black? We don't quite understand the "newest pattern" in this article, but perhaps the Pope does.

One hundred and eighty-eight deaths have occurred in New York alone through the heat wave, and there is scarcely a city or town in the States, except the summer resorts, which does not present a list of victims. The world is supposed to have been made for the special behoof of man; but tidal waves, heat waves, earthquakes, storms, and other disasters, frequently testify how imperfect was the performance. Thousands are killed every year just because their heavenly father hurried his work to get it finished in six days.

The Bible Christians have had a Conference at Portsmouth, and report a decrease of 346 members. Bible Christians claim to represent the primitive faith of Christianity; but, if they were judged by the Apostles, it may be doubted if a single one would be owned. Nay, we doubt if there is in all Christendom a single church which the veritable Jesus Christ would acknowledge, and if he came to earth he would probably leave all the Christian churches in disgust and go to a synagogue.

The Catholic Church has found itself so undermined by Masonic propaganda that an anti-Masonic Congress is to be held next month at Trent, in Austria. An attempt will be made to prove that Masonry is really an outcome of Satan, and identical with devil-worship. What will the Prince of Wales and the leading English Freemasons say to this?

This is a free country, yet it was a little venturesome of Mr. Levy, a Christianized Hebrew, to set up as a pork butcher in the Spitalfields district. He should have done as so many of his brethren do—become a Lee, a Lawrence, or a Lawson. He was set upon by some enthusiasts for the law of Moses, whom Mr. Haden Corsier bound over to keep the peace.

A Wesleyan missionary's unpremeditated public confession concerning "the good work" in Fiji:—

"The Catholics, however, had not been able to share the spoils."

"Share the spoils" is excellent. The good pastor goes on to tell how—

"A chief left the Wesleyans and joined the Romans simply because he had quarrelled with his brother, and could not, on that account, worship in the same place with the latter."

"Allee samee" civilized Kerristian "long-pig."

The Salvation Army has adopted the bike. "We claim the cycle for God," says the English *War Cry*, chiefly, it appears, because it enables many an "officer" to put in Saturday night with his wife and still be at "knee-drill" ten miles away next morning. This explanation was necessary, or it might have been thought that the bike was approved of because it enabled many an "officer" to slither from his wife and spend Saturday evening with his "best girl."—*Sydney Bulletin*.

A lecture, or sermon, by the Rev. J. Robbins on "The Needs and Lessons of the Transvaal" is reported in the *Watford Leader*. Mr. Robbins, according to the report, gave a graphic account of the attempt to form a town on an atheistic basis, and, as a result, it became the rendezvous of every form of vice and immorality, until, in despair, the founders had to call to their aid a minister of religion. The "graphic account" does not seem to have supplied the time and place where this occurred. If this omission is only on the part of the reporter, perhaps Mr. Robbins will be good enough to supply the particulars.

The *Ceylon Times* for July 15 reports a scene at the Colombo Criminal Sessions between the Chief Justice and Mr. Benjamin Horsburgh, the Police Magistrate of Anuradhapura, who had to give evidence in a murder case. Mr. Horsburgh wanted to affirm, and the Chief Justice tried to put him through a religious examination. Was he a Christian? No. A Hindu, a Buddhist, or a Mohammedan? No. He had a conscientious objection to swearing, and he would say no more. "Very well," said the Chief Justice; "if you are not going to swear, I won't take your evidence." "If your lordship rules in that way," said Mr. Horsburgh, "I will swear." And he did—and very sensibly too. Justice ought not to be defeated because a Chief Justice gives a bigoted ruling. The Ordinance over in Ceylon ought to be based upon the English law, and affirmation is legal here under Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Act.

This is from the *Golden Penny*: "There is a church which reposes hard by the building in which Professor Shuttleworth and his congregation worship. Sometimes people in search of the Professor's unconventional services would stroll into the other church, and ask of the verger, 'Is this St. Nicholas Cole Abbey?' Then the verger would elevate his

chin, and haughtily make answer, 'No, sir; the theatre is higher up.'" No doubt "the theatre" was full and the church empty.

The London *Star* prints a very funny letter written by Mr. Price Hughes's friend, the Rev. Dr. H. S. Lunn, a gentleman "who knows how to combine a lucrative tourist agency with the reunion of Christendom." Dr. Lunn's letter is addressed to a Bavarian hotel proprietor, asking for free accommodation for "three cycling commissioners" of *Travel* (Dr. Lunn's monthly). "If you would be willing to entertain them gratuitously at your hotel," says the *Travel* editor, "they would be glad to mention your hotel in their travels." The *Star* calls this a good specimen of "the gentle art of deadheadism."

Mr. Gladstone is said to have arranged his correspondence for biographical purposes, over sixty thousand letters having been carefully tied up in bundles and docketed. Jesus Christ took no sort of trouble about *his* biography, and the result was a frightful muddle. It is a pity that gods should be more careless than men, especially when they damn you for being mistaken.

Addressing a recent District Railway meeting, Mr. J. S. Forbes, the chairman, said that he had long ago digested the wise saying of a great orator, no less than St. Paul—"To take no heed of what ye shall speak." It was not St. Paul, however, who gave that advice, but, as the Christians would say, "a still greater." Nor is it very wise advice, though most preachers have steadily followed it for nearly two thousand years.

Tolstoi says that "Blessed be ye poor" really means "Blessed are ye tramps." If that was Jesus Christ's opinion the people of the eastern part of the State of New Jersey do not share it. They are overrun with tramps, who organise daily foraging expeditions. The residents of the suburban portion of the towns are not blessing the tramps; they are buying revolvers to keep them at a convenient distance.

A band of pilgrims, consisting of a dozen families, under the delusion that Jesus Christ was shortly to positively make his last appearance in Jerusalem this year, sold their goods and set out from Smith County, Kansas, to be on the spot. They got to Palestine, but soon became sick of their surroundings, with no prospect of their belated Savior putting in an appearance. "John A. Dixon, the leader of the band, writes to his old neighbors in Smith County that they are starving, and that they are now willing to take chances on the world coming to an end, and be satisfied to live in Kansas the remainder of their days, if they can only get enough money with which to pay return passage." After all, these dupes are not served so badly as were millions during the Crusades, who were got rid of by priests imposing a pilgrimage to Palestine as a penance; the pilgrimage usually meaning starvation, death, or slavery, with no prospect of rescue by friends at home.

Why people don't go to church is a burning question. The *British Weekly* offers prizes of one guinea and half a guinea for the best letters on the subject. We know someone who could earn the first prize legitimately, but they wouldn't print his letter in the *British Weekly*—no, not for a hundred guineas, perhaps not for a thousand.

Joseph Steadman, silk merchant, of 9, Wood-street, E.C., committed suicide by swallowing carbolic acid. In a letter left behind him he wrote: "I have prayed hard for a blessing for my wife and children, and they shall be blessed—I know it. God tells me so as plain as I can suffer." We doubt whether it will be quite as plain to the widow and fatherless children. It certainly is not clear why God should be kinder to them than to him. Joseph Steadman should have stuck to his post, and not asked God to stand sentry for him. God isn't likely to do it.

The account of "Infidels in Hyde Park" is exactly the same in the *Christian Leader* and in *Word and Work*, which appears to be an English version of the *Christian Leader*; or perhaps the *Christian Leader* is a Scotch version of *Word and Work*.

Booker Washington, the most eloquent of colored orators in the States, is aware of the necessity for the secular salvation of his race. He says the negro must be taught to mix in with his religious fervor and emotion habits of industry and economy with land, houses with two or three rooms, and a little bank account, just as the white man does. Without these accessories religion may be very fervent without being profitable.

Robert Butler, who has been arrested in Melbourne for some hideous murders in New Zealand, while serving a term of imprisonment at Dunedin was noted for piety. He was



the organist and choirmaster of the gaol, and composed tunes of a devotional character to several hymns.

The performance of Rubenstein's musical drama, "Christ," has been prohibited by the Prussian police, under an old law forbidding the representation of Jesus in public entertainments. The old law was in its day a wise one. That familiarity breeds contempt is no doubt true in reference to gods as to pot-house companions, and a badly-acted Jesus Christ or a crack-voiced Holy Ghost would bring contempt on the Trinity as readily as on an Ingomar or a Count di Luna.

What a magnificent showman is the great "General" Booth! Wanting a fine advertisement for his Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall, he hit upon the idea of a telegram to the Prince of Wales, with a view of drawing from him a reply that might be published in all the newspapers "free, gratis, for nothing." Accordingly a message was sent to the Prince in the name of ten thousand Salvationists gathered from all parts of the Empire "over which it might please God to call his Royal Highness to reign." The Prince telegraphed back his sincere thanks, and added: "I wish every success to your exhibition." This is a quotable sentence, and the "General" will make the most of it.

Great preparations are being made for the Pan-Anglican Synod which will meet next year at Lambeth Palace. Live bishops will gather from the four corners of the earth. We suggest that they should give the people of London an opportunity of seeing them. A procession of bishops through Fleet-street and the Strand would catch on better than the Lord Mayor's Show.

Father Ignatius, who wrote to us a little while ago on the subject of the heresies of Dean Fremantle, has followed up his letter to the *Freethinker* by one addressed to the clergy of the diocese of Ripon upon "The Grave Scandal in Ripon Cathedral." He describes the appointment of a Rationalist to a deanery as the "very greatest scandal that has ever occurred in our venerable and orthodox Church of England." He continues: "The whole thing is so unspeakably awful that it makes one's blood tingle in one's veins. For myself, I can truly say the very fact of this Awful Man being a Dean in our beloved Church causes me sleepless nights of mental agony." The Anglican Father is more sensitive than sensible. Dean Fremantle has been over a year in his position, and none of the clergy thought of raising their voices against his appointment. They are little likely to do so when urged by one usually regarded as a rank outsider.

The Catholic Dr. Barry contributes to the *National Review* a paper on "The Secret of Catholicism." The secret is an open one: Catholicism owes its success to its superstition. Dr. Barry, of course, does not say this directly. But he does so in other words, for he says it lies in its supernaturalism.

The *Church Times* points out that the full clause of the Methodist Deed-Poll, which the last Conference has decided to ask Parliament to alter, says that the Conference shall not appoint ministers to any chapel for more than three years "except ordained ministers of the Church of England." It suggests that the clause gives the clergy and the Church an interest in the affairs of the Methodist Society, and that its alteration would be an invasion of a reversionary right bequeathed to the Church. Anyway, it shows that Wesley's idea was that his followers should not come into collision with the Church, which the alteration will render much more likely.

Prince Bismarck is reported to have said that he "took less interest in Crete than in the smallest mound of earth in his garden"; and, a gentleman having expostulated with him on this, he referred to Paul's Epistle to Titus, where the Cretans are described as "liars," "evil beasts," and "slow bellies." What a curious instance of the power of religious training, even over the strongest minds! Paul insults the Cretans, his words become part of the Christian Bible, and nearly two thousand years afterwards the insult is repeated as Gospel against a different set of people altogether—people, in all probability, whose only resemblance to the ancient Cretans is that they live upon the same island.

The tidal wave in Japan, which, it is now calculated, had 35,000 victims, has been followed by one on the coast of China, which inundated the country, destroyed many villages, and, it is estimated, killed four thousand of the inhabitants. Large quantities of cattle were also lost, and the rice fields are under water. A famine is consequently feared in the autumn. The works of omnibenevolence are strikingly like those of fiendish malice.

The *Shanghai Union*, which we receive from a "Daphne"

tar, gives a translation of an anti-foreign proclamation posted at Wuchow, on the West River, China. It urges driving out the foreign devils, who, it says, "observe only the words of Christ, and teach the people not to worship the gods, and not to be dutiful to their parents." "They are all liars, and their books are nonsense. What their books say is untrue and without foundation." It further says: "Unbearable outrages are frequently committed by the missionaries, who inveigle women into adopting their religion. They then make the poor women come to them four times every month, and, when they come, give them money and incense pills to swallow, so that they may be forced to submit to their outrageous wishes." This may be all a mistake, but it shows what a delicate matter propagating the Gospel in China is.

Mr. Price Hughes contributes to the *Methodist Times* an article on the late Cardinal Manning, whom he praises as "one of the greatest and most distinguished of modern Englishmen." Mr. Hughes mentions one thing which we reproduce for the benefit of our readers. "I was simply horrified," says Mr. Hughes, "at the calmness with which he declared [in a personal interview] that he would be willing to deluge the whole of Europe with blood in order to destroy the unity of Italy and recover the Temporal Power of the Pope." There you have the cruel, ambitious priest in his true colors. It was this same Cardinal Manning who cast the bitterest insults at Charles Bradlaugh when he was trying to take his seat in the House of Commons. Cardinal Manning was a born persecutor. He would have commenced with Atheists, and, having settled them, he would have attacked the liberties of other sections in turn, until the Roman Catholic Church was the only one permitted to lift its head in England. Happily he failed, even against the Atheists.

"Thomas Hardy studies pessimism in the slime pits of Siddim, and has all the woe-begone signs about him which mark Bunyan's Pilgrim when he is first introduced to our notice. One can only wish that this woe-begone man might alight upon some such guidance as that which led his prototype into happier conditions." This elegant passage is taken from the Fernley Lecture recently delivered by the Rev. T. G. Selby in connection with the Methodist Conference at Liverpool. No doubt it mightily tickled the Methodist ears that listened. But its first sentence is impudent, and its second is grotesque. Thomas Hardy would be the first to smile at the idea of his finding the "guidance" suggested. He is a man amongst men, not a pilgrim amongst sinners.

Sabbatarianism is in a bad way at Manchester. The police have been trying desperately to put down all kinds of Sunday trading; even the barbers have been prosecuted for giving Manchester men clean chins on the Lord's Day. In the opinion of the police, it was better to have a dirty face than to break the old Jew fourth commandment. However, they have been ignominiously beaten. The barbers and the lovers of clean faces have triumphed all along the line. Prosecutions are now stopped by order of the Watch Committee. But the chairman of that august body is not satisfied. He wants a new Act instead of the rusty one of Charles II., and he won't be happy till he gets it; but as he is not likely to get it, we shudder at his miserable future in this vale of tears.

The Manchester bigots have also been badly beaten over the question of open-air meetings. After several persons were sent to prison for upholding an elementary right of free citizens, the authorities gave way, in view of the fact that Keir Hardie, Dr. Pankhurst, and a host of others, were all ready to "do time," and the question has been settled by new regulations.

The Abbé Kannengieser, in a new book on Jews and Catholics in Austro-Hungary, says Judaism is the enemy, and sneers at circumcision. He should be reminded that Christians got their God from the Jews, and that the first day of their year commemorates the fact that their Savior was circumcised.

A certain distinguished ecclesiastic had engaged a new groom, who had quite recently left a racing stable, and he was not accustomed to ecclesiastical ways. As he was starting on a round of farewell calls on his neighbors he sent the groom into the house to fetch his cards, and at each stoppage on the round James left some. When they came to the last house the master said: "Leave two cards here, James." His consternation may be imagined when the groom made answer: "I can't, my Lord; there's only the ace of spades left."

"Why," asked a diocesan inspector, "did Elijah pour the water on the flesh of the sacrifice?" "Please, sir," said one little girl, "to make the gravy."



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

August 30 and September 6, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road.

September 7 and 8, Plymouth, Debate with the Rev. W. T. Lee.

September 13, Glasgow.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London. September 6, Manchester; 13, New Brompton. October 4, Glasgow; 6 and 7, debate at New Brompton with the Rev. A. J. Waldron. —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.

J. DOMINEY.—Mr. Watts is answering A. Guest himself; otherwise we should insert your excellent and pointed letter.

JOE NICHOLL.—Glad to hear you have been pleased and instructed by reading the debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. Dr. McCann. Mr. Foote's debate with Dr. A. J. Harrison was never published. A reporter was engaged, but he turned out to be a drunken rascal, and did not supply a line of copy, although he had money on account. *Secularism Restated*, written after the 1870 debate between Bradlaugh and Holyoake, has long been out of print. You can obtain the *Philosophy of Secularism* (3d.). You misread the sentence you quote from Mr. Holyoake. It means the exact opposite of what you imagine, which seems to show some faultiness in the expression. Thanks for your good wishes for Messrs. Foote and Watts in America.

C. E. SMITH.—Mr. Foote will of course send a weekly letter to the *Freethinker* from America. Glad to know you have a fond recollection of his *Prisoner for Blasphemy*. The volume has long been out of print, but an abridged edition will soon be prepared for publication. It is more than twelve years (how the time flies!) since Mr. Foote's release from Holloway Gaol, and many *Freethinkers* who have come into the party since are quite ignorant of the circumstances of his imprisonment. Many thanks for your batch of enclosures.

JAMES BROWN.—You are quite mistaken. We have not the slightest sympathy with the raiders, except as far as they were deluded by that stupid letter from Johannesburg. If the Boers had shot the leaders on the spot, it would have been no business of ours. But when they were handed over to the British Government, and tried for a political offence, they should have suffered a corresponding penalty. It is not to the interests of revolutionists, or advanced reformers, in any part of the world, to abolish the distinction between political and ordinary criminal offences. You cannot believe in peace and justice more than we do, but are you quite sure that you understand the position at Johannesburg? And is it true cosmopolitanism to be the friend of every country but your own?

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND.—*Per Miss Vance*:—T. Holstead, 5s.; G. Smith, 2s. 6d.; W. Collins, 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, 10s.; J. Shuttlebotham, 1s. 6d.; Mrs. Collins, 1s.; C. N. Atkinson, 2s.; J. Berry, 5s.; W. Palmer, 1s.; W. S. M., 10s.; C. J., 3s. *Per R. Forder*:—J. Hayes, 2s. 6d.; E. Birkbeck, 4s.; W. C. Stuart, £1 1s.; F. Smith, 1s.; Painter (Leicester), £1.

C. CATTELL, Emerson, Pokesdown, near Bournemouth, will send a copy of *Freethinking and Gems from the Ocean of Truth* for 1s. 3d. each post free to any Freethought or Workman's Society up to September 1.

W. J. WILLIAMS.—You were too late for a paragraph in last week's issue.

J. SAUNDERS.—Yes, the roses arrived, but in a sadly faded condition. We acknowledged by a postcard, which must have miscarried. Thanks for your kindness.

G. H. FIRTH.—Pleased to receive your encouraging report of Mr. Moss's lectures at Heckmondwike. He has himself written an account of his tour for our columns. We should be glad to have hundreds of such open-air meetings organized in the summer time in all parts of the country, and it could be done if Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme were adequately supported. Grumbling and cheap advice will never carry a movement far, though some people seem to think it will; what is wanted is plenty of hard work and ample sinews of war.

A. J. HOOPER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

E. S. H.—Mr. W. T. Lee is now pastor of a Baptist church at Cardiff. He still lectures for the Christian Evidence Society, we believe, though not under a regular engagement. The recent debates between him and Mr. Foote are not to be published, nor will those that are announced for next month. Reporting such debates is very costly, and a great deal of money has to be sunk in their publication. It is possible that Messrs. Foote and Lee may have one or two written debates during the next twelve months. The Dr. Jamieson matter has not been forgotten, only more pressing business has intervened.

W. D. ROLLEY.—Carlyle's *Cromwell* is not rare, and has no special market value. Of course, it is a valuable book to read.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Western Morning News—Christian Leader—Word and Work—Liberator—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Nya Sanningar—Freidenker—Fur Unseere Jugend—Times of Ceylon—Shanghai Union—Secular Thought—Open Court—Echo—Two Worlds—Charleston Sun—Sydney Bulletin—New York Public Opinion—Little Freethinker—Metropolitan—Animals' Friend—Der Einige—Zoophilist—Independent Pulpit—Watford Leader.

FRANCIS NEALE.—Shall appear. We are delighted to hear from you, and always shall be, partly for auld lang syne, and partly because you wield a bright and trenchant pen.

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.

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

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

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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.

### PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

THE next Executive meeting of the National Secular Society will be held at our new office, 376-377 Strand. It is on the second floor, over Manfield's boot shop, the entrance being in Exeter-street—so that we are very near Exeter Hall. We have a nice, well-lighted office, where Miss Vance will be found during business hours, and which we can use at all hours whenever there is a pressure of work. We have also the use of a larger room on the same floor for our Executive meetings. The situation is central and commanding, the entrance is thoroughly "respectable," and the rent (£40 a year, free of rates and taxes) is not excessive.

The rest of the floor is occupied by the Land Restoration League. The Rev. S. D. Headlam is the legal tenant for the League, and I am *his* legal tenant for the N. S. S. We have a proper agreement drawn up by Mr. Headlam's solicitor. I reported this matter to the last Executive meeting, and my action was unanimously endorsed. It will be remembered that this step was recommended in the Annual Report, and accepted by the Glasgow Conference. Personally, I feel sure it is a step in the right direction. It will conduce to the better transaction of our business, and the more effectual dealing with the great mass of my correspondence, with which I have been quite unable to cope hitherto. We shall have every convenience for interviews between the Society's officers and persons willing to assist the movement, and a rallying place in any time of trouble. I believe the office will far more than pay for itself in the long run.

I consulted the Executive, at its last meeting, on some points of my scheme (which was submitted in outline to the Conference) for an Association that may largely, if not entirely, frustrate the Blasphemy Laws, as they disable Secular Societies from holding property or receiving bequests. These points being settled, I am preparing for the publication of the scheme *in extenso* in the *Freethinker*. Criticism on details will be invited from all who are interested in the matter; and, after such correspondence has been fully considered, the Articles of Association, drawn up by our solicitors, will be signed by a few trusted persons, who will start the Society as a properly registered body. Should the Scheme stand the fullest test of *legal* criticism, I have reason to believe that very considerable funds will be immediately forthcoming.

Two things about this Scheme should be specially noted. Under the Articles of Association, the Society's funds must be devoted to its stated objects, and its members are debarred from making any sort of personal profit, either by way of dividend or bonus or otherwise. That is the first point. The second is this: the Articles of Association will give me no more *power* than any other member. Whatever *influence* I may wield will be purely moral, and therefore entirely legitimate. I state this for the sake of members whose ears may be assailed with dark whispers of my autocratic designs.



A letter was read at the Glasgow Conference from Mr. S. P. Putnam, on behalf of the American Secular Union, inviting the N.S.S. to send its President and one of its Vice-Presidents (Mr. Charles Watts) to the United States this year, with a view to their attending the Annual Free-thought Congress at Chicago. This invitation was accepted, and Mr. Putnam was duly apprised of the Conference's decision. The intended visit of Messrs. Foote and Watts appears to have excited much interest among the American Freethinkers. A magnificent hall has been engaged for the Congress at Chicago, and a great rally is expected from all parts of the Republic. Mr. Putnam is confident of a splendid success. Berths have been secured on the "Germanic," which sails from Liverpool on Wednesday, October 14, and the English delegates expect to arrive at New York on Thursday, October 22. Mr. Putnam and Mr. George Macdonald, editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, are arranging a reception for them on the following Sunday evening. Chickering Hall, one of the finest in New York, has been engaged for the purpose. It is expected that all the leading Freethinkers of the city, including Colonel Ingersoll, will be present on this occasion. Colonel Ingersoll has already written a most cordial letter, expressing his pleasure at the prospect of meeting Mr. Watts again, and his anxiety to become acquainted with Mr. Foote. One of the latter's chief objects in visiting America is to tell Ingersoll face to face how much he is loved by the British Freethinkers, and to induce him to pay a return visit to the old country. As the saying goes, Mr. Foote does not intend to take "No" for an answer.

After the reception in New York the English delegates will visit Canada and lecture at Toronto and Montreal, where they will meet the leading Canadian Freethinkers. Then they proceed to Grand Rapids, where they lecture in the Opera House. Thence they travel to Chicago, where the Congress opens on Sunday, November 15, closing on the following Saturday. After that Messrs. Foote and Watts will part company, to meet again at New York early in December. They will be home again before Christmas.

Mr. Wheeler will, of course, look after the *Freethinker* in my absence (I must return to the first person), and the paper could not be in better hands. I shall send a long letter every week from America, and try to make it interesting to my readers.

Decent accommodation on board the ocean liners is costly up to the end of October, and travelling in America, owing to the vast distances, is very expensive. Mr. Watts and I will also have to maintain our homes during our absence. It will not do to trust to what we can get in America. As we go to represent the N.S.S., the British Freethinkers will be invited to contribute towards our expenses, which will certainly exceed £100 together.

I am anxious also about my Lecture Scheme, for which I have not been making any special appeals during the summer, although I have had difficulty in meeting the obligations I had undertaken. I think the London friends should remember that I am keeping Mr. Cohen in the metropolis all the summer, and that they have the benefit of his lectures. Mr. Heaford has done some country lectures, and Mr. Moss has just taken a tour under the Scheme in Lancashire and Yorkshire. The open-air demonstrations in London have also been very successful, the expenses being lessened by the gratuitous services of Mr. Watts and myself. Up to the present I am out of pocket, and I have applications for further lectures in September and October. Happily we have turned the corner at the Athenæum Hall, which will soon yield a reasonable profit. For fifteen months I have maintained our platform in London, paying rent, advertising, and lecturers' fees. Altogether, it is I and my colleagues who have been, and are, doing the forward work of the party. Our irresponsible and most delicate critics do little but indulge in the luxury of grumbling and defamation.

The National Secular Society's exchequer also needs recruiting for the winter's work. The long fine summer, with naturally diminished receipts, has brought it too low for my liking. I wish to see this remedied, so that there may, at least, be ample means during my absence in America.

I now appeal to the party for financial support. The members of the N. S. S., and the other readers of the *Freethinker* who are still unattached, are numerous enough, and I believe rich enough, at least collectively, to provide for all the objects I have indicated. Will they do so? A trifle from the poorest, and more in proportion from those who are better off, will supply all that is wanted. It is very much a question whether those who elect me as President have practical faith in my leadership. Personally, I should be more comfortable in every way if I attended solely to my own affairs. I am still ready to spend and be spent for the movement, but I must ask for reciprocity in this matter.

There are two months before I sail for America, and take (in one sense) the first long holiday I have had since that protracted one, thirteen years ago, in Holloway Gaol. The time is brief, and I invite Freethinkers to send in subscriptions at once. Those who can send cheques, or considerable remittances in any other form, need not delay a moment. For the rank and file of the party, who number thousands, September will be a Shilling Month. Let everyone who possibly can send something, if only one shilling, and the result will inspire confidence in those who are bearing the chief burden of our movement.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

CAMBERWELL Secular Hall was crowded on Thursday evening, August 6, when the debate opened between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. A. J. Waldron on "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better System?" The audience included a fair proportion of Christians and several Christian Evidence advocates. On the Secular side we noted Messrs. Hartmann, Cohen, and Heaford, Mr. and Mrs. Gott from Bradford, and Miss Vance and Miss Brown. Mr. Charles Watts, who occupied the chair, bespoke a fair hearing for both disputants. The audience behaved remarkably well throughout, the Christians listening attentively (or at least quietly) to Mr. Foote, and the Secularists listening similarly to Mr. Waldron. There was really nothing that could be called an interruption. It was nearly eleven o'clock when the meeting broke up, and Mr. Foote suggested that the second night's debate should begin at 8 instead of 8.30. Mr. Watts put this to the audience, and it was carried unanimously.

The second night's debate is billed for Thursday, August 13. The chairman on that occasion is not the Rev. Mr. Jephson, of the London School Board—as we previously announced—but the Rev. Arthur Mursell, who is perhaps even better known.

Fine weather was provided by the clerk of that department for the three N.S.S. open-air demonstrations in Hyde Park, Regent's Park, and Finsbury Park; but he turned on a continuous supply of rain last Sunday afternoon, and stopped the demonstration on Peckham Rye, which will have to be held at a later date. London is so huge a place that it is impossible to take counsel from various parts, especially on a Sunday. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts drove through the rain as far as Peckham Station, where Mr. Wilson, with the brake and pair of horses, was expected by them if it were fine. They waited from 3 till 3.30, and then drove away, concluding that Mr. Wilson had very sensibly stayed at home. But it happened that there was a misunderstanding as to the rendezvous, and Mr. Wilson drove straight to Peckham Rye. Each side went to inconvenience out of mere civility to the other. Miss Vance and Mr. Heaford accompanied Mr. Wilson, and announced the postponement to the knot of enthusiasts who had assembled. Of course, it would have been absurd to attempt a demonstration in such circumstances. The public were all at home, keeping dry, at least outside; and it is the public that it is sought to reach by these efforts. Unless the clerk of the weather is in a relentless mood, we shall find another Sunday afternoon for Peckham Rye, and another after that for Victoria Park.

Mr. Foote lectured in the evening at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, to a much improved audience, on "Christ's Descent into Hell"—a subject which lent itself to gaiety as well as gravity, so that there was plenty of laughter as well as applause. Miss Vance again presided. There can be little doubt that the Athenæum Hall will be densely crowded during the winter. Mr. Watts takes the platform there to-night (August 16) and on the following Sunday, after which Mr. Foote lectures for two Sundays before his northern tour.



Mr. Charles Watts had another good audience last Sunday evening at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, when he lectured upon "Christian Evidences a Fallacy." Mr. Hartmann presided. This evening, Sunday, August 16th, Mr. Watts lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject, "Why some People go to Church, and Others Do Not."

The London *Echo*, the other evening, gave a beautiful quotation from the writings of Colonel Ingersoll. This is as it should be. The leading Rationalists have too long been tabooed in the English newspapers.

The Westminster Branch of the N.S.S. held its members' business meeting on Sunday. A favorable report was adopted, a small balance was carried forward, and most of the old officers were re-elected. A permit from the London County Council for the Branch meetings at Old Pimlico Pier was laid upon the table.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch's secretary, Mr. W. J. Williams, now dates from 29 Oxford-street. Local friends will please note the change. The Branch has an excursion to-day (August 16) to Shotley Bridge. Brakes leave Grey's Monument at 9 a.m. prompt. Tickets 2s. 6d. Dinner or tea can be had at moderate prices at Mrs. Surtees', Bolton Cottage, Shotley Bridge.

Mr. Lo Fengh Lub, First Secretary and interpreter of the Special Embassy of Li Hung Chang to the Courts of Europe, has a fine command of English. He first visited England twenty years ago. He is a student of Shakespeare and a follower of Herbert Spencer and Darwin. Our greatest poet and our greatest thinkers will do more good for China than all the Christian missionaries.

The *Little Freethinker* is a small semi-monthly, edited by Aunt Elmina Slenker, Snowville, Prelaski Co., Virginia. It has the motto, "Tis education forms the common mind; Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined." Without any pretence it seeks to inculcate useful knowledge, free from all superstition, and is a modest step in the right direction.

Professor W. Jay Youmans, writing on "The Province of Science" in the *Popular Science Monthly*, of which he is editor, says of the order of nature: "While we may, if we choose, call the series of events which make up this order a series of effects, nothing seems more certain than that we have not yet succeeded in passing over from them to any reality behind them; that the reason why they occur in one order rather than another is a problem which is yet absolutely unsolved." This is the position of the Atheist, though Professor Youmans may prefer the term Agnostic.

The *Animals' Friend* is an excellent but very orthodox publication. However, heresy creeps in sometimes. In the August number Mrs. Betham Edwards writes in opposition to Miss Helen Gladstone on vivisection, and founds her text on the passage in Plato's *Republic*, in which the Pagan says that, "though knowledge and truth are very beautiful things, you will be right in looking upon good as something distinct from them, and even more beautiful." Maude Hadden, too, writes: "I am sure—quite sure—that I could never be happy in a heaven without animals, and I should never wish to be in a heaven without animals." So, if God has not endowed them with souls, he will have to do so to satisfy Miss Hadden.

The Watch Committee reported to the Manchester City Council that it was impossible to get convictions for Sunday trading by the magistrates, the old Act of Charles II. being considered obsolete. The *Daily News* remarks: "The Act received its death-blow in the metropolis when a few public-spirited citizens showed that it could be made to inflict as much hardship on the rich as on the poor, who are usually its victims. They prosecuted a coachman—we believe it was the coachman of a bishop—for driving his master to church on Sundays. The Act seemed to lose its savor in saintly circles after that."

The French Freethinkers held a large demonstration at the statue of Etienne Dolet, in the Place Maubert, on the 360th anniversary of the martyrdom of the printer, for heresy. The pedestal of the statue was hidden with wreaths and bouquets. A gigantic wreath sent by the *Intransigent* was greeted with cries of "Vive Rochefort."

The National Secular Society's recent demonstration in Hyde Park is the subject of a long special article in the *Christian Leader* of August 6. The heading of this article is not very complimentary:—"With Infidels in Hyde Park: Blatant Orators and Foolish Hearers." Still, we welcome the advertisement. If the Christians will only write about us—whether it be good, bad, or indifferent—it will help to swell our meetings, and we will look after the rest. The *Christian Leader* writer affects to "laugh" at what he heard,

though it would be more to the purpose if he tried to answer it. However, he admits that the proceedings were "conducted decently and in order," and describes Messrs. Foote and Watts as "powerful speakers."

Mr. Wilfrid Ward, a Roman Catholic, who resided near Professor Huxley at Eastbourne, gives in the *Nineteenth Century* some reminiscences of the scientist, in which he seeks to minimise his heresy. One anecdote is amusing: Of an eminent person whose great subtlety of mind was being discussed, he said that the constant over-refinement of distinctions in his case destroyed all distinctness. Anything could be explained away, and so one thing came to mean the same as its opposite. Some one asked, "Do you mean that he is untruthful?" "No," replied Huxley, "he is not clear-headed enough to tell a lie."

Dean Stanley's impressionable nature was well brought out in another anecdote. "Stanley could believe in anything of which he had seen the supposed site, but was sceptical where he had not seen. At a breakfast at Monckton Milnes's, just at the time of the Colenso row, Milnes asked me my views on the Pentateuch, and I gave them. Stanley differed from me. The account of creation in Genesis he dismissed at once as unhistorical; but the call of Abraham and the historical narrative of the Pentateuch he accepted. This was because he had seen Palestine—but he wasn't present at the Creation."

### CRAZED BY RELIGION.

I HAVE had to spend a few days lately in the Lexington circuit court, and, by the way, am summoned for a term of jury service, beginning July 6.

Two women were brought in to be tried for lunacy. Both of them were kindly treated at home, and were physically in good health, the testimony showed.

The statement of the first woman was that she had been "studying"—been studing about "the good man above" (meaning God), and that she had been reading her Bible and praying. In answer to the commonwealth's attorney she said she was not afraid of hell or the devil; but when asked if she was afraid of "the good man above" would not say, but buried her face in her hands and wept.

She begged to be allowed to go back to her children, and was told that she would probably not have to stay at the asylum more than a week or so before she would be well and could go to her children, and she was taken to the asylum, probably to spend the remainder of her life.

The next woman said that she had thought she was "a pillar of salt like Lot," because she had been a Christian and had looked back, but that four angels had come to see her and told her that it was not true, and that she now felt relieved and happy. She said the four angels were dressed in white, and that they had wings, and that they stood around her and sang:—

Oh, come, angel band,  
Come and around me stand.

The wife of a Lexington minister, both of whom have been kind and good to me, has also lately become insane, and he has the deep sympathy of all good people who know him, and mine besides. But if my wife should become insane, don't you know that there would be thousands of Christian people who would say it was the result of her "studying" about all the Infidel things I say and write? And yet here is the fact that the older we get, and the more she sees of my Infidelity and of my life, the more we love each other, and the happier we are.

C. C. MOORE.

—*Blue Grass Blade*.

Religion cannot get on without morality, but morality can get on very nicely without religion. Mohammedanism would be a poor thing without temperance, but temperance does not need the belief that Mohammed was a prophet of God.—*Uncle Ben*.

### 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.



## WHAT IS MEANT BY CREATION?

IN one of my recent articles entitled "The Secularist's Catechism," in referring to the alleged creation of the universe I wrote as follows: "If the universe was created, from what did it emanate? From nothing? But 'from nothing nothing can come.' Was it created from something that already was? If so, it was no creation at all, but only a continuation of that which was in existence. Further, 'creation needs action; to act is to use force; to use force implies the existence of something upon which that force can be used. But if that "something" were there before creation, the act of creating was simply the re-forming of pre-existing materials.'" To what he is pleased to term this "bit of reasoning" Mr. A. Guest takes an exception in his letter to the *Freethinker* which appeared last week.

If I did not know Mr. Guest, I should, judging from this letter, be inclined to regard him as a hasty thinker and writer. He says that it appears to him "that Mr. Watts is here demolishing a position that no theologian holds. When a theologian uses the word 'creation' in a Biblical sense, he means a calling into existence, by mere effort of will on the part of God, of that which previously did not exist." Just so; but how does this contradict what I said? My contention is that, if we admit that the universe was created, it must have emanated from something or from nothing? Will Mr. Guest deny this? He seems to be unaware of the fact that the orthodox view of the matter is that something was created out of nothing. Bishop Pearson, in his *Exposition of the Creed*, writes: "I do truly profess that I really believe, and am fully persuaded, that both heaven and earth and all things contained in them have not their being of themselves, but were made in the beginning: that the manner by which all things were made was by mediate or immediate creation; so that antecedently to all things beside there was at first nothing but God, who produced most part of the world merely out of nothing, and the rest out of that which was formerly made of nothing" (Burton's edition, vol. i., p. 121). Professor Bowen, in his *Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton*, remarks: "When God is said to create the universe out of nothing, we think this by supposing that he evolves the universe out of nothing but himself" (p. 41). And Mr. Bradlaugh, in his *Bible: What it Is*, says: "The orthodox doctrine of to-day is that Genesis teaches that God created the world out of nothing" (p. 8). Thus I was *not*, as Mr. Guest asserts, "demolishing a position that no theologian holds." When he says that creation is understood to be the "making to exist that which previously did not exist," does not my critic see that the making must be from something or nothing? The supposition in either case is absurd from the creation standpoint.

If Mr. Guest can conceive creation without action, and force without matter, his powers of conception are more fertile than mine. In fact, I fail to see any *force* in his criticism. His illustration of genius creating an idea, etc., is of no use. Ideas are but mental pictures, and before becoming actual pictures they must be embodied in something external to the brain wherein they were formed. May I suggest that Mr. Guest would do well to carefully read Mill's *System of Logic* (book iii., chapter v.)?

His concluding paragraph contains excellent advice, not "to strain a point to gain an argument." But, unfortunately, that is just what Mr. Guest has done. Only in his case he has failed to "gain an argument."

CHARLES WATTS.

## Church Modesty.

At a time when eminent prelates of the older church were eulogizing debauched princes like Louis XV., and using the unspeakably obscene casuistry of the Jesuit Sanchez in the education of the priesthood as to the relation of men to women, the modesty of the church authorities was so shocked by Linnæus's proofs of a sexual system in plants that for many years his writings were prohibited in the papal states and in various other parts of Europe where clerical authority was strong enough to resist the new scientific current. Not until 1779 did one of the more broad-minded Cardinals, Zelanda—succeed in gaining permission that Professor Minosi should discuss the Linnæan system at Rome. And Protestantism was quite as oppressive.—*Dr. A. White, "Warfare of Science."*

## THE "NEW WOMAN" IN HEAVEN.

(Tune—"Her Golden Hair was Hanging Down Her Back.")  
An angel wandered up and down the "bright and better land,"

And a golden harp was slung across her back.  
She didn't want to play again in Yahveh's golden band,  
So her golden harp she slung across her back.  
That angel she was beautiful, that angel she was fair,  
She wore a heavy crown of gold upon her golden hair;  
It was so deuced heavy that it nearly made her swear,  
And her golden harp it nearly broke her back.

Chorus—And—she—stamped her foot with rage,  
She felt as though she'd like to have a cry;  
Alas! and alack!  
She wished herself back  
Where at ladies mashers wink the other eye

While on this earth, that angel was a woman known as "new,"

And she wore a cycling jacket on her back.  
She had a nice pneumatic bike, a pair of "bloomers" too,  
Though a harp she didn't carry on her back.  
But God, in heaven, looks upon "pneumatics" with a frown,  
And all the dress allowed there is a white nocturnal gown;  
So in that dress, on foot, the angels wandered up and down,  
And her golden harp was slung across her back.

Chorus—And—she—fairly had the hump,  
She felt as though she'd like to "do a guy";  
Alas! and alack!  
She wished herself back  
Where at "bloomers" mashers wink the other eye.

She asked if God Almighty would supply her with a bike,  
And her golden harp remove from off her back.

Now, God is rather touchy, her request he didn't like,  
But her golden harp he snatched from off her back.

Said he: "I will not gratify your bicycling desire,  
And, if you are not satisfied, to hell you can retire."  
Then, like the ancient angel, Mephistopheles, Esquire,  
From the New Jerusalem she had the sack.

Chorus—But—she—didn't care a rap,  
When told that she to hell would have to fly;  
"It can't," muttered she,  
"Very much worse be  
Than your dismal habitation in the sky."  
ESS JAY BEE.

## Obituary.

It is with regret that I notify the death of Mr. J. Worster, aged seventy, who died in the Licensed Victuallers' Almshouses on July 24, and was buried on the 28th. His end was painless and peaceful. It was the deceased's request that Mr. R. Forder should read the Secular Burial Service, and that as many of his old friends as possible should attend his funeral. But the letter announcing his decease, being wrongly addressed, never reached the undersigned. This was a keen disappointment to those who wished to be present to pay their last respects at the graveside of this staunch old veteran. During his long illness, which he bore with great patience, he was often visited by Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. H. J. Stace, the undersigned, and others. Towards the close, when too feeble to read the *Freethinker*, the nurse, who was most kind and attentive, would read it to him. The ruling passion of his life appeared to me to be the propagation of Freethought principles, and attacking superstition. Never wearied, he would sit down with a pile of leaflets before him, and patiently cover the border of each with epigrammatic comment, and would then go out and deliver them in letter-boxes. Fluent and ready in controversy, he knew his Bible from the first to the last chapter. He was a generous supporter, and an intense admirer of our late great leader. He was a general favorite. The soul of honor and the example of high principle, he has now gone to his long sleep, which, when lying sick, he so often wished for. He will always live in our memories, honored and respected.—J. BURRELL, Hon. Sec., Westminster Branch.

## Providence.

What were called spiritual means could not be depended on; the preacher who put his trust in aid from above still found it necessary to take up a collection. Looking to Providence for protection against epidemics or famine still left a good deal for physicians and Poor Law Guardians to do. Those who, like Mr. Spurgeon, could fill their meal barrels by prayer had no unfailing formula they could patent, of which the public could purchase the royalty. Clearly science is the only Providence which can be depended on.—*G. J. Holyoake.*



## BOOK CHAT.

*Humanity*, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, is a publication we always open with pleasure. It does such a good work in such a modest way. The August number is just to hand. It opens with an article on "Trial by Judge," advocating the immediate establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal. This is followed by an eloquent article on "The Humane Life," by W. J. Jupp. "Feather-Headed Women" is the excellent title of a protest against the female fashion of ornamenting hats and bonnets with the "murderous millinery" of slaughtered birds. Joseph Collinson writes feelingly, without at all losing his head, on "The Treatment of Fish." We hope all Free-thinkers will take in *Humanity*. It will never take in them. Snivelling sentimentalism is not admitted in its columns. Its appeal is always to intelligence as well as to sympathy.

Mr. F. F. Arbuthnot issues an interesting leaflet, reprinted from the current number of the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, on the past, present, and future of "The Oriental Translation Fund." Under Mr. Arbuthnot's direction, and mainly we believe, at his expense, this Fund has already issued many important works, notably the *Rauzat-us-Safa*; or, Garden of Purity of Mirkhond. There are five volumes of this work, the first two containing the Moslem version of our Bible stories concerning Adam, Nuh, Ebrahim, Esahaq, Yaquub, Yusuf, Moses, Elias, Daniel, Suliman, and Isa the son of Mariam, and chronicles of the kings of Persia. The third and fourth volumes give the life of Muhammed, and the last the lives of his immediate successors, Abu Bakr, Omar Othman, and Ali.

This was followed by Professor Tawney's translation from the Sanskrit of the *Katha koca*, the best collection of Jain stories that has yet appeared in English. This volume enshrines much ancient Hindu folk-lore, and casts strong light on the Jain religion, of which an account is given in the preface. It traces its heroes and villains through many lives, the same person being now a king, now a god, and anon an elephant, and makes one realize how truly awful an endowment immortality would be, and how every Indian philosophy and religion sought escape from the successive whirl of reincarnation.

Among books in hand to be produced through the Oriental Translation Fund are Miss Ridding's translation of *Kadambari*, a Sanskrit romance, written in the seventh century A.D., and giving an interesting idea of the manners and customs of the people of India at that time. Another work, dealing with nearly the same period, is *The History of King Harsha*, translated by Professor E. B. Cowell. Two other important Sanskrit works under preparation are the *Pancadasi*, a poem giving a summary of Vedantist philosophy, and the *Katha Vathi*, an account of heretical opinions compiled for the Synod of Buddhists held under Asoka B.C. 250. Yet more important works are being directed by Mr. Arbuthnot, who is doing a work which in France is taken up by the Government—viz., encouraging the translation of works of learning and research, for which there is no immediate public demand. Of these must be mentioned Dr. Steingass's translation of *The Assemblies of Al Hariri*, an Arabic work of great eloquence and learning, which Carlyle described as one of the most extraordinary books that he had ever read. *The Annals of Tabari*, whom Gibbon called the Livy of the Arabians, is likewise proposed to be published.

Mr. Arbuthnot also has in hand a new translation of the Koran, which will be as completely literal as it can be made, with all the proper names in the same words as they appear in the original—for instance, Ibrahim, Musa, Harun, Isa, etc. The effort will be not, as with the Revised Bible, to adapt an ancient work to modern understanding, but to restore the ancient lines of a work modernized in translations. A second volume will contain a copious index and analysis of the contents of the first. For instance, Ibrahim (Abraham) is mentioned in twenty-five chapters of the Koran. Under Abraham will be found the Moslem version of his story, with all the passages in which he is alluded to. All the proper names will be dealt with in the same way; while all subjects, such as Ablutions, Alms, Debts, Marriage, Divorce, Dowries, Prayer, Slavery, Trusts, etc., will also be separately treated. The Koran, thus analyzed, and its bearings on existing law seen at once, will be found more interesting than it has hitherto been considered to be by the general reader.

From this new translation, and from the *Life of Muhammed*, by Ibn Ishak and another, the earliest extant, Mr. Arbuthnot hopes to show that the prophet himself left no literary remains, but that the Koran was prepared by a committee some years after his death, based on his sayings, thoughts, and ideas promulgated *viva voce* during his

lifetime, and that much of the knowledge of Jewish stories was imparted by Kab-ul-Akbar, a Jewish convert to Islam. A careful perusal of the first long chapters of the Koran indicates that they were carefully prepared to lay the fundamentals of the faith, and not the casual "inspirations" of the prophet.

The full title of the book mentioned in Mr. Wheeler's article on the Devil is, *A Few Hundred Bible Contradictions: A Hunt after the Devil, and other Odd Matters*, by John P. Y., M.D. It was published in three volumes by H. Hetherington in 1843, and is, perhaps, the most curious Freethought book ever issued. Full of Bible lore, it contains the results of wide reading, jumbled together in a discursive, colloquial style that is, for a while, very amusing. The author's real name is given on page 144. "If the Rev. Peter Lecount had stuck out all this impious trash, I should have said he ought to be kicked for a jackass." Lecount was not a reverend, but a very irreverent naval lieutenant, who, being an able mathematician and engineer, was engaged on the construction of the London and Birmingham Railway. At the conclusion of his work he says with truth: "This book will be a mine for others to dig in"; and Mr. Holyoake, in his *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (chapter lxxiii.—"How Bishop Colenso Became Converted"), gives reasons for supposing that the first Bishop of Natal may have been acquainted with the work.

Mr. Arthur J. Thomson, in the preface to Mrs. Thomson's translation of Brehm's *From North Pole to Equator*, attempts a classification of naturalist travellers. The Romantic type culminates in Marco Polo. Then comes the Encyclopædist type of the 16th and 17th centuries, indiscriminating absorbers of information. These were followed by the General Naturalist type, like Pennant, Pallas, and Humboldt. The Specialist type succeeded, ranging the world singly or in groups, with the object of solving particular problems. From these emerge the last and highest kind of naturalist traveller, the Biological type, whose chief representative is Darwin.

## PROFANE JOKES.

In answer to the first question in the Shorter Catechism, Colin replied: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy himself forever."

A parson went the other day to see an old woman, who told him that she had just had a visit from a gentleman, who had read and prayed with her. "Well," said the vicar, who knew the visitor to be a Plymouth Brother, "it was very kind of him, but he's not a Churchman. Do you know what he is?" "No, sir, I don't exactly; but it was something like a Yarmouth bloater!"

A little four-year-old in New York created a ripple by remarking to the teacher of the Sunday-school class—"Our dog's dead; I'll bet the angels were scared when they saw him coming up the walk. He's awful cross to strangers."

"Well, Uncle Rasbury, how do you like the sermon?" "Powful, fine sermon, Marse John." "Where did the preacher take his text?" "From dat potion ob de Scripture whar de Postol Paul pints his pistol to de Fesions."

The anthem was from Ps. lxxiv., and the soprano trilled forth that she had rather be a "dorkie bird" in the house of her god than dwell in the tents of ungodliness? "What is a dorkie bird?" whispered a young lady to her escort. "A what?" he inquired. "A dorkie bird." He turned on her a pair of interested eyes. "A what?" he asked again. "Oh, never mind," she whispered nervously. "It's nothing. They are going to pray." To the exclusion of all else, that idea of the unusual bird occupied her attention during the remainder of the service. When she reached home she rushed to her room and seized her Bible. After an arduous search she found the place and read: "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper—" "Doorkeeper! Oh!" she said faintly, and sat down on the edge of the bed.

Scene—Sunday-school. Teacher—"Who reigned after Saul?" Scholar—"David." Teacher—"Who after David?" Scholar—"Solomon." Teacher—"Who came after Solomon?" Scholar—"The Queen of Sheba."

A divinity candidate was asked: "Can you explain the apparent discrepancies between St. Stephen's speech and the Old Testament history?" Pause—puzzled look—then triumphant reply, "He used the Revised Version."



**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.**

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Why Some People go to Church, and Others Do Not."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, W. Heaford, "Christ and Socialism." August 22, Smoking Concert.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "The Resurrection."  
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Secularism."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Devil's Conversion."  
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack, "Miracles."  
CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The Soul."  
DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.  
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.  
FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 11.15 and 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.  
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "All About Souls." Thursday, August 20, at 8. A lecture.  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, C. Cohen will lecture; 3.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Wednesday, August 19, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.  
ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11, H. Courtney will lecture.  
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.  
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Real Saviors of the World."  
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack, "Why I Ceased to Pray."  
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "God so Loved the World."  
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Curse of the Cross."  
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Rowney will lecture; 3.15, J. Rowney will lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

HECKMONDWIKE (Mr. Wood's Office): 2.30, Business meeting.  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. M. Robertson—11, "Gladstone on Butler"; 3, "Socialism and Secularism"; 6.30, "The Bible in the Schools."  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and friends' excursion to Holme Farm, Wharnciffe Side. Meet at 1.30, corner of Arundel and Norfolk-streets. Start at 1.45 prompt.  
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): Excursion to Holywell Dene. Brakes leave North Shields at 1 p.m.

**Lecturers' Engagements.**

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—August 16, m, Hyde Park; a, Regent's Park; e, Kilburn. 19, Hyde Park. 23, m, Camberwell; a, Peckham Rye; e, Camberwell. 27, Hammersmith. 30, m, Ridley-road; a, Regent's Park; e, Battersea.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Creden-road, London, S.E.—August 16, Camberwell. 23, m, Westminster; a, Finsbury Park; e, Balls Pond. 30, m, Wood Green; e, Edmonton.

**POSITIVISM.**

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

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

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