

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVI.—No. 37.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1896.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM.

No doubt Christianity tended to spread by its being regarded as a gospel for the poor. But the good news was rather of a heaven hereafter than of one here. Christ was to return in power and glory and judge the world, and a New Jerusalem was to appear. The millennium looked forward to was miraculous, but materialistic. Papias, the first witness to the Gospels, tells how John said Jesus said that for the new wine of the kingdom there would be vines each having 10,000 branches, in each branch 10,000 twigs, each twig with 10,000 shoots, each with 10,000 clusters, and on every cluster 10,000 grapes, each grape giving 25 measures, or 216 gallons, of wine. This promised the Communism of a Bacchanalian orgie.

The Essenes, who are nowhere mentioned in the New Testament, though it has been conjectured that Jesus was a member of their order, according to Josephus had everything in common, "so that there was, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren." Their communism, however, was based on religious asceticism. Modern Socialism is founded on humanitarian hedonism, and has its ideal, not in monastic retirement from the world, but in a full sharing of all its delights.

The first Christian congregation in Jerusalem, according to Acts ii. 44, had all things in common. Mosheim, whose ecclesiastical researches showed him that such a system was neither widespread nor lasting, argues* that the practice was not a full community of goods, but simply extensive mutual assistance, necessary in the infancy of a persecuted Church. Several passages of the Acts imply the right (v. 4) and the actual possession of private property (xii. 12). Ananias and Sapphira met their mysterious deaths not so much for keeping something to themselves as for attempting to deceive the Apostles or the Holy Ghost dwelling in them. Paul took up a collection on behalf of the Jerusalem saints, but he appeals to the voluntary "bounty" of the Corinthians. Neither Jesus nor Paul said a word against the system of slavery which existed everywhere around them. *A fortiori*, they did not upset "the rights of property."

The monastic orders, while having a system of internal Communism, held property—often slaves—and in many instances became vastly rich. Some of the early orders of mendicant monks attempted to convert the world to Communism. Thus the Circumcelliones denounced wealth as the cause of all the evil in the Church. They took the part of the peasants against the landlord, the slave against the master, and the debtors against the creditors. They held that Christianity prohibited the use of swords, but used massive clubs, to which they gave the significant name of Israelites. Regarded even in the Church as a danger to society, they were violently suppressed. From time to time during the Middle Ages sects arose adopting Communism as a protest against the avarice and corruption of the Church, or as a means of recruiting their numbers. Most of the heretics, such as the Cathari and Albigenses, had, if not absolute division of property, a full provision for the poor out of common funds. Monsieur E. Aroux, in his *Dante Heretique Revolutionnaire et Socialiste*, tries to show that the great Florentine poet was a secret sectary.

One of the most interesting of the heretical sects which

adopted a pantheistic Socialism was the *Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit*, a sect of Reformers before the Reformation, which spread, under various names, in Italy, France, and Germany, especially among the peasants and mechanics. In their secret meetings they denounced the Church as corrupt, and excited the people against ecclesiastical oppression. At the same time, they denied all distinctions, laws, and institutions of civil society. They taught that mankind must return to its beginning in paradise—that is to say, to perfect unity with God, with whom there is neither rich nor poor, male nor female, and who says to his disciples "all mine are thine and all thine are mine." All Government, civil order, private property, marriage, monogamy, and the family they regarded as consequences of sin, which must give way before a complete community of goods and of wives. Does not Paul place property in women and property in goods in the same category, and speak of them together as ready to be abolished by the advent of the kingdom of heaven? "The time," says he, "is short; it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that buy as those that possessed not; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 29-31). Accordingly the brothers and sisters met at night in dark caverns and retreats called paradises, laid off their clothes, to be in true Adamic state, and worshipped after the fashion of early savages.* Similar things are related of many heretical sects, so that Swift was not entirely without justification when he said of those led by the spirit that, however they might be opposed in other matters, "there is one fundamental point wherein they are sure to meet, as lines in a centre, and that is, the community of women," the logical sequence of other forms of Communism.

Some features of the Brethren of the Free Spirit were preserved by the Anabaptists, who arose—or, it may be said, revived—at the time of the Reformation, of which they took much of the odium and persecution. Luther showed himself on the side of the princes at the time of the Peasants' War;† but Thomas Münzer saw that the Reformation, to be of advantage to the masses, must place the rights of life before those of property. The Anabaptists were everywhere hunted down, imprisoned, tortured, and executed, with the utmost ferocity, by their fellow Christians, both Protestant and Catholic.

The chief manifestation of Anabaptist Christian Communism took place at Münster, the capital of Westphalia, in 1534, under Jan Bokelzoon, otherwise John of Leyden. The sect obtained possession of the town, and proclaimed the reign of Christ on earth. This meant common meals, common property, and, if not common wives, at least that large liberty which God granted to the patriarchs and Luther permitted to the Landgrave of Hesse. Christian Communism did not hinder the leading saints from taking their pick of the goods and women. John of Leyden—who, it is said, in the true spirit of the Gospel, left his own wife to follow Christ—dressed, and had a harem, like a sultan. He read to the faithful Isaiah's prophecy that, when Zion is established, seven women shall take one man. His own share was fourteen. Münster was besieged by its bishop, who declined to resign his authority,

* Probably stories of witches attending Sabbats arose from the meeting of secret sects denounced by the clergy as children of the devil.

† He wrote: "A rebel is outlawed of God and kaiser; therefore, who can, and will, first slaughter such a man does right well."

* In his treatise, *De Vera Natura Communione Bonorum in Ecclesia Hierosolymitana*.

tithes, and possessions into the hands of Christ. When taken, after heroic defence, the town was given over for a week to outrage and rapine. The leaders were ferociously tortured and executed, Jan being placed for six months in an iron cage, and then lacerated with red-hot pincers, which carried off his flesh in smoking pieces. So merciful were Christians to their erring brethren, who thought that Christianity meant Communism.

Another development of Christian Socialism was attempted by the Anabaptists in Switzerland, where—if we can believe Calvin, who suppressed them with all the vigor of an Inquisitor—they taught that there is only one real being, God, and that sin and the Devil exist only in imagination. The Christian is free from the bonds of the law, and need recognize no restraint. His motto is that of the Abbey of Theleme, "*Fay ce que voudras.*" Calvin identified them with the Libertines. The communion of saints consists in community of property and a spiritual wife system which anticipated Mormonism. Joris, an Anabaptist leader, went so far as to derive the orderly family relation from the Devil. Some echo of Anabaptist Communism was found in England in the Family of Love, and among the Levellers and Fifth Monarchy men of the Commonwealth. In later days the Shakers, reviving early Christian celibacy; the Perfectionist followers of John Humphrey Noyes, with a system of complex marriage, which they equally claimed to be founded on the New Testament; and the followers of Brother Prince, with their Agapemone; have given examples of Christian Communism, and illustrated that, when religion takes the place of reason, the result is fanaticism. J. M. WHEELER.

ZOLA'S "ROME" AND THE PAPAL BAN.

(Concluded from page 562.)

THE Abbe Froment at last obtains his coveted interview with the Pope. But it comes too late. He is already prepared for disillusionment. The Pope is seated in an arm-chair, and his appearance is thus described:—

"Leo's neck was particularly remarkable, slender beyond belief, suggesting the neck of some little, aged, white bird. And his face, of the pallor of alabaster, was characteristically transparent, to such a degree, indeed, that one could see the lamplight through his large, commanding nose, as if the blood had entirely withdrawn from that organ. A mouth of great length, with white, bloodless lips, streaked the lower part of the papal countenance, and the eyes alone had remained young and handsome. Superb eyes they were, brilliant like black diamonds, endowed with sufficient penetration and strength to lay souls open and force them to confess the truth aloud."

Pierre pleads with the Holy Father on the lines of his "New Rome," but he is told that he has written a wicked book, depreciating the value of dogma, which is of the very essence of the Church; further, that his calling for a new religion is impious, blasphemous, sacrilegious. If his book contained nothing beyond the words "a new religion," it should be destroyed as a fatal poison to the human soul. Pierre felt at last that the Pope was but an instrument in the hands of the Jesuits, and that the Catholic Church, governed from Rome, was really a gigantic business—the Pope, the cardinals, and the prelates being the heads of the world-wide firm, appointed by God to administer his mundane possessions—mankind and the earth. His reflections on their proceedings were as follows:—

"They begin by setting that very Deity on one side in the depths of the tabernacle, and impose whatever dogmas they please as so many essential truths. That the Deity exists is evident, since they govern in His name, which is sufficient for everything. And being by virtue of their charge the masters, if they consent to sign covenants, Concordats, it is only as matters of form; they do not observe them, and never yield to anything but force, always reserving the principle of their absolute sovereignty, which must some day finally triumph. Pending that day's arrival, they act as diplomats, slowly carrying on their work of conquest as the Deity's functionaries; and religion is but the public homage which they pay to the Deity, and which they organise with all the pomp and magnificence that is likely to influence the multitude. Their only object is to enrapture and conquer mankind, in order that the

latter may submit to the rule of the Deity—that is, the rule of themselves, since they are the Deity's visible representatives, expressly delegated to govern the world."

Pierre was tempted to tell the Pope that "it is all over with you, your Vatican and your St. Peter's; all is falling before the onslaught of the rising multitude and growing science; you no longer exist, there are only ruins and remnants left here." But he refrained, and simply bowed and said, "Holy Father, I make my submission and reprobate my book." The Pope was pleased, and dismissed him with a blessing. But the young priest was only ironical. He reprobated his book as sin against wisdom. He had advocated a reformed Papacy, and he found it impossible; sow as ready to fling his book on the ground like a dead leaf.

Afterwards, at the funeral of Dario and Benedetta, the two tragical lovers, he realized that the woman's dying regret, that she had not given herself to her lover, was a sign of the reappearance of the great god Pan "mating the sexes and scattering life around." The struggle between the natural and the supernatural still continued, and "at each and every hour new nations, overflowing with sap, hungering for life, and warring against a religion which was nothing more than an appetite for death, threatened to sweep away that old Holy Apostolic Roman and Catholic edifice whose walls were already tottering on all sides."

Pierre's dream was dispelled, his hope shattered. Rome could not head the new movement, the Church was doomed, and the old order of things was about to disappear in a sanguinary crisis. Well, he would not despair; he would write a new book *against* Rome, and advocate a new religion in spite of it—a religion which should realise here below the kingdom of God referred to in the Gospel. But, while in the fever of this fresh dream, he opened a little book of Théophile Morin's, given him by the noble old Garibaldian, Count Orlando Prada; and that little book changed his ideas as by a sudden mental revolution. It was Science, after all, and not Religion, that was to save the world.

"Not only was Catholicism swept away from his mind, but all his religious conceptions, every hypothesis of the divine, tottered and fell. Only that little school book, nothing but the universal desire for knowledge, that education which ever extends and penetrates the whole people, and behold the mysteries became absurdities, the dogmas crumbled, and nothing of ancient faith was left. A nation nourished upon Science, no longer believing in mysteries and dogmas, in a compensatory system of reward and punishment, is a nation whose faith is for ever dead: and without faith Catholicism cannot be. Therein is the blade of the knife, the knife which falls and severs. If one century, if two centuries be needed, Science will take them. She alone is eternal."

It is pure childishness, Pierre sees, to say that reason is not contrary to faith. The sacred writings are only harmonised with reason by sacrificing their real meaning. And in the great historic warfare between Science and Catholicism, it is Catholicism that has always been forced to retreat. Step by step, Science wrests truth from error, and to say that "she is bankrupt because she cannot explain the world in one word and at one effort is pure and simple nonsense." Idle is it, too, to assign Reason and Faith separate domains. Science will sweep on and overwhelm the authoritarians so obstinately clinging to ancient dreams.

"She cannot become bankrupt, for she does not promise the absolute; she is simply the progressive conquest of truth. Never has she pretended that she could give the whole of truth at one effort, that sort of edifice being precisely the work of metaphysics, of revelation, of faith. The *role* of Science, on the contrary, is only to destroy error as she gradually advances and increases enlightenment. And thus, far from becoming bankrupt, she remains the only possible truth for well-balanced and healthy minds. As for those whom she does not satisfy, who crave for immediate and universal knowledge, they have the resource of seeking refuge in no matter what religious hypothesis."

It was Pierre's mother within him that prompted him to deeds of charity in Paris, his mother within him that had prompted his dream of a renovated Christianity. But it was his father's voice that he now heard, the voice of lofty and bitter reason. All that service of the destitute and suffering in Paris was, after all, of questionable value; it was necessary to look to the foundations of the social edifice.

"Never before had Pierre so acutely realised the derisive futility of Charity. And all at once he became conscious that the long awaited word, the word which was at last springing from the great silent multitude, the crushed and gagged people, was *Justice!* Aye, Justice, not Charity! Charity had only served to perpetuate misery, Justice perhaps would cure it."

With this thought Pierre goes back to Paris. The book he came to defend, his own work, seemed now a triviality. Religion was dead within him, but Science lived and the spirit of Brotherhood. He cherished a new dream, the dream of universal fraternity; nations uniting in races, and races uniting in one immortal mankind—"mankind at last without frontiers, or possibility of wars; mankind living by just labor, amidst an universal commonwealth." "Ah! that one fatherland, the whole earth pacified and happy, in how many centuries would that come?—and what a dream!"

Thus ends Zola's *Rome*. In his next work, we believe, the new ideas of Pierre Froment—no longer a Roman Catholic, nor a Christian, nor even a Theist—are to be developed and illustrated. We look forward to it with great interest. It should be Zola's masterpiece in his new vein of production. Certainly it will make the heaviest demands on his intellect and imagination.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE SECULAR PARTY.

SECULARISM, as an organisation, has been in existence over forty years, and during that time its adherents have always been found among the foremost workers for the exercise of individual rights and mental freedom. All societies having for their object the destruction of deep-rooted evils and the overthrow of long-cherished prejudices must expect to have to encounter difficulties which are sometimes hard to overcome. The Secular party has been no exception to this rule. At first we had to fight for the right of existence; then we had to struggle to gain recognition and respect, and to justify ourselves in the estimation of the thoughtful and intelligent portion of the public by the performance of useful acts which tended to enhance personal dignity and independence of thought. It is to me exceedingly gratifying to know that we have been successful, not, perhaps, to the extent we deserved; but, remembering the powerful obstacles with which we have had to cope, the success has been great. To-day Secularism is more extensive than it ever was, and exerts a greater influence than at any previous period of its history.

It is a knowledge of these facts, and my love for the good Cause, to which I have been attached for nearly forty years, that prompts me to pen this article, with a view to urge upon all Secularists to abstain from doing anything that would mar the progress of principles which we all should have at heart. Bitter feeling, falsehood, and indiscreet conduct have been so prevalent among certain sections of theological professors that the disastrous consequence of such evils ought to be fully apparent to us, and should induce us never to encourage their practice in our movement. Unfortunately, the Secular party has to encounter one drawback, which I fail at present to see how to avoid. Our platform is so broad, and our principles are so catholic, that many persons enter our movement who are strangers to the philosophy of Secularism. It is the indiscretion, or something worse, of those persons from which the party has frequently to suffer. It is an error to suppose that every Freethinker is necessarily a Secularist. I have often indicated the marked difference between the two. No Secularist should knowingly slander anyone, neither should he seek to defame the character of a co-worker from a feeling of petty spite or disappointed ambition. We cannot all be the equals of a Bradlaugh or an Ingersoll; let us, therefore, be content to do the best we can, and crush out all jealousy save that of each other's honor. Right doing and intellectual ability will always command recognition in our ranks, and those who practise the one and possess the other should never sully their reputations by indulging in slander and mean imputations.

It must be understood that I am not in any way objecting to honest criticism of the conduct of those who are appointed to lead our movement, or that I would check the condemnation of error wherever it is found. It is against

groundless attacks upon personal character, and base innuendoes of dishonesty, prompted too often by uncontrolled selfishness, that I protest; and it will be to the credit of every Secularist to join me in my protestation. The honor of our Cause and the usefulness of its advocates demand that truth and justice should be maintained. Differences of opinion must necessarily exist in such a movement as ours, and each person has a perfect right to his or her own view upon any particular subject. But to differ need not provoke anger, or call forth scandal against those from whom you differ. Such conduct would be an indication of ethical weakness, and of an ambition to gratify personal desires at the sacrifice of fidelity to principle. Of course, it will be inferred that I allude to the recent slanders upon the character of the President of the National Secular Society. The inference would be quite right; I do. I read his "Personal" in the *Freethinker* of August 30 with pain, and feelings of sorrow for the condition of the minds of those who rendered the necessity for that "Personal" to be written. Not one of them has had the courage to attempt to verify the charges made against the President, although he gave a direct and emphatic denial to all his calumniators. I am no hero worshipper, but I am in favor of fair play to one and all; and these recent statements about the President, having received no verification, are a violation of all that Secularism teaches as being right and honorable. I fully agree with the remarks of the *Truth Seeker*, so ably conducted by Mr. Grange, of Bradford. In its last issue our contemporary justly observes: "There is surely a reasonable limit to criticism and condemnation of any person, be he who he may. Surely there is a time for everything, and the accusers and detractors of Mr. Foote ought to have been manly enough to make their serious charges openly at the last Conference." These are my sentiments also, and I invite my readers to well consider them. At the Conference every opportunity was given for criticism. Mr. Foote was re-elected unanimously, and received nothing but praise; why, then, should he be the victim of slander since that date? He is not even accused by his most inveterate enemies of having done wrong subsequent to that period. In the words of the *Truth Seeker*, the journal already referred to, I "prefer the light and open enemy to the darkness which shields and protects the cowardly assassin."

A circular has been sent to me announcing the formation of an organization called "The Freethought Federation." So far as its promoters work to spread a knowledge of Secular principles, it has my good wishes; but, if it continues to circulate the shameful and false charges against the National Secular Society which its circular now before me contains, it will deserve to be ignored by all who desire the welfare and advancement of the Secular party. Apart from the accusations against the N.S.S. of financial mismanagement, in which there is not a word of truth, its statement, that the National Secular Society "no longer makes even a pretence of accomplishing its mission," is a wicked and malicious libel—one that is as stupid as it is disgraceful. Let the reader reflect upon what is being done by the President of the Society, assisted by the whole of the Executive. Through his Lecturing Scheme many lectures have been given, and several branches in the provinces have had, free of cost to them, the services of London lecturers. Mr. Foote and myself have taken part in several outdoor demonstrations without the slightest pecuniary remuneration. The President, with the sanction of the last Conference, has devised a "scheme for defeating the Blasphemy Laws," the details of which are now being completed by a solicitor, so that the Secular party shall be no longer robbed of bequests intended for its use. An office has been taken at 377 Strand, where an efficient secretary will be found daily from 10 to 5, engaged in transacting the Society's business. Surely the doing of such work as this does not show that the N.S.S. "no longer makes even a pretence of accomplishing its mission."

This circular of the "Federation" also alleges that at the last Conference "the democratic principle of direct representation" was "openly assailed by an official motion upon the Agenda." This statement is as untrue as most of the other allegations emanating from the same source. The motion alluded to was not "official"; it was placed upon the Agenda paper by myself, with a view (as I stated at the Conference) of placing the government of the Society in the hands of the "whole body," and of securing direct representation for each Branch. One peculiar feature of

this "Freethought Federation" is, that its promoters lack either the ability or the desire to formulate "Principles and Objects" of their own, for they have adopted those of the N.S.S. To do them justice, this reflects credit upon their discernment, and our wish is that they will not further tarnish the advocacy of our principles by the circulation of mean imputations and false and malicious accusations.

I have recently been in communication with many of the provincial branches of the N.S.S. as to their position and prospects, and I have not received one complaint either as to the action of our President or as to the general management of the Society. I do not pretend that either is perfect, but I do urge that improvement is not to be obtained by indulging in the lowest passions of our nature. We are all fallible, and as time goes on reform after reform will be necessary; and our aim should be to seek to secure such advancement in a proper constitutional manner. Neither the President nor any other official has, to my knowledge, ever discouraged this suggested mode of procedure, and, until they do, I see no necessity for such an ebullition of feeling as has recently been manifested by a few discontented members of the Freethought body.

In conclusion, I desire to state that I have written thus "more in sorrow than in anger," and I have done so entirely upon my own responsibility, and not at the solicitation of anyone. I want to see our party united, and not split up into opposing sections, as we find professed Christians are. This is the more desirable because we all agree as to the truth and value of our principles and aims. The National Secular Society has a record of good and serviceable work. Its President is an able and a hard fighter on its behalf, and he is supported by vice-presidents who are equally earnest, and who are determined to heartily co-operate with him in the uphill battle of vindicating the power of Secular activity in the great struggle with priestly arrogance and orthodox pretensions. Finally, I appeal to all who deem practical work a necessity to render every possible support to those who are able and willing to labor for Secular progress in the spirit of peace, goodwill, and justice.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

IN a famous passage John Stuart Mill declared that he would call no being good who was not good in the sense in which he used the word when applied to a fellow creature; and surely anyone, after a moment's thought, must admit that it is merely playing with words to call a being good who acts in such a manner that, were a human creature to act so, we should unhesitatingly pronounce him bad.

Now, the Theist tells us God is a father. Let us see, then, just what we mean by the term, and whether there is sufficient reason to warrant us in calling that power, which we see manifested in the universe, by that name. I think I shall be correct in saying that generally we use the word, as applied to a person, in two senses; we either mean a male parent only, or we mean a person who exercises a paternal care over another. In the former case a person may be cruel and yet be a father, but in the second case we should not think of applying the word to anyone who was not affectionate, tender, considerate, and loving.

Now, it is quite evident God cannot be our father in the former meaning of the word; but are there sufficient reasons for believing that he is in the latter sense? In my opinion, there are not; the person who, through blind optimism, sees in nature only the beauty, the affection and love of parent and friend, the glorious sunset, the rich harvest and the lovely flowers, must be reminded that there is another side to the picture, that there are other facts of existence that make one cry:—

My soul is grey
With poring o'er the total sum of ill.

With such a total of distracted life,
To see it down in figures on a page—
Plain, silent, clear, . . .

That's terrible
For one who is not God, and cannot right
The wrong he looks upon.*

What are we to make of the hurricane and storm,

* Mrs. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*.

destroying the lives and homes of thousands at a stroke! What of the avalanche and earthquake, of crime, pestilence, and shipwrecks? What of the bad harvests that bring famine, want, starvation, and death? What of disease that causes such terrible and lingering pain to men and beasts? What of bitter warfare and strife? Are these evidences of a father's care and love? If the world, as the Theist sees it, leads him to the belief in a God of love, surely there are sufficient facts to induce a less sanguine mind to conclude that above it all there is an Almighty brute.

Would we call a man a father who, surrounded with plenty himself, and having the means to satisfy, stood by and saw his children burnt to death, buried alive, or suffering unspeakable pain and agony, without moving a finger to alleviate the pain, to satisfy the hunger, to save the lives? A thousand times, no. Then why call the God a father who does this every minute of time? The existence of evil is the rock upon which every Theistic theory is dashed to pieces. I have just been looking through again some of the ablest defences of Theism, to see how its champions deal with the problem. I pick up Professor Momerie's *Belief in God*; he ignores the question altogether. I turn to his *Origin of Evil*, and find he does not even attempt to explain, or to reconcile, the existence of physical evil with the goodness of God. I take up another book by a very able American Theist—*Belief in God*, by Minot Savage, and he, too, ignores the whole problem. I refer to Romanes's recent *Candid Examination of Religion*, which is supposed to be a reply to his former work, written while an Atheist, and I find that he does not attempt to grapple with that part of his *Candid Examination of Theism* that dealt with the question of evil; in fact, no satisfactory explanation has ever been given by theologians; they either avoid it altogether or dismiss it as a mystery.

But we are told that we must look to the Bible, and not to nature, for the true character of God; and what do we find? Why, that from first to last the God of the Bible is guilty of acts which no earthly father would ever think of committing. We cannot get away from the fact that such words as "justice," "love," "father," all express human ideas, and are without meaning when applied to the inscrutable power which is manifested in the universe. Let us, then, be intellectually honest and admit this. We are told by others that evil is accounted for by the intractableness of the material.* But who made the material? If God, then surely he is responsible for the evil resulting therefrom. If God did not create it, if it always existed, then you sacrifice God's infinity to save his goodness. Others tell us it is owing to man's free will. But this, as Leslie Stephen (*Agnostic's Apology*, p. 22) points out, "justifies God at the expense of making the universe a moral chaos." Besides which there is not sufficient evidence for believing that man does possess a free will in the theological sense of the term. The evidence goes to support Buckle's remarks, "That when we perform an action we perform it in consequence of some motive or motives; that those motives are the result of some antecedents; and that, therefore, if we were acquainted with the whole of the antecedents, and with all the laws of their movements, we could with unerring certainty predict the whole of their immediate results" (*Civilization*, vol. i., p. 18). Or, again, we are told that evil is for our discipline. If so, then pain always purifies. But does it? Certainly not; in many it produces a crabby, disagreeable nature, short-tempered, and crotchety. The fact is, the Theist cannot reconcile the existence of evil with the goodness of God. For, as Epicurus, and Mansel and Mill of more recent time, have said, evil exists—either God is not able to remove it, then he is not omnipotent; or, if he is able and will not, he is not all good.

W. WITT LEAVIS.

If anything is, or can be, certain, the writers of the Bible were mistaken about creation, astronomy, geology; about the causes of phenomena, the origin of evil, and the cause of death. Now, it must be admitted that if an infinite being is the author of the Bible, he knew all sciences, all facts, and could not have made a mistake. If, then, there are mistakes, misconceptions, false theories, ignorant myths and blunders in the Bible, it must have been written by finite beings—that is to say, by ignorant and mistaken men. Nothing can be clearer than this.—*R. G. Ingersoll*.

* See George St. Clair's *Darwinism and Design*.

NEW LIGHT ON ANCIENT WAYS.

WHEN the writer was, like David, a ruddy youth, the family library consisted chiefly of volumes of the *Sunday at Home*; and he studied much therein. He read that wicked infidels had denied that the kings of Israel and Judah ever lived, but that these said wicked infidels had been confounded for ever by the discovery of cuneiform inscriptions which mentioned these said kings by name. Since then he has read a good many works of "wicked infidels," but has not yet found that any one of them denied the existence of the kings of Israel and Judah; and when he has asked clergymen to specify any person who did such a thing they have been unable to tell him of any; indeed, some of these parsons did not attempt it, but endeavored to cover their ignorance by rude remarks.

On opening the present month's *Sunday at Home* I find an article on "New Light on Ancient Ways," by Henry A. Harper. Mr. Harper some time ago perpetrated a half-guinea volume on the Bible and modern discoveries, in which he demonstrated the amount he did not know of Oriental archaeology; for instance, he actually referred to Assyrian "coins" as one of the modern discoveries, whereas every numismatist knows that the Assyrians never had any coins. Mr. Harper commences his "new light" by some self-laudatory remarks about his own acumen in picking up pottery, weights, and other valuable trifles which had been trodden on by hundreds before him without notice. As I failed to see what relation these anecdotes had to the rest of the article, I submitted the case to a young lady relative, who, with true feminine intuition, immediately remarked: "Harper's trumpeter is dead."

Mr. Harper's article is addressed to children, presumably because they are not in a condition to test his statements. He says that the officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund sunk a shaft down in front of the temple platform at Jerusalem, and came upon some red letters upon the buried stones. "Learned men, skilled in languages, have decided that these red marks are directions from the master builder where the stones were to be placed, and that the language was Phœnician"; and that proved the Bible to be true when they said the temple was built by Hiram, King of Tyre. Furthermore, when this shaft was continued further down, the explorers struck upon the virgin soil, which was quite free from stone chippings; and this proved the Bible to be true when it said that no tools were used at the building of the temple. When the children who read these statements grow up, and have an opportunity of referring to the publications of the Palestine Exploration Fund, under the title of *The Survey of Western Palestine*, they will find that "learned men, skilled in languages," have not decided that the marks referred to are in the Phœnician language, or, in fact, that they are in any language at all, for they are only quarry marks. The late Emanuel Deutsch, indeed, expressed his opinion that some of these marks were probably Phœnician letters; but, as the Jews used the Phœnician letters, that proves nothing. Furthermore, the officers of the Fund have demonstrated that all the existing masonry in the lower part of the temple platform is of Roman date; so that we are dealing with Heron's temple, not Solomon's. Mr. Harper, of course, ignores these facts. Besides this, if he reads the memoirs of the survey, he will see that the explorers had to work their way through large quantities of stone chippings, so that his second statement is as erroneous as his first.

We are then told that on the tablets of Tell-el-Amarna mention is made of Jahir, King of Gezer; Jabin, King of Hazor; and Adonizedek, King of Jerusalem. Any person of average sanity who provides himself with the published transcriptions of these tablets, and a cuneiform syllabary, can convince himself in half an hour that it is impossible to read these names upon the tablets. No Assyriologist countenances such readings, and the imaginative individual whom Mr. Harper follows is not an Assyriologist.

Mr. Harper then talks of critics (names not mentioned, of course) who found fault with the Babylonish garment found at Jericho; and, having disposed of these mythical critics, he tells us that an Egyptian tablet has just been discovered by Mr. Flinders Petrie, which actually mentions the Israelites. He naturally does not mention that this tablet disproves all the theories of the Apologists, and helps the critical positions. He leaves the children to

find all that out when they grow up, as they will assuredly do.

I was still at a loss to understand what "ancient ways" Mr. Harper supposed he was throwing light on, until a friendly student of the scripture directed my attention to the ways of the contemporaries of David, as shown in Psalm cxvi. 11; but, nevertheless, it is to be lamented that those "ancient ways" should be followed in this so-called nineteenth century.

DEMETRIUS M'CASEY.

A REAL AND AN IMAGINARY DEATH-BED SCENE.

WHO is not familiar with the poems and hymns of that brilliant Christian scholar of the last century, William Cowper? His father a clergyman, and his associates through life highly exemplary, we find the poet a model of purity and devotion. Tender, affectionate, and timid to a fault, the reader is shocked to learn that he imagined himself doomed to endless woe. This so preyed on his mind he shunned society, and was prompted on several occasions to attempt suicide. The unpardonable sin, of which he was taught there is no forgiveness in this life or in the coming one, seemed to fill him with despair. Says a recent writer:—

"No picture of a death-bed scene ever equalled in horror that of William Cowper, though a pious, sincere, and devoted Christian. All his life he was subject to insane ravings; but they assumed a more aggravated form as he neared the end; the yawning gulf of hell he fancied was waiting to receive his departing spirit. His lamentations, and pathetic appeals to a frowning God, almost crazed his attendants, and compelled some of them to leave the room."

Who has not read the death-bed scene of Altamont, as portrayed by Dr. Young? It was published as a reading lesson in the school books of two generations ago, to illustrate the miserable death of an unbeliever. Though a work of fiction, it is cited as a fact, and many a sceptic has been pointed to this awful scene, described in Young's most vigorous style, as the fate which awaits the unregenerate soul about leaving this life. No doubt many a sinner has been frightened into the Church after reading the ravings of poor Altamont. We quote briefly for the delectation of the Christian reader:—

"My soul as my body lies in ruins; in scattered fragments of broken thoughts. Remorse for the past throws my thoughts on the future. Worse dread of the future strikes it back on the past. I turn and turn and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames! That is not an everlasting flame; that is not an unquenchable fire!..... My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife. And is there another hell? Oh, thou blasphemed, yet indulgent Lord God! Hell itself is a refuge, if it hide me from thy frown."

Young inquired on one occasion: "Who can write the absurd like me?" He knew his own worth in that direction, and it is well represented in his ridiculous death-bed scenes of an infidel. But the real death-bed scene of Cowper, born, educated, and living a practical Christian life, in his wild, insane ravings about an angry God, and the fiery hell that awaited his miserable soul, eclipsed the imaginary scene, and shows what a frightful death a believer can die. The real infidel may well exclaim: "Oh, God, save me and mine from the wretched death of the believer Cowper."

—*Progressive Thinker.*

The entire theory of the Church is antagonistic to any concentrated or consistent scheme for raising the earthly conditions of the suffering masses.—*W. R. Greg.*

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

Believers in a special act of creation sometimes object to Darwinism on the ground that it is only a theory; but they forget that their own doctrine of independent creation is also a theory—a theory, too, which depends entirely on the authority of a book; whereas evolution, so far as it goes, is founded on inferences from facts.—*Dr. A. S. Brown*

THE FIRST BIBLE BLUNDER.

"In the beginning,"—HOLY BIBLE (*first phrase*).
 THE Bible begins with a meaningless phrase—
 When used as its Author intends it—
 A phrase merely verbal, which simply conveys
 Just nothing; hence, *Faith* apprehends it.
 The phrase is absurd;
 But that is a word
 Which, somehow or other, commends it.
 'Tis, "In the beginning"; fond, fatuous phrase!
 When used in a cosmic connection;
 And thus it is used; for the next sentence says—
 Result of the same irreflection—
 That God did create,
 On that very date,
 The universe all in perfection.

We're told 'twas Jehovah, the Joss of the Jews,
 Who scribbled this olio scrap-book;
 Designed to instruct, it but serves to amuse—
 Like many a broadside and chap-book;
 But, mind you! look out!
 You're damned if you doubt
 This old intellectual pap-book!

A person who writes—whether joking or not—
 Should have, at the least, an idea;
 But Jahveh had none, for "beginning" 's a "spot"
 Ne'er "touched" by the mind's "*Homocœa*."
 Our reason believes
 That he who conceives
 Or thinks a "beginning" must be a
 Much greater than He
 Who sent us J. C.
 From ev'rywhere, *via* Judea.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

THE SURVIVAL OF "CHRISTIANITY."

THE following story, given by the New York *Sun* to illustrate the degeneration of democracy, may almost rank with Captain Adams's shark story, as illustrating the decay of Christianity with the survival of supernaturalism:—

"Here," said an old gentleman to his young friend, "is a family relic of which I am proud, and the sight of which should inspire in your heart feelings of the loftiest patriotism. It is a musket, borne by my father in the Revolutionary war, and before its deadly aim many a redcoat bit the dust in that struggle for liberty."

The young man handled the venerable relic tenderly and reverently, but he ventured at last to ask:—

"But where is the bayonet?"

"Oh," said the old man, "one of the boys was poking in a hollow tree for a coon, and broke it, and the pieces are lost."

"Where is the ramrod?"

"Why, that was splintered so badly that I had a new one made of iron at the blacksmith shop, but young Will used that to mend the bear-trap."

"These marks on the stock look quite fresh."

"So? Oh, yes; Jim broke the old stock last year cracking hickory nuts, and I had a new one made."

"The barrel seems well preserved."

"Well, the old barrel busted last hog-killing time, so I've got a new one."

"I was not aware," said the young man in a thoughtful mood, "that they used percussion locks in the Revolutionary war."

"I think that's so," hesitatingly replied the old gentleman; "but I believe the touch-hole is left."

And that is about all there is left of Christianity, if for "touch-hole" we read "touch-pocket"—with a vague sort of belief in a Something-or-other or a What-you-may-call-it.

—*Secular Thought.*

The Bible.

Historical investigations have revealed to us the origin and growth of the Bible; we know that by this name we designate a collection of writings as radically unlike in origin, character, and contents as if the Nibelungen Lied, Mirabeau's speeches, Heine's love poems, and a manual of geology had been printed and mixed up promiscuously, and then bound into one volume.—*Max Nordau.*

ACID DROPS.

SPAIN is carrying on a long war with the "rebels" in Cuba—that is, with the inhabitants who are tired of Spanish misrule, and want Home Rule for their island. More troops are constantly being drafted from Spain to do the bloody work more effectually. A fresh lot were drafted from San Sebastian on September 3. A special sermon was addressed to them by the Bishop of Vittoria, after an open-air celebration of the Mass on the promenade in presence of the Royal family. The Bishop told them that the Spanish flag surmounted by the Cross could not be conquered. The same thing was said three hundred years ago, but everyone knows how the Spanish Armada was scattered to the winds. The Papal benediction was given to the troops at San Sebastian, as it was given to the sailors and soldiers of the Spanish Armada, and we dare say it is just as valuable now as it was then.

One thing the Bishop of Vittoria said which was simply disgraceful. He expressed, on behalf of the King, his Majesty's regret at not being able to lead his gallant troops to victory. Considering that "his Majesty" is a little boy, only just out of the nursery, the Bishop's language is sufficiently nonsensical. From a moral point of view, it is still worse. Why should the Church interest a mere child in war and carnage? The fact is, the Church always plays into the hands of the powers that be, so long as they favor its own privileges and pretensions.

Our own Archbishop of Canterbury would doubtless give his archiepiscopal blessing to any naval or military expedition from this country. But he is curiously soft and gentle over the Armenian massacres—perhaps because the Tory Government has not yet given him the tip to act differently. His Grace has nothing to offer the Armenians but prayers. He has drawn up a special one for us "in this time of anxiety." Here it is *in extenso*: "O Merciful God, from whom all good counsels and all just works do proceed, we beseech Thee to provide justice and mercy for the suffering people who are called by Thy Holy Name, and to guide in judgment the counsels of the nations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

What wretched hypocrisy all this is, to be sure! All the Christian powers of Europe can do for the Christian subjects of the Sultan is to pray for them. They are too jealous of each other to step in and put an end to outrage and massacre, so they leave it all to God, who, as usual, does nothing. The Archbishop of Canterbury knows as well as we do that his "Merciful God" will not save one man's life or one woman's honor. All the thunders of "Omnipotence" are of less avail than the roar of a single English cannon.

According to the *Daily News* correspondent at Constantinople, the Sultan is neither ill nor a drunkard. He is quite free from the taint of intemperance or debauchery, but he is a suspicious and cruel fanatic. "One thing," this correspondent says, "he has made up his mind about, and that is the extermination of all Armenian males, and the drafting into Turkish and Kurdish harems of all Armenian women. I have this item of news from a Turk who is *au fait* with all the chit-chat at Yildiz Kiosk." Of course this will horrify Christian readers, but, after all, it is the good old Bible policy. Jehovah ordered the Jews to kill the male inhabitants of Palestine, and to keep the women for themselves—at least all the virgins. Which reminds us of Milton's "just hard by hate."

The High Church people are getting up a petition against the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. How do they reconcile their opposition with the Bible account of the patriarchs? Jacob married two sisters at the same time, yet God loved him, and his chosen people were the fruit of this triangular union. According to the good old book, it is all right if you marry two sisters at once. According to our bishops and the High Church party, it is incest if you marry them in succession.

Mr. Bevan Harris, a Spiritist correspondent of the Nottingham *Argus*, alleges that the supposed late Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has been preaching in that town. He uses Miss Cotterill, a mejum, as his mouthpiece. Spurgeon was announced at the Tabernacle as having departed to heaven, and the Baptists want to know why he should come back again and go to Nottingham instead of visiting his own congregation. The good people must learn that it all depends upon "conditions."

The great Irish Race Convention, in which the priests were very much in evidence, did not separate without demanding certain education "rights" for "Catholics." One of these "rights" is a Catholic university; another is "religious training" in primary and intermediate schools.

Yet the very resolution in which these demands were put forward extolled the "priceless principle of religious liberty." Everybody knows that the Catholic Church never allows religious liberty whenever she can refuse it. When a Catholic extols religious liberty you may be sure he is in a country where his Church has had misfortunes, and has to be on her best behavior.

Rev. P. C. Smith, rector of St. Anne's, Blackfriars, went for a holiday, leaving the rectory in charge of his aged housekeeper. During his absence some burglars paid the place a professional visit, and took away all the presents he had received from time to time from his congregation, together with "a quantity of valuable silver plate." Parson Smith ought to thank his visitors for relieving him of these encumbrances; for, if it is hard to enter the gate of heaven at all, how shall a man squeeze himself in with a load of silver plate on his back? The rector of St. Anne's forgot the teaching of his Master, and those burglars have given him an opportunity of studying it afresh. We hope it will prove to him "a means of grace" and a new "hope of salvation."

Bryan's expression, "A crown of thorns and a cross of gold," is said to have gained him the nomination for the Presidency of the United States. Anyway, the phrase has caught on, and the *Judge* has a big caricature of Uncle Sam with a crown of thorns, which is pronounced to be blasphemous. Swinburne's "Before a Crucifix" is also blasphemous, and therein he speaks of the people as the "grey-grown speechless Christ." Several have contended that the conception of the Christ was merely an ideal of "the new Jew," while the *elite* of the Jews have always considered that no one man, but the nation of Israel itself, was the true Messiah.

The famous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which Christians cite as a life-like prophecy of their Messiah, the Jews very properly refer to the nation, who, in the preceding chapters, are spoken of as "Jacob my servant whom I have chosen."

The *British Weekly*, writing on "Church Attendance," asks: "What is the result of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons? Our knowledge," it says, "is not sufficient to justify any attempt at an answer, but it is notorious that in certain cases, when the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons are attended by crowds, the regular services of the Church attract small and diminishing congregations."

Harper's Weekly says: "After ten years' trial of a Sunday law in New Orleans, it has been decided to abandon it as impracticable. During these ten years, however, the law has been enforced only three months, and that spasmodically, a couple of Sundays at a time. The city officials have testified unanimously against the law, saying that it took the entire police force to support it, and that in the criminal courts the murder and other more important cases have been crowded from the docket by the immense number of Sunday-law violations."

In England the exposures in *Truth* have led the Kilburn Sisters to issue a circular stating that they wish to work only under Episcopal control. But the *Evangelical Churchman* has a notice that the Kilburn Sisterhood is at present working in the diocese of Toronto, in direct defiance of the Bishop's expressed orders.

The Church of England is the richest in Christendom. Its bishops get an average of £6,000 per year. Yet there are constant appeals for the poor clergy. A writer in the *Times* says that, having advertised for servants in the *Church Times*, most of his answers were from clergymen's daughters. One said: "My father is the vicar of this parish." Another ran: "I am the rector's daughter." A third said: "I have had no education, as my father could not afford it, so I can only hope to get a place as servant."

In Italy, Spain, Portugal, and even in some parts of France and Ireland, the Catholic priests have only about a pound a week. Of course they have no wives and children to provide for. In England even the poor curates do not often descend below "the living wage" of £150. Millions of their fellow-countrymen, who are quite as well educated, would be happy to exchange pecuniary positions with them.

A writer in the *Times* mentions that, of the almost unused City churches in London, there are four where the livings are worth £2,000 a year, or over, to each of which a rectory is attached, which lets as offices. There are four more worth over £1,000 a year, of which three have house; and ten of £800 and over, of which five have house. Some of the churches, like St. Mary's, Woolnoth, and St. Catherine's, Coleman-street, are among the most hideous in the world.

The Rev. R. F. McLeod, of Great Berkhamstead, is one of the good old kind of parsons, who think the world ought to

be left to the sole control of the man of God, and possibly the squire. He recently treated his parishioners to the following slush: "The wretched Education Act of 1870 was a deep-laid scheme of the evil one for taking away the religious character of the schools. Education was now being pushed to a most absurd extent, and one result was the encouragement of ideas among the people of what they thought they ought to be." Jes so. Oh for the good old times of ignorance!

Under the new civil marriage law in Hungary, a Catholic at fourteen may marry a Catholic woman at twelve; but if Protestants marry, the man must be eighteen and the woman fifteen.

The *Sydney Bulletin* gives a comic description of a Chinese school conducted by the Church of England Mission Church in Little Bourke-street, Melbourne, in which seventeen white young ladies teach about forty yellow chows who go to enjoy the girls' society, and then adjourn to a fan-tan gambling saloon two doors higher up. The same paper also gives the following sign at a Melbourne Chinese Laundry: "Samuel Wun Lung—Laundry—Christian—member of the English church. Clothes sent for and taken home. We most cleanly and carefully wash our customers with possible cheap prices as under: Ladies—eight shillings per hundred; gentlemen 7s. per hundred."

A Sydney church has been presented with the figure of a saint, life-sized, and dressed in the robes of office. An arrangement of wires enables mouth and eyes to open and shut, and the hands to gesticulate. The holy fathers are somewhat afraid of the uncanny gift, which has come to them all the way from Germany, and, so far, they exhibit it to friends only.—*Bulletin*.

"Creeve Roe" says in our lively exchange, the *Bulletin*, of Sydney: "If there is anything more urgently wanted than another in Australia just now, it is a solid, Anti-Sabbatarian Association." Thanks to the sky-pilot monopolisers of the day of leisure, it is, particularly in Victoria, where dour Presbyterian Puritans abound, a day not of gladness, but of gloom. The only alternative left by men of God in many places is going to church or getting clandestinely drunk.

"Peter Lombard" says that, although St. James's, Piccadilly, is as fashionable a church as St. George's, Hanover-square, it has few marriages compared with the latter, the reason alleged being that you go down steps into St. James's and up steps to St. George's, and that the latter one is lucky, the former unlucky. This is an interesting remnant of the "sympathetic magic" superstition in the upper circles.

A deputation of holy men waited upon Vic. Mines Minister Foster the other day to request him to insert a clause in the Amended Mines Bill, prohibiting miners from undermining the churches. Pawky Brother Balfour was "awfu" shocked at the idea that peradventure some Sunday a minister of the gospel would drop through the church floor with his pulpit, and never be heard from in the flesh again. This complaint comes rather late. The churches are already hopelessly undermined.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

It is calculated that there are more Jews now in Jerusalem than there were in the days of Jesus Christ. Many of them are engaged in the manufacture and sale of Christian relics. The Mount of Olives would have long since been treeless if its wood alone were depended on to supply the articles of olive-wood, guaranteed to be genuine because supplied from Jerusalem.

It is said that the Council of Maçon, held in 585, discussed the question, "Have Women Souls?" It was finally decided that only Christian women had souls, and all through the Middle Ages heathen women were spoken of, and treated, as mere animals.

The *Sydney Bulletin* for July 25 has an illustration on bushrangers talking ancient history over a camp fire. One says: "Now, Moses appears to me the greatest general of all time." "How?" "Well, look how he led those Jews for forty years from Egypt to Canaan?" "Well, he may have been a great general, but he was a blanky bad bushman. Wouldn't do for this country, Jack. Ye gods, forty years!"

The distance from Egypt to Canaan is under two hundred miles, and the miracle is how Moses contrived to put in the time. The greatest Exodus known to modern times was that of the Kalmuck Tartars, who, in 1771, to the number of 600,000, migrated from Russia, and traversed a distance of 4,000 miles over the pathless steppes of Asia, amid a myriad difficulties. They arrived, much reduced in numbers, at the great wall of China, and were taken under protection of the Emperor in eight months, having set out on January 5,

and being received by the Chinese Emperor on September 8, 1771.

A friend who called at the office of the *Pioneer of Wisdom*, Grays Inn-road, informs us that, although the Jezreelite temple near Chatham is for sale, the sect of "The Latter Israel"—as the followers of Jezreel White and his revelation, entitled *The Flying Roll*, prefer to call themselves—is by no means extinct. On the contrary, they look forward to very speedily collecting together the 144,000 who will ascend bodily to meet Christ in the air. The lady who was seen at the office of the *Pioneer of Wisdom* said that the newspapers were always reporting their collapse, but the work was of God, and neither men nor devils could stop it.

"It seems to me," says the editor of *To-Day*, "that we are living in an artificial atmosphere. The men who conduct themselves outwardly as orthodox Christians, as believers in dogma, reveal a very different side of their souls in private talk. When one talks, one finds that the men who go to church and chapel regularly, who devoutly echo all the responses and subscribe to all the orthodox beliefs, think most heterodoxly. Ministers of all denominations, one finds, say one thing in the pulpit and another in the easy chair. It haunts me—this idea of a dead religion—a machine beneath which the fire has died out, still beating the air by reason only of the momentum instilled into it in the past. Do we really believe all we say, or are we grown so indifferent that, knowing nothing better to take its place, we repeat an idle formula from sheer custom?"

All this has been said over and over again in the *Free-thinker*. Still, we are delighted to see it in *To-Day*. Its presence there shows that the game of make-believe is getting played out.

It appears from the *Straits Times* that the wealthiest Chinese in Singapore have made wills disinheriting any of their descendants who may turn Christians. They have discovered the insidious method by which the missionaries attempt to make converts by establishing schools, for which they obtain money and pupils from the Chinese on the pretence that they are secular schools, while really their sole aim is to save the souls of the heathen Chinese. Another result of the exposure of missionary methods is that the Chinese are likely to establish English-teaching schools of their own.

Bishop Tugwell, of Lagos, has made a sensation by attacking from the pulpit the absent Governor, Sir Gilbert Carter, who excited the bishop's ire by presiding at the opening of the fine Moslem Mosque, but never attends the Bishop's ministrations. Probably Sir G. Carter knows well that Islam is a stronger power for good in Lagos than Christianity.

A solicitor named Mesnard claimed at the Sunderland Police-court to be allowed to swear on his own book instead of on the court Testament. Permission was granted, but the court was horrified when, upon examining the book, it was discovered to be a dictionary bound like a Testament. The witness was reprimanded, and had to swear again on the well-thumbed court volume.

Mary Ann Stanton, a licensed hawk, attempted to steal an umbrella from the Rev. Frederick Nelham, rector of Thurlow, Newmarket, while he was going through Hyde Park. Instead of offering her his cloak also, he gave her in charge, and the magistrate sent her to prison for six weeks with hard labor.

The Rev. Dr. Burrow, of St. Andrew's, Bordesley, summonsed William Tilson, who alleged himself to be churchwarden, for unlawfully detaining the communion plate and choir surplices belonging to the church. The magistrates declined to interfere, as the question to be decided was not for their court.

The name of the Rev. John George Gregory, clerk of holy orders, of Lansdown House, Hove, Sussex, has been mentioned as landlord of a brothel in Lambeth. He had received a complaint against the house, and served a notice to quit on Mrs. Lewis, who denied that the house was a disorderly one, and the notice was withdrawn.

The priest of the village of Santa Marina, in the Abruzzi, Italy, is such a favorite with the ladies of his parish that, on his receiving an order transferring him to another village, they absolutely refused to allow him to go. The Mayor, at the head of the carabinieri, intervened in order to force the women to release the priest, whom they had surrounded; but they held firmly to each other, and the soldiers had to charge them in order to get him away. One woman was killed on the spot by a gunshot, and several others were injured. Finally, the priest was literally dragged from

their midst and escorted by the carabinieri out of the village. Seventeen of the women were arrested.

The *Kansas City Star* observes: "A young woman in a Maine town, who recently played cards for three hours one evening, died the next day, and a local clergyman took the incident as a text for a sermon, in which he declared that her death was a judgment sent by God to indicate his condemnation of card-playing. But the next week a man dropped dead while carrying food to a starving family, and his sudden death was declared to be an evidence that God approved of his errand of mercy, and therefore took him home."

The *Boston Investigator* reports that a suit is to be instituted against the Rev. A. B. Simpson, D.D., of New York, to recover a valuable watch which a Mrs. Marley, an aged woman who resides at Ashburnham, Mass., was induced to part with at the recent meeting of the Christian Alliance at Old Orchard, Me., in response to the reverend doctor's fervent appeals for contributions to the cause of foreign missions, she being hypnotized by him to do so, as she alleges. Subscribers to such missions are often under worse delusions than any induced by hypnotism.

A dreadful case of persecution is reported in the *Methodist Times*. The vicar of the parish church, in a certain Northumberland watering-place, called upon a certain lady, and asked her to attend his church; and when she told him that she was a Methodist, he said that he regarded Methodists as next to Atheists. Such atrocious conduct on the part of a Church parson shows what the poor, oppressed Methodists have to suffer in England. They will never be happy until they reach the better land, far, far away; and, for our part, we should like to see them happy as soon as possible.

We live in a Christian country, but the *Daily News* of September 5 reports, from Heckington, near Sleaford, Lincolnshire, the case of a couple who sold their child to a pig dealer for a shilling.

In an article on "Brigandage in Sicily," in the September number of *Macmillan's Magazine*, mention is made of a church near Palermo dedicated to the souls of executed malefactors, whose graves are covered with flowers even in winter. The people, as they pass by, make the sign of the cross and kiss their hands. They pray also to a tablet within the church, which is believed to be guarded by the soul of a dead criminal. The brigands seem to be not less superstitious than their admirers. Above the heart of the daring and bloodthirsty ruffian Botondari was found tattooed the figure of a woman surrounded by a frame and the words, "Holy Mary, pray for me."

Mary Newman, described as "the terror of Brentford," when committed to gaol for seven days replied: "Thank God for that. I can do seven days easy." Mary is evidently of a devout frame of mind.

Richard Arthur Knight, a missionary, living at South Wimbledon, was charged with cruelly torturing a bay gelding which he employed to conduct a mission among the hop-pickers. He pleaded that he was ignorant of the horse's condition, and the owner, who was summonsed also, was ordered to pay the penalty of £5 and costs.

A genuine believer in creation has been found in the person of Thomas Beecham, a tailor, now awaiting trial in Northampton Gaol for stealing twenty live sheep. He explained to the magistrates that he was the victim of a conspiracy. The farmers on the London side of Northampton, he said, possess a knowledge of the way to create sheep and other animals from mere rubbish. Scores and scores of horses, cattle, sheep, and even pigs, he declared, are thus made, to the infinite profit of the creators. In the course of his travels he discovered the secret, and, on the day of his arrest on "the king's highway in Salcey Forest," between midnight and two in the morning, he made these twenty sheep. They were "sheep of the resurrection," and no mortal eyes had ever seen them before. The farmers, however, desirous of maintaining their profitable monopoly, stole the sheep from him, clapped him into prison, and trumped up the charge of theft against him.

We read that "the Rev. Park Bradford, of Lowell, Mass., who expressed silver views, has lost his pulpit." In America, as at home, the men of God are made to understand that they hold their places as spiritual police to preserve the power of the gold-bugs.

The Rev. Mr. Hird, the rector of Eastnor, denies that he has to resign on account of his Socialism. It is rather for the religious opinions expressed in his book, entitled *A Christian with Two Wives*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 13, Glasgow—11.30, "The Sermon on the Mount: Did Jesus Preach it, and what is it Worth?"; 2.30, "Christ's Descent into Hell"; 6.30, "Is there a Future Life?"

September 14, Dunoon; 16, Paisley; 17, Motherwell; 20, Liverpool; 27, Athenæum Hall.

October 4, Leicester; 11, Athenæum Hall.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 13, New Brompton; 20, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.; 27, Edinburgh; 28, Paisley; 29, Motherwell; 30, Dundee. October 1, Dundee; 4, Glasgow; 6 and 7, debate at New Brompton with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 11, Camberwell.—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.

T. DUNBAR.—Thanks for your letter.

G. CAIRNS writes that he was much interested in Francis Neale's article on Prayers in Hospitals. It was six months' sojourn in a hospital that made this correspondent an Atheist. Dissatisfied with what he heard from the chaplain and from Scripture readers, he resolved to look into the subject for himself, with the result that he had to reject religion altogether.

C. C. CATTELL, the Birmingham veteran, now residing near Bourne-mouth, writes that a certain publication has "reached even a recluse in the shade of pine trees. You have done," he continues, "all that is needful to new men. Your predecessor had worse things said of him. It is hard to believe that any genuine Secularist does not know that scandal, personalities, and spite ought not to appear in print. Let all who can't work together work separately. I enclose my shilling, endorsing fair play, and against scandal of all species."

J. GARVEN.—Thanks.

W. MANN.—The full address of the publisher is H. A. Copley, High-street, Canning Town, London, E. The paragraphs on Professor Hilprecht's discoveries were based on a long account in the *Daily News*. Professor Cope's book is worth consulting, but we doubt the value of the other books you mention if you have read Spencer, Lewes, and Weismann. The old edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* would probably have to be consulted at a public library. Don't trouble about our "time." We are always glad to be of any assistance to our readers, and especially to the more studious ones.

W. H. BURR (America).—We admire your good work on behalf of Faine's memory, but cannot sympathise with your attitude towards Shakespeare. The signatures prove nothing, except that Shakespeare's hand was shaky when he signed his will—a not unnatural phenomenon. As to the different spellings, why the great Sir Walter Raleigh, a scholar and a statesman, spelt his own name several different ways. With regard to Donnelly's "great cryptogram," it is now universally derided. Accept our thanks, however, for the copy of your article.

SHILLING MONTH.—T. Dunbar, 1s.; C. C. Cattell, 1s.; J. Garven, 1s.; F. Garven, 1s.; H. B. Lakeman, 5s.; Castor, 2s. 6d.; J. J. T., 1s.; S. J. B., 2s. 6d.; Friend, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Lawrence, 1s.; H. J. Strong, 3s.; J. Scott, 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, 2s. 6d.; Ernest, 2s.; J. W. G., 2s.; F. J., 5s.; Ridley, 1s.; J. Hooper, 2s. 6d.; G. F. McCluskey, 2s. 6d.; F. Pascoe, 2s.; H. J. Barter, 2s. 6d.; J. Hockin, 1s.; W. Mann, 1s.; H. Good, 2s.; G. Kersley, 1s. *Per Miss Vance*:—A. Sirett, 2s.; A. F., 5s.; W. Ayre, 1s.; F. W. Donaldson, 2s. 6d.; C. Heaton, 2s. 6d.; A. J. Lorkin, 2s.; A. Silk, 1s.; H. P., Birmingham, 1s.; Fred Morgan, 2s.; John Dennis, 5s.; Ips, 2s.; J. Payne, 1s.; P. Cole, 1s.; H. A. Lupton, 5s.; E. L., 1s.; J. Hayes, 3s.; G. Holloway, 1s.; C. H. Gask, 2s. 6d.; H. Poulson, 5s.; Dave's Mite, 5s.

THE Blackburn Branch have unanimously passed a vote of confidence in Mr. G. W. Foote as President of the National Secular Society, and contributed the following sum to the Honorary Fund:—J. Titherington, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Ainsworth, 2s. 6d.; N. Ashworth, 2s.; R. Ashworth, 2s.; J. E. Harley, 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Knowles, 2s. 6d.; J. F. Haworth, 2s.; H. W. Jones, 2s.

LECTURE FUND.—C. Lewis, 5s.

SPECIAL FOR MESSRS. FOOTE AND WATTS'S AMERICAN VISIT.—R. Green, 1s. *Per C. Watts*:—R. (Manchester), 7s.

S. J. B., subscribing to Shilling Month, writes:—"I am glad you and Mr. Watts are going to America, and hope that you will have a good time. There is no doubt that the Yankee Freethinkers will at any rate. I expect you will stir things up a bit, even in the land of Ingersoll the Great. I hope you will bring Pagan Bob back with you; but I am sure it will not be your fault if you don't."

FRIEND.—You will see from the letter which we print in another column that Colonel Ingersoll extends a cordial hand to Messrs. Foote and Watts, who are soon to visit America. The letter is characteristic. It only remains for the British Freethinkers to subscribe the necessary expenses of their two delegates.

A. M.—The account of Professor Hilprecht's Babylonian discoveries was in the *Daily News* of August 20.

J. HOCKIN.—We believe there is a fair prospect of our being able to "bring Ingersoll over."

W. BRADBURN.—Thanks for cutting. We noticed the fellow's ravings last week. It will, as you say, be a grand thing to secure a visit by Ingersoll to England.

A. N. STAIGER.—Thanks for yours. Pleased to hear from you again. We know that we have many friends. An enemy makes a great noise, and seems to be a host until you count him.

G. KERSLEY.—Subscribing to Shilling Month is the best way of showing sympathy. Thanks.

A. C. H.—Yes, it was Professor Tyndall who published that proposal to submit the efficacy of prayer to a practical test in some hospital. The proposal is said to have emanated from his friend, Sir Henry Thompson, the great physician, and a warm advocate of cremation.

SEVERAL correspondents remain unanswered in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence at Plymouth.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Post—Isle of Man Times—Chat—Der Eigene—People's Newspaper—Echo—Progressive Thinker—Vegetarian—Sydney Bulletin—Workers' Friend—Weekly Times and Echo—Reynolds's Newspaper—Morning Leader—Open Court—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought—Freethought Ideal—Plymouth Mercury—Straits Times—Nya Sanningar—Freeman's Journal.

BRING INGERSOLL OVER.

MR. CHARLES WATTS, who contracted a friendship with Colonel Ingersoll while in America, has received the following letter from the great Freethought orator:—

Walston,
Dobbs' Ferry-on-Hudson,
August 21, 1896.

MY DEAR MR. WATTS,—

Just received yours of the 14th inst.

Now, when you and Mr. Foote arrive in New York, go to a telephone station and telephone me. Ask for No. 207, Dobbs' Ferry. I want you and Mr. Foote to come to our house at Dobbs' Ferry. You certainly can pay me a visit before you go to Canada.

As I understand Putnam's arrangements, we will all be in Chicago on November 15. He writes me that he wants us (all three) to speak on Sunday, November 15. So you see we are to have a good time.

I would meet you in New York on arrival of the "Germanic," but it is hard to tell when the ship will arrive.—Yours always,

R. G. INGERSOLL.

It is obvious that Colonel Ingersoll is bent on showing a generous hospitality to the official representatives of British Secularism.

Mr. Watts, on the occasion of his last visit to America, begged Colonel Ingersoll to come over to England, but it was impossible then in the face of business engagements at home. Mr. Foote will now unite with Mr. Watts in urging him to pay this country a visit, and "there's witchcraft in it" if the double solicitation proves a failure. It will be a grand result of this delegation to America if Colonel Ingersoll can be induced to promise that he will come over to England in the near future.

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 Freethinkers; (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*.

All letters should be addressed to me at 28 Stone-cutter-street, London, E.C.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. FOOTE opens the winter session for the Glasgow Branch to-day (September 13) by delivering three lectures in the Brunswick-street Hall. On Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday he lectures at Dunoon, Paisley, and Motherwell, under his Lecture Scheme—that is, without any charge at all to the local Branches.

Mr. Foote lectured to a fine audience on Sunday evening at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, his subject being "Turks and Christians: An Object Lesson in Religious Brotherhood." The audience was a considerable improvement even on that of the previous Sunday, which itself was far the largest up to date. As the winter approaches the hall will have to be stretched somehow, at any rate for Mr. Foote's lectures. Mr. Bater, who took the chair on Sunday, invited questions or opposition, but no one responded. One gentleman suggested that if subscriptions were taken for Shilling Month, it would save the trouble of sending by post, and several persons took the opportunity thus afforded.

On Monday and Tuesday evening Mr. Foote debated with the Rev. W. T. Lee, at Plymouth, on "Is there a Future Life?" Some account of this debate will appear in our next issue.

The London *Star* gave a telling extract from Father Ignatius's letter in last week's *Freethinker*—of course with acknowledgment.

The *Star* has also displayed an interest in Mr. Foote's scheme for an Association to evade the pecuniary disabilities of Secularism under the Blasphemy Laws. A member of its staff interviewed Mr. Foote on the subject, and the result was a half column in last Saturday's *Star*, under the heading of "A Delicate Task."

Mr. Foote has received very little—in fact, next to nothing—in the way of criticism or suggestion in regard to the scheme for this Association, which was printed in all its chief details in the *Freethinker*. Few have much valuable advice to give beforehand; many have heaps of valueless advice to give after the event, when criticism is only a fine name for complaint. In this, as in so many other matters, Mr. Foote will probably have to act on his own responsibility.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured in Manchester. Friends from the surrounding districts assembled in good force at the evening meeting to wish Mr. Watts "good-bye" ere his departure for America. An unanimous wish was expressed that he and Mr. Foote would be able to induce Colonel Ingersoll to visit this country.

To-day, Sunday, September 13, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening at New Brompton, Kent. We hope our friends will gather in large numbers.

The secretary of the Camberwell Branch reports that Mr. Cohen delivered an excellent lecture on "What Think Ye of Christ?" last Sunday. Mr. Hartmann presided, and there was a capital attendance. Next Sunday will probably be the last time the Camberwell friends will have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Cohen this year. He has an attractive subject—"Christian Missions." On Thursday and Friday Mr. Cohen lectures at Derby.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake has been very busy of late at Co-operative gatherings in London, and he is now off to the Congress at Paris—rather hard work for so aged a veteran. Mr. Holyoake, in writing to Mr. Foote from Brighton, refers to a certain pseudo-Secular publication, and says: "Wanting to see what was in their minds, I agreed, after many solicitations, to subscribe for a year, which did not commit me to anything; but in the September number I find my name paraded. If they do this by every reader, they won't have many." Mr. Holyoake adds: "I intend subscribing to the American fund."

Our veteran friend, Mr. Edward Truelove, who celebrates his eighty-seventh birthday on the 29th of next month, was knocked down in Holborn last Saturday by a careless cyclist. Happily, beyond the concussion, he was little injured, and on Sunday was entertaining his friends apparently as well as usual.

We receive from Rockhampton, Queensland, *The People's Newspaper*, a Radical journal and labor advocate, with which Mr. Wallace Nelson is editorially connected. Mr. Nelson still continues his Sunday Freethought lectures.

Sir Robert Stout of New Zealand, has a Bill in hand

providing that no person shall have power to will away more than a third of his property from his wife and children. This will stand in the way of those church bequests by which dying reprobates try to effect a post-mortem fire-insurance at the expense of the family.

We hear that a great crowd of people assembled no Peckham Rye last Sunday afternoon, expecting to hear Mr. Foote speak at a Freethought Demonstration. There was evidently some mistake. Mr. Foote had made no definite arrangement, and he does not understand how the advertisement came to be made.

The Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C., has been engaged for Wednesday and Thursday, October 7 and 8, for a debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. Lee.

WITH REVIVALISTS.

A WOMAN who was interested in the philosophy of revivalism attended an afternoon meeting, and the professionalist asked her: "Are you a Christian?"

"No."

"Do you want to be one?"

"No."

"Do you believe in the Christian religion?"

"No."

He eyed her so closely that she was certain he would recollect her and trouble her no further. She went again and watched the proceedings, but the preacher did not molest her when he was around personally urging sinners. At length he took his place in front of the audience, and called on various persons to arise and speak. Finally, pretending not to recognize the Freethinker, he intimated that she was expected to "speak a piece," and she made a sign of refusal. Then he repeated the three questions that he had asked two days before, and she was so far from him that her answers were audible throughout the room (a side-room devoted to prayers and suppers). Apparently he had been planning to hold her up and flout her in public; and now he began and proceeded after this manner, though saying much more than is recorded:—

"You are on the borders of hell. I wonder why you are here, why you care to listen to anything that is said here. I should not think you would want to come to such a meeting. What led you to come? Curiosity! I hope curiosity will continue to bring you here till you are convinced of your errors. You have decided that this is a delusion, and you have superior mental ability, therefore you cannot be mistaken. Your conclusions are correct, whereas most people are deceived. You are right, and the rest of us are fools and cranks, and—"

Unable to endure more, the woman exclaimed: "Not that! But what more do you know about these things than I know?"

After the interchange of a few remarks and rejoinders and retorts, the pastor interposed; but he had to give the thumbkin another twist, and turn the culprit about for the further criticism of the congregation, while he foretold that she would be a coward when she came to die, again bringing in the word "coward" as if it were an epithet so applicable to her that he was proud of having thought of it.

When that Freethinker left the room all those sympathetic messengers, the nerves, were seething with the consciousness that those two men had united in adding abuse to insult, and that the assembly, as in duty bound, had indorsed their dictum, and placed her name in their catalogue of demons. And you, Agnostics, must help relieve the Church from the burden of taxation, that preachers may have a less expensive place in which they may "separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the sake of man's sake" (Luke vi. 22).

How to Help Us.

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

WOMAN AND THE BIBLE.

THERE was a time when it was not doubted by the average woman that the Bible was woman's best friend and the Christian religion her strongest advocate. It has been difficult for woman, naturally religious and through long ages of subjection not accustomed to think for herself, to free herself from the superstitious ideas about the Bible.

The leaders of all great reforms must first be freed from bondage to the old book. Slavery was fought with the sentiment, "that if the Bible taught slavery all the worse for the Bible," and now the advocate of woman's enfranchisement is forced into the same formula. Mrs. Stanton utters true words when she says: "The Bible, as the literature of a barbarous people on their way to semi-civilization, is all that could be expected; but as the perfect word of God for all time it cannot be received."

The Bible, like all ancient and savage tribes, regards woman as the cause of evil and made for man, and subject to him on account of the curse of God pronounced against her. She is regarded as a slave, to be bought and sold, having no voice in the matter. Moses and Jesus give men release from marriage bonds if the woman does wrong, but no word of rights for her against a brutal and unfaithful husband. The Bible sanctions polygamy, even the New Testament having no direction against it except that a "bishop shall be the husband of one wife." The custom of a brother taking a brother's widow to wife says nothing of what may be done if he is already the husband of one or more wives. The "thus saith the Lord" in the mouth of Nathan to David was in substance: "I gave thee my master's wives, and if that had not been enough I would have given thee such and such"; but the only fault was taking another's wife in the way he did. The orthodox have gotten what seems to them a safe position, "that the God of the Bible did not sanction polygamy, but tried to regulate it"; yet they cry aloud against regulating the sale of liquor, and claim that the State goes into partnership in the business. They fail to see that their theory puts their God into the same relation in this matter. They say "God wrote the Book." Will it sound well to say: "God did not originate polygamy, but found it established, and tried to regulate it"? There was no trouble to find texts for slavery when it pleased the Church to be on that side. The Mormons have no need to be afraid to offer to meet the Gentile on the subject of their pet idea, and in our legislative halls they dared anyone to bring a text against it; and I noticed the Gentile was silent. The Church has found it hard to get over, or explain away, Paul's sayings, so as to let woman have a voice in their meetings, or go as delegates to their conventions.

The fact is, that woman has now all the rights, and more, that the Bible sanctions. The simple question is not what would be the result if woman had her rights, or who would use the right, or who now claims it, or denies it; but it is one of mere justice. If any harm comes of such a course, it is because women have been led by their priests so long that there is danger that they may rule her to the detriment of freedom; but she can never learn but by exercising her simple right, and bearing the consequence with the rest of us. Some reforms, such as temperance and the suppression of what is politely called the "social evil," can never be fully brought in till women who suffer most by these crimes have a voice in making the laws; and if in their pious zeal they go too far with Sunday laws and God in the Constitution, we will have to bear it until she gets far enough along to know that Buddha was right when he said: "No upward step can be taken till men are freed from priests and books." The Bible cannot help her, nor the Church; she must fight her cause against it and those who rely upon its teachings—as many a reform has been fought.

Those engaged in reform work must not be alarmed at being called infidels and threatened with damnation. "The powers that be are ordained of God, and he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and shall receive damnation," was quoted against the rebels that won our independence. I can remember well when abolitionists were called infidels. Woman, seeking her rights that Christianity has denied, must bear up under a whole Pentateuch of opposing texts, and say with Whittier:—

Than garbled texts and parchment law
I hold a statute higher;
For God is true, tho' every man
And every book's a liar.

Sir Henry Maine, in his work on *Ancient Law*, says: "No society which preserves any tincture of Christian institutions is likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by middle Roman laws" The Bible regards woman as a soulless slave; motherhood a crime to be atoned for by sacrifice, doubly so if the child is a girl. Moses commanded a husband to kill, without pity, an unbelieving wife. To kill the married women and give the maidens to the soldiers was God's command to his chosen people. To desert and hate one's wife, parents, and kindred was necessary to become Christ's disciples in his day. Those that did this were promised a hundredfold more in this life, and life eternal hereafter. A hundredfold more wives and children would be easily read in this. Whatever it means, it offers a premium on forsaking wife and family for personal gain to the deserter. As far as we can see, the Gods and Spirits of the Bible were all masculine, and woman was regarded as a temporary necessity, to be kept under, and made to obey, and serve. There is nothing even in the "Woman's Bible" to help her to her rights as man's equal. The sight of an ignorant foreigner casting his vote, and an intelligent American woman excluded from the sacred right of having a voice in the laws that she must obey, is one to make a man ashamed of his sex, and opposed to all books, creeds, churches, and societies that are not outspoken on this subject. Religion has lost too much already, because "the heart of woman has not warmed her creeds," and because the refining influence of the wife and mother has been denied her priests. If texts can be found anywhere to help on this coming day, I shall be rejoiced, but I cannot find them in the Bible.

In Frank Carpenter's letter on the Abyssinians he says: "It is a land of free love. Marriage seldom lasts any time. Couples marry and separate at pleasure." He adds: "They are Christians; they believe in the Bible."

—*Federalist*.

R. B. MARSH.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THE oldest form of what is called the Lord's Prayer is found in the Jewish Kadish, as follows:—

"Our Father, which art in heaven, be gracious to us, O Lord our God; hallowed be thy name; and let the remembrance of thee be glorified in heaven above and upon earth here below. Let thy kingdom reign over us now and forever. Thy holy men of old said: 'Remit and forgive unto all men whatever they have done against us,' and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil thing. For thine is the kingdom, and thou shalt reign in glory for ever and evermore."

The Lord's Prayer in the Latin Vulgate, the Authorized Version of the Roman Catholic Church, is as follows:—

"Our Father, which art in heaven, sanctified be thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, in earth also. Give us to-day our supersubstantial bread; and forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."—Matthew vi. 9-13.

You see the Vulgate omits "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." This part, together with the concluding "Amen," is omitted in the late Revised Version of the Protestants. It is wanting in the most ancient manuscripts.

The episcopal Prayer Book substitutes "trespasses" for "debts"—which is wrong, and yet the episcopal form prevails. Ask anyone to repeat the prayer, and he will invariably give it to you from the Prayer Book.

The parody on the Lord's Prayer recently addressed to President Cleveland may have been suggested by the one that emanated from Italy some years ago, as follows:—

"Our Father, who art in the Vatican, infallible be thy name; thy temporal sovereignty come; thy will be done in Europe and America as in Ireland. Give us this day our tithes and titles; and forgive us our trespasses as we give plenary indulgence to those who pay penitently unto us; and lead us not into ecumenical councils, but deliver us from thinking; for thine is the crozier, the key, and the tiara, Rome without end. Amen." W. H. BURR.

Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.—*Spencer*.

C. H. PEARSON.

THE late Charles Henry Pearson, author of *National Life and Character: A Forecast*, was a very remarkable man. The volume of *Reviews and Critical Essays* issued this year has additional interest from the biographical sketch, by Herbert A. Strong, which is prefixed to the volume. Born September 7, 1830, Pearson's father was Principal of the Church Missionary College, and he was brought up in the Puritan evangelical school. At King's College, London, he was brought under the broadening influence of Maurice and Dr. Brewer. Among his fellow-students were Kingsley, Fawcett, Clifford, Harrison, Fitzjames, and Leslie Stephen. At Oxford he became Fellow of Oriol. He was appointed lecturer in English Language and Literature at King's College, London, and also became Professor of Modern History. As his ideas on the alleged inspiration of the Bible were not those of the authorities, he offered his resignation, as he had no intention of concealing his views; but Dr. Jelf declined to accept it. After writing his *History of England During the Early and Middle Ages* and his *Maps of England in the First Thirteen Centuries*, he went to Australia, married, and accepted a lectureship on History at the University of Melbourne. He was largely concerned in promoting free secular education in Victoria. As a Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly, his advocacy of a progressive land-tax, and of a tax on the unearned increment, stirred up great bitterness against him on the part of the large landowners. He eventually became Minister of Education, and established two hundred State school scholarships, as a link between the primary schools and the University and the established technical schools. He fathered the Bill for giving University degrees to women, and succeeded in getting it passed. He was also greatly instrumental in getting a Divorce Bill carried, placing women on much the same legal footing as men. His great colonial experience adds weight to his most important work, that on *National Life and Character*, which, written, as he has stated, "under sentence of death" was recognized as a remarkable contribution to modern thought. Year by year we are seeing his forecast realised. We have already seen one of the yellow races, the Japanese, rise to the rank of a second-class military power; while the visit of Li Hung Chang indicates that Pearson was also right in predicting that China would open up commerce with Europe, and accept our science, while rejecting our religion. His outlook was considered pessimistic. Yet, as he says, "Even so, there will still remain to us ourselves." His own motto was, "To thine own self be true." And the spirit of his life comported with the noble, mournful words at the end of his volume: "Simply to do our work in life, and to abide the issue, if we stand erect before the eternal calm as cheerfully as our fathers faced the eternal unrest, may be nobler training for our souls than the faith in progress."

Doubtless the work on *National Life and Character* is the one by which Charles Henry Pearson will be remembered. His *Reviews and Critical Essays*, though dealing with topics of social and historical interest, are of a more ephemeral character. Two notable essays are those on "Optimism" and "Pessimism," in which the social outlook of humanity is ever before the writer's eye. An essay on "An Agnostic's Progress" is a review of the work with that title. It contrives to say little that is distinctive, as may be judged from the last paragraph: "There was a time when society could build altars to an unknown God, but it was the time when men were certain of divinity, and only doubtful whether all its manifestations had been properly catalogued. At present, if religion is to hold its own, it must decide definitely how much it will discard, and how much it is prepared to retain. It is certain that the old creeds have been outgrown. It is equally certain that a large part of the world has found nothing better to believe in than the teaching of the Gospels in their simplicity; and the men who wish to live up to it, while they profess to know nothing about it, are nothing more than Christians without Christ."

Not a Sunday-School Story.

It is doubtful if the story of William Fisher, of Hoboken, will ever be published in the Sunday-school books. The present status of the narrative is that Mr. Fisher, who was, until recently, a hard-working employee of the Fourteenth-street ferry, had reached the age of seventy-three years a poor man, having invested his early savings and all his surplus earnings in lottery-tickets for the last twenty-five years. Now, if the gentleman had desired to point a moral more than to adorn a tale, he would have continued to buy the wrong numbers in the lottery, and have ended his days in the poorhouse. On the contrary, he has just purchased a winning number that brings him \$15,000, has retired from the ferriage business, and contemplates living in luxury for the remainder of his days. There is still an opportunity for Mr. Fisher to live in Sunday-school literature, however, if he will only acquire bad habits as the result of his wealth, and commit a crime and go to the Devil.—*New York Journal*,

BOOK CHAT.

MR. JOHN TREVOR, of the Labor Church, has published a pamphlet on *The Labor Church in England*, addressed to the foreign members of the International Congress. He lays it down that religion will last, and the labor movement is a religious movement. Great principles will not long continue to live (we are told) merely by association with great names. No scientist is great enough to give his name to the scientific movement—not even Darwin. No Socialist is great enough to give his name to Socialism—not even Marx. No religious teacher is great enough to give his name to the religious movement—not even Christ. Where names linger the movement makes no progress; and mere discipleship means stagnation. The attempt to bring the thought of Jesus into the life of to-day as a standard and a guide is to be avoided as a step fatal to full development.

The influence of Walt Whitman and of Edward Carpenter is visible in the unrhymed poetry entitled *Out of the Darkness*, by Bessie Joynes (Manchester Labor Press Society, 57 and 59 Tib-street). Full of sympathy and the enthusiasm of humanity, there are many to whom these musical, though unrhymed, heart utterances may come as the hymns of a higher faith.

Leigh Hunt, in his *London Journal* (July 31, 1835), mentions "the popular Calvinistic manuals of Scotland (Brown's Catechism), in which, to the question, 'What shall the wicked for ever do in hell?' it is dauntlessly answered: 'They shall roar, curse, and blaspheme God.'" It would be interesting to know if this fine representation of the old theology is still in circulation.

The *Freethinker's Magazine* says of *The Reason Why?* by Ernest E. Russell: "It is truly one of the best Freethought missionary books we ever read, and every Freethinker ought to purchase a copy and pass it around among his orthodox friends."

The *Weekly Times and Echo* (September 6), noticing the thirty-second edition (just published) of *The Elements of Social Science* (which contains an addition on the important question, "Can War be Suppressed?"), says: "It was a brave thing for a medical man to do to write this book forty years ago, and as brave a thing for Mr. Truelove to publish it."

Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, the well-known archæologist and ethnologist of Philadelphia, has recently expressed his *View of History* from the point of view of an ethnologist in an address delivered before the New Jersey Historical Society, and now published in pamphlet form. His ideas, which, coming from so high an authority, will be read with much interest, are essentially that history "should be neither a mere record of events, nor the demonstration of a thesis, but a study, through occurrences and institutions, of the mental states of peoples at different epochs, explanatory of their success or failure, and practically applicable to the present needs of human society."

Herr A. W. Ernst has written a book on *Goethe's Religion*, in which he takes the position that, although Goethe rejected all the distinctive dogmas of Christianity, and was no positive believer in a positive or specifically ecclesiastical religion, yet his thought was what is vaguely called Christian.

The *Jewish Chronicle* (September 4) notices Chilperic's paper in the *Free Review* on "Daniel in the Critics' Den," as "a smart example of the manner in which the critics of the 'Higher Criticism' can be criticised."

Mr. F. P. Badham, noticing a new work on John by Professor Resch, in the *Academy* (September 5), points out the correspondence between the Nathanael of the Gospel of John and the Levi Matthew of the Synoptics. He further considers that the feast in Levi Matthew's house (notice the metaphors of "the bride-chamber" and of "the old and new wine") is the Synoptic parallel to the wedding-feast at Cana.

Arthur Schopenhauer.

No more thorough Atheist, perhaps, ever lived than Schopenhauer. He, indeed, said: "No man who is religious can become a philosopher—metaphysics are useless to him, and no true philosopher is religious; he is sometimes in danger, but he is not fettered, he is free." Elsewhere he said: "Religion and philosophy are like the two scales of a balance; the more one rises, the more does the other descend." The Christian's God he spoke of contemptuously, as "the old Jew upstairs."

CORRESPONDENCE.

ANCIENT SCEPTICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I was greatly interested in the article on "Ancient Scepticism" which appeared in the *Freethinker* of August 30—the more so as I had contemplated writing a paragraph on the same subject myself for your most valuable and esteemed paper.

I note that your correspondent has omitted all mention of the famous Theodorus, the Atheist. This philosopher—a pupil of Aristippus—was banished from Cyrene on account of his "advanced" teachings. He fled to Athens, where he resided under the protection of the author, Demetrius Phalareus. Some state, however, that he was at last condemned to death for his impiety, and that he took poison—a favorite mode of exit with the ancients—*exempla*: Seneca, Petronius, Socrates, etc. This philosopher discarded friendship from his system, while following his master in other doctrines.

"Lucianus" does not mention that Bion, the sophist of Borysthenes, recanted in his old age. He heartily repented of the many insults heaped upon the gods in his younger days. When overcome by disease this philosopher, now in his dotage, took to wearing amulets and charms at the instigation of some pious old woman, thus hoping to appease the array of offended deities.

Protagoras, a Greek philosopher of Abdera, in Thrace, published a book denying the existence of a supreme being. "This doctrine he supported by observing that his doubts arose from the uncertainty of the existence of a supreme power, and from the shortness of human life" (Lemprière). This work was publicly burnt at Athens, and its author banished from the city as a bad character. He died about 400 years B.C.

It was Archelaus who first taught the infinity of the universe, and Democritus, a philosopher of Abdera, who originated the atomic theory. He taught "That atoms and the vacuum were the beginning of the universe; that the atoms were infinite both in magnitude and number, and were borne about the universe in endless revolutions; and that thus they produced all the combinations that exist. Motion, being the cause of the production of everything, he called necessity" (Diogenes Laertius). This great man died 361 B.C.

With regard to the Protagoras mentioned above, we have the testimony of Cicero to his being the greatest sophist of his age. The ignominious treatment to which he was subjected by his fellow citizens prevented, as Marcus Tullius imagined, a great many from avowing their Atheism openly.

Thus has priestcraft endeavored in all ages to stamp out free thought. Cicero, in his *Nature of the Gods*, ingenuously acknowledges that he believed it to be dangerous to take the negative side (the Atheistical one) before a public auditory. He therefore argued on the hypothesis of there being a supreme power. But "I would demand of you," he writes, "why these world-builders started up so suddenly, and lay dormant for so many ages? I desire to know why this Providence of yours was idle for such an immense space of time. What was it that incited the Deity to act the part of an œdile to illuminate and decorate the world? If it was in order that God might be the better accommodated in his habitation, then he must have been dwelling an infinite length of time before in darkness as in a dungeon. But do we imagine that he was afterwards delighted with that variety with which we see the heaven and earth adorned? What entertainment could that be to the Deity? If it was any, he would not have been without it so long." This may remind us of Shelley's lines:—

From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke.

Again, Cicero writes: "Because you do not conceive that nature is able to produce such effects [the universe] without some rational aid, you are forced, like the tragic poets, when you cannot wind up your argument in any other way, to have recourse to a deity, whose assistance you would not seek if you could view that vast and unbounded magnitude of regions in all parts, where the mind, extending and spreading itself, travels so far and wide that it can find no end, no extremity to stop at. In this immensity of breadth, length, and height, a most boundless company of numerous atoms are fluttering about, which, notwithstanding the interposition of a void space, meet and cohere, and continue clinging to one another; and by this union these modifications and forms of things arise, which, in your opinion, could not possibly be made without the help of bellows and anvils. Thus you have imposed on us an eternal master, whom we must dread day and night. For who can be free from fear of a deity who foresees, regards, and takes notice of everything; one who thinks all things his own; a curious, ever-busy God? From this belief in a God, too, first arose your *Εμπαμένη*, or fatal necessity; so that, whatever happens, you affirm that it flows from an eternal chain and

continuance of causes. Of what value is this philosophy, which, like old women and illiterate men, attributes everything to fate? Then follows your *μαντική*, in Latin called *divinatis*, divination, which, if we would listen to you, would plunge us into such superstition that we should fall down and worship your inspectors into sacrifices, your augurs, your soothsayers, your prophets, and your fortune-tellers."

Is not this prophetic of the glorification of the priesthood in all ages? Are we not told of the power and influence exercised by the augurs of old, of whom it is recorded that they could never meet one another in the streets of the city without grinning in each other's faces? Oh, superhuman credulity! are not all men fools?

FLORENCE BRADSHAW.

PROFANE JOKES.

JOE KERR says one of the surest results of the higher criticism is to establish the mosaic authority of the Pentateuch. It is a mosaic of many legendary scraps.

It is said that Talmage can carry the imagination of his hearers up into the seventh heaven, but it is noticed that he never takes his eye off the collection plate.

Verifying the Truth.—"You say that man is a vapor?" "Yes; so the Bible says." "Well, I'm downright glad to hear it: I am so." "Why do you say that?" "Because it backs up a remark I made to Parson Tibbs, just the other day." "What was that?" "I told him he was all gas."

"John," said the grocer to his assistant, as they opened the store early Sunday morning; "the parson says it's wicked to do any unnecessary work on Sunday." "Yes, sir." "Well, you needn't wet that sugar until to-morrow. It can lay over just as well; besides, it weighs a great deal more just after you wet it. I don't believe in breaking the Sabbath unnecessarily."

"Sometimes," remarked Methuselah to his favorite great-great-great-great-great-grandchild; "sometimes I wish I had died young; say, in my sixth or seventh century." "Why, grandpop?" "Well, it is peculiarly annoying to me to hear my 94th wife say, as she does every day or two, 'You are certainly old enough to know better.'"

She—"I'm so surprised! He was such an energetic church worker too." He—"He was; he worked it for all it was worth."

Peripatetic Parson—"Where are you going, my boy?" Small Boy—"Untin'." P. P.—"And isn't Sunday-school the best place wherein to spend a Sabbath afternoon?" S. B.—"Oh, that's all very well for kids!"

IS THERE A FUTURE LIFE?

"KARL" sends the following letter to the *English Mechanic* (August 28):—

"Here is the evidence of one who for centuries has been called the wisest man that ever lived—the G.O.M. of the Scriptures: 'For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again' (Eccles. iii. 19, 20).

"Every minister of the Christian religion boasts that even the savages believe in a future state, therefore it must be true; but let us see how this faith comes about, and for my argument I will take a neolithic savage—one who knew how to grind a flint implement, and consequently could reason to a certain extent. This savage lies down to sleep, and dreams that he is hunting with his old father, and, perhaps, other old friends, who have been dead long ago. When he wakes he reasons thus: There is the impression of my body on the ground; I know that I have not left that spot since I lay down there; but I, my *other self*, have been absent. I have been with my old father in the happy hunting grounds; but my father has been dead a long, long time; there cannot be the slightest doubt of his death, for when he died we roasted him and eat him. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the savage would further reason in this way: So then, when I die, it will be only my body that dies; my *other self* will still continue to exist?

"Here is the pith of the whole matter: this theory of the continual existence of the *other self* has come down to us as instinct for thousands of years, and, I am sorry to say, has become a business, or, perhaps, a more proper word would be profession, to get money by.

"The ministers tell us we must believe the Bible to be the word of God. Very well, then, we must believe the evidence of the great and glorious and favored of all men, King Solomon."

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, W. Heaford, "The Bible, the Child, and the Higher Criticism."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "Evolution of Man."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Foreign Missions: What they Do, and how they Do it."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): (8), J. T. Blanchard, "The New Secularism."
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kasparly will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "The Immorality of Christianity."
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, No lecture.
CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, Stanley Jones.
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.
FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: J. Rowney—11.15, "Buddhism and Christianity"; 3.15, "Christianity a Gospel of Hate, Confusion, and Strife."
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The Darwinian Hypothesis"; 3.30, W. Heaford will lecture.
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton will lecture.
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Some Tales from the Gospels."
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Ascent of Man."
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. lecture.
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 3, C. Cohen.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, C. Cohen will lecture; 3.15, A. lecture.

COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN (18 St. Peter's-road): 7, Fortnightly meeting.
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL, Queen's Road, New Brompton): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Bible and Civilisation." A silver collection to defray expenses.
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, W. Holmes, "Radicalism v. Socialism." September 17 and 18, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture in the Athenæum.
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foot—11.30, "The Sermon on the Mount: Did Jesus Preach It, and What is it Worth?" 2.30, "Christ's Descent into Hell"; 6.30, "Is there a Future Life?"
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Back to the Land, and How to Prepare for It."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Last excursion of the Season. Members and friends meet in front of Victoria Station at 8.20, and will go to Grimsby and Olethorpes by train leaving at 8.45.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Adjourned discussion on "Bimetallism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11, C. Watts, "A Plea for Unbelief."
DERBY (Market-place): 11, J. G. Briggs, "Is there a Future Life?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—September 13, m., Victoria Park; a., Regent's Park; e., Camberwell. 17 and 18, Derby. 20, Manchester. 24 and 25, Debate with Rev. Mr. Waldron, Manchester. 26, Manchester. 29 and 30, Blackburn. October 1, Blackburn. 4, Manchester.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—September 13, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park; e., Bradlaugh Club. 20, m., Camberwell. October 4, m., Westminster; 11, e., Bradlaugh Club.

POSITIVISM.

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