

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## MR. GLADSTONE AND LI HUNG CHANG.

THE visit of the great Chinese statesman to Mr. Gladstone in his retirement at Hawarden is a very striking sign of the times. "A most remarkable man," Mr. Gladstone said when his visitor had left; "yes, a remarkable man altogether." What his visitor thought of Mr. Gladstone we do not know, yet we dare say the admiration was reciprocal. But the personal interest of this interview sinks into insignificance beside its public importance. Twenty years ago it would have seemed incredible that a Chinese statesman, with the approval of his own government, would ever make a political tour through Europe. This itself is one of the surprises of our time. And that Li Hung Chang should pay a special visit to Mr. Gladstone, now that he has finally left the political arena, shows that there is a certain sympathy with Liberalism in the breast of this distinguished Chinaman.

There is good reason to believe that China will rouse herself from the stupor of ages. "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay," sang Tennyson. Perhaps so; but Cathay is waking up, and will probably join the movement of the world. She will welcome railways and international commerce. She will adopt the most improved European methods of finance. She will have a trained and well-equipped army, and perhaps a first-class navy. She will then be able to snap her fingers at Japan, and to resent any insolence on the part of the Western powers. And it must be remembered that she counts four hundred millions, or about a quarter of the whole world's inhabitants, under her flag. Yes, the awakening of China is fraught with the deepest significance. It means a fresh and a mighty factor in the problem of civilization.

The late Sir C. Pearson, in his powerful study of *National Life and Character*, laughed at the exaggerated pretensions of the white race. He showed the absurdity of the idea that they are destined to overrun this planet. He proved that they can only flourish in certain latitudes, and that outside these they cannot compete in population with the indigenous inhabitants. Just as the Indians hold their own in South America, so the Negro will hold his own over the greater part of Africa. Europeans are only a very small percentage of the population of India, and nobody suggests the colonization of China, where the population is, in many parts, already congested. There seems every probability that the brown, black, and yellow races will at least hold their own in the future. Whether they will be a source of danger to the white race, when they are thoroughly organized and furnished with all the resources of modern science, is, perhaps, a more disputable question. Sir C. Pearson thought they would be. He believed that the white nations, shut up in their own territories, would have to unite in constant readiness to defend themselves against outside aggression.

A much smaller nation than China, but a very much more compact one, has already joined the modern movement. Japan has to be reckoned with in the East, not only as an independent power, but as a competitor in the international market.

Now, if we take all these present facts and future probabilities together, we can all see how *temporary* is Mr. Gladstone's argument that the Christian nations dominate the globe. There was a time when they did not. They were once in constant terror of a Mohammedan invasion, and they were certainly inferior in civilisation to the

followers of "the false prophet." The real truth is that the Christian nations got the first start with modern science. They did not welcome it; they cursed it. They did not honor its pioneers; they burnt them. Nevertheless, they profited by it, in their own despite. Science gave them guns and rifles, industrial machinery, railways, and ocean steamers; and with these they conquered the world. Christianity had nothing to do with this process. The Bible had as much to do with it as the story of Jack the Giant-Killer. The weakness of Europe four hundred years ago was consistent with a pretty long past of well-organized Christianity. Her strength has been derived from another factor, and that factor is science.

Consider for a moment what England would have been without science. She would have had three or four millions of inhabitants, and her commerce would have extended but to neighboring countries. That commerce would have been carried on with small sailing vessels, mostly hugging the coast, and its amount would be trifling in comparison with the present lists of our exports and imports. England's world-wide empire is extremely modern; it has been gained principally during the last hundred and fifty years—in fact, during the period of her great start over other European countries in the race of practical science. It is science that has enabled her to maintain a vast increase of population, and science that has enabled her to find an outlet for her surplus population in distant colonies. And in her quarrels with the far-off "heathen" she has been able to dictate her own conditions by virtue of the superior powers of destruction which science has placed at her command.

Obviously, however, England will not be able to carry things with a high hand perpetually. Even in Asia, the land of hereditary slavery and superstition, her superior energies are being confronted with the newly-aroused energies of races that seemed for ever doomed to supineness and subjection. And in the course of time all the navies of all the European powers will be inadequate to compel the submission of China, Japan, and other powers that will certainly arise in the great Asiatic continent.

Now, these nations will either keep their old religions or drop religion altogether. The expectation that they will embrace Christianity is a fond dream of the creed-proud devotees of Christ. Missionary efforts, with all their prodigal expenditure of cash, make as much real impression on the "heathen" world as a little band of fleas would make upon the hide of an elephant. Even in India, under the moral favor of the British Government, the number of native converts to Christianity is extremely small, and they belong almost exclusively to the very lowest stratum of the people. China is just as "heathen" as ever, and the Prime Minister of Japan has recently startled the British Christians by declaring his satisfaction at the fact that his countrymen are cultivating science and dispensing with religion. Certainly, he says, they show no inclination to accept Christianity.

We repeat, then, that Mr. Gladstone's argument in favor of Christianity from the dominance of Christian nations is *temporary*, and therefore shallow. It is based upon a fact of a century or two's duration; and what is a century or two in the history of the world, or even in the history of one of its great religions?

Some such thought as this may have suggested itself to Mr. Gladstone's active mind in the calm of his study after the departure of the great Chinese statesman. Whether it did so or not, this thought will certainly

press itself more and more upon the attention of Christian Europe, and especially upon the attention of Christian England. One feels that the old arrogant tone of Christianity has for some time been abating, and it will necessarily continue to abate in the presence of powerful "heathen" nations, who will take from us our science, our practical methods of civilisation, our railways, our telegraphs, our ship-building, and our manufactures; in short, everything but our religion. And if Christianity has to settle down in the world amidst such conditions, its supernatural claims will fall into derision. While it was to conquer the world, it might conceivably have come from God; but a number of rival supernaturalisms, each holding its own ground and demanding respect from the rest, must in the long run throw discredit upon each other. Thus the silent spread of science is revolutionizing the world, and destroying the great religious systems which were all constructed in the midst of ignorance and insularity. Science does more than minister to our material comfort. Science is the great democratizer, the great humanizer, the great preparer of the coming brotherhood of man.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE DEVIL DISCOVERED.

(Concluded from page 514.)

THE *Catholic Dictionary* of Addis and Arnold lays it down that "the Devil is a spirit (Ephesians ii. 2); that he is a prince with evil angels subject to him (Matthew xii. 24-26; xxv. 41). All spiritual evil and error (2 Corinthians xi. 14, 15), all which hinders the Gospel (1 Thess. ii. 18; Apoc. ii. 10), is traced unto him.....Satan has a terrible power over the world and its votaries, so much so that he is called the ruler and even the 'god' of this world (John xii. 31; 2 Corinthians iv. 4); and hence St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 5) regards exclusion from the Church as to amount to a deliverance of the excommunicated person into the power of Satan." All the early fathers held that Christ's atoning blood was a price paid to Satan.

The Devil of the Dark Ages—that is, of the period when Christianity was dominant and unquestioned—was a horrible nightmare of a malevolent being in semi-human shape, but with horns, tail, cloven hoof, and trident. He was the prince of darkness, the prince of the powers of the air. Martin Luther, who met him,\* and threw his ink bottle at him, found in his agency an explanation of mosquitoes and mice as well as other troublesome phenomena. The Bogomili called him "the elder brother of Christ," so great was the dread of his power; and even Bishop Martensen, the greatest Danish orthodox theologian of modern times, calls him "the younger brother of Christ."

Until the eighteenth century the Devil bulked largely in popular imagination. Fulke, in his *Meteors* (1640), says of the period 1563: "There was newes come to London that the Devill.....was seene flying over the Thames." The Rev. Joseph Glanvill, of the Royal Society, gives many accounts of the Devil's visitations in his *Sadduceismus Triumphatus* (1681), as "the Devil, in the shape of a black man, lay with her in the bed.....his feet was cloven." Glanvill was not a stupid man. On the contrary, he was a very cute and able man, a voluminous and versatile writer, who, in his able *Scepsis Scientifica*, shows the vanity of dogmatizing and the futility of mere metaphysical speculation. He anticipated the electric telegraph and Hume's theory of causation. Yet he was shrewd enough to see that the Devil and God were logically bound together, and that to deny the agency of one was really to discard natural theology and would be the triumph of Sadduceism.

The terrible belief in contracts with the Devil, which drove many to insanity, now remains only in the jocular saying, "There'll be the Devil to pay." *The Devil to Pay* is appropriately the title of a farce, though the words may recall many direful tragedies. To play the Devil now implies recklessness, though the Devil is supposed to be a peculiarly cute and cautious personage. Some glimpse of the old terror associated with the term may be found in such expressions as devil-fish, sea-devil, and so on. But, in

\* On another occasion he said: "I heard someone walking on the floor above my head; but, as I knew it was only the Devil, I went quietly to sleep."

ordinary parlance, devil is often associated with poor as a term of pity. Sterne, in his *Sentimental Journey*, said: "I am apt to be taken ..... when a poor devil comes to offer his services to so poor a devil as myself." And Scott, in his *Antiquary*, has: "What can we do for that puir doited deevil of a knight-baronet?" Thus Disraeli in 1850 spoke of the churchmen "riding the high Protestant horse, and making the poor devils of Puseyites the scapegoats."

The Devil's name appears everywhere, even in popular zoology and botany. The puff ball is the Devil's snuff-box, ferns are the Devil's brushes, the prickly pear is the Devil's fig, the bindweed is the Devil's garter, the dragon-fly is the Devil's darning-needle, the black-beetle is the Devil's cow, and so on. Even our popular games have been damned by his name. Cards are the Devil's prayer-books, dice are the Devil's bones. Nay, human beings, or collections of human beings, are in the same boat. The Inns of Court Volunteers are known as "The Devil's Own," because they are all lawyers. Yet no one thinks of doing anything save smile at the impiety of an expression which would be the essence of blasphemy if people really believed in the Devil.

A very familiar personage is the printer's devil. Beyond a penchant for blood-and-thunder stories and deeds of devilry, he is rather an amiable creature. There is a deal of human nature about a printer's devil, who so far resembles the religionist's Devil that he is often made the scapegoat for other people's sins and shortcomings. Another devil, truly a poor devil, is the literary hack, content to let his own work pass under some mightier name. There are many grades of these devils. I have heard of one who was offered two guineas to do a piece of literary work. He found a poorer devil who would do it for one guinea, and sublet the contract; the guinea devil found one who would do it for ten shillings, he another who would do it for five, and he yet another who took two shillings and a drink for doing what devil No. 1 got two guineas for.

Among "the devil's own," the term is used for one who does professional work, to gain experience, without fee or recognition. Thus, the *Athenæum* is quoted in Murray as writing: "He devils for the counsel on both sides"; and again: "This unjust system is termed devilling, and those who appear in cases for which others are retained, at the sole request of the latter, are called 'devils,' while the original holders of the transferred briefs may be styled devilees."

Among derivatives of the devil we must not omit "devil-dodger," first used by Lackington in 1791, but, like "sky pilot," popularised in the *Freethinker*, and used by Mr. Grant Allen in *Mamie*, one of his popular novels.

If the Devil is as jealous as the Deity is said to be, and refuses to hold guiltless those who take his name in vain, he will be kept pretty busy. Many expressions are really invocations to his Satanic Majesty. "Who the devil are you?" "What the devil do you mean?" "When the devil will you pay me?" "How the devil did it happen?" Such phrases, not uncommon among Christians, have "in the name of" the Devil, understood; and sometimes ill-mannered people substitute his majesty's hotel to give further emphasis. The liberties taken with the Devil's name in common speech show that real belief in the personage Jesus called "the god of this world" has faded from the minds of men.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that, although there is said to be extant a sect of Devil worshippers, though Marie Corelli writes of the sorrows of Satan, and even Mr. Buchanan seriously puts forward *The Devil's Case*, without seriously believing in him, Old Nick has, to the mass of mankind, become a mere laughing stock in his ancient guise, and a mere figure of speech or idiomatic seasoning in the ordinary parlance of the world.

J. M. WHEELER.

## Sunday and Chicago.

Chicago Mother—"Well, my daughter, you were very good in church. Now, can you tell me what the sermon was about?"

Little Chicago Girl—"Oh, yes, of course. It was about heaven. Won't it be nice! Nothing but music gardens and races and base-ball games and theatres all the time."

"Mercy on us, child, where did you get that idea?"

"From the preacher, of course."

"The preacher? Why, what did he say?"

He said that up there it would be Sunday all the time!

## A SECULARIST'S ESTIMATE OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE Secularist's estimate of Christianity is either not understood, or else it is intentionally misrepresented, by many of its exponents, for we are being constantly charged with asserting that the Christian system is destitute of truth, that it was originated for the purpose of deceiving mankind, and that its professors are either fools or knaves. It has frequently been our duty to contradict these absurd charges, and to distinctly state that these are not the views Secularists entertain of what is called Christianity. Inasmuch as we consider that the Christian faith is an emanation of the human mind, it is not likely that we should deem it destitute of *all* truth. Judging from its nature, as presented in its official records, we are compelled to regard it as being a combination of good and evil, of that which may be made useful if kept apart from the influence of priestcraft, and of much that is useless and injurious when believed by persons who are credulous and intellectually weak. We do not consider that Christianity was originated for any particular purpose, but rather that it was a natural outcome of the period of its inception. That during its development many foolish and unscrupulous persons have been its advocates and professors there can be no doubt, if history may be relied upon; but it would be unfair to suppose that all of its exponents and adherents were of this class. Secularists prefer to estimate Christianity by its teachings, rather than by the conduct of its professors. Still, when it is persistently urged that the faith of Christ has been potent for nothing but good, the character of some of his disciples may be legitimately referred to for the purpose of refuting such an extravagant claim. Action, not belief, is the Secular standard of moral efficiency.

In forming an estimate of Christianity, it may be as well to bear in mind the various and conflicting designations that have been given to its different phases. We have heard of "Heretical Christianity," "Muscular Christianity," "Secular Christianity," and "Supernatural Christianity." Now, it may be necessary here to intimate that we do not coincide with those who consider that what is termed "Secular Christianity" is identical with Free-thought principles. Christianity appears to us to be objectionable under whatever name it may be presented. Of course there are axioms taught in the New Testament which are admirable and worthy of acceptance; but then such axioms do not belong exclusively to Christianity. The practical portion of the Sermon on the Mount was in existence long before the time when Christ is supposed to have taught in Galilee. The phrase "Christianity" cannot be consistently used without conveying in some degree the idea of what is called supernaturalism. The inspiration that induced Christ to say and do what is ascribed to him in the Four Gospels was considered to have emanated from above. The power that moves and regulates the whole system of Christianity is designated by its believers as supernatural. The term "Secular Christianity" is therefore a misnomer. Christ did but little from purely secular motives; but, thinking he was doing the will of his "Father in Heaven," he did it all for the "glory of God." It is important that this fact should be remembered, because we live in an age perhaps unsurpassed in the history of the world for the promulgation of systems which have for their professed object the advancement of mankind. It becomes, therefore, a duty that we should be judicious as to the terms we use, as well as to the mode we adopt to secure the triumph of principles which we believe are essential to the permanent welfare of society. Many valuable systems are deprived of much of their vitality, and some of the best efforts of men are rendered comparatively useless, through the lack of the observance of this very necessary precaution.

In estimating the nature of Christianity, we recognise one or two features which are identical in all its different phases. Reliance on a supernatural power, faith in Christ, belief in the efficacy of prayer, and the immortality of the soul, are tenets professed, more or less, by most Christian sects. In addition to this, the New Testament distinctly teaches that poverty is a virtue, that submission is a duty, and that love to man should be subordinate to love to God. Now, these principles, however consoling they may be to some, have checked, and must from their nature check, human progress. The extent of their retarding

influence depends upon the degree of veneration in which they are held by their professors. With Theists and Unitarians these theological notions are less dangerous, because such Christians are less dogmatic and less orthodox. But with a Wesleyan, a Salvationist, or a Baptist, the profession of such notions frequently leads to conduct antagonistic to general improvement. With these latter Christians, Christ is "all in all." In vain do we look to their teachings for those principles that are necessary to a progressive civilization. On the contrary, experience has proved that, as a rule, they have been injurious, and in proportion to their adoption has the secular welfare of mankind been retarded. And we cannot expect aught else. The object of Christ was to teach his followers how to die, rather than to instruct them how to live.

It is this indefinite nature of Christianity that makes it difficult to form a clear estimate of its true character. The fact is, according to the education of the individual and the intelligence of the nation, so are the notions entertained as to what constitutes the true faith. For instance, the Christianity of the Roman Catholics differs from that of the Protestants, as does that of the Church of England from the Nonconformist bodies. Evidently the Christianity of Father Ignatius is not the same as that which is taught as such by Dean Fremantle, any more than the faith of the Unitarian is like that of the Trinitarian. The same diversity exists in reference to nations. In Spain Christianity is cruel oppression, in Scotland it is a gloomy nightmare, in Rome it is priestly dominion, in America it is a commercial commodity, while in England it is simply emotional pastime.

Remembering the condition of society at the dawn of Christianity, the Secularist sees nothing marvellous in its appearance and in its nature. It was an offshoot of the ideas that prevailed in an age of ignorance and credulity—an age when nature's operations and the functions of body and mind were almost entirely unknown. All things wonderful were readily believed without investigation. It was an age of blind faith, when the authority of theology ruled undisputed. There is ample evidence to prove that the early age of Christianity was one in which the *many* believed and the *few* only inquired. Even among the brief list of eminent men of that period the all-absorbing consideration was the nature and destiny of the soul, rather than the cultivation of reason and the exercise of the understanding. The practical development of man, mentally and physically, for purposes in this life, never entered into their philosophy. Whatever did not contribute to the promotion of the new faith was not only deemed unimportant, it was repudiated altogether. The literature that could not be incorporated with it was either abandoned or destroyed. Such knowledge as is prized in the nineteenth century was entirely absent in the primitive days of Christianity. The classic thought which then existed was not allowed to be blended with the new superstition, except when it took the form of myth or fiction. So effectively was the work of repression carried on under Christian rule that at the end of a thousand years but few men were found capable of even reading the ancient writings that had escaped the destroyer's hand. Thus from a literary, critical, and scientific, as well as from an ethical, standpoint, Christianity was the main instrument in retarding the progress of the world.

The Secularist, bearing in mind these facts which pertain to the nature of Christianity, and to the condition of the world when the faith was evolved, does not regard its advent as an act of supernatural power, but simply as a product of the human mind. Therefore its value must be estimated purely by what it is, and how far it is capable of improving the mundane condition of the human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

The Christian Theist is horrified at the suggestion of the cannibal deity of the Fijians; the modern defender of orthodoxy finds much that is repulsive, with little that is admirable, in the despotic and tyrannical God of mediæval theology; yet, throughout, the conception is that of idealized humanity. Even in the very loftiest theological teachings this still holds true. The moral qualities are infinitely purified—the intellectual qualities infinitely developed; but the difference is one of degree only, and not of kind. The qualities are human qualities still.—*W. H. Hudson.*

### SUB-EDITING THE BIBLE.

It was a great task, and, alas, never completed. Perhaps it was because neither Jones nor I had quite grasped the extent of the undertaking that we never got right through with our joint sub-editing of the holy Scriptures. Possibly we stopped to squabble too often and too long by the way. Nevertheless, we made a big effort to sub-edit the whole book with a blue pencil, and the results, so far as they went, were at once amusing and amazing.

We were both, at that time, budding journalists engaged on an old-fashioned newspaper that left us plenty of time on our hands. Part of this leisure we had previously occupied, perhaps wasted, in desultory disputation on questions of a theological kind. Jones had almost enough faith to be a Unitarian of the more liberal sort, which, after all, is a great deal more than many pressmen I know can honestly lay claim to. I had considerably less. Even that small stock has, in the course of years, been further diminished. However, as, in our conflicts of opinion, we were repeatedly referring to the office copy of the Scriptures—which surely had never been in such requisition before—it gradually dawned upon us that we might as well cease discussion for a time, and try to put this court of appeal in proper order to begin with.

This was the inception of the great work upon which we spent many odd hours during the best part of a year. Where that sub-edited copy of the Scriptures has got to now I do not know. If it should ever have fallen into the hands of a pious believer, who by chance looked at its contents, I hope he was not too greatly horrified at the liberties taken with holy writ.

At the commencement of our labors I felt it necessary to impress upon Jones that we must do this work in quite a professional way. We must deal with the book on its merits, without fear or favor, and as if we had never seen it before. It seemed to me, from a casual glance, that it was too wordy, too diffuse—in fact, too bulky by half. It wanted cutting down—judiciously, of course.

Yes, he thought it would be improved by being brought into a smaller compass. Perhaps it would be necessary to re-write it here and there. I knew he meant to strike out all the texts on which Trinitarians relied; but I let that pass. He said that, as it stood, it was not in the best presentable shape. He agreed that there was a great deal in it which was unimportant and uninteresting. The best parts would be decidedly better for being brought closer together. The book would then have a greater chance of being read.

Thereupon we commenced with Genesis, and very soon, by our combined efforts, the Old Testament grew smaller by degrees, and beautifully less. We brought no great scholastic attainments to the task, but we thought we had plenty of common sense and a fair amount of literary taste, and it was no part of our design to trouble about the accuracy of the translation. And so we went on striking out all that we considered “unfit for publication,” toning down the Mosaic laws, making short work of tiresome genealogies and the history of petty Hebrew kings, scratching out prophetic rhapsodies, and, in short, divesting the volume of all that we thought too ridiculous, or too obscure or irrelevant to the general purpose of the book. And the mention of the purpose of the book reminds me that one of the difficulties we encountered arose from the fact that we had never quite determined whether to treat the Scriptures as a story-book, in which case there was an abundance of amusing fiction and fable that might be preserved; or as a moral preceptor, in which case we found the morality hopelessly mixed up with the theology.

But as to the propriety of a drastic condensation we never had any scruple or doubt. We allowed no weak consideration for the feelings of Moses or the prophets, or even the “sweet Psalmist of Israel,” to stay the blue pencil’s work. Reporters, especially if they are young, are no respecters of persons. We had faced bishops unabashed, had our own decided opinions as to the relative merits of standard authors and popular actors, and, if we had been called upon for a “leader,” would have threatened the Czar of all the Russias with a not less fiery vehemence than our editor was displaying just then. Judging by the sad havoc made in the sacred writings, Jehovah might well have concluded that either his enemies had written this

book, or that it had fallen into the hands of two most ruthless and remorseless critics.

It is true that, at the earnest request of Jones, who was the more lenient of the twain, I gave a reluctant assent to certain passages remaining. I decidedly disapproved of them myself, and privately resolved to make a second revision, in which they would not be permitted to appear. Some of the passages, I convinced him, were libels on the deity that ought to be suppressed. Others, I persuaded him, might very well be relegated to an appendix for the satisfaction of the curiously inclined. Occasionally we were both of one mind as to an expurgation, and made it with scarcely a word of comment. Really, on the whole, it was refreshing to notice how liberally Jones went on pruning when once his critical faculty was brought into play.

When we looked back on the remains of “revelation,” after a lengthened period of work, nobody could have been more astonished than we were that the book promised to be so remarkably thin. The attenuated collection of shreds and patches might well have made the Holy Ghost stare aghast with dismay. If our condensed version could have been authorized for general use, what a marvellous economy would have been effected in printers’ ink! And yet, as far as I can recollect, the book was all the better for being shorn of much that we deleted. But then what was left made a very poor show, and to this day I have never been able to believe that any of it—either that which was expurgated or that which remained—could be, in the orthodox sense, divine.

Christians who are compelled to accept the whole of the Scriptures—all that is good, bad, and indifferent alike—have ever excited my sincerest commiseration. That they should also feel themselves called upon to circulate them in their entirety is much to be regretted and condemned. There are blots and blemishes in all great human works, with which the keen-eyed critic may readily find fault. But then these otherwise noble productions are not pretended to be, or circulated as, divine revelations, which surely ought to be beyond the possibility of serious attack. Probably there is something comical in the picture of two young men sitting down to sub-edit the “Word of God.” But we are told to “search the Scriptures,” and, at any rate, we paid that very much over-rated book a higher compliment by the attention we bestowed upon it than does John Smith or Jack Robinson, who professes his belief in it, but never reads it at all, and probably believes in it the more for that very reason. As for the self-styled Christians who venture to adopt an eclectic policy, it is impossible to understand by what authority, or on what lines, they proceed. Who is to decide which is the human element and which the divine? Z.

### THE ANTIQUITY OF SCEPTICISM.

THE orthodox are always exclaiming against *modern* scepticism, forgetful or ignorant of the fact that scepticism is as old as the human intellect. Every old literature shows us that at all times there were men who condemned superstition and its observances, and realized that the human right hand was far more powerful than the supernatural powers called up by wayward imaginations. These thoughts are suggested by the translation of the *Jataka* now being made under the editorship of Professor Cowell, the first volume of which has recently appeared. As our readers may know, the *Jataka* is one of the most popular books of the Southern Buddhist Canon. It professes to give episodes from the 550 previous lives of Buddha, before he attained complete enlightenment in his last birth, and so entered into Nirvana. All these episodes are stated to have been related by Gautama Buddha himself at some period of his life; and they give one the impression that Gautama was a genial old fellow, with a lot of entertaining stories to tell. These *Jataka* stories have never yet been entirely translated into English; but Professor Cowell and four of his friends have formed themselves into a committee to undertake this work, and the first volume is before us, with 150 of these tales. The *Jataka*, as now known to us, is in the Pali language, and appears to have received its present form about 450 A.D. The stories themselves, however, are considerably older. Some of

them are mentioned in the oldest Buddhist scriptures; and scenes from them are found sculptured upon the oldest known Buddhist monuments; so that they were certainly in existence in 300 B.C., and were then considered as an essential part of Buddhist lore.

As previously hinted, the stories of the *Jataka* are frequently of a pronounced sceptical tendency. Thus narrative 144 tells how a young Brahmin, who had devoted himself to the service of the God of Fire, had an ox presented to him. He determined to sacrifice the ox to his god; so he went off to the village to get some essentials for the ceremony, tying up the animal meanwhile. While he was gone a hungry band came by who had been unsuccessful in a hunting, and they, seeing the ox there alone, promptly slaughtered it, and had a good meal off its carcase. When, therefore, the Brahmin came back, he found nothing but the offal, the tail, the hide, and the bones. "Well," he exclaimed, "if the Fire-God cannot protect his own, he certainly cannot protect me." So he threw the remains on the fire and went his way.

No. 49, like several others, is a popular tale tending to ridicule the Brahmins and their pretensions. Some Hindu townsfolk had arranged to marry one of their sons to a country girl. After the wedding day had been fixed, they asked the family priest to ascertain if the stars were propitious for that day. The priest, however, felt piqued that they had made the arrangement without first consulting him; and he accordingly announced that it was a very unlucky day. So the townsfolk stayed at home. The girl's relations, having made all the arrangements for the festivity, and called all their friends together, were naturally annoyed when they found that the bridegroom and his friends did not come; so they married the girl to someone else, and had the usual feasting. Next day the townsfolk came to claim the bride, and were told that, as they had not come at the time they promised, she had been married to someone else. "But it was not a lucky day," said the townsfolk; "the stars were unfavorable." "What do the stars matter?" said the Bodhisat; "the lucky thing was to get the girl."

The fool may watch for "lucky days,"  
Yet luck shall always miss;  
The luck itself is luck's own star;  
Mere stars are naught, I wis.

Another story (No. 126) tells of the Brahmin of Brahmadatta, king of Benares. This Brahmin professed to be able to tell whether swords were lucky or not by smelling them; but he made it a rule only to commend the work of those smiths who gave him presents, while he rejected the work of those who gave him nothing. A certain smith, who felt aggrieved at this, made a fine sword, ground it very sharp, and put it into a sheath with a quantity of pepper. In this state he took the weapon to the king, who at once gave it to the Brahmin to test. The ecclesiastic drew the sword, and sniffed at the blade, and the pepper made him sneeze so violently that he cut his own nose off, thus putting an end to his sword-testing.

The last story in the volume pokes fun at the magicians. A young Brahmin learned a spell, by repeating which he could raise the dead to life. He was very proud of this accomplishment, and one day, he and his companions having found a dead tiger in the forest, he proposed to revive the animal. His companions climbed up the nearest trees, and it was fortunate they did so; for the instant the spell was pronounced the tiger rose up alive, and killed and ate the Brahmin, whose magic powers thus came to a sudden end.

We can only wish success to Professor Cowell and his friends; and we trust that we may soon see the complete translations of the other four hundred tales of the *Jataka*. Religious books are dry reading at the best; and it is a relief to the student to be able to turn to such things as these ancient Buddhist stories, illustrating as they do the ideas and the folk-lore of the India of the past.

CHILPERIC.

There is no evidence that man was originally endowed with the ennobling belief in the existence of an omnipotent God. On the contrary, there is ample evidence, derived not from hasty travellers, but from men who have long resided with savages, that numerous races have existed, and still exist, who have no idea of one or more gods, and have no words in their language to express such an idea.—*Darwin's "Descent of Man,"* p. 65.

## DETERMINISM

If God exists, and did the world create,  
He made it in *amount* determinate;  
For ev'n a Being whom a God we call  
Must make in *some* amount, or not at all:  
Thus, Nature, for its quantum or amount,  
Can ne'er by God be called to give account.

God, also, to the things He did create,  
Perforce gave *qualities* determinate;  
Not ev'n a God could fashion, great or small,  
Unless He gave fixed properties to all;  
But quantity and quality are facts  
Whence spring desires and motives, will and acts;  
And nought from anything can grow or spring  
Unless 'tis in the *essence* of the thing:  
Thus, God is all in all—if God there be;  
And when we work, 'tis He that works, not we.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

In 1572 August 24 fell on a Sunday. Consecrated to the Lord and St. Bartholomew, the day was to have a triple sacredness by the extirpation of God's enemies in France. The bishops, Sorbin and Vigor, had preached it for years. The Jesuits had plotted and Cardinal Lorraine sanctioned it. The Huguenot chiefs were lured to Paris to celebrate the nuptials of their leader, Henry of Navarre, with Marguerite of Valois, the King's sister. Hopes arose that this union would end the religious wars which had spilled much of the best blood of France.

At the dawn of this eventful Sabbath the streets of Paris were filled with armed men. All wore a white cross. Many had images of the Virgin around their necks; for theirs was a work of religion. They first went to the house of Admiral Coligny, dragged him from bed, stabbed him, and threw him still alive into the streets. Then the pious work began in earnest, similar and worse scenes taking place at the marked houses of every Huguenot. Men and women alike were first tortured, and then murdered. Children were torn from their mothers and tossed on the points of spears. Were they not children of the Devil, liable to lead others to hell?

Blood inundated the streets, and flowed even within the royal palace, where the guards and friends of Henry of Navarre were massacred. The most Christian king, Charles IX., amused himself standing at his window shooting the flying Huguenots. For the two succeeding days the slaughter continued in Paris, and for above a week it was followed in the provinces by the imprisonment, massacre, and pillage of the Huguenots. The number murdered has been variously estimated from twenty to one hundred thousand. De Thou, who puts the number of slain at 30,000, is probably the safest authority.

A miracle is said to have attested the handiwork of God's people. On the day of the massacre, about noon, a white thorn in the churchyard of the *Innocents* that was almost dead flourished all of a sudden. This was published through the streets as a sign that heaven approved their actions, though the Protestants afterwards said it signified that a new troop of innocents had been sent to heaven.

The news of the massacre was received at Rome with unrestrained delight. A Consistory of the Cardinals was assembled, and the Legate's letter, containing a relation of the event, being read, they went straight, in a procession, to St. Mark's Church, where they offered up thanks to God for his great mercies. On the following Monday another procession was made by Pope Gregory XIII. and the Cardinals to the Minerva, where they had high mass, and his Holiness proclaimed a Jubilee to all Christendom, "That they should thank God for the slaughter of the enemies of the Church, lately executed in France." Over the entrance of the Church of St. Louis was placed an inscription: "In perpetual memory of this great blessing." The subject was ordered to be painted as frescoes in the hall in which the Pope gave audience to ambassadors. Medals were struck at the royal mint to celebrate the pious deed. On the one side is represented a head of the Pope; on the other, an angel with a cross in one hand and a sword in the other, pursuing and slaying a band of flying heretics. I have a copy, which may be seen at the office of the publisher. It is an effective reminder of what can be done in the name of religion.

J. M. WHEELER.

A melancholy thing recently happened at a church in Kent. The parson, after droning through about fifty verses of the second lesson, suddenly discovered that he was reading the wrong one, on which he started afresh with the right one.

## TYPES OF RELIGIONISTS.

## VII.—THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE MAN.

It would need the pen of Swift to adequately describe the combination of hypocrisy, ignorance, and arrogance exhibited by the Christian Evidence man. He is, without exception, the worst type of religionist it has been my misfortune to encounter, and that is saying a great deal. Rancor and inflated self-esteem have led him to a business which enables him to gratify his virulence and malignity with a sense of doing God a service. He thus

Compounds for sins he is inclined to  
By damning those he has no mind to.

The last thing the Christian Evidence man thinks of is the evidences of Christianity. There is no need to go into these. They are too clear and convincing to concern him. If he opens his mouth on Papias or Polycarp, he only puts his foot in it. So he prefers to sneer at Spencer and Darwin. It is the hearts of infidels that are at fault. They have good reasons for not wishing there to be any God or any future punishment for their crimes. The proper treatment of an infidel is not to walk side by side with him, like travellers on a common road, but to seize him by the throat as you would a foot-pad who had designs on your life or property. The C. E. man scorns to waste his polemic powers in the barren fields of argument and the realm of common-place fact. A larger audience may be drawn by reflections on the character of his opponents. Envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness become virtues when exhibited towards infidels in the sacred cause of Christianity. He says, with the Psalmist: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies."

Christianity must be true—its opponents are such bad characters. "Fling plenty of mud and some is sure to stick" is the motto of the Christian Evidence man. The staple of his discourse, the constant theme upon which he can always fall back, is the immorality of infidelity. He counts all infidels his enemies. Nothing is too bad to say of them. The C. E. man does not care what filth he handles in the holy cause of Christ, and the names of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, though the one is dead and the other a Theosophist, are still, from force of habit, ever on his lips with an indecent gibe. Abuse and effrontery are his stock-in-trade. He is always ready to challenge those he knows will not debate with him. "When I debated with Bradlaugh," he is fond of saying, alluding to the day when he made a fool of himself for ten minutes in an attempted reply to "Iconoclast," and was snuffed out by one sentence amid the laughter of all auditors. He will challenge, too, those he knows are not speakers. "There stands 'Uncle Benjamin' of the *Freethinker*," he once shouted, seeing me in the park; "I defy him to come up and contradict what I am saying." I might as justly have challenged the Christian Evidence man to write a reply to my articles. Seeing I did not budge, he called attention to my cowardice, and insinuated that, if not an active participant in the crimes of my "leaders," I was at least an accessory.

The C. E. man does not care a jot for facts. He can always make them up as he goes along. He does not know French, or he might quote *tant pis pour les faits*, whenever evidence is cited against him. To argue with him is a good deal like punching a feather pillow. He gives way before every attack, but always bulges out in a fresh place. Ridicule is probably the best treatment for the C. E. man; and its employment by my friend, Dr. G., in Regent's Park, has been so successful as to considerably modify some of the worst symptoms of the C. E. disorder in that locality.

There is one book he specially delights to advertise—*The Elements of Social Science*. This, he declares, is the Secularist's Bible, inspired by an unholy Ghost. He has wonderfully increased the circulation of this wicked Bible, by inducing curious persons to see what it is those infidels do believe in. He boasts of "blowing infidelity to the four winds of heaven," which, in one sense, is true. He lets the world know there is such a thing as dissent from Christianity. The idle, stupid, and bigoted he may attract and induce to believe his stories about infidels, but the thinking and self-respecting are only likely to be repelled by his abuse and vulgarity. So, after all, like bugs, rats, and other vermin, the Christian Evidence man may have some use.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

## "Outer Darkness."

(Matthew viii. 12.)

Is God omnipresent?—"Yes," says the Christian.

Are there *light and glory* wherever God is?—"Yes," says the Christian.

Can there be *darkness* where God is?—"Oh, no!" says the Christian.

Then if *God is everywhere*, where is the "outer darkness"?

H. N.

## ACID DROPS.

MR. GLADSTONE went to see Wilson Barrett's *Sign of the Cross* at Chester, and afterwards wrote a flattering letter to the author. According to the G. O. M., Mr. Barrett has rendered "a great service to the best and holiest of all causes—the cause of faith." We have sent the G. O. M. a copy of Mr. Foote's criticism of Wilson Barrett's play. It is just as well that he should see how far the *Sign of the Cross* has rendered a service to the cause of reason.

The marriage question is still a burning one in Malta. The Government Council there enacted an Ordinance that "marriages celebrated in Malta by all those who profess the Catholic religion, whether both the contracting parties be Catholic, or whether one of them be a Catholic and the other a non-Catholic, are not, and shall not be, valid if they are not celebrated according to the form established by the Council of Trent." The *Methodist Times* call this "an impertinent and blasphemous Ordinance." We don't see where the blasphemy comes in, but, as Malta is a British possession, we certainly think the Ordinance is an outrage on the first principles of religious liberty. Surely the Government will be obliged, sooner or later, to redress this flagrant wrong. Meanwhile we see what Catholicism means when it has the chance of asserting itself. It only affects toleration where it is weak. When the Catholic Church talks about religious freedom it is only playing the hypocrite for a temporary purpose.

J. Collinson, who hails from Sandown, Isle of Wight, and who claims to be able to control the weather by Odyllic Force, evidently does not mean to exert his extraordinary powers for nothing. Writing to the *Daily Chronicle*, he says that a certain gentleman who wanted frost should have asked for a fortnight of it, and have enclosed a cheque for £150. Not a bad sum to begin with! We are willing to exert all our Odyllic Force for half the money. Seriously, however, if J. Collinson could control the weather, and arranged it according to the taste or interest of those who paid him best, it would clearly be a justifiable act of self-preservation on the part of the community to hang him forthwith, without the usual three weeks' grace.

The *Sunday Companion* is at it again. This time it gives some curious memoirs of W. R. Bradlaugh and H. A. Long as "Fighters for the Faith." Long is described as "a terror to infidel lecturers." This is enough to throw an owl into convulsions of laughter. Long is also stated to have had "three public encounters with the late Charles Bradlaugh." Not to put too fine a point on it, this is a lie. Long never debated with Bradlaugh in his life.

W. R. Bradlaugh's achievements are evidently supplied by himself. He is described as an efficacious praying machine and a miraculous converter of infidels. Once he asked God to spoil Charles Bradlaugh's meetings at Brighton, and God did so. A terrible storm burst over Brighton, and Charles Bradlaugh had an audience of one, which so annoyed him that he refused to give the other lectures. Such is the stuff which is greedily swallowed by orthodox readers!

But this is nothing to W. R. Bradlaugh's next experiment in prayer. He was "once"—note the precision!—at Glasgow, conducting a soul-saving mission, and some well-known infidels came with the intention of upsetting the meeting. Bradlaugh the Little prayed for them, and, instead of making a disturbance, one after another of them renounced his infidelity on the road home. The next day the whole lot of them, who were employed at the very same sawmill, retired to a shed and held a prayer-meeting in the dinner hour, with the result that twenty-five of their shop-mates accepted Christ. There never was anything like it since the Day of Pentecost, and if the Holy Ghost should think of retiring from business, Bradlaugh the Little will be able to fill the vacancy.

Another troublesome Secularist, thinking himself insulted by some remarks of Bradlaugh the Little, threatened to knock him down. Now this is a species of controversy for which he has no stomach, so he fell upon his knees again; in fact, he appears to do this so often that it must show outward and visible signs on his trousers. This time his prayer was as efficacious as usual; indeed, he always seems to hit the bull's-eye; for the Secularist "cried out" on the spot, "God bless you! The infidels shall never see me in their midst again." And they never did.—Here endeth the third lie.

Two gentlemen are candidates for the Presidency of the United States of America. Mr. McKinley is a Methodist, and Mr. Bryan is said to be a Presbyterian. It is therefore known what they think of God Almighty. It would be

more interesting to know what God Almighty thinks of them.

The Queen's speech proroguing Parliament ended with the words, "I pray that the blessing of Providence may rest upon all your labors." This reminds us of a *bon mot* of Ingersoll's. Dealing with the efficacy of prayer, he remarked that people asked God for things that were absolutely impossible. "Why, the other day," said Ingersoll, "I heard the Chaplain ask God to give Congress wisdom."

This invocation of Providence at the end of the Queen's speech is part of the general humbug of the document. Of course, it is no more the Queen's speech than it is her washerwoman's. It is concocted by the Cabinet and read by the Lord Chancellor.

Charles Huylemrseek, who, perhaps, has read that Jesus asked questions in the temple and spoke in the synagogue, was moved of the spirit to rise in St. Paul's Cathedral to ask: "What do you care for the starving poor of the East-End?" He was run in and fined 20s. and costs for brawling.

Mr. Louis Beckz, a traveller in the South Seas, gives his testimony that "Christianity, especially in Tonga, has changed a fine warlike race into a set of oily, grovelling hypocrites." Yet Christians hope to make their salvation sure by subscribing to missions abroad, while thousands are starving at home.

The visit of Li Hung Chang has made several of the religious papers deplore the inaccessibility of the educated Chinese of the upper classes to Christian influences. Converts are only made of the poor and uncultured classes—"rice Christians." Those acquainted with the works of Confucius smile at the gospel. But much the same attitude is that of our own cultured classes—at least, of those who are frank enough to show their true opinions.

Li Hung Chang has a knack of asking inconvenient questions, as when he inquired of Mr. Gladstone if he liked Lord Salisbury. With Mr. S. Maxim he would talk on the relation of science to religion. Here he got on nicely, for Mr. Maxim is a Freethinker, who has expressed himself as strongly against the Christian missionary business as any Chinaman could wish. But, at the same time, he spoke on religion to the Honorable Lionel Rothschild, and asked Mrs. Maxim how old she was, and whether she believed in the efficacy of prayer. At Barrow he compared Huxley, Spencer, and Darwin to Lao-tsze and Confucius.

Booth's latest game is a Tea League. Every member signs a pledge that, wherever possible, she or he will use only Salvation Army tea, on which the profit is said to be considerable. Good business!

Booth's trading department, which has, confessedly, added £90,000 to the funds of the firm, is to be further developed, and all the paper and magazine work removed from Clerkenwell-road to Queen Victoria-street. Booth supplies everything, and is a formidable competitor to poor tradesmen, as well as an under-seller of poor wood-choppers.

A writer in the *Church Times* points out that, although English Freemasonry is theistic, that of the Continent is "the rallying point of all those forces which are hostile to Christianity." As Masons must help each other all over the world—or their pretence of fraternity is a fraud—the accession of every individual Mason in England, from the Prince of Wales downwards, is a gain to Masonry, and "the Christian who is admitted to an English lodge is indirectly aiding and abetting the anti-Christian forces of the Continent."

The angelic Gabriel Jogand-Pages, better known as St. Leo Taxil, has established, in opposition to the Freemasons in France, a Christian *Ligue du Labarum*, or order of the Cross of Constantine. Both sexes are represented. The males are soldiers of St. Michael or Legionaries of Constantine, and the females "sisters of Joan of Arc"—poor Jeanne d'Arc. They have signs and passwords, and the ritual is largely a Christian parody of that of masonry, which it is one of the objects of the League to extirpate.

Julius L. Meek, a Jewish baker, was summoned at the Marlborough-street Police Court for carrying on his trade on Sunday. He pleaded that he shut up shop on the Jewish Sabbath, and couldn't afford two Sundays a week. Mr. Newton, the magistrate, replied that the court knew nothing about the Jewish law; it was the Christian law that had to be obeyed in this country. Poor Mr. Meek was accordingly fined ten shillings and costs, and warned that if he did it again he would get the full penalty.

We are glad to hear Mr. Newton confessing that these

vexatious laws are "Christian." Bigotry and persecution could not sail under a better flag.

Thomas W. Wilson was a Salvationist, and for twelve years had "walked in the paths of rectitude." At least he says so. But one evening he was found by a policeman with his boots off, and burglar's tools in a bag, at the rear of 103 Peckham-rye. He is now doing two months' hard.

William Brodie, of the Salvation Army Mission in India, has been sentenced at Bombay to seven years' rigorous imprisonment for robbery and culpable homicide. What does Booth say of his agent of peace and goodwill?

The sailor Ellis, under sentence of death at Grimsby for the murder of his wife, wrote to his minister: "I was so pleased to hear that so many were praying for me. I am pleased to let you know that I am prepared for the glorious world above, and I have everything I need here; I pay every attention to what the parson says, and I read the Bible every day and night." Evidently a fit candidate for Abraham's bosom.

How is it that all the condemned criminals are booked for what Joseph Robert Ellis calls "the glorious world above"? It is because Christianity teaches the erroneous doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. It not only professes to be a religion for sinners, but it declares there is more joy in heaven over a repentant sinner than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon naturally rise to welcome the repentant sinners who are "jerked to Jesus."

The Rev. James Wright, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York Village, U.S.A., has been suspended for gross immorality.

The *Church Review* complains that people take their holidays and leave God at home. That is, they are lax about church attendance when taking rest and recreation.

Cardinal Vaughan's organ, the *Tablet*, is having a series of articles on "The Religious Condition of the People of England." Here is part of the writer's testimony, given in the last number (August 15): "Country people, till after the first quarter of the century, were entirely in the hands of squire and parson—often brothers in blood, and were kept in the most abject condition of dependence and ignorance, hardly so well off as the squire's favorite hunter."

A more amusing item is the following: "One has heard of people, especially in country places, who have been confirmed over and over again 'because it was strengthening and they had rheumatics.' In 1885 I met a woman of seventy who had just been confirmed for the ninth time because she felt 'failing like.'"

Here is what the writer says of the now dominant section of the English Church: "Ritualists have aped the names, titles, dress, and ceremonies of the Catholic Church; but they do not possess one shred of her reality or truth. They talk of Apostolical succession, and deny the only source from which they could have had it; they call themselves 'priests,' knowing they have not one function or power pertaining to the name; they speak of the Real presence, meaning only a spiritual presence of Christ."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* thus reports a recent sermon by a capuchin before women at Schwandorf, in Bavaria: "If a mother murders her child here, she can obtain forgiveness of her sins. If a child poisons father or mother, again that sin can be forgiven. But one who lives in a mixed marriage with a person of another creed obtains no absolution."

The Catholic Bishop at Liverpool, at the laying of the foundation-stone of some new school buildings on Saturday at Golborne, near Wigan, speaking of the late Education Bill, blamed its failure to the Anglican party, who, he said, were not at one among themselves. He anticipated that by Christmas both religious sections would become united in their claims, and so produce a Bill they could support in the next session.

The *Church Times* tells the Government that temporary aid to the Denominational schools will be of little use, because the difficulties surrounding the Voluntary schools are growing chronic, and threaten to wear out the patience and energies of managers and teachers alike. It says: "We should like to see a general rate made by each County Council for all the schools in its area." This lets us see what the Church party are driving at. No doubt they would like the distribution of the rate also.

The Rev. Piers L. Claughton, rector of Hutton, who is probably a relative of Bishop Claughton, is quite prepared

for union with Rome, and has drawn up the terms. He says: "We must be prepared to accept the infallibility of the Pope..... We must accept the doctrine of 'the Immaculate Conception,' and the Romanists must accept the validity of our orders." Evidently the Rev. Piers L. Claughton has a large gullet, but keeps his eye on the main chance.

The Rev. J. Bell Cox, who was prosecuted for his extreme Ritualism at Liverpool, is now conducting a "Retreat for Ladies" at Peterborough. This makes the *English Churchman* fear that "the Evangelical cause is at a low ebb in Peterborough city and diocese."

According to the *British Weekly*, a son of the celebrated Theistic preacher, Mr. C. Voysey, applied for recognition as a Unitarian minister, frankly declaring at the time that "he was not a Christian, and refused to profess Christianity." The Advisory Committee, notwithstanding this avowal, thought him "well qualified to do good work as a minister." The Rev. Robert Spears, editor of the *Christian Life*, better known as *Christian Strife*, set up his back in an indignant protest that this will justify the enemy in saying they are not Christians. The *Inquirer*, in turn, denounces Mr. Spears, and describes the word Christian as "a glorified nickname."

Dr. Finders Petrie writes in the *Century* on "Pharaoh of the Hard Heart." He says that all the context of his much-written-of discovery of a text, where Merenptah says, "The people of Ysiraal is spoiled, it hath no seed; Syria is widowed," shows that the event happened in Syria, about Galilee. "If so, how can Merenptah possibly be the Pharaoh of the Exodus? To this a counter question arises: How is it that no trace of this fighting in Palestine, or of any of the similar wars of Rameses II. or Rameses III., is to be found in the Book of Judges?" Perhaps a sufficient explanation is that the Israelites did not care to chronicle defeats. Professor Petrie seeks to clear up the difficulties by supposing there were Israelites in Egypt and in Syria also. All of which shows that the Jewish traditions are of dubious authenticity.

The daughter of Enoch was 380 years old when she married. Courage, ladies!—*Tit Bits*. What a relief it must have been to Enoch!—*Freethinker*.

Enoch was the gentleman who was translated to glory without dying. Perhaps this was a compensation for having an unmarried daughter so long on his hands.

The *English Churchman* says that at the Lambeth Conference of 1897 it is probable that the Bishops will discuss the advisability of constituting the Archbishopric of Canterbury the patriarchate for the whole Anglican Communion. The *E. C.* asks: "Are we to have a rival Pope to him who sits at Rome?"

A Select Committee of the House of Lords, selected, we should think, for their piety, reported that the Sunday law corresponds substantially with the wishes and sentiments of the English people—of whom they appear to judge by the advocates of the Lord's Day Observance Society. The magistrates at Manchester who decline to convict for Sunday trading, and the judges who, in the Leeds case, declared that the prosecution ought never to have been entered on, are more in touch with the English people than the House of Peers.

According to the ably-conducted *Blackpool Gazette and News*, the first Sunday of the Blackpool Promenade electric tramway was, from a financial point of view, a complete success. The men of God used to denounce the crowded traffic on Sunday, and now they denounce the tramway which relieves the traffic.

The Rev. J. S. Balmer is so upset with the interference with ministerial monopoly of the people's one day of leisure at Blackpool that he was tempted lately to resign and go out of the town, for he felt as if he was being driven to hell himself. In comparison with Blackpool, Paris was sweet and Sodom a Paradise. This, being interpreted, probably means, "My trade is going down." Perhaps he would like to be transferred to a good situation in Paris, if, indeed, his preference is not for Sodom.

We need not sneer at the Americans for the devil scare in New York, for all Christians keep a devil, though they put him to little use. The *Blackpool Gazette and News* reports that last week a rumor gained currency that a prophecy had been given from the Spiritualist platform that the Clitheroe train to Blackpool on Saturday morning would meet with a terrible accident, and that large numbers would be killed. In addition to this, the Isle of Man steamboat would be certain to founder, and all on board probably perish. It was the Clitheroe holidays, and the people who had tickets sold them at a great discount. The *Gazette* says

scarcely anything else was talked about on the Friday and Saturday in the streets, in the home, in barbers' shops, public-houses, and the railway station. Our spiritual instructors and Bible-bangers encouraged credulity, for it is upon that they thrive. Does not the good book say, "The just shall live by faith"?

The vicar of Kingswood, Surrey, claimed in the Redhill County Court £3 from a female parishioner for the interment of her son. Thirteen-and-six, the usual fee, was tendered, and fourteen shillings were paid into court. The judge ruled that the vicar had no authority or warrant whatever for charging such fees, and held that the amount paid into court was quite sufficient. Costs, including counsel's fees, were allowed to the defendant, and the man of God probably now wishes he had accepted what was first offered.

During a thunderstorm in Mount Vernon, New York, last week, nothing but a church was injured, and the only part of the church demolished was a cross on the steeple.

The Pope is a far shrewder man than his advisers. Speaking of the late Cardinal Monaco, he said there was but one question on which he disagreed with the deceased, who believed that the Italian occupation would be of short duration, while the Pope had little confidence in the speedy liberation of the province on account of the indifference the Italian people showed on the question. The Pope might have safely added that this indifference would be soon turned to active opposition if there was any prospect of the priests breaking up United Holy.

The Boers have legislated against shooting at the clouds, on the ground that attempts to bring down the rain is an attempted interference with the intentions of Providence; but, as Mr. Lang says in the *Daily News*, "If Omnipotence, for reasons best known to itself (as the earl said when his house was burned), does not want rain to fall, then firing at the clouds is mere waste of powder and shot."

The *Sun* (August 18) is responsible for the statement that no fewer than one million of men, women, and children die yearly in India from starvation. What shall be said of our heavenly father who leaves his children unprovided for in this way?

In Presbyterian Scotland a kirk sessions once denounced a lady who employed a new-fangled winnowing machine. Her ladyship was accused of creating a private wind for her sole use, contrary to the manifest design of Providence. Indeed, every advance in human civilisation has found someone who thought it an interference with the plans of the deity.

The Presbyterian Board of Home and Foreign Missions at New York purchased one of the most expensive pieces of property in the city at a cost of two hundred thousand dollars more than they possessed, for the bare ground. They say they trusted to Providence, and ask the wealthy Presbyterians to shell out to supplement the deficiencies of Providence.

The Rev. Mr. Hansen, the Moravian missionary, was preparing a dying Eskimo for the glories of the New Jerusalem. "Tell me," said the departing brother, "are there many walrus in heaven?" "None at all, as far as I know," Mr. Hansen replied, not without astonishment at the question. The weary eyelid opened to emit a look of intense reproach. "And you couldn't tell me that before. No heaven for me, then; an Eskimo cannot live without walrus."

No boy nor girl should leave school without possessing a grasp of the general character of science, and without having been disciplined more or less in the methods of all sciences; so that, when turned into the world to make their own way, they shall be prepared to face scientific problems, not by knowing at once the conditions of every problem, or by being able at once to solve it, but by being familiar with the general current of scientific thought, and by being able to apply the methods of science in the proper way, when they have acquainted themselves with the conditions of the special problem.—*Echo*.

The value of negative information was well stated by the famous French savant, who was once asked by a certain lady an apparently simple question in science. He replied: "Madame, I do not know." "Well, what is the use of all your scientific education if you cannot tell that?" said she. "Madame, to be able to say, 'I do not know,'" he replied. A good woman presented three reasons for objecting to a preacher. She said that in the first place he read his sermons; in the second he did not read them well; and in the third place they were not worth reading.



### 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 23, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. September 6, Manchester; 13, New Brompton; 27, Edinburgh. 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.

THE National Secular Society's new office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

OWING to Mr. Foote's absence from London, much correspondence stands over till next week.

E. S.—The debate on "The Bible and Polygamy," between Professor Orson Pratt and the Rev. Dr. J. P. Newman, was published at Utah. Our sub. cannot part with his copy until he has utilised it.

G. F. DUPLAY.—Your letter was written before you saw our second paragraph on the subject in last week's *Freethinker*. We have nothing to add, and nothing to retract. Of course you are entitled to your opinion, as we are to ours. It does not follow, however, that justice is all on your side. Anyhow, the subject is hardly worth pursuing.

CELT.—The *Freethinkers' Magazine* is not procurable in this country. You would have to order from the publisher in America. Glad to know you are so pleased with Mr. Foote's visits to Cardiff and Swansea, where there certainly appears to be a good field for Freethought work.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND.—*Per R. Forder*:—J. Fulton, 10s.; S. L. (Leicester), £1.

LECTURE FUND.—*Per R. Forder*:—T. H. S., 10s.; J. Warner, 4s.

LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston).—Your papers are always welcome. *Salut.*

C. WRIGHT.—We are not aware if the Anglo-Israel advocate is identical with the Christian Evidence man of the same name.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—*Rangoon Gazette*—*Isle of Man Times*—*Two Worlds*—*Progressive Thinker*—*New York Public Opinion*—*Freidenker*—*Nya Sanningar*—*Secular Thought*—*Dominion Review*—*Blackpool Gazette and News*—*Sun-De Dageraad*—*Truthseeker*—*Boston Investigator*—*Liberator*—*Sydney Bulletin*—*Freethought Ideal*—*Altruist*—*Crescent*—*Der Arme Teufel*—*Federalist*.

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

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

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.

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.

### SPECIAL.

READERS of the *Freethinker* are reminded that September is Shilling Month. Every one who has a real interest in Freethought should subscribe something. I do not want anyone to send me less than a shilling, but I shall be glad to receive as many more shillings as he or she can send me. My desire is to realise as large a sum as possible for the following purposes:—(1) my visit to America, with Mr. Charles Watts, to represent the National Secular Society at the special Chicago Congress of the American Free-thinkers; (2) my Lecture Scheme, which is the Forward Movement of our party; (3) the National Secular Society's general fund, which needs recruiting, especially now that we have taken a new office at 377 Strand. Cheques and postal orders should be crossed. All subscriptions will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

Branch secretaries, and all others concerned, are requested to note that the new office of the National Secular Society is at No. 377 Strand, where all letters should be addressed to Miss E. M. Vance.

G. W. FOOTE.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

CAMBERWELL Secular Hall was crowded again on the second night of the debate between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. A. J. Waldron on Christianity and Secularism. The audience was roused to enthusiasm, but not unruly, and the disputants conducted their cases with good temper and the absence of anything like personality. The proceedings terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to the Rev. Arthur Mursell, who occupied the chair. We do not know what the local Christians think of the debate, but the Camberwell Secularists are delighted. They think it will give a stimulus to the movement in South London.

The debate at Plymouth between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee is fixed for Monday and Tuesday, September 7 and 8. It will take place in the Co-operative Hall. The question to be debated is one that has seldom been discussed on a platform: "Is there a Future Life?" Mr. Page, vice-chairman of the School Board, will take the chair one evening, and Mr. Smith, of the Plymouth Branch, on the other. Very large audiences are expected, as both the debaters are so well known in the three towns.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured last Sunday evening in the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road. Miss Vance occupied the chair, and made a humorous speech. Mr. Watts lectures again this evening, Sunday, August 23, in the same hall, taking for his subject, "Heaven or Earth: Which?" Next Sunday the platform will be taken by Mr. Foote with an attractive subject.

There will be a demonstration next Sunday morning at Clerkenwell Green, at which Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, and other speakers, will be present. The proceedings will commence at 11.30, and it is hoped there will be a good attendance of Freethinkers to preserve order.

On Sunday, August 30, the Camberwell friends hold a *Conversazione* in their hall, New Church-road. There will be plenty of singing and dancing, and a large gathering is expected. The price of the tickets is 6d.

The committee of the Bradlaugh Club ask us to announce that, in order that those who avail themselves of the excursion which starts from London Bridge this Sunday morning at 9.30 shall have ample time at Hampton Court, they have arranged with the contractors to supply a shilling lunch and sixpenny tea on board. The steamer will call at Westminster and Hammersmith. Fare, 1s. 9d. Free children's tickets can still be obtained on application.

Mr. Victor Roger, one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, is a member of the Lambeth Vestry, and a highly valued one too, if we may judge from the following notice in the *South London Press*: "The only Progressist on Lambeth Vestry who enjoys the distinction of being chairman of a standing committee is Mr. Victor Roger. The selection by the Moderates of Mr. Roger as chairman of the Sanitary Committee commanded approval on all sides of the Vestry, for there are few vestrymen who have a closer acquaintance with the affairs of the parish, and a more sincere desire to be of service to the ratepayers. Moving in and out among the workers, Mr. Roger can safely claim, as he has often done in the debates at the Vestry, that he has a unique knowledge of the conditions under which the working classes live. Mr. Roger has long taken an active part in Liberal and Radical work in North Lambeth. He was the first hon. secretary of the association after the redistribution of seats. In the debates at the Vestry 'Victor' invariably brings to bear pungent criticism, from which he does not spare friend or foe. But, for all that, he has never been known to make an enemy by the straightness of his talk."

The Vaccination Commission has been a long time over its investigations. One of its members, the late Charles Bradlaugh, has been dead nearly six years. However, its report is issued at last, and substantially it is dead against compulsory vaccination. And that is the only point with which the Government is concerned. Parents don't want the State to tell them what sort of medicine to take, or what sort of doctors to employ. It is the element of compulsion, and that alone, which makes vaccination a political question. Of course it is very probable that vaccination will die out altogether if it is virtually made optional; but that is a matter which must be left to take care of itself. If medical men continue to regard vaccination as a good thing, they must persuade the public to undergo it, and not force it upon them by means of the policeman and the gaoler. We don't want a priesthood of medicine any more than a priesthood of theology.

Mr. E. H. Seppings keeps the Freethought ball rolling out

in Burmah by the circulation of literature and articles which frequently appear in the *Rangoon Gazette*.

Mr. Daniel Baker, 42 Tindal-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, kindly offers to supply Branches of the N.S.S. having a library attached with a small selection of suitable books, on the secretary signifying his willingness to pay carriage of same.

Ex-Rev. C. C. Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, says: "I know my own heart and brain, I would not, for all the millions of all the Vanderbilts, again laden my heart and brain with all the beliefs about heaven, and hell, and gods, and devils, and angels, and ghosts that I used to have, or try to have, when I was a preacher."

The *Dominion Review* for August (67 Adelaide-street, Toronto) opens with Professor Goldwin Smith's dubious article on "Is there a Future Life?" to which the editor of the *Mail and Empire* attempts a reply. This is appropriately followed by some excellent verses on "Everlasting Life," by Walter A. Ratcliffe. W. F. Munro writes on "So-called Christian Science," and J. Spencer Ellis discusses Sir R. Ball's views on "Is Space Finite or Infinite?" and Tolstoi's indictment of Patriotism is reprinted. Among "Current Opinions" there is the inevitable discussion of "Gold, Silver, or Paper," now agitating the politicians of the United States.

Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the English National Secular Society, and Charles Watts, erstwhile of this country and Canada, now a British citizen, will arrive in New York the latter part of October on their way to attend the Congress of the Secular Union and Freethought Federation of America, which occurs in Chicago about the middle of November. It is the intention of the Liberals of this city to give them a reception at Chickering or some other big hall, and show how glad we are to see them. Of course we shall make them speak to us from the platform, for a reception without some speeches would be rather un-American. Every Freethinker within railroad distance of this city should keep an open date for about October 25, and come in and see the folks and shake hands with our English cousins. We are told that Mr. Foote is a jolly good fellow, and we all know Watts! If they survive the reception here, Messrs. Foote and Watts will go to Toronto and Grand Rapids, where they lecture, and then to Chicago. After the Congress they will fill a number of lecture engagements which Mr. Putnam has made for them, returning to England early in December.—*Truthseeker*

### METHUSELAH.

"And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died."—GENESIS v. 27.

METHUSELAH, it is safe to say, died of a broken heart, because he foresaw old age coming upon him. To moderns, the trouble is how he came to live so long. Human nature must have been totally different then. Wicked Rationalists have suggested that the Bible figures have got altered, or that for years we must understand moons, that being the ancient way of counting. It has, too, been suggested that not persons, but dynasties, are meant. But the ages of the Biblical patriarchs are, after all, infinitesimal compared with some of the Hindu heroes, who, after existing for a few hundred thousand years, gave up the ghost, like poor old Methuselah.

More orthodox writers have given excellent reasons for the patriarchs' longevity. They lived in a fine climate on vegetable diet, and are supposed never to have touched women till they were over a hundred years old, although Enoch had a son at sixty-five. Archbishop Whately, in all seriousness, gives us the best explanation. Adam ate of the tree of life. He did not live for ever, but some of its effects were observed in the long lives of some of his descendants. The effects of the fruit were, however, gradually exhausted, and man, by the time of David, got down to the normal standard of seventy years. This would be all very well if the diminution had been gradual, but Methuselah was not only older than his father, Enoch (who is supposed to have been solar in character, since he lived 365 years), and his grandfather, but even than Adam himself. After all, the safest thing to say is, it was a miracle—if it happened at all.

LUCIANUS

If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet afterwards with a detail of the miseries which attend it.—*David Hume*.

Religion ignores its immense debt to science; and science is scarcely at all conscious how much religion owes it.—*Herbert Spencer*.

### INGERSOLL AND THE SPIRITUALISTS.

A *Sunday Journal* reporter called upon Colonel Ingersoll recently and asked him to just what extent he had intended to endorse the Spiritualists and their belief. The eminent Agnostic said:—

"Well, I think that the Spiritualists have done good. They believe in enjoying themselves—in having a little pleasure in this world. They are social, cheerful, and good-natured. They are not the slaves of a book. Their hands and feet are not tied with passages of Scripture. They are not troubling themselves about getting forgiveness and settling their heavenly debts for a cent on the dollar. Their belief does not make them mean or miserable.

"They do not persecute their neighbors. They ask no one to have faith, or to believe without evidence. They ask all to investigate, and then to make up their minds from the evidence. Hundreds and thousands of well-educated, intelligent people are satisfied with the evidence, and firmly believe in the existence of spirits. For all I know, they may be right—but—"

"The Spiritualists have indirectly claimed," said the reporter, "that you were in many respects almost one of them. Have you given them reason to believe so?"

"I am not a Spiritualist, and have never pretended to be. The Spiritualists believe in Freethought, in freedom of speech; and they are willing to hear the other side—willing to hear me. The best thing about the Spiritualists is that they believe in intellectual hospitality."

"Is Spiritualism a religion or a truth?"

"I think that Spiritualism may properly be called a religion. It deals with two worlds—teaches the duty of man to his fellows—the relation which this life bears to the next. It claims to be founded on facts. It insists that the 'dead' converse with the living, and that information is received from those who once lived in this world. Of the truth of these claims I have no sufficient evidence."

"Are all mediums impostors?"

"I will not say that all mediums are impostors, because I do not know. I do not believe that these mediums get any information or help from 'spirits.' I know that for thousands of years people have believed in mediums—in Spiritualism. A spirit in the form of a man appeared to Samson's mother, and afterwards to his father. Spirits, or angels, called on Abraham. The witch of Endor raised the ghost of Samuel. An angel appeared with the three men in the furnace. The handwriting on the wall was done by a spirit. A spirit appeared to Joseph in a dream, to the wise men, and to Joseph again.

"So a spirit, an angel, or a god spoke to Saul, and the same happened to Mary Magdalene.

"The religious literature of the world is filled with things. Take Spiritualism from Christianity, and the whole edifice crumbles. All religions, so far as I know, are based on Spiritualism—on communications received from angels, or from spirits.

"I do not say that all of the mediums, ancient and modern, were, and are, impostors; but I do think that all the honest ones were, and are, mistaken. I do not believe that man has ever received any communication from angels, spirits, or gods. No whisper, as I believe, has ever come from any other world. The lips of the dead are always closed. From the grave there has come no voice. For thousands of years people have been questioning the dead. They have tried to catch the whisper of a vanished voice. Many say that they have succeeded. I do not know."

"What is the explanation of the startling knowledge displayed by some so-called 'mediums' of the history and personal affairs of people who consult them? Is there any such thing as mind-reading or thought-transference?"

"In a very general way, I suppose that one person may read the thought of another—not definitely, but by the expression of the face, by the attitude of the body, some idea may be obtained as to what a person thinks, what he intends. So thought may be transferred by look or by language, but not simply by will. Everything which is natural. Our ignorance is the soil in which mystery grows. I do not believe that thoughts are things which can be seen or touched. Each mind lives in a world of its own—a world that no other mind can enter. Minds, like ships at sea, give signs and signals to each other; but they do not exchange captains."

"Is there any such thing as telepathy? What is the

explanation of the stories of mental impression received at long distances?"

"There are curious coincidences. People sometimes happen to think of something that is taking place at a great distance. The stories about these happenings are not very well authenticated, and never can seem to have been of the least use to anybody."

"Can these phenomena be considered aside from any connection with or form of superstition?"

"I think that mistake, emotion, nervousness, hysteria, dreams, love of the wonderful, dishonesty, ignorance, grief, and the longing for immortality—the desire to meet the loved and the lost, the horror of endless death—account for these phenomena. People often mistake their dreams for realities—often think that their thoughts have 'happened.' They live in a mental mist, a mirage. The boundary between the actual and the imagined becomes faint, wavering, and obscure. They mistake clouds for mountains. The real and the unreal mix and mingle until the impossible becomes common and the natural absurd."

"Do you believe that any sane man ever had a vision?"

"Of course, the sane and the insane have visions, dreams. I do not believe that any man, sane or insane, was ever visited by an angel or a spirit, or ever received any information from the dead."

"Setting aside from consideration the so-called physical manifestation of the mediums, has Spiritualism offered any proof of the immortality of the soul?"

"Of course Spiritualism offers what it calls proof of immortality. That is its principal business. Thousands and thousands of good, honest, intelligent people think the proof sufficient. They receive what they believe to be messages from the departed, and now and then the spirits assume their old forms—including garments—and pass through walls and doors as light passes through glass. Do these things really happen? If the spirits of the dead do return, then the fact of another life is established. It all depends on the evidence. Our senses are easily deceived, and some people have more confidence in their reason than in their senses."

"Do you not believe that such a man as Robert Dale Owen was sincere? What was the real state of mind of the author of *Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World*?"

"Without the slightest doubt, Robert Dale Owen was sincere. He was one of the best of men. His father labored all his life for the good of others. Robert Owen, the father, had a debate in Cincinnati with the Rev. Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Campbellite Church. Campbell was no match for Owen, and yet the audience was almost unanimously against Owen."

"Robert Dale Owen was an intelligent, thoughtful, honest man. He was derided by several mediums, but remained a believer. He desired Spiritualism to be true. He hungered and thirsted for another life. He explained everything which was mysterious or curious by assuming the interference of spirits. He was a good man, but a poor investigator. He thought that people were all honest."

"What do you understand the Spiritualist means when he claims that the soul goes to the 'Summer Land,' and there continues to work and evolve to higher planes?"

"No one pretends to know where 'heaven' is. The celestial realm is the blessed somewhere in the unknown nowhere. So far as I know, the 'Summer land' has no metes and bounds, and no one pretends to know exactly or inexactly where it is. After all, the 'Summer land' is a hope—a wish. Spiritualists believe that a soul leaving this world passes into another, or into another state, and this world continues to grow in intelligence and virtue, if it so desires."

"Spiritualists claim to prove that there is another life. Christians believe this; but their witnesses have been dead for many centuries. They take the 'hearsay' of legend and of ancient gossip—but Spiritualists claim to have living witnesses; witnesses who can talk and make music, who can take to themselves bodies and shake hands with the people whom they knew before they passed to the 'other shore.'"

"Has Spiritualism, through its mediums, ever told the world anything useful, or added to the store of the world's knowledge, or relieved its burdens?"

"I do not know that any medium has added to the useful knowledge of the world, unless mediums have given evidence of another life. Mediums have told us nothing about astronomy, geology, or history, have made no dis-

coveries, no inventions, and have enriched no art. The same may be said of every religion.

"All of the orthodox churches believe in Spiritualism. Every now and then the virgin appears to some peasant, and in the old days the darkness was filled with evil spirits. Christ was a Spiritualist; and his principal work was the casting out of devils. All of his disciples, all of the Church fathers, all of the saints, were believers in Spiritualism of the lowest and most ignorant type. During the Middle Ages people changed themselves, with the aid of spirits, into animals. They became wolves, dogs, cats, and donkeys. In those days all the witches and the wizards were mediums. So animals were sometimes taken possession of by spirits, the same as were Balaam's donkey and Christ's swine. Nothing was too absurd for the Christians."

"Has not Spiritualism added to the world's store of hope? And in that way has not Spiritualism done good?"

"The mother holding in her arms her dead child, believing that the babe has simply passed to another life, does not weep as bitterly as though she thought that death is the eternal end. A belief in Spiritualism must be a consolation. You see that the Spiritualists do not believe in eternal pain, and consequently a belief in immortality does not fill their hearts with fear."

"Christianity makes eternal life an infinite horror, and casts the glare of hell on to almost every grave."

"The Spiritualists appear to be happy in their belief. I have never known a happy orthodox Christian."

"It is natural to shun death, natural to desire eternal life. With all my heart I hope for everlasting life and joy—a life without failures, without crimes, and without tears."

"If immortality could be established, the river of life would overflow with happiness. The faces of prisoners, of slaves, of the deserted, of the diseased and the starving, would be radiant with smiles, and the dull eyes of despair would glow with light."

"If it could be established."

"Let us hope."

—*Sunday Journal* (New York).

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## MY HOLIDAY TOUR.

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It is about four years ago now since, combining business with pleasure, I did a lecturing tour in the North, and wound up with a visit to Belfast. It was an exceedingly pleasant time to me, and, I hope, a profitable one to the movement. For the past two or three years I have spent my holidays with wife and children either on the South or East coast of England, and have had no opportunity of addressing an audience in the interest of Freethought. This year, having lost my dear wife, I thought I should like a change. After a consultation with Mr. Foote, I decided to make a tour through Lancashire and Yorkshire under his Scheme. So on Saturday, July 25, I made my way to Euston, accompanied by my two boys, and, struggling beneath a heavy burden of literature, a portmanteau, and a bag, proceeded thence to Bolton. Having arrived at this important industrial town in Lancashire, I was cordially received by Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, with whom I stayed several days before proceeding to North Wales, and who generously took care of my boys while I was away lecturing.

On Monday, July 27, I opened my campaign at Blackburn. My first lecture was delivered in the Market-place, and the subject chosen was, "How to Revise the Bible." There was a large audience, and they listened with great attention while I made a few suggestions as to what I considered should be unceremoniously eliminated from the pages of the so-called "Holy Book." Some of them doubtlessly thought that, if all the passages I referred to were ruthlessly cut out, the "Holy Scriptures" of the Jews and Christians would be considerably reduced in bulk. Still, they listened calmly to the end. Then a couple of "Salvation soldiers" held forth, who declared that God Almighty dwelt in their hearts. I replied, and the proceedings terminated.

On the next evening there was a still larger audience, numbering between seven and eight hundred, and they were, if possible, more attentive than ever. My discourse was concerning "The Foundation of the Christian Creed." I adopted the *reductio ad absurdum* method of argument, laughed at the alleged miracles of Jesus, and criticized the doctrines of the Fall and the Atonement.

At Blackburn I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Knowles, whose kind hospitality I greatly appreciated. Mr. Knowles is the fortunate possessor of a very extensive library of first-rate books, and I only regretted that time did not admit of my perusing a larger number of them.

On Wednesday evening I made my first appearance at

Rochdale, and lectured in the Town Hall-square on "Christianity at the Bar of History." The audience, which included a couple of parsons, was very attentive as well as appreciative; but one gentleman wished me to adopt a very irregular mode of discussion, which I respectfully and firmly declined to do, much to the satisfaction of the audience. I was entertained by Mr. and Mrs. James Howarth, to whom I am greatly indebted for their kindness during my brief stay. The members of this Branch expressed themselves well pleased with the proceedings, and were glad that they were able to have such a lecture at practically no cost to them.

On Thursday evening I lectured at Todmorden on "Bible Errors and Secular Truths," to a fine audience. Mr. Clegg presided, and he was supported by Mr. Richard Crowther, Mr. Howarth, and other active workers in the movement. The lecture was pronounced a great success.

At Heckmondwike I was met by Mr. Ward, Mr. Firth, and other friends. In the evening I lectured from a waggon at an open space in the centre of the town, with two large chapels on my right. There was an excellent audience. Two parsons came and listened for a time to my lecture, which was on "Morals and Evolution"; but they thought it prudent not to wait to take part in the discussion. I stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Long at Batley, and on Saturday I enjoyed a well-earned holiday.

On Sunday I delivered three lectures at Heckmondwike; in the morning on "Christianity: How it Began and Why it Lives"; afternoon on "Shelley on God and the Bible"—when a few members of the audience became noisy and troublesome; but this only served to increase the numbers, a lot of young ladies and gentlemen from the chapels opposite coming to see what was going on. The evening lecture was listened to by a very large audience; the subject was, "The Glory of Freethought." I experienced the greatest possible kindness from Mr. Firth, Mr. Ward, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Long, whose kind hospitality I enjoyed during my stay.

Tuesday and Wednesday found me again at work at Bradford. On Tuesday evening I lectured to a very orderly crowd, mostly Christians, on "A Freethinker's View of the Bible." Mr. John Grange presided, and made a capital introductory address. He is a fluent and eloquent speaker, and soon succeeded in attracting a crowd round our rostrum. On the second night there was a still larger crowd, composed again largely of Christians, and I spent a very interesting quarter of an hour after the lecture in answering such questions as, "Has man a conscience, and, if so, what is it?" "Do you believe in the freedom of man's will?" "If a man acts from force of motives, is he a responsible being?" and so on.

Mr. Grange and the Bradford friends were quite satisfied that my lectures will give a fresh impetus to Freethought in Bradford. Of course, I called to see my old friend, Mr. J. W. Gott, the indefatigable man of business, and Freethinker; but he had gone to London on pleasure bent, so I missed his cheering presence and support. I had, however, the pleasure of staying with Mr. and Mrs. Grange, from whom I experienced the greatest possible kindness. Mr. Grange enlivened me with interesting news and funny stories. He has recently been over to America and heard Ingersoll, and he kept me in perpetual merriment when relating stories of the customs of our American brethren.

On Thursday I returned to Bolton and again became the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, with whom I passed many a happy hour, and to whose thoughtful kindness I shall ever be indebted. I am now making preparations for my visit to North Wales as a wind up to a very enjoyable holiday tour

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### ATHANASIUS CONTRA MUNDUM.

O ATHANASIUS, thy terrific creed

Makes my heart tremble when I hear it read;

And my flesh quivers when the priest proclaims

God's doom on ev'ry unbeliever's head.

Yet do I honor thee for those bold words

Against the Arians so bravely hurled;

"Though no one else believe, I'll hold my faith—

I, Athanasius, against the world."

Not mine thy faith; but that is not my theme,

'Tis thine example I would preach to all.

Whatever each believes and counts for true

Of things in heaven or earth, of great or small;

If he believe it, let him stand and say,

Although in scorn a thousand lips are curled:

'Though no one else believe, I'll hold my faith,

Like Athanasius, against the world."

V. V.

Remember that the only true divinity is humanity.—  
William Pitt, Earl of Chatham.

### A "DEVIL" SCARE IN NEW YORK.

OUR useful contemporary, *Public Opinion* of New York, gives the following, the first extract being from the *New York Tribune*.—

From the way in which the children of the East Side schools have been frightened by the rumored appearance of the Devil, one would be almost tempted to believe that we had gone back 200 years or more, to the days of witchcraft and its awful fears and dire penalties. Two such panics had already broken out within a week among the children of the East Side who attend the public schools, when another one threatened for the moment to destroy the lives of the boys and girls who went to Grammar School No. 22. The building is at the north-east corner of Stanton and Sheriff streets, and is attended by about 2,000 children. The story that the "Evil One" was abroad among the schools, and endeavoring to steal away some of the little ones, has evidently been the talk of the East Side for some time; and when the cry was started, after about 25 of the youngsters had reached the building, that Satan himself was inside, there was a stampede for the streets and for home. The children in the street took up the cry, and in a few seconds the greatest excitement prevailed. The frightened children ran into each other, crowded and pushed one another, at the same time crying that the Devil had come. Men and women from the tenements near by ran from their apartments and added to the excitement. In a little while the street in front of the school was crowded with men, women, and children, and it looked as though some of the little ones would be trampled to death. A stranger in the crowd started the report that the school was on fire, and this intensified the excitement. While the police and the school janitor were trying to calm the frightened children, several of the teachers in the primary department arrived. They took in the situation at a glance, and at once induced the children to go into the school building. A few minutes later they had all the little ones in their classes singing their morning songs. Soon the children forgot all about the Devil and their fright. Several children fell in the rush from the playgrounds, and were trampled on; but, so far as could be learned, none of them were injured. After the panic the teachers stationed monitors from the grammar departments in the playgrounds to bring children through the yard as they came into their classrooms. Many of the children were afraid to go through the yard alone on account of the talk about the Devil.

On this Devil-scare the *New York Herald* says: "This Devil-seeing business must be brought to a conclusion. Whether there is a real Devil or not, with horns, hoofs, and other peculiarities, must be left to the theologians; if there is one, and he ever comes to New York, he certainly would not be stupid enough to spend his energy on the children in our grammar schools. There is much more profitable business for him to attend to. . . . Hysteria will create anything, however ridiculous, and the best way to cure hysteria is with a slender birch rod. In the present instance a little severity, properly applied, will put a sudden stop to all the nonsense about Devil-seeing."

The *Truthseeker* (Freethought), New York, says: "In nearly every school in the country, and probably in every school in this city, is habitually read a book, the *New Testament*, in which the Devil is mentioned something like 150 times. In the Gospel of Matthew, a part of the Bible used more than any other in the public schools, the Devil is as familiar a figure, almost, as Christ himself, to whom he appears in the wilderness, in the city, and on the mountain. The children get this sort of doctrine on five secular days, and on Sunday they are given an extra dose. When the Board of Education looks for the origin of the mischief, therefore, they may find it in both school and church. The remedy for Devil scares and other forms of religious hysteria is Freethought and secular schools."

Appleton's *Popular Science Monthly* (New York) says: "The true corrective to Devil-worship—and all fear of the Devil is a kind of worship—is the study of nature and of the powers inherent in nature. It should not be difficult to make children feel that there is really no scope left for the Devil in the world as we know it to-day. Of course, if their parents or Sunday-school teachers, on the other hand, tell them that the Devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, the more wholesome teaching which we are advocating may be so far antagonized. No effort should, however, be spared in the public schools to put all the thoughts of the children on a natural and rational basis, and thus as far as possible to secure for them immunity against hurtful and degrading superstitions. This incident should be taken to heart by teachers generally, as showing the importance of knowing what thoughts are really engaging the minds of their pupils."

If God made man in his own image, he has well returned the compliment.—Fontenelle.

## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. J. W. WILLIS BUND has in preparation a work on *The Celtic Church of Wales*. By investigating the institutions of the Celts, the author aims at showing that their Church was nothing but the tribal system with a slight infusion into it of Christianity, and that, in consequence, it had few points in common with the Latin Church, which subsequently superseded it.

\* \* \*

The article on "Secularism" in *Johnson's Universal Encyclopedia* (vol. vii.) is signed by John W. Chadwick, a popular American Unitarian preacher, who evidently intends to be fair, yet is very one-sided, and sometimes inaccurate. It is, for instance, quite a mistake to say Mr. G. J. Holyoake "was succeeded in 1858 by Charles Bradlaugh," and this is the stranger as it is evident that Mr. Chadwick's article has mainly depended on information obtained from Mr. Holyoake or his friends. Mr. Chadwick ends his brief account by saying: "If the temper of Holyoake could have dominated it always, it might, perhaps, have done better service. That it has done good service in many ways is not denied by those to whom its Agnostic and Atheistic elements are most deplorable." But praise from a Unitarian minister, accompanied by regrets at "the aggressively anti-theological attitude" of "the Bradlaugh régime," is not altogether to our liking.

\* \* \*

An old Freethinker takes exception to our having described *A Few Hundred Bible Contradictions, A Hunt After the Devil, and Other Odd Matters*, as "perhaps the most curious Freethought work ever issued." He considers *The Devil's Pulpit* of the Rev. Robert Taylor as in every way more curious, amusing, and entertaining. *The Yahoo* and *The Great Dragon Cast Out* might, perhaps, vie with either on the score of irreverent wit, if not of learning.

\* \* \*

Rubinstein, the Russian composer, in a voluminous work, in which he gives reminiscences of his own life, under the head of "Religion" said: "There are two kinds of priests—honest and dishonest. The honest ones deceive themselves; the dishonest deceive their fellow-men." Rubinstein must have been a critical observer to have compressed so much truth in so little space.

\* \* \*

Proudhon's "*Qu'est ce que la Propriété*" has been translated into German, and is published by B. Zack, 45 Oppelnerstrasse, Berlin.

\* \* \*

The treatment of the question, *Was Jesus a Socialist?* by James Leatham, is of an able and satisfactory character, and we do not wonder that it has reached a fourth edition. It is published by the Twentieth Century Press, 37 Clerkenwell Green, price 1d.

## PROFANE JOKES.

The minister of a church a few miles west of Edinburgh was greatly exercised by the drowsy habits of his people. Taking them to task on this score one Sabbath afternoon, he remarked: "I see a great many of you overcome with sleep. I do not wonder at that, for the weather is oppressive, your daily toil is hard, and many of you have come a long way; therefore," he added, "I am not surprised to see many of you asleep. But what surprises me is to see so many sleeping this afternoon who had such a comfortable sleep here in the forenoon."

The Shepherd—"My good man, do you know you are on the road to hell?" Bill Smith—"No blanky fear! I'm on the road to the Just-in-Time." The Shepherd—"My friend, will you take a tract? 'twill make your path easier." Bill Smith—"Track be d—d! No more blanky short cuts for me. I'm on the road, and I'm going to stick to it all the darned way!"

Little Johnny had often prayed for a bicycle, having been taught that God would listen to prayer. His parents, wishing to strengthen his faith, decided they would do what they could to secure an answer to his petition. Afraid lest he should suffer from accidents with a bicycle, they purchased a tricycle, and placed it outside his bedroom door. Before leaving his bedroom next morning, he again prayed that God would be good enough to hear his prayer and send him a bicycle. Judge of his profound astonishment when he found the tricycle outside his room. His parents, who were in hiding, were rejoiced to see him return to his room and fall on his knees, as they thought, to thank God for His goodness; but they were more astonished than pleased when he said: "Oh, God! do you not know the difference between a bicycle and a tricycle?"

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

In the process of evolution, so simple in itself, dwells the simple solution of all those complicated mysteries which man has hitherto believed could not be solved without the aid of supernatural powers. To trace this process in its details and in all its phases both in time and space, and in this way gradually to acquire a more exact knowledge of those indestructible threads which unite man with nature and the totality of extra-human existence, is the task of modern science. All appeals to supernatural or unnatural, or even merely forced, modes of explanation must in this case be most stringently rejected. Simple, natural suppositions, in accordance with the known laws of nature, or, at all events, not contradicting them, can alone claim acceptance; but these only until they are replaced by better ones, approximating still more closely to the truth and the real state of the case. When no explanation is possible with the existing means of science, the case must remain an open one, requiring elucidation; but it must not be covered up and concealed from the public eye by imaginary theories, after the well-known and convenient fashion of the speculative philosophers, or by the use of obscure terms which require an explanation of their own, or may even be incapable of interpretation. But as such explanations can relate only to the mode or to the simple proceeding of a later entity from an earlier one and to their casual connection, and, as, moreover, with all our knowledge, we move constantly in a circle in which the beginning and the end are nowhere or at every point, it becomes clear to us why we must be satisfied with these explanations of natural connection, and why the question as to a first or supreme cause of being, or as to the why of existence, is one which, in a philosophical sense, cannot be raised.—*Ludwig Buchner*.

Nature works very hard, and only hits the white once in a million throws. In mankind she is contented, if she yields one master in a century.—*R. W. Emerson*.

Public opinion is society's real religion.—*J. B. Crozier*.

Man has created God, not God man.—*Garibaldi*.

An honest God is the noblest work of man.—*R. G. Ingersoll*.

Reorganise society without either king or God.—*Auguste Comte*.

## FANATICISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

TALK about conscience! Conscience will, under given circumstances, adapt itself to anything, and approve of the worst of crimes. Miss H. M. Williams, in her work on *The Politics of France*, published 1796, relates this of the horrid butcheries of the Reign of Terror: "One of the executioners in those days of horror was a young man, a Protestant, the son of a poor and pious widow, who received her share of the monthly distribution of alms from the Church. Being herself feeble and infirm, she often sent her son at the appointed times for the donation, who was, therefore, personally known to Monsieur Maron. During the massacre of September this young man, at eight in the morning, entered, in a hurried manner, Monsieur Maron's apartment, his hair dishevelled, his look wild and disordered, his arms bare and covered with blood; and said to him in great perturbation, 'Oh, mon Cher pasteur, nous avons bien besoin de vos prieres! Grace a Dieu, nous avons bien travaille cette nuit.' ('Oh, My Dear Pastor, we have great need of your prayers! Thank God, we have worked hard this night.')" Miss Williams heard this from Pastor Maron's own mouth, who told her he had done his best to lead the assassin into a course of humanity; but he was too fully convinced that he was doing God service, and back he went to his work of wholesale murder. This account is quoted in the *Analytical Review*, July, 1796. Of course, the holy ones pretend that the Atheists were the parties who committed the horrors of the French Revolution, but it is well known now that the holy ones are, and ever have been, the worst liars and slanderers ever known. JOSEPH SYMES.

—*Melbourne Liberator*.

## Obituary.

WE regret to have to record the death, at Selby, Ontario, of Mr. Allen Pringle, the president of the Canadian Secular Union. Mr. Pringle was born April 1, 1841, so was in his fifty-sixth year. Mr. Pringle's father was a local preacher, and he was intended for the ministry. But he preferred being a teacher, and was eventually a farmer and bee keeper. For the last quarter of a century his pen has been busy as an advocate of Freethought and progressive ideas. He contributed to the *Truthseeker*, and largely to *Secular Thought*. Mr. Ellis, the editor of that paper, conducted the service.

## 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, "Heaven or Earth: Which?"  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): Excursion to Hampton Court, from London Bridge, at 9.30. No lecture.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Atheism: Its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."  
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "Ingersoll and Self-Idolatry."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.  
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, C. Cohen.  
CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, Demonstration—Messrs. Foote, Watts, &c.  
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, T. Thurlow will lecture.  
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): R. P. Edwards, "A Commonsense View of the Bible." Thursday, August 27, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Fagan, "Miracles"; 3.30, Stanley Jones, "Saviors of the World." Wednesday, August 26, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.  
ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11, E. Calvert, "Is there Design in Nature?"  
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."  
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): River Excursion to Hampton Court.  
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Church and Science."  
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Modern Gods."  
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 3, A lecture.  
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, A lecture; 3.15, A lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (60 Conduit-place, Ashley-roan): Monday, August 24, at 8, Meeting of Members.  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. Barlow, "Is the Policy of the I. L. P. Necessary and Justifiable?"  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Grainger, "The Soul Theory."  
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.50, A reading.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (bottom of Morley-road): W. Dyson—3.30, "The Age of Faith"; 6.30, "The Age of Reason."  
NORTHAMPTON (Cow Meadow): W. Heaford—11.15, "The Jargon of Theology"; 6.30, "Christ and his Teachings."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

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

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 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.

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