

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER

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## BOOTH AND CALIBAN.

WILLIAM BOOTH, the sole proprietor and manager of the religious and trading organization known as the Salvation Army, recently held a celebration at the Crystal Palace, where he read out to his followers an obliging telegram he had received from the Queen. Henceforth he may fairly claim to be considered "respectable." At first he was regarded as a mountebank, then as a well-intentioned faddist, afterwards as one with a message for the "residuum," and still later as a kind of social savior deserving the moral and financial support of capitalists and the nobility. All that was lacking has now been secured. William Booth's "Army" has been acknowledged by royalty as a "safe" institution, and Her Majesty has addressed him by his darling designation of "General." Yes, the Jubilee, among other surprising things, has brought about the apotheosis of the commercial Wesley of the nineteenth century.

This is one side of the picture. Let us look at the other. The following is an extract from the *London Echo* of Tuesday, July 27:—

"At Penge to-day, Alfred Mong, a Salvationist, of Fortress-road, Kentish Town, was charged with cruelty to a horse. Defendant took part in the Salvation Army demonstration at the Crystal Palace last week, when he was found driving a horse with a sore back. Defendant was fined 15s."

Alfred Mong's devotion to Christianity in general, and to Salvationism in particular, is quite compatible with gross and deliberate cruelty to a helpless dumb animal. He gives so much thought to Jesus Christ and William Booth that he has none left for his own horse. Perhaps he had read Paul's brutal query, "Doth God care for oxen?" and thought that all non-human beings, perhaps all non-Salvationists, were outside the pale of consideration.

We are far from saying, or insinuating, that all Salvationists would act like Alfred Mong. But here is a man who ill-uses a poor horse while taking part in a Salvation Army demonstration. It is not an ordinary case of cruelty to animals. The circumstances give it a special significance, at least to a student of the relations between religion and morality.

The class of people that Booth caters for in the religious market are, generally speaking, what the evolutionist calls survivals. They belong to pre-civilized stages of human development. Their coarse texture is only accessible to savage forms of excitement; hence the crudity of their music, and the overwhelming predominance of the big drum in their bands. We have often stopped for a few minutes to listen to Salvationist exhorters, and we do not remember hearing a single sentence that was worth uttering.

Practically our view of the Salvation Army and its "General" is held by Mr. Edward Jenkins, whose *Pantalas*—a social study in the guise of fiction—has just been published by Messrs. Bentley. The book opens with the discovery by a half-fuddled vestryman, a sober policeman, and an enterprising newspaper reporter, of a new Caliban one foggy winter night in the streets of London. The creature lies prone in the gutter, his huge deformed body is covered with a miscellaneous collection of rags, no arms are distinguishable, and the only visible symptom of a leg is "a short, stumpy limb, with a foot at

the end of it which resembled that of an elephant." His shock of tangled red hair, his low brow, his one blood-shot eye, and other interesting peculiarities, make him resemble "one of those monsters in the pictures of hell which the old artists used to paint to frighten sinners and cheer the spirits of the faithful." Finally, the Thing moves about with two crutches and a low small-wheeled trolley. The newspaper reporter recognises It as one of "the General's Submerged Tenth," and the policeman says "It's w're misery marries misery that you get the likes of him." Afterwards we learn that the new Caliban has a wife—who is not a Miranda—and a litter of young Calibans more or less resembling himself.

The reporter conveys Caliban to his newspaper office, gives him plenty to eat and especially to drink, and makes good copy out of him. London is soon hot with the news, and exhorters, philanthropists, and scheme-mongers flock to the court where the monster dwells with his brood and their dam. The Rev. Mr. Mildewe, a luxurious evangelical preacher, looks at Caliban shudderingly and says "It is a visitation of God." Mr. Maxim declares this to be humbug. Addressing the preacher, he says:—

"You profess to know something about Him—at any rate, you are paid for finding out. You say He is good and just, and yet you charge Him with having created this terrible being in pursuance of an accumulating vengeance against a long line of progenitors. What kind of theology, I should like to know, is that to preach to people whom you desire to draw to the knowledge and love of an over-ruling Providence?"

Mr. Maxim continues his sceptical remarks—sneering at the Bible and its code of morals, and at the ignorant impudence of the clergy—until he raises the whole court against him and is obliged to decamp. All the sects unite against the common enemy, and drive him off the field. But when they try to agree upon a remedy for the ills of the new Caliban, which is to be found in a blending of the various shades of Christian faith, they soon quarrel with each other, and it becomes manifest that "pandenominationalism means pandemonium."

Presently the Holy Militia make a descent upon the court, and besiege the monster. This corybantic Christianity (Professor Huxley's phrase) seems to have borrowed its rites from "the fetish ceremonies of Dahomey," but it makes an impression upon Caliban and his family, and the whole lot are swept into the ranks.

The General of the Holy Militia appears upon the scene; his face, with its "hawk nose, eagle eyes, and firm-set mouth," evincing "extraordinary keenness and strength of character." He prepares a vast, fantastic scheme of social salvation for the likes of Caliban, which he declares to be "the grandest scheme of human redemption ever thought out since the Savior worked out his in the council of heaven." The General is going to start a big farm, rear rabbits and poultry, breed pigs, and make sausages by the mile. All that he wants is the cash, and that he proposes to get from "the benevolent and the wealthy."

Pantalas, the new Caliban, passes through the General's social mill. But somehow or other the success of the great venture is not equal to its founder's "colossal conceit." The submerged tenth are as numerous and miserable as ever. Most of those who are "rescued" drift back into the slough. Pantalas, his old woman, and his kids are turned out because they are unprofitable, and again we find him in his squalid court, where he dies of starvation.



Mr. Smith, a long-headed, benevolent man, who never believed in the General or his social scheme, brings food and brandy to poor Caliban; but it is too late. The monster dies almost in his arms. Turning to the General, who is just then visiting the court on a round of inspection, he tells him that he has failed; but the Chief of the Holy Militia replies that he is only just at the beginning of his experiment, and is "on the high road to success." This is too much for Mr. Smith. He tells the General that his scheme was the offspring of conceit, that his altruism was pretentious egotism, that he wanted to get honor and glory for himself and his own sect, and that this sectarianism is the curse of modern philanthropy. Then the group of bystanders disperse, and Prelewski the Anarchist goes out last of all into the night, shrugging his shoulders, and muttering between his teeth—"Ah! zere ees bot one remedy for zees dam malady—ze dynamet!"

Mr. Smith's final words to the bystanders before they disperse may, we presume, be taken as an expression of Mr. Jenkins's own views:—

"Until society agrees to sink its bigotries, its jealousies, its fads and conceits, in order to unite on the common purpose of redemption for this class, no practical solution will be found. The truest and noblest Socialism consists, not in the equalization of interests, which is an impossible dream, but in the harmonizing of ideas and efforts."

This is wise enough in its way, but it is like bespeaking the millennium. To hope that this temper of mind will soon prevail, in face of the egotism and mutual hatred of sects, is as wild a dream as that of the General of the Holy Militia. It is so easy to recognise social disease, so hard to prescribe remedies! Must we not rely, after all, on time and the progress of science and general enlightenment? Meanwhile some good is done by pointing out, as Mr. Jenkins does, that "spiritual" remedies will not cure a social malady.

G. W. FOOTE.

### CALVIN'S GOD.

O Thou, wha in the Heavens dost dwell,  
Wha, as it pleases best thyself,  
Sends ane to Heaven and ten to Hell  
A' for thy glory,  
And no for onie guid or ill  
They've done afore thee.  
—R. BURNS'S *Holy Willie's Prayer*.

I SEE that the Rev. A. H. Craufurd, M.A., of Oxford, is reported as preaching in St. Bernard's Parish Church (Dr. Mathieson's), Edinburgh, and as using the following words, on Sunday, July 18: "Atheism was never likely to be accepted as the belief of men, but Calvin had done more to warp the religion of Jesus than a thousand Mr. Bradlaughs." This utterance in a Scotch church is surely a notable sign of the times. I do not propose to make any further comment on the first clause, which is of the nature of a prophecy, beyond the remark of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, that "Not one man in a thousand has either sufficient strength of mind or sufficient goodness of heart to be an Atheist."

To my mind, Calvin, so far from warping the religion of Jesus, drew from it the only consistent system. It seems to me, too, that the rejection of Calvinism logically leads to the rejection of every form of Theism. Few men ever studied the Bible more closely than did John Calvin, or expounded it with more pith and logic. Calvinism is simply the necessary deductions from belief in an Omnipotent Personal Deity, and these deductions are founded on the Bible.

Jahveh declares himself emphatically the author of all. "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah xlv. 7). No words could more absolutely proclaim the divine responsibility. Again, he says: "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying: My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah xlvi. 9, 10). His will is the immutable decree of fate. "For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his

hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" Jesus is as emphatic. "No man," he is reported as saying, "can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John vi. 44). "Many are called, but few chosen" (Matthew xx. 16). Men are sharply divided into sheep and goats, and for the former is "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew xxv. 34). "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," says James in Acts xv. 18. Paul says: "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.....Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" This, and this alone, is consistent Theism. Calvinism is just Bibleism. It is the real, old, genuine faith—absolute dependence on God. Granted there is an Eternal, Almighty, and All-knowing Creator and Ruler of the Universe, what other attitude is logically possible? To such a being, man, his creature, must be infinitely less than microscopical creatures to us, for we cannot create, though we may destroy, them. It is Calvin's God or none. Calvinism has declined simply because consistent Theism has declined. Calvin's God is the only genuine article on the theological board.

It is true Calvinism is fatalism, but so is all Theism. Prayer from a finite being to an infinite one can hardly be anything but an impertinence. If there be such a Dread Sovereign, the unquestioning submission of Islam is the true attitude of his creatures. An extension of human life to all eternity can only be given by the unmerited grace of God. Before such a being self-abasement is the only devotion. There is no need of elaborate ritual or pomp of worship. The piping "kist o' whistles" can scarcely be supposed acceptable to such a being; and, indeed, one would think silence the one form of worship. We are

But helpless pieces of the game he plays  
Upon this chequer-board of nights and days;  
Hither and thither moves, and cheques and slays,  
And, one by one, back in the closet lays.

The only trouble about Calvin's God is that it is extremely difficult or absolutely impossible to tell him from the Devil!

Calvinism holds its own where men are hardly wrought and unhappy. For, when one's utmost is done, and there remains but a sense of human impotence foiled by contact with fate, refuge is taken in the thought of a Higher Power. As human lot improves and self-reliance develops, Theism declines.

Calvinism is as clearly taught by the Church of England as by the Church of Scotland. Its Tenth Article reads: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." The Thirteenth Article declares that "works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit are not acceptable to God"; and the Seventeenth Article elaborates the doctrine of Predestination and Election.

Calvinism, with its concomitant unquestioning submission, was taught in the Church as long as the congregations would stand it. But now it is discovered to warp the religion of Jesus worse than a thousand Bradlaughs—as though Bradlaugh ever warped the wonderful, and wonderfully mysterious, religion of Jesus, the sweet teacher who came not to send peace, but a sword; to set a man at variance with his father, and who said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

Calvinism, with its legitimate doctrine, that men, and even babes, may be fore-ordained to unending torment, is horrible. But it is honest. It is genuine Christianity. But men like the Rev. A. H. Craufurd, M.A., sworn to believe in these very doctrines, and to uphold the creeds, confessions, and articles in which they are found, now repudiate Calvinism, and offer instead a treacle theology from which they have eliminated all the brimstone. I rejoice in it as a sign of the development of their hearts; but I do not think much



of their heads. I must tell them their honey-pot Deity is not to be found in nature. The God of Calvin may offend the heart of humanity; but the God of Craufurd can have no hold on its intellect. It is Calvin's God or none.

J. M. WHEELER.

### THE DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY.

It is not here alleged that the outward profession of Christianity has declined to the extent it would have done if the dictates of sincerity and consistency had been faithfully obeyed. It requires more intellectual courage than at present we find among the masses to produce an open and general renunciation of the popular faith. Besides, business and pecuniary interests are so interwoven with the Christian profession that to frankly sacrifice the latter often means to damage the former. To a very large extent the apparent adherence to Christianity is based, not upon intellectual assent, but rather upon considerations of pounds, shillings, and pence. Still, it is an encouraging fact that the number of honest and avowed rejectors of the Christian religion is constantly increasing. Even the church attendance has considerably fallen off within the last few years, and but for such secular agencies as singing, music, etc., as are now employed in the "places of worship," the decrease would probably be more palpable than it is. Some important statistics have recently been published, showing the poor attendance at the London churches. A writer in the *Daily Mail*, dated April 8 of the current year, made a special observation of the numbers present in several of the City churches on one particular day, and the figures he supplies afford a curious revelation. Visiting ten of those sanctuaries without any definite principle of selection, but taking them as they came, he found the aggregate of persons ministered to on this particular Sunday morning to be 147. This is an average of fourteen and a fraction for each church. The cost to the State of ministering to these few "precious souls" amounted to the sum of £7,128 per annum, or about £48 10s. per head. The clerical incomes in two instances are over £2,000, while the majority range over £500.

The "Christian" *Daily Chronicle*, dated April 10, has the following editorial: "We publish in another page some startling figures about the City churches. It has long been common knowledge that the forty churches within the boundaries of the City's square mile of area were distinguished by two special features—the largeness of their incumbents' incomes and the smallness of their congregations. The Rev. H. W. Clarke, who has compiled these figures, set himself some six months ago to ascertain the facts. At intervals of a month he made four Sunday visits to every one of the City churches which are open on Sunday for divine worship. At each visit he counted the congregation; and he now, in an open letter to the present Bishop of London, gives us for each church the average attendance at morning and evening service, and other particulars gleaned in the course of his investigations. The figures are very eloquent. St. Alphage, London-wall, with an income of £925 a year, has an average attendance of four in the morning and six in the evening. St. Olave, Hart-street, averages thirty-four in the morning and twenty-seven in the evening. The income is £2,050 a year with a house, which the present incumbent, who resides in Kensington, has leased for £220 a year. We also have made a little calculation; and we find from Mr. Clarke's figures that a certain fifteen of these City churches have a united income of £9,933 a year, with rectories, vicarages, etc., as well, and that the average aggregate congregations of these fifteen churches number only 148 persons in the morning and 155 in the evening. That is an average income per church of £662 a year and house for an average attendance of about ten persons morning and evening." The gospel of "Blessed be ye poor" has a double significance in this case—the poverty of attendance and the salary received for preaching a "free salvation."

The "outward and visible signs" of the decline of Christianity are not confined to the churches. Not only have "fast days" and public appeals to "Providence" in cases of national calamities ceased, but "family prayers" have become almost a habit of the past. In the July number of the *Quiver* the question, "Is family prayer declining?" was freely discussed, and such representative

men of the churches as the Archbishops of Armagh, the Bishops of Gloucester and of Ripon, Dean Farrar, Dr. Parker, and others, gave it as their opinion that this devotional custom is declining. Dr. Parker frankly stated: "In my opinion, it is almost extinct" (see *Christian World* for July 1). It has been discovered that the theological folly of prayer does not accord with the practical requirements of the age. "The one thing needful" is now found to be secular activity. As the late Mr. Samuel P. Putnam wrote:—

'Tis we must grasp the lightning,  
And plough the rugged soil;  
'Tis we must beat back suffering,  
And plague and murder foil;  
'Tis we must build the Paradise,  
And bravely right the wrong:  
The God above us faileth,  
The god *within* is strong.

While the leading organs of the Press refrain from openly repudiating Christianity as being the lever of modern progress, it virtually acknowledges that the dominant factors of present personal and sociarian advancement are secular. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph* of May 31 last attributes what success "The Young Men's Christian Association" has achieved to its adoption of secular means. It points out "how enormously life has been improved by the universal organization of clubs and societies; by the invention of new and salutary forms of exercise, from volunteering down to lawn-tennis, golf, and bicycling; and by that general and resolute recognition in the land of the high civic and national value of the education of the body, which has gone ahead of the very decided advances made in the education of the mind." And even the pious *Rock*, of May 28, in alluding to the late Jubilee craze, says: "In connection with these congratulations, we regret that, while all the secular press is ringing with—we had almost said boast of—the wonderful doings of the British race during the last sixty years, God is practically ignored, and in the speeches of our leading public men, as well as in the organs of the Press, there is little or nothing to indicate that England is not a nation of infidels."

Now, in these admissions of secular potency in modern life we see the evidence of the decline of the power of Christianity in the mundane affairs of human existence; and we hail with delight the triumph of those Freethought principles the carrying out of which we hold to be essential to the advancement of the nation. Before the scepticism of the last few decades the elements to which our present progressive state is justly attributed were unknown as active agencies. And it may be fairly asked, if these elements are claimed as being indigenous to Christianity, why were they not manifest in the ages of faith—days when Christianity was really believed, and, as far as it was possible, acted upon? The fact is, when the profession of the Christian religion was genuine, progress was comparatively unknown. The comforts of earth were sacrificed to the preparation for imaginary happiness in heaven, and the duties of man were made subordinate to the supposed will of God. Then it was that truth was tested by the Bible; but now that book is tested by truth, and found sadly wanting in the principal requirements of modern life. Then it was that reason was fettered by a narrow and exclusive faith; but now, by inquiring minds, all beliefs are measured by cultivated reason. Hence, as Dr. Chalmers is reported to have said: "As things stand at present, our creeds and confessions have become effete, and the Bible a dead letter; and that orthodoxy which was at one time the glory, by withering into the inert and lifeless, is now the shame and reproach of all our Churches." In those times, when the Christian profession was honest, reason was decried as a blind, fallacious guide; but now he who follows the advice of reason has, in the words of Scott, in his *Christian Life*, "a mind elevated above the reach of injury; that sits above the clouds in a calm, quiet ether, and, with a brave indifference, hears the rolling thunders grumble and burst under his feet." With such a marvellous and gratifying change as this, who can truthfully assert that our Freethought advocacy has been in vain?

It is not, however, in the profession of Christianity only that its decline is perceptible; its decay is equally obvious in the open rejection, by prominent leaders in the Church, of its principal doctrines. Father Ignatius has recently repeated the statement of Canon Gore, that Dean Fremantle who is paid £1,000 a year to preach Christianity,



denies "the whole idea of revelation." And in the *Christian World* of July 1 the "Father" is reported to have said: "The splendor of Anglicanism, as represented by the gorgeous ceremonial at St. Paul's on Jubilee Day, was dimmed by the fact that so many of the clergy were denying the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And Nonconformity was just as bad.....I do not think there is a single Christian doctrine which they believe." Mr. Walter F. Adeney, M.A., in a special article in the same newspaper, dated June 17, relates many of the changes which have taken place in the churches during the last half century. He tells us that not only has Calvinism declined in the Free Churches, but that the conclusions arrived at in reference to the Bible, "in Oxford, Cambridge, and the Scotch Universities, would have startled our forefathers"; that "vagueness, hesitancy, or silence is often found where the preachers of old spoke with no uncertain voice"; and grave discussions have taken place upon eternal punishment and Christ, "the issue of which has been great caution in treating the whole subject"; and finally he says: "Many preachers seem scarcely to know how to expound the doctrine of the Atonement. If, as it may be feared is the case in some places, the Cross is no longer so prominent in the centre of the Gospel message, the change is to be deplored."

Thus the tide of mental progress rolls on, and the work of emancipating the human mind from the darkness of superstition continues—a fact that should encourage us to still toil with all our energies in the fight against theological domination and priestly interference, and in favor of moral dignity and intellectual freedom.

CHARLES WATTS.

## SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS OF A SCOTCHMAN AND FREETHOUGHT.

(Concluded from page 475.)

AT that time the Freethought party had a number of very bright lecturers. Among them I may name Southwell, Holyoake, Jeffrey, Lloyd Jones, Cooper, and Mrs. Martin. There was no central organization as now. The Branches were each conducted on their own lines. I think the lecturers were paid thirty shillings a week, remaining about a year in one place, and interchanging with other Branches. Of England at that time I knew but little; but some, if not all, of the above lecturers, I believe, had been brought out in England.

Discussions were rife at that time. The clergy had not found out what stuff Freethinkers were made of, and probably did not know the weakness of their own case. They have learned since, and find it safer now to preach where they cannot be contradicted, and confine themselves to traducing Freethinkers.

In politics the Chartists were the most prominent fifty years ago; and I may note that, while many Chartists were not Freethinkers, most Freethinkers were Chartists. Here, again, we see the superiority of Freethought, for already the stronger points of the Charter are now the law of the land. We have for years had vote by ballot. We have not got universal suffrage, but we have got an immense extension of it; and practically we have got equal electoral districts. Nor have we got annual parliaments and payment of members; and query, Are either worth fighting about?

Many of the Chartists left their churches, built others of wood or iron, and political lecturers preached the Gospel to them on Sundays. I remember one Abram Duncan, of whom I knew a little, and I think it cost him some mental worry to preach Christ crucified. About that time we got Mrs. Martin to come from Edinburgh to Arbroath. She lectured on Prayer. I was her *chaperon*, and nailed up her many illustrations in the hall. She had a good audience, but next day the authorities seized her. Southwell rushed across from Edinburgh to defend her, but she was convicted and fined; and Southwell, to have out his vengeance and break new ground, billed the town and lectured, and was not molested. The authorities found they had caught a tartar, on whom they might have to spend a lot of money; so they left him severely alone.

At this time there was a Christian young men's society in Arbroath. Two Freethinkers and I joined it. We

were three chums, about sixteen or seventeen years of age. The Society had a weekly meeting for discussion. On these nights we numbered about twenty to thirty, hiring a room in a coffee-house. For a short time our discussions were vigorous, for it was all the rest against us three. By-and-bye they flagged, and within a year, I think, we were all Freethinkers. The last night that I attended the momentous question was, "Whether an old maid or a young widow would make the better wife"—quite a secular subject.

About this time we had the mesmeric craze, which travelled from the *Zoist*, a monthly review, contributed to largely by Dr. Engledue. My two Arbroath chums and I had a go at it—one of them being very sensitive—and we were quite successful in producing the phenomena ascribed to it. I may mention a funny circumstance that occurred in relation thereto. I was sent to do some work at a paper-mill in Fifeshire, where I had frequently been before, and was well known. I talked of mesmerism, and they wanted to see it. About a paper-mill there are a lot of girls who sort the rags. I selected two, and we had an evening. The proprietor, hearing of it, would have me to exhibit it at his house. I did. A few evenings after he must exhibit it to a number of his friends, and he had the same girls. He got one into the sleep all right, but failed to get her out of it; instead of which, the girl went into hysterics, and the company were in desperation. He sent for me. I had never had such a case, and was loath to appear ignorant; so I thought deeply on my way to his house, and decided on my own course, which was to send her into the sleep again. I found the girl in bed, and a dozen people in the bedroom—she raving, and the women weeping. I ordered the company to leave, and shut the door; got her out of bed, and into an easy chair; made a few passes over her, got her into the sleep again, walked out leaving a woman with her, and was much thanked. They wanted me to bring her out at once; I thought better not. Better let the system rest awhile, when I got her restored without trouble. I was very anxious till the end, for I could not afford to show the ignorance I felt.

Another mesmeric scene I may mention. I was on board a ship bound for Constantinople; a boastful American was telling the company one evening all about mesmerism. I don't remember that I said anything, but he hit on me as a fitting subject. Would I let him try? I said I didn't mind. I presently closed my eyes, gave a long sigh, which I knew was the proper thing to do, and he said, "There now." He spoke to me. I gave him a ridiculous answer. He stuck a pin into my arm, but I was prepared for that, and the ladies shuddered and pitied me. And what would my poor wife say if she saw me? They insisted that I should be restored. This he easily did. I slowly opened my eyes, looked dazed to see so many of the passengers, and asked for a drink of water, which I knew to be the usual thing. So let no one tell me that there are no impostors in those spiritual and other *séances* which people pay to see.

Coming down to more modern times, Freethought has a much broader basis than it had up to the fifties. Then it was mostly anti-religious. Anti-religious it must always be, for all religions are but varied superstitions; but during thirty or forty years men of acknowledged eminence, both in books and magazines, have written as they dared not do before Freethought was popularized chiefly through working men, with a small sprinkling of the upper classes. We have had Combe's *Constitution of Man*, Robert Chambers' *Vestiges of Creation*, Buckle's *History of Civilization*, and a host of great thinkers, such as Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer, who spoke and wrote for the upper classes mostly, and numerous Freethought lecturers, that I will take in the mass, who have spoken mostly to the working-classes; so that now Freethought permeates all classes of society. Most of it, however, not being outspoken; for Freethinkers are not so apt to outrage the feelings of their superstitious neighbors as these neighbors are to scandalize, and as far as they can persecute, any one who does not attend some conventicle. The days of physical persecution are past in this country.

We are no longer apt to be skinned alive, or burnt, or chopped to bits, as in past times; and it is consolation to know that we will be able to die with our skins on. But it is only because the claws and fangs of superstition have been drawn. The basis of all superstition is necessarily persecution. For what is it to gain the whole world and



lose your own soul? The religious man is acting quite in harmony with his belief if, by some persecution of the body in this life, he can save the soul from everlasting torment in an after life. Of course, we think that the whole doctrine is unphilosophical and absurd; but he thinks not, and considers that all unbelief is mere perversity.

Although much has already been done to liberate the mind of man from superstition, a great deal more requires to be done to free the garden of the mind from the noxious weeds of religious dogma. Consider that for every one-tenth of a Freethought lecturer there are a thousand priests. Thus the priests catch the virgin soil of humanity, and it is crammed with dogma from its mother's knees up through youth, its baptisms, confirmations, etc.; and it is only when the weeds have grown to maturity that Freethought steps in to plant the seeds of secular wisdom.

It is wonderful, indeed, that Freethought, so fettered, has been able to do so much; and the foregoing shows how necessary it is to go on doing more. Every year's progress will make it easier; but there should be no flagging or resting on our oars. The prosperity of the whole nation rests on our getting the minds of youth freed from the trammels of superstition. In Germany, France, and Belgium the children are not dosed at school, as English children are, with dogma. In the whole series of the school books of the French polytechnic there is not a word of dogma; all the information is secular. These nations are competing with us in the markets of the world, and they must turn out boys better prepared for that competition than English boys, whose intellects must be confused by the contrastory lessons that have been mixed up with their early training.

It is, therefore, a national question of the utmost importance that our youth should have a secular training. These nations put heavy duties on every article of manufacture from England before it enters their countries, so as to give their native manufacturers an advantage over us. We let their goods into our country free; hence the cheapness of all articles of food with us. Cheap bread, sugar, and other things are a benefit; but we must have the money to buy them, and we would not have that money if we were beaten out of the world's markets.

Superstition is dying a lingering death, it is true; but it is mixed up with so many doings of life—its bishops in Parliament, its thousands of churches, and vast revenues descending through many generations—that nothing short of a revolution can prevent it from largely influencing English life for many years to come.

It is the duty of every man who is himself free to try to free his neighbor, especially the young. A physical revolution will not do it. It must be a mental revolution. And this cannot be wrought in a day.

Our forefathers believed that our world was flat, and if one went too near the edge he might fall off. Now, science has proved that such a belief was only one of the nonsenses of religion; that our world is a revolving globe; that there is no up nor down; that the sky is around us everywhere; that no human being has ever left the earth, or ever can; that all that is on it is held to it by its own gravitating force; and that no particle of matter is lost, nor any created. Do as we will, all is but changes in pre-existing matter.

Geology has proved, and even the religious world have accepted it, that the Mosaic account of the creation of the world is the veriest nonsense; that, instead of its age being under seven thousand years, it has to be measured by millions of years; and research into the history of man has proved, from the monuments he has left in his tombs, that he was civilized—had built large cities that are now being exhumed, and their ruins prove the existence of civilized man anterior to the fabled history of Adam and his fall. All experience shows that man has not fallen, but that he has risen, and is rising, and that it is only by science that he has risen—not by religion, which has for thousands of years been the chief drag-chain, keeping back his improvement.

Science has proved that the locality of heaven or of hell cannot be found; even the residence of the gods cannot be discovered. Rather that matter is eternal than that it was ever created. Thus the occupation of the gods is gone.

Thousands of years before the dawn of science there were gods for every event—for war, for peace, for rain, and for sunshine. Of later years they have been reduced to three—in some countries to only one; and in those small

numbers they are as mythical as they were when they were a multitude. Then what are they? Are they any more than a bogie set up by the priests, who live by preying on the credulity of man? Are we to support them and let them stuff into the minds of our children their hellish doctrines that have driven to madness so many thousands? For the love of mankind, say No. Keep your children from such mental pestilence. Support your lecturers, who expose their knavish tricks. Support your literature, that your youngsters may have something in their heads superior to what they can get from all the churches of every denomination, remembering always that this is a national question.

We have to compete with Continental nations in the goods we manufacture, and if we cannot sell cheaper than they foreign markets will be closed to us. We have to go to those countries for the bread we eat, our own country being too small to produce one half of what we require. For the corn and other foods we import we pay by the goods we export to them. Lessen that export, and we lessen our ability to live. When that time arrives the downfall of England is only a question of time.

GEORGE ANDERSON.

### WERE THE GOSPELS LATIN?

THE analysis of the Gospels made by Drs. Abbot and Rushworth conclusively shows that in Mark lies embedded a document common to the Synoptics. This makes the Second Gospel of the first importance in considering the question of their origin. Now, in the subscription to the Gospel according to Mark in the Syriac Version it is stated that Mark wrote in the Latin language. This is the common opinion of the Oriental Churches. It was also the tradition of Venice, for there are shown fragments of a Latin gospel said to be written by Mark.

The earliest mention of Mark in Papias (*i.e.*, Eusebius—*i.e.*, those who wrote in that name) does not mention in what language it was written, though Matthew is said to have been written in Hebrew. "Eusebius" says, on the authority of Clement of Alexandria, that it was written in Rome. The first particular mention of Mark's language is by Ebedjesu and Eutyehius, the former of whom says that Mark wrote in Latin at Rome, and the latter that "Peter, making use of the pen of Mark, wrote a gospel at Rome in the Roman language." Lardner tries to make out that by this he meant Greek—which is highly improbable. Cardinal Baronius says: "This Gospel was written at Rome, and for the use of the Romans; can we, then, suppose that it would be written in any other than the language of the place?" Marcus was a Roman, and there is no reason to suppose that, like Hudibras,

he could speak Greek  
As naturally as pigs squeak.\*

All the available evidence goes to show that the proto-evangelium, or foundation of the Gospels, first appeared in Latin. It has been pointed out that the word *επιτομιον* in Matthew vi. 11 is not Greek at all, but a manufactured word to represent the Latin *supersubstantialem*, this one word sufficing to show not only that the Greek is derived from the Latin, but that this occurred after the doctrine of supersubstantial bread was accepted in the Church. Mark explains Hebrew or Greek terms by Latin ones—thus, the widow's mite is *quadrantes* (xii. 42); the court, the *praelorium* (xv. 16); and the preparation, the *prosabbaton*. Many other terms used are but Latin words in Greek characters, as centurion, speculator, legion, sextarius, denarius, census, fragello, etc. Everyone knows that the received texts are in Greek; and Latin versions, like the Vulgate ascribed to Jerome, are from the Greek. But this in no way invalidates the evidence that the underlying gospel was originally in Latin. It may have happened that it suited the Church to represent its original documents as Greek, despite the evidence that Matthew wrote in Hebrew and Mark in Latin; or it may have happened that only Greek manuscripts were available when translations were made. Of course, this argument refers only to the originals of our Gospels. Matthew may have written Logia in Hebrew, and Jews in Egypt put the *Λογια Ιησου* in Greek, as in the recently-discovered papyrus.

LUCIAN WRIGHT.

\* Even in Corinth, the Latin colony in Greece, they spoke Latin.



## GOD INCOG.; OR, CHRIST ON HIS TRAVELS.

THE Christian God who fills the whole of space,  
The loving God of "God-damn!" notoriety,  
Set out from Ev'rywhere to find a place  
Wherein to breed a God-and-man variety.

He found a place, a geographic slum,  
Behind the wholesome highways of humanity—  
A habitat of Oriental scum;  
A moral swamp of ignorance and vanity.

Ignoring "Woman's Rights," as male-spooks should,  
He coolly made a native's promised wife, it seems,  
His mate, *pro tem.*, and then his Ma for good—  
The only Ma he'd had in all his life, it seems

We're told that he, himself, himself begat—  
The Son and Father of himself—suspiciously,  
And came ashore a barb'rous Hebrew brat,  
A contraband bambino, surreptitiously.

On earth he lived for three-and-thirty years,  
And then for three-and-thirty hours in hell, they say;  
And carried on, midst teething, wine, and tears,  
His business as a Deity as well, they say.

When Christ had done his one-day's trip to hell,  
He sailed aloft—as told in his biography—  
Through cold and silence, whither none can tell—  
'Tis thought to heaven; so, *vide* Uranography.

On sailing up, he saw, with wild surprise,  
The far-receding Earth's revealed sphericity.  
"A globe!" said he; "has Dad been telling lies?  
He said 'twas flat! What nescience, or duplicity!"

He stared to see the Welkin all at rest,  
And Earth, His Father's "Footstool," waltzing spright-  
fully;  
Said He: "I'm blowed! I mean, of course, I'm blest!  
The Pater, Ghost, and I have blundered frightfully!"

"I taught that Earth was flat; 'tis round, I find;  
So, now, lest people know it, and discredit me,  
I'll raise up rogues who'll claim to know my mind:  
Who'll gloss my blunders, wrest my words, and edit  
me!"

"Since Earth's a planet, other planets may  
Be blighted by ancestral sin frugivorous;  
To these I'll suicidal visits pay,  
And offer them my remedy carnivorous.

"Meanwhile, up, up we go to tell Papa  
That Earth is not so flat as I've been told it is,  
And hand the lock of hair from poor mama—  
I wish this flight would end!—By Dad! how cold  
it is!"

He may perhaps on other worlds have called  
To boom his cleansing, healing, holy olio  
That cured the blind, but cannot cure the bald;  
That beat Old Nick, but cannot beat Sapolio.

Perhaps He's now bedev'ling pigs on Mars,  
Or brewing drink for jovial Jovian peasantry;  
Perhaps He's touring now around the stars,  
Performing in His "Deicidal Pleasantry."

He must be wand'ring, fast asleep, or dead,  
And still entombed—as mooted once by Paul, you  
know—

For Faith's a failure, maugre all he said—  
That is, of course, if e'er he lived at all, you know.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

To say that the performance of the action is the result of man's free will is to say that he determines the cohesion of the psychological states which arouse the action; and as these psychological states constitute himself at the moment, this is to say that these psychological states determine their own cohesion, which is absurd. These cohesions have been determined by experiences—the greater part of them, constituting what we call his natural character, by the experiences of antecedent organisms, and the rest by his own experiences. The changes which at each moment take place in his consciousness are produced by this infinitude of previous experiences registered in his nervous structure, co-operating with the immediate impressions on his senses; the effects of these combined factors being in every sense qualified by the psychological state, general or local, of his organism.—*Herbert Spencer.*

## ACID DROPS.

A VERY funny thing happened at that Crystal Palace celebration. There was a small conical tent on the platform, and everybody wondered what it was for. At the appropriate moment the tent was drawn up, like a big extinguisher, and the "General" himself was disclosed, wearing the Salvation red waistcoat and a polished silk hat. That is how the "General" made his appearance, and it was worthy of the fine old showman.

"General" Booth, after reading the Queen's telegram to him at the Crystal Palace celebration, exclaimed: "I am a general now; there is no dispute about that. No twopenny-ha'penny editor of a twopenny-ha'penny paper, no twopenny-ha'penny curate can object any longer to my being called general when I have been so addressed by the Queen herself." That settles it.

Rev. G. E. Thorn, of Lower Edmonton, was one of the Nonconformist ministers who presented an address to the Queen at Windsor. On his return it was announced to the congregation by handbills that their pastor would preach "all day" on the next Sabbath, in the dress in which he appeared before Her Majesty. This is one way of doing business, but we dare say the reverend gentleman would have attracted a bigger crowd if he had advertised that he would appear in the dress worn by David when he danced before the Ark.

We pointed out some time ago, in a series of special articles, that Christian morality was not superior to Mohammedan morality. M. Denais, in the *Nouvelle Revue*, while severe enough upon Abdul the Damned, says that the common Turks are a very humane people. Their kindness to animals puts most Christian countries to shame. A Turkish child will never destroy a bird's nest; on the contrary, Turks buy birds from Christian and Jew hawkers in order to liberate them. Stray dogs are fed and tended, instead of being killed. There is no room for a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Turkey.

Mark Twain's misfortunes have not damped his humor. Describing the Jubilee Show for American readers, he said: "It was a sort of allegorical suggestion of the Last Day, and some who live to see that day will probably recall this one, if they are not too much disturbed in mind at the time."

In Dean Farrar's article in the *Temple Magazine*, noticed in our "Book Chat," he gives a good illustration of the beauties of vicarious punishment. After mentioning the prolixity of Dr. Wordsworth, late Bishop of Lincoln, he says: "One of my predecessors at St. Margaret's, the Syriac scholar, Canon Cureton, had a son at Westminster School, and whenever the Canon preached too long a sermon the boys used to thrash his son. When Dean Trench was informed of this he remarked with a deep sigh, 'Oh, how I wish that Canon Wordsworth also had a son at the school!'"

On the newly-discovered saying of Jesus, "Except ye keep the Sabbath ye shall not see God," the *Jewish Chronicle* remarks:—"Jesus did not attack the Sabbath. His contention was that in certain circumstances the Sabbath law might be broken. But any Rabbi would have said the same thing, the only difference being one of detail. The very phrase, 'The Sabbath is given to man, not man to the Sabbath,' is Jewish. It occurs in the Talmud and Midrash, and originated at least 150 years B.C. It will be curious to witness the efforts made by theologians to escape from the position which this new saying creates. Everyone knew that for centuries the Christian Church observed the Sabbath as the Jews did, on the seventh day. What effect this fresh discovery may have in strengthening the weak Sabbatarian movement in England is a problem easier to formulate than to solve."

Dr. Martineau wonders at the importance attached to the newly-discovered "Logia" of Jesus Christ. Its value, he says, is simply ecclesiastical, not religious. He adds that it confirms the "most probable judgment previously formed respecting the popular traditional materials out of which the Gospels were brought into their present form."

For our part, we have this to say about these new Sayings of Jesus. Suppose they had been just discovered, and the Jesus in question had never been heard of before. Suppose, that is to say, these were the utterances of an entirely unknown teacher. How much value would anybody find in them? We venture to say that they would be dismissed as in the last degree unimportant. Yet because the name of Jesus is attached to them they are lauded to the skies, and even beyond, as superhumanly profound and wonderful. Such is the force of prepossession.



Mr. Price Hughes is *not* the new Wesleyan president. The honor is carried off by Mr. Watkinson, a gentleman who has written a book to show the immorality of unbelief. Mr. Watkinson, according to the *Westminster Gazette*, has the great gift of silence. What a pity it cannot be extended to some other Methodist ministers!

Curious things are heard at some seaside places on Sundays. The "niggers" and other minstrels, and even the phrenologist, have to take a holiday, and the sands are given up to another class of performers, who fill up the time while the people are waiting for Monday. Of the singing of these performers but little is to be said. They are generally led by a lady who plays *pianissimo* on a small organ, and they usually sing gently and in slow time, as though they were afraid of offending the ears of "the one above." Of course this doesn't apply to the Salvationists. They make all the noise they can. It is one of their specialities. And when they thwack their big drum it is a signal for the discontinuance of all opposition within a mile.

But if there is nothing very noticeable about the singing of these Sunday sand-troupes, there is often something very noticeable about their preaching. For the most part it is calculated for Sunday-schools and the convalescent side of lunatic asylums. Now and then you get a rare specimen of the evangelical order. A correspondent of ours recently encountered one at Ramsgate. The preacher was extremely dull until he fell back upon personal reminiscences, and then he was extremely amusing. Years ago, he said, he was laid up helpless with rheumatic fever. He couldn't move himself in the slightest, not even a finger or a toe; and he had not slept a wink for three weeks. All his supplications to the Lord brought no relief, and at length he said to his wife: "Well, dear, the Lord isn't going to answer prayer. It is no use praying any more." But his wife said: "Don't give up; keep on praying." And at that very moment he heard a voice saying: "Put your arms under the clothes." He knew he couldn't do it, but he felt bound to try, and to his surprise his arms moved easily; and immediately they were under the clothes, his pain all vanished.

That was pretty tall, but the preacher capped it. Forgetting that prayer had restored his power of movement and banished his pain, he went on to explain the text about the Lord making the believer's bed in his sickness. "You know," the preacher said, "I couldn't move myself, not a bit. I had to be turned over in bed to get a little ease by change of position. Well, I felt somebody take hold of me and turn me over. I thought someone had come into the room to do it. I did not know it was the Lord. But I knew it when my wife told me that no one had come into the room, and that I was all alone. Well, the next time I was being turned over by the same hands, I was suddenly dropped back, and the pain I suffered was something dreadful. But when I came to think of it I recollected that a doubt crossed my mind as I was being turned over, and the Lord must have dropped me for that reason."

Our correspondent walked away at that point. He calculated that the preacher had reached the zenith. And as he walked away he felt that this evangelist, in the age of Darwinism, Board schools, railways, telegraphs, ocean steamers, and North-pole balloons, was as if a mastodon were to walk into a West-end garden party.

After all, however, it seems to us that there is still a large supply of the sort of intellect to which that sea-side evangelist appealed. So much of it, indeed, that if there were any weakening of the causes of progress, it would be quite adequate to wreck our civilization by an uprising of ignorant fanaticism.

A new American sect has arisen "way down old Virginy." They hold very similar views to the "Perfectionists" of Oneida Creek. They call themselves "Sanctificationists," and are led by a man named Joseph Lynch and a woman known as Sadie Collins. These two were compelled to flee owing to threats by the friends and relatives of those they persuaded to adopt their peculiar views with regard to free-love, and "Sanctificationists" being without sin whatever they may do. The rest of the "Sanctificationists" propose holding a big camp-meeting in order to secure converts. The farmers of the vicinity have served notices on them that their proselytizing must stop. Many churches in the district have lost heavily in membership owing to this craze, which began at Chinoteague Island, and spread to the Valley of the Chowan River in North Carolina.

Like the "Perfectionists," the "Sanctificationists" point to the Bible as the sanction of their free-love doctrines. They point to the fact that all God's favorites had concubines, that God commanded Hosea in this matter. They quote Jesus as saying there is no marriage in heaven, but that "all mine are thine and thine are mine," and Paul as saying: "It remaineth that they that have wives be as

though they had none." The old wax nose can be used to support whatever doctrines you like.

St James's Parish Church, Heywood, has been struck by lightning, much to the alarm of the Sunday-school children. A God who does not take care of his own houses will hardly protect those of poor mortals.

The number of lives lost at sea by wreck or drowning from ships registered in the United Kingdom in 1896 amounted to 1,897.

An old woman named Foster died suddenly in a Sunderland mission chapel the other night. When kneeling to pray she fell forward and expired.

The *Bombay Gazette* vouches for the following incident in connection with the recent earthquake in India. The head babu at a certain place was asked what he did when he felt the earthquake, and he replied: "Well, sir, I ran into a room where my wife and old mother were, to find them so frightened that they could not run, so I commended them to God and ran outside myself."

Mr. Bigelow, writing in *Harper's Magazine* on South Africa, does not pay a high tribute to the missionaries. "Missionaries," he says, "have done some good in so far as they have taught the blacks to respect their marriage vows and occupy themselves with productive trades. But all that they have accomplished, from the days of Livingstone down to this year of Jubilee, is small indeed compared with the evangelizing effect of one locomotive."

Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, who has spent twenty-five years in India, where she has been an inspectress of girls' schools, expresses some opinions which are calculated to abate the pride of the pious and virtuous Briton who subscribes towards missionary societies in that great peninsula, with its nearly three hundred million of inhabitants. Interviewed by Mrs. Tooley in the *Humanitarian*, Mrs. Steel says that "marriages in India are singularly happy. There are fewer cases of unkindness and violence than in this country. The Hindu has a finer idea of marriage than we have." How strange this sounds when we recollect the loud talk in Christian England about the need of the Gospel to elevate the women of India.

Spain is in a wretched condition, and the Cuban trouble seems likely to complete her ruin. Mr. J. Foreman, in the *National Review*, says that the only chance for Spain lies in abandoning her old Colonial policy, the propagation of liberal secular education among the masses, and the abolition of priestcraft. "But," he sighs, "what prospect is there of such measures being adopted?"

An English missionary, Mr. Hall, has been expelled from Madagascar as an alleged political agitator. The French mean that island to be for Mary as well as for Christ.

While some Mormons were holding a convention in Fairfield County, South Carolina, local Christians set fire to their church and burnt it up. Citizens have subscribed to build the Latter-Day Saints a larger and handsomer structure than the one destroyed.

Mrs. A. C. Stacey, of Topeka, Kansas, went to San Francisco as a delegate to the Christian Endeavor Convention. Her husband went there to look for her, and found her with another man. Whence arises the first scandal reported from the convention.

Further testimony to the virtues of the missionized Kafir! A correspondent, writing to the *African Critic* from Maritzburg on the question of the morality of the natives who have come under so-called Christian influences, is very pessimistic. His story is by no means a pleasant one, and would not be agreeable reading, say, at a mothers' meeting or an Exeter Hall demonstration.

A thief broke through and stole the contents of the poor box and some sacramental wine at St. James's, Heywood. He was caught by having so many threepenny pieces upon him, that diminutive coin being known as the Lord's offering.

Evidence was given at a Consistory Court held at Droitwich that the Rev. John Williamson had frequently been drunk at services at St. Andrew's Church, of which he is rector—at two funerals, a wedding, and a christening. A large number of witnesses were heard. Defendant, who was in an excited state, continually interrupted the witnesses, and was called to order. The Mayor of Droitwich, a surgeon, one of the prosecutors, spoke to the falling off in the church attendance, but said he had not seen defendant drunk until that day. Defendant was adjudged guilty on



all charges, and the Court adjourned for the Bishop to pronounce sentence. Defendant said he should appeal.

Twenty-six bodies of children of different ages, some of them in an advanced state of decomposition, and others which appeared to have been dead only a few months, have been found in the church of St. Peter at Seville.

Recently the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a lot of bishops and other clergy of the Church of England, held a religious celebration at Ebbsfleet in honor of the landing of Saint Augustine. Now, this saint was a Roman Catholic, and Cardinal Vaughan means to let the Anglicans know that it was a missionary of his Church who brought Christianity to England. Accordingly he has arranged for another celebration at Ebbsfleet on September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Solemn High Mass will be performed, and the affair is to be made as "impressive" as possible—that is, to people who admire ecclesiastical millinery and tomfoolery. From the business point of view, Cardinal Vaughan will decidedly score against Archbishop Temple.

According to the report of a lecture by Mrs. Besant at Chicago, that lady is now a thought-reader and a passion-reader. She says she "is able to see the auras and thought-forms of everyone she comes into contact with." Thick black clouds in the aura indicate hatred and malice. Deep red flashes show anger, but crimson indicates love. Lurid red indicates animal passions, rust color avarice, lurid gray fear, gray-green deceit, and brow-green jealousy. Orange indicates ambition, and yellow intellectuality. Blue is the best aura to have. "It indicates religious feeling, and varies very much." We suppose Mrs. Besant has a blue aura, but we fail to see what use this information is to poor creatures who cannot discern any auras at all.

When spirits differ what mortal can decide? "Tien," the spirit-guide of Mr. Morse, emphatically denies reincarnation. The spirit-guides of Allan Kardec, the leading French Spiritist, as emphatically affirm reincarnation. Swedenborg's angel-guides asserted that Jesus was Jehovah. The guides of the Rev. Stanton Moses, of *Light*, said Jesus was a great man medium; while the *Two Worlds*, in its last number (July 23, p. 493), says that "the man Jesus was not the perfectly-wise and spiritually-immaculate being his worshippers would have us believe. We have no desire to extol or belittle him, but we do want the clear, calm, plain truth. If the Bible is true, its Jesus is a human being; if it is not true, he is a myth—but he is not a God, nor a perfect man." Some spirit-guides say there is a Devil, and others deny it. One does not seem to get much forrader by resorting to spirit-guides.

The Cape Argus reports a speech of President Kruger, who related how the hand of God had been visible in driving out the enemies of the Boers, whether black or white. A minister said to him it was wonderful. But, said Kruger, it was all the work of his General. The minister thought he meant Joubert. But, said the President, "his General was the Lord Jesus Christ," who, it seems, supplies his friends with arms and ammunition.

Another Scripture prophecy fulfilled! A thirteen-year-old boy is stirring up the people of Western Nebraska by his preaching. His name is John Edwin De Merritt, and he is said to be the youngest licensed preacher in the world. He still wears knee breeches, and when not preaching has all the desire of the average healthy and well-constructed boy for baseball, marbles, and other juvenile sport.—*The Nebraska Daily Herald*.

Verily "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," etc. Penny-in-the-slot machines date from a period long before the birth of Christ. There is one in existence which is a combination of jug and slot machine. It was used for the dispensation of holy water. A coin of the value of five drachmas, dropped into the slot, opened a valve which allowed a few drops of the desired liquid to escape.—*Science Siftings*.

The Clericalist reaction, which is so powerful at the moment in Austria, is beginning to dictate measures to the Government. One day last week the meeting of the Graz Secular Society (Verein der Konfessionlos) was interrupted by the Commissary of Police, and the society is now ordered to dissolve itself. The cause of offence was a lecture given by Dr. Bruno Wille, of Berlin, upon "The Religion of Joy." Dr. Wille is a well-known disciple of the philosopher Nietzsche, the originator also of the Free Theatre in Berlin, and a great enthusiast for the plays of Ibsen and Hauptmann, which he has done much to popularize. In the foregoing week Dr. Wille had given there addresses at the Freethinkers' Congress in Vienna, whereupon loud complaints were made by the clergy and the reactionary politicians to Count Badeni. It was thought imprudent,

however, to interfere with him in a city where the Socialist population is so numerous, and where the German element would have raised an angry protest. So they waited their opportunity until the foreign propagandist could be arrested in a provincial town.—*London Echo*.

Rev. Dr. Horton writes the fourth of a series of articles in the *Sunday Magazine* on "Answers to Prayer." Naturally he doesn't compete with that imaginative gentleman, Mr. Price Hughes, who prayed for a thousand pounds and got it to the very penny. Mr. Horton's answers to prayer are of a less startling character. He tells us, for instance, that a certain town council decided to close a music hall which was exercising a pernicious influence. Somehow or other the members who had threatened opposition caved in quite unexpectedly. Nobody could explain it, until it was found that some "good women" were holding a prayer meeting at the time and begging God to get the licence withdrawn! This should be a good hint to the Puritan party. Instead of taking political or municipal action, let them turn on their women to pray, and they are sure to win hands down.

Dr. T. E. Withington, in *Cornhill*, gives some curious cases of legal proceedings against animals. At Basle, in August, 1474, a cock was publicly burnt for the diabolical crime of laying an egg, which also was burnt lest it should produce a cockatrice—one of the strange animals in the Bible menagerie, a little fiery flying serpent hatched from a cock's egg.

As late as 1731 Franciscan friars in Brazil brought an action before their bishop against a plague of ants, and the bishop solemnly read out his judgment before the ant-holes. Modern Christians will laugh at this, but in the Middle Ages it was common to excommunicate animals. When the Church of Christ triumphs people are stupid enough for anything.

Fancy Jesus giving a "garden party," with a military band in attendance, ample refreshments in a tent, and the guests mainly the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jerusalem! Yet this is what the Archbishop of Canterbury, who claims Apostolic succession, has been doing during the week. The place glittered with diamonds, and shone with expensive costumes. It was crowded with landlords, monopolists, and titled persons. And the founder of this religion was a working man—a carpenter. When shall we have an end of this ghastly hypocrisy? The Anglican Church is Mr. Worldly Wiseman masquerading in the garb of holiness—a perfect blasphemy of religion.—*Reynold's Newspaper*.

One wonders there are any who fail to see through established religion. The Church has its share of the best lauds, and the parson comes after, if not beside, the squire as the boss of the district. His ostensible function is to guide the people to heaven. His real function is to keep them in their lowly position on earth.

A Connecticut church takes up its collection by electricity. The parson touches a button when the proper moment arrives, and tiny cars run along each book board and return to a locked box at the end. The collections are lifted out after the service, and the folks who put in policemen's buttons can be very nearly identified by the arrangement.

According to the *Grimsby Daily Mail*, the vicar of Hornsea last Sunday stated that he had met a lady (an unbeliever) in Northumberland, and he had a very long talk with her. She had read, she said, all the books and literature on the subject she could obtain, and was a stronger unbeliever than she ever was. "Will you tell me," said the Rev. Mr. Little, "if you have ever given ten hours to sincere study of the other side of the question?" The lady at once admitted that she had not. We tell Mr. Little that his lady is an exceptional unbeliever. Most of them know the other side well, having both been reared in Christianity and studied its evidences. Many have become unbelievers by reading their Bibles and works on Christian evidences. If Christians would only read their own books and use their reason, the ranks of unbelievers would be largely recruited.

The *Daily Record*, of Stockton, California, sent to us by the kindness of Mr. G. J. Holyoake, gives prominence to "The Funeral of an Infidel." Mr. W. Freeman, who "died as he lived, a Materialist." He was cremated, and had prescribed a simple form of ceremony, which was followed to the letter. Nothing was done for effect, nor was any reverence made to God in the entire services. Dr. Endicott delivered a short address, in which he referred to the good deeds, good life, and acts of the deceased, and praised him for his liberality and integrity. He stated that Mr. Freeman did not believe in a future, nor had he a ghost to hamper him.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 1, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "New Sayings of Jesus from an Old Egyptian Dust Bin."

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 8, Failsworth; 15, New Brompton. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society. November 7, Glasgow.—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.

R. ALGER.—Always glad to receive such material.

DIGNIFIED.—We agree with you in a general way, but we feel sure you are mistaken in the particular case. The paragraph in the *Daily Mail* is evidently the work of an enemy. Mr. Cohen did not use "offensive language" at Chatham. The disturbance at his meeting was caused by a handful of orthodox rowdies, who have since been disowned by their co-religionists.

W. SUTHERLAND.—If you read Numbers v., you will see that "the Lord spake unto Moses," prescribing a disgusting ordeal. Would any missionary be justified in prescribing it? To those who believe in witchcraft is it not better to say at once, "There are no witches," than to speak as if they existed? Do you think missionaries justified in ordering the slaughter of idolaters as in Deuteronomy xiii. 6? Who told you that Scott recanted? Those who know him say the statement is false.

LONDON LOUDON LADDIE.—Thanks for reference. It is best to send us marked papers where possible.

F. J. BOORMAN.—(1) We never thought you would receive an answer from Sir Charles Warren. We saw him at the Home Office, at the time of the Trafalgar Square "riots," and he impressed us as a bigoted, insolent martinet. He has a great reputation for piety, and probably thinks he is doing God a service in suppressing Secular meetings on Chatham Lines. (2) You say the Chatham Branch has decided to contribute one guinea annually to the Lecture Scheme. Mr. Foote has decided to drop his Lecture Scheme, for the present, and there is no other in the field. Do you mean the Treasurer's new scheme? This, if it succeeds, will cover pretty well all the ground. (3) Pleased to hear that your Branch has spent over £90 in special propagandist work during the past four years.

W. F.—"Money, O money, thy praises I sing," which you kindly send us, apparently as an original composition, is probably older than you are. We printed it as a tract some ten years ago, and it was ancient then. We receive several copies of it in manuscript in the course of a year, and shall doubtless continue to do so, in spite of the above facts having been stated again and again.

G. KESLEY asks "Rex" and Mr. Ball to give some authority for their definitions of Agnosticism. "If," he adds, "the Ethical party and the Secular party are two wings of one army, how important it is that we should know precisely where each wing stands, and what it is doing?" Readers of the *Freethinker* must understand that the Editor is not in any way responsible for the opinions of his correspondents, whether they have their names printed or prefer to remain anonymous.

FRANCIS NEALE.—Article to hand. Shall appear in our next. Always much pleased to hear from you. Yes, there is a chaplain to Congress at Washington; his name is Milburn, and he is blind.

E. H. T.—(1) The governorship of Cyrenius is mentioned in Josephus. (2) Protestants were as bad persecutors as Catholics, only they never had quite the same chance.

F. W. SWAIN (Derby) promises to bring Mr. Hartmann's financial scheme before the local Branch, and feels certain a subscription will be raised.

J. B.—The report in *Justice* is farcical, though not surprising. Mr. Foote's speech at the Moral Instruction Conference is reported upside down, though he made his meaning perfectly clear to persons of ordinary intelligence and candor. It is amusing to hear that Mr. Foote spoke against Secular Education. Those who believe that are foolish enough to believe anything. Mr. Foote said that if candidates were not put forward on the Moral Instruction policy, it would be idle to make that policy a test at the next School Board elections. Even a Secular candidate might say: "That policy is not ripe, it is only just presented to the electors; I stand at present simply for the abolition of religious teaching"—and was it likely that the Secularists would pledge themselves not to support such a candidate? It is not true that Mr. Foote said a word in favor of the so-called Progressives. He is now, as he always has been, opposed to Church and Nonconformity alike. Moreover, he fought for Secular Education when some of his valiant critics were helping the cause of Bible-reading in Board schools.

SCOTCH LADDIE.—Your verse has merit, but it wants polish. Some of the lines do not scan. The same defect is apparent in the verse to which yours is an answer.

J. JOHNSTONE has read George Anderson's article with great interest, but he doesn't believe that wakes were ever held in Scotland.

T. DODSON, bookseller, Market Hall, Bury, asks us to let H. Bain know that he has a copy of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. We did not keep H. Bain's address, so we apprise him through this medium.

GEORGE ANDERSON calls our attention to a misprint in his communication in last week's *Freethinker*. With reference to Irish wakes he used the expression "mild debauchery," which got printed as "wild debauchery." "The two words," our correspondent says, "are so much alike, and my writing is not like type, that I see how the mistake arose."

TRUTH.—(1) Mr. Foote has repeatedly said that he never issues or accepts challenges. He is not a sportsman or a pugilist. Edwards, the black preacher, is dead. He often talked about "meeting Mr. Foote," but always backed down when the opportunity was presented. Can your Christian friend really suppose that a Secular advocate, who has debated with Dr. Harrison, Dr. Sexton, Dr. McCann, J. M. Logan, and W. T. Lee, was afraid to meet a West Indian negro, who did not possess their abilities or their advantages of education? (2) Pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* has counted for so much in your mental development.

D. T. SNOW.—No doubt a lot of good might be done by more frequent lectures at Swansea, Cardiff, and other places in South Wales. But the work cannot be carried on without funds. Let the Secular party provide the money asked for under Mr. Hartmann's scheme, and lecturing throughout the country will proceed with vigor.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Yarmouth Mercury—Daylight—Grimsby News—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—L'Etoile Socialiste—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Grimsby Daily Mail—Blackpool Gazette—Reynolds's Newspaper—Cape Argus—Literary Guide—University Magazine—Church Weekly—New York Public Opinion.

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

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

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

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

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

### SPECIAL.

#### THE TREASURER'S SCHEME.

THIS is a bad time of the year for pushing the N. S. S. Treasurer's scheme of financial reconstruction. Nevertheless the appeal must be continued now it is begun. My experience is that it takes people some time to appreciate a new thing, and longer to act in relation to it. We must therefore be patient.

The N. S. S. Executive was to have met on Thursday, July 29. I have, however, had the meeting postponed for a fortnight, in order that a larger number of letters may be submitted.

Let me repeat that what we want is a list of the names and addresses of persons who promise to subscribe anything from £100 down to 5s. annually towards the sum of £1,500 a year which Mr. Hartmann, the new N. S. S. treasurer, proposes to raise, with a view to carrying on our organization and propaganda efficiently.

Why does not the Secular party rouse itself? Hitherto almost everything has been left to the President, who has been beautifully criticized in consequence; Mr. A., who never gives anything, always wanting to know what has been done with Mr. B.'s money. This state of things ought not to continue. If it does, I shall have to reconsider my position.

During the week a few fresh promises have been received. Mr. J. J. Wyand, writing to the secretary, promises £5 annually. He hopes the valuable open-air work will be well supported, and thinks the President should be better paid than Mr. Hartmann suggests—which is generous on his part, but hardly feasible. Mr. E. Lawson promises another £5. Other promises sent to the secretary are: J. Thomas, 5s.; Hugh Thomas, 5s.; W. N. Franklin, 5s.; H. McGuinness 5s.; Mrs. McGuinness, 5s.; J. A. (Edinburgh), 10s. The last hopes that Edinburgh will not be forgotten when the scheme comes into operation.

Writing to me, a Leicestershire friend promises £2



annually. He has given most of his spare time to Socialism, but he recognises the necessity of maintaining Secularism. "Your fight is hard," he adds, "and sometimes made harder than it need be." Dr. Mortimer, Turriff, in far Aberdeenshire, promises £1 annually; Tom Beach another £1. Others are: W. Louis 5s., C. H. Gask 5s., D. T. Snow 5s., J. T. Lewis 5s., J. Williams 5s., W. Waymark 5s., J. Unsworth 5s., S. J. B. 5s., T. Dobson 5s.

We are not asking for the money at present, but for promises, so that we may see what are the scheme's prospects of success. Hundreds of these promises ought to come in during the next fortnight. They can be sent to me, or to the Secretary (Miss Vance), or Treasurer (Mr. Hartmann), at the N. S. S. Office, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C.

Mr. Hartmann himself promises £50 annually. I am surprised that no one has offered another £50. I know some Freethinkers who could give it easily. Why don't they?

G. W. FOOTE  
(President, N. S. S.)

## SUGAR PLUMS.

HAVING had a brief holiday, Mr. Foote is now resuming his platform work. This evening (August 1) he lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "New Sayings of Jesus from an old Egyptian Dust Bin." On the first Sunday in September, Mr. Foote re-opens the Manchester Secular Hall, which has been closed for repairs and decoration. Early in October he lectures and debates at Glasgow.

Mr. Cohen lectured again at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening on "Scepticism: Its Meaning and Value." Mr. A. J. Marriott, a West-end veteran, took the chair. Mr. Cohen's lecture was highly appreciated.

Mr. C. Cohen has just published through Mr. Forder an able pamphlet entitled *What is the Use of Prayer?* We hope it will have a wide circulation.

*Secular Thought*, of Toronto, in its issue for July 17, begins the publication of a Freethought novel entitled "A Man from Mars." It is by William McDonnell, of Lindsay, Ontario, author of *Exeter Hall* and *Heathers of the Heath*.

The August number of the *University Magazine and Free Review*, in "Musings after the Feast and Jubilee Charity," deals with various aspects of the late celebrations. The caustic criticism of "William the Cad" is continued. Geoffrey Mortimer's "Some Limitations of the Cultured" is, of course, well written. There is an interesting article on "Rural Life in Russia," and Edith Mote writes with spirit on "Natural Women." We should like to see the *University Magazine* give as much and as free criticism to religious as it does to social and political matters.

The controversy on "Christianity v. Agnosticism" is carried on with spirit in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. "N. M. X." contributes some thoughtful and interesting letters.

The *Literary Guide* says: "Shakespeare, by Colonel Ingersoll (R. Forder; 50 pp., 6d.), is one of the best addresses yet delivered by the distinguished American orator. It is in every sense a magnificent tribute to our national bard."

In the *Gazette and News* for Blackpool "Ariel" gives an article entitled "Why I am an Agnostic," being "The Opinions of Mr. X." who is evidently able both to clearly state and defend his views. It is satisfactory to see the taboo on Freethought gradually breaking down in the press.

The Bradlaugh Club holds its annual excursion on Sunday, August 22. The party will go by train to Broxbourne, where Mr. Bradlaugh used to fish, and to Rhy House, by train from Liverpool-street and other stations on the G. E. R. The time and other arrangements will be announced later. The tickets are one-and-six for adults and ninepence for children. A generous friend of the movement has provided a hundred children's tickets for free distribution. Those who wish to join the party should communicate with the Club secretary.

The *Literary Guide* for August gives an account of

the Rev. Dennis Hird's recent works, under the title of "Rationalism in Fiction." The lately-discovered Logia of Jesus are dealt with under the title of "The Gospel in the Dust," and Mr. Gladstone's New Gleanings are dealt with as "Out-of-Date Theology." Dr. Hommel's pretentious learning defending Hebrew tradition against modern criticism is amusingly taken off under the title of "The Ghost of Khammurabi."

The *Progressive Review*, of Chicago, is a Spiritist but non-Christian paper, whose position may be judged from the following extract: "The Church is 'tied back,' as the word 'religion' may be correctly rendered, to old, dead dogmas which the parent Church borrowed from paganism. It worships a God born of woman, like Bacchus and Apollo of the Greeks; it trembles at the name of Devil, a relic of Egyptian mythology, under the name of Typhon, the wicked brother of Osiris; its ambition is to escape the tortures of a fabled hell. Its false conception of God is at the base of the whole matter. Instead of adoring the Almighty Ruler of the universe, such as science reveals to humanity, they bow the knee to a hateful, jealous, repenting, vacillating, man-made demon, such as only a race of savages could invent."

"Atheos" and "Antipas" have been discussing Christianity and Secularism in the columns of the *Grimby News*. "Antipas" is a believer of the good old type, and the controversy should be instructive as well as amusing.

The *Truthseeker*, of New York, in its number for July 17, gives a portrait and an appreciative account of Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism.

## THE PRIESTLY TABOO.

THE "touchiness" of Roman Catholicism reveals itself absurdly in connection with a Melbourne amateur performance of a feeble comic opera—*Lelamine*, to wit. The local (R.C.) *Advocate* has "no hesitation in saying that *Lelamine* is a vile, demoralizing production, a slander on the Catholic priesthood, and an insult to Catholics generally. . . . We could wish that there were no Catholics engaged in *Lelamine*, but that shame we are spared." To the average Protestant, who was unable to discover the drift of the poor little opera aforesaid, these ravings appear pitiable. They are easily explained, however. Among the more or less inaudible mummies in *Lelamine* was one who played a priest, and the priest was dimly understood to be an uncelibate sort of person, addicted to visiting a convent by a private subway, or something to that effect. In short, *Lelamine* was an "insult to Catholics" because it put forward, in a farcically exaggerated form, the suggestion that a Catholic priest may be quite as giddy as a Protestant parson who "carries on" with the sanctimonious girl adherents of his little church or chapel. And because one grotesque priest was here supposed to do exactly as hundreds of parsons have been convicted of doing, at one time or other, official Roman Catholicism gets its holy hair off. The *Lelamine* notice for a Melbourne weekly paper was written by an Irish-blooded representative of the old faith, and the protest of this indignant critic sent the Catholic bawl rolling. Archbishop Carr, upon being appealed to, thought it "regrettable that the plot of any public opera should be based on incidents which had no foundation in fact, and which appeared to rely for their success on the anticipated prejudices of certain of the audience rather than on the merits of a plot." The celibate Archbishop took an even more foolish view of a trivial incident than his reverent "son," the Milesian pressman, had taken in the first instance. His Grace hinted that the giddy priest on the stage was a dirty, heretical device for bringing an immaculate priesthood into ignorant contempt. Such utterances put the all-round unbeliever out of patience. An outsider, honestly convinced that all religious denominations claim too much holiness for their spiritual professors, naturally objects to being asked to swallow the R. C. claims without a grain or two of salt. Numerous stage satires on Protestant parson cant are founded on fact, and laughed at by Protestants accordingly. For instance, "Dr. Cantwell" and "Mawworm" in *The Hypocrite*. But the R.C. priest and the R.C. boarding-school for girls, or convent—they must be held absolutely sacred. Why, in the name of scandalous revelations, ancient and modern!—why is the priestly denial of human nature to escape ridicule?—*Sydney Bulletin*.



## IN THE OPEN.

To those who are aware under what conditions Secularism is propagated in the metropolis, the importance of the open-air lecturing will be beyond question. In the provinces the halls usually form the chief strength of the movement, open-air lecturing being chiefly incidental, and having a secondary value; but here in London the positions are reversed, outdoor propaganda occupying the position of honor, and serving as the recruiting-ground for the indoor attendances.

This much is true of most reform movements in London, but it is specially true of Secularism. In the London parks and open spaces, thousands congregate Sunday after Sunday, anxious to hear, willing to be instructed; and although at times the harmony of the meetings is marred by interruptions from noisy followers of Jesus, wishful to publicly exhibit the strength of their lungs, the poverty of their brains, or the defects of their education, the conduct of the audiences usually leaves little to be desired. At any rate, here the people congregate, and, as Jesus said, "Wherever Christians are gathered together, there should the Free-thought advocate be in the midst of them."\* Recognising the importance of this branch of our propaganda, I have made it a rule to devote the fine summer months to the London open-air work, leaving the rest of the year to the provinces. Hitherto, although the work is far from easy—three lectures on Sunday at widely-different parts of London, besides week-night meetings, being my usual weekly dose—my policy has been fully justified by results. People who would never dream of entering a Secular hall stay to listen at an open-air gathering; and over and over again I have been informed by people that their first acquaintance with Free-thought was due to their being a chance listener at one of my meetings. And even in the case of those who listen and remain unconverted, we may piously hope that what they hear exerts a chastening influence upon their religious beliefs.

Without at all limiting the number of lectures delivered, I have this year confined my attention to a rather smaller number of stations than usual, and of the work carried on at these I have the most encouraging reports to give. In the East-end of London I have visited three places—Victoria Park, Mile-end Waste, and Limehouse. At Victoria Park I delivered my first Free-thought lecture—now nearly seven years ago—and since then I have given the place a fair share of my attention. I can remember when it required all the strength of the handful of supporters that were present to save the platform from destruction—two were actually demolished. To-day we have here a solid body of supporters large enough to check any outbreaks of that description. I notice, too, that many of those who seven years ago were strong opponents of Secularism are now quiet, well-behaved listeners, or even ardent supporters. The interruptions, which will occur at an outdoor meeting, are now confined to a mere handful of raw youths, hailing from a neighboring church club principally, whose conduct, powerless to disturb the meeting, affords it a little material for amusement. On the whole, I should say that Victoria Park is one of the best open-air stations in London, and if the N. S. S. could afford to keep a good man stationed in the East-end, an excellent organization might be worked up from the materials already at hand.

Having tried every other method—legitimate and illegitimate—to minimize the influence of our platform here, Christians recently tried what surrounding the Secular platform with rival meetings would do. As many as three religious meetings are sometimes held on as many sides of ours, with the sole result of splitting up the Christian audience into three groups.

The Limehouse and Mile-end platforms are managed by the East London Branch. Encouraged by the success of their Sunday morning meetings at Mile-end, the Branch arranged for others on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. The venture has been thoroughly successful. I lectured here every Wednesday evening in June, and found the audiences larger and more attentive on each occasion. Limehouse is a recently-opened station, and although a not very promising neighborhood, apparently, I was surprised to find the meetings here so successful that the only chance the Christian Evidencers possessed of getting a decent audience was to wait patiently until the Secular meeting had concluded. At each of these stations Mr. Loafer is indefatigable in his exertions as chairman, news-vendor, and general overseer of the meetings.

In the North of London I have lectured at Wood Green, Edmonton, and Ridley-road, Dalston. At each of these places the Free-thought lecturer is pretty sure of a quiet and respectful hearing. Edmonton has always, during my experience, been a strong station, and, under the secretary-

ship of Mr. Harwood, the meetings continue to be both moral and financial successes. At Ridley-road Mr. Simons and two or three helpers have maintained the platform under somewhat discouraging conditions; and at Wood Green, ever since a band of roughs were brought together to break up the meetings, resulting in five free-fights in as many days, the opposition has practically died out.

Hyde Park, Kilburn, and Hammersmith in the west of London, and Camberwell and Peckham Rye in the south, complete the number of stations I have lectured at since my return from the provinces in May. At each place I find pretty much the same features—audiences growing in size, interest in Secularism increasing, and the opposition becoming weaker and more trivial. At many of my meetings I noticed among the audience several clergymen; but, usually, they seem to think discretion the better part of valor, and retire silently from the field.

The only place I have lectured at outside of London during the summer has been Chatham. This provided me with the one disturbance I have had this season. I was down for two meetings at the end of June. The first went off quietly enough; so did the second, until the opposition commenced. My opponent, a member of the Christian Evidence Society, was of the usual type—only more so. He was, indeed, the most kaleidoscopic ignoramus I have met for a long time. Some people present the same dead level of foolishness right through. Not so this man; a fresh absurdity flashed from each sentence; his history was something wonderful to hear, and his antics marvellous to behold. He was supported by a crowd of raw youths, silent when their champion chanced to blunder into something sensible, yelling their loudest on all other occasions. The meeting was carried through, however, although a goodly-sized crowd followed us to the station.

Following my usual custom whenever there is any bother, I at once made arrangements for a return visit. On July 14 and 15 I returned for two more lectures. The first meeting was quite orderly and very large—the largest ever held in New Brompton. On the 15th a new feature arose. When I went down to lecture I found a sergeant-major and a guard of soldiers there, with orders from the commanding officer, Sir Charles Warren, of "Bloody Sunday" fame, and noted also as a staunch defender of the Gospel, to prevent my meeting being held on that ground. As the land belonged to the War Department, and had thus all the privileges of private property in this connection, I did not see what could be done at the time except submit. I told the officer, however, that I should inquire into the matter, and if I found that I had any right to be there, he might depend upon my being down to hold a meeting in spite of what had been said.

So far as the meeting was concerned, the order made no difference whatever. I adjourned to the other side of the road, and spoke to an enormous audience, amid perfect quietness, for nearly an hour and a quarter. A quantity of literature was distributed, and I am informed that the general topic of the district has been the four meetings I addressed there.

On the whole, I may safely say that during the seven years I have been upon the platform I have never had a more successful season in London than the present one; and if the places I have visited are fair samples of those I have not, the Secular cause in London must be making considerable progress.

The maintenance of a vigorous open-air crusade is in every way essential to our movement. It is the hardest, the least showy, but, I believe, the most important branch of our propaganda. It requires an amount of tact, discrimination, and courage that only those who are engaged in the work can fully appreciate. We reach people by this method who could not well be reached by any other; and it would be difficult to calculate how much the free-and-easy propaganda carried on in the parks has contributed to that religious scepticism which is so characteristic a feature of the present day.

Nor are we the only ones that benefit by this kind of work. What does not such bodies as the Christian Want of Evidence Society owe to our activity? Their entire being—mildly parasitic at best, vilely scurrilous at worst—is dependent upon us for an existence. But for the N. S. S. the heavens would never have resounded to the soul-inspiring cry of "Where's yer 'orspitals"; nor would the earth have shaken beneath the thunderous eloquence of the C. E. advocates. Take away from these men the supposed immorality of Secularists and the imagined obscenity of Secular writings, and their entire stock-in-trade is gone. The sparkling wit, polished epigram, profound historical criticism, courteous conduct, and brilliant scientific knowledge displayed by the advocates of the C. E. S. would never have existed but for "Infidel" activity. The poor sleepy world would have gone on its way sublimely unconscious of the genius that lay undeveloped in its midst. But such a disaster was not to be. Secularism came, and at once the Lord raised up mighty men of intellect to defend his cause, and to smite hip and thigh the pygmies of Secularism that were assailing his sacred word. History received a new

\* I find that in the Authorized Version this text runs somewhat differently; but probably a closer examination of the original, or the opportune discovery of an early manuscript by some Christian explorer, will prove the above rendering to be the more correct one.



rendering at their hands, and scientific doctrines an entirely original exposition. Professor 'Uxley and 'Erbert Spencer were shown to be devout Christians; whereas people had hitherto foolishly imagined them to be Agnostics, upon the bare authority of their written statements; while the extreme probability of a jackass having vocalized before Balaam received a living illustration from a score of Christian Evidence platforms Sunday after Sunday.

But, in spite of all, it gradually dawned upon people that an inspired creed that needs so much defending—and such defences!—must have something wrong about it somewhere. Like the old lady who understood everything in the *Pilgrim's Progress* with the exception of the notes, people found the apologies offered worse than the original article; with the result that, despite the enormous odds that Secularism has had to face in the past, and still has to fight against in the present, our platform is everywhere steadily gaining the support it deserves by the helpfulness and sanity of its teaching.

C. COHEN.

## AN AMULET.

### THE JEW AND THE VICAR'S WIFE.

THE two men shook their dusty feet as they entered the house. They were received in a private parlor, which was filled with objects of art and devotion. Very blandly did the good wife of the vicar greet them, yet with business-like condescension.

The Jew, in a very few simple words, told the story of his sister's death and the loss of the amulet. He noted the peculiar value of the amulet, and added: "I entreat that you will return it to me; for to you it can only be a paltry trinket, and to us it is like a household god."

She looked at the Jew with evident emotion.

"I cannot tell you how it grieves me to hear you speak as if you attributed to any inanimate object the saving power which belongs to God alone," she said. "Think for a moment, only think, how dishonoring such a superstition is to the Creator."

"Madam!" said the Jew in utmost surprise.

"Consider how wrong such a superstition is," she said. "What virtue can there be in a stone, or a piece of metal, or an inscription? None. They are as dead and powerless as the idols of the heathen; and to put the faith in any such thing that we ought to put in God's providence is to dishonor him. It grieves me to think that you or any other intelligent man should bow down to idols."

"Madam," said the Jew again, "these things are as we think of them. You think one way, and I another."

"But you think wrongly. I would have you see your error, and turn from it. Can you believe in the Christian faith and yet—"

"I am a Jew," he said.

"A Jew!" she exclaimed. She began to preach against that creed also, entering into a long argument.

"It would seem, madam," said the Jew, after she had talked much, "that you desire greatly to set an erring world to rights again."

"And should we not all desire that?" she asked, unconscious of the irony. "For what else are we placed in the world but to pass on to others the light that God has entrusted to us?"

"I verily believe, madam," said he, seriously, "that you think exactly what you say, and that you desire greatly to do me good. But, putting these questions aside, will you tell me if you have this ornament which I venerate?"

"Yes, I have it."

"You took it from the breast of my sister when she lay dead upon the shore?"

"I unfastened it from her neck, and have kept it with the greatest care. It was an ornament which was quite unsuitable to your sister's station in life. I could not have allowed any of our poor women to see such a valuable stone on the neck of a girl like themselves in station; it would have given them false ideas, and I am careful to teach them simplicity in dress. In England we do not approve of people of your class wearing jewellery."

The curate put his arms on the table and bowed his head on his hands.

"Be that as it may," said the Jew, rising, "I will thank you if you will give me my property now and let me go."

"I cannot give it to you." She was a little flustered in her manner, but not much. "It would be against my conscience to give you what you would use profanely. Providence has placed it in my care, and I am responsible for its use. If I give it to you, it would be tempting you to sin."

He sat down again and looked at her with wonder in his soft brown eyes. "You have had the stone taken out," he said, "and set in a ring."

"Yes, and I have given it to my daughter, so that it is no longer mine to return to you. You must be aware that the marble cross stone I set up over your sister's grave cost me

much more than the value of this stone. I am very much surprised that you should ask me to give it back. Surely any real feeling of gratitude for what I did for her would prompt you to be glad that you have something to give me in return." She paused, then harped again upon the other string. "But, under any circumstances, I could not feel justified in giving you anything that you would put to a bad use."

"That you have stolen my property does not make it yours to withhold, whatever may be your sentiments concerning it."

"Stolen! I do not understand you when you use such a word. Do you think it possible that I should steal? I took the chain from your sister's neck with the highest motives. Do not use such a word as 'stolen' in speaking to me."

"Truly, madam," he said, "you could almost persuade me that you are in the right, and that I insult you."

She looked at him stolidly, although evidently not without some inward apprehension. It was a piteous sight—the poor, distorted reasoning faculty grovelling as a slave to the selfish will.

"I cannot give you back the amethyst," she said, "for I have given it away; but if you will promise me never again to regard it as having any value as an amulet or talisman, I will give you the necklace, and I will pay you something to have another stone put in."—From "A Taint of Blood" in L. Dougall's *A Dozen Ways of Love* (Edinburgh: A. and C. Black).

## DEATH OF MRS. HARRIET LAW.

FREETHINKERS, whose minds go back to the early days of Mr. Bradlaugh, will unite with me in regret at the somewhat sudden death of Mrs. Harriet T. Law, who expired at her residence, 7 Victoria-road, Peckham, on Monday, July 19, after a short illness. Mrs. Law was one of the bravest women who ever spoke from a Freethought platform, and in her day did efficient and honorable service for the cause. She was in her sixty-sixth year.

At the time of the Reform League, when I first heard Mrs. Law, she was as energetic in politics as in Freethought. Her enthusiasm and energy were unbounded. When the Hyde Park railings fell she was the very first to hold a meeting within the park and speak in defiance of Sir Richard Mayne. At the Agricultural Hall meetings her clear, ringing voice always commanded a large audience. She was essentially a woman of the people, with ready tongue, apt and homely illustrations, and vivid wit to turn the laugh against an opponent. Those who heard her debate with the Rev. Harry A. Long, of Glasgow, can never forget the pungency of her satire. Certainly he can never forget it, or how the audience were convulsed with continuous laughter. Mrs. Law was the liveliest debater I have ever been my good fortune to listen to. She was an advocate of women's rights, when their champions were comparatively few. I remember the dressing one pietist got who told her she would be better at home nursing children than to be lecturing against Christianity. She told him of the family she had brought up, and recommended him to go home and help his poor wife nurse the baby. So sharply did she whip him with her tongue that one pitied the poor male creature. In the days when Freethinkers had to fight for the mere right of being heard, the service of such a bold woman was invaluable. Mrs. Law was one of the small brave band of the Amazons of Freethought, and worthily takes her place beside Frances Wright, Emma Martin, and Ernestine Rose. With the last-named lady she tried to put some grit into the Conference of Liberal Thinkers called by Mr. Conway in 1878.

When G. H. Reddalls, who had started the *Secular Chronicle* in Birmingham, died in 1875, Mrs. Law came forward and carried on the paper with credit to the cause until 1879. Many of the leading Freethinkers contributed to the paper while under her management, but it was never a paying success. As with Mr. Bradlaugh, I always think of Mrs. Law rather as a speaker than as a writer, for in my young days the really able women lecturers were few. When Mrs. Besant became prominent on the Freethought platform, Mrs. Law gradually edged off. Personally I much regretted this; for, from the first time I met Mrs. Law, at Cleveland Hall, until the last time, which was at Mr. Bradlaugh's funeral at Woking, I recognised in her a woman who was true as steel. Although she gave up her advocacy, she in no wise changed her opinions; and Mr. Law, her partner in thought as well as in heart for so many years, informs me that during the last two days of her life she was reading with interest and satisfaction Mr. George Jacob Holyoake's pamphlet on *Secular Prospects in Death*, being the veteran leader's address at the grave of her friend, that brave and good Freethinker, Councillor Josiah Gimson, of Leicester. This was either a coincidence, or indicates that she felt her end to be near. Mrs. Law had no more liking for doctorcraft than for priestcraft, and used



to say that there was little to choose between the mystery-men of Æsculapius and the mystery-men of Christ. It was with difficulty she was persuaded to have a medical attendant. She died from failure of the heart's action. On the Thursday previous she was taken very unwell. She gradually improved up to the time of her death, being able to take her food, and go about the house, as usual. On Monday, at four o'clock in the afternoon, she went upstairs and fainted immediately on reaching the landing; she expired a few minutes later, without recovering consciousness. Perhaps it need hardly be said that she never wavered a hair's breadth from the convictions held for nearly forty years. The funeral took place at Forest Hill Cemetery on July 23, being, at her son's desire, entirely private and silent. The day before the ceremony, however, the daughters decided to say a verse each over the grave of their mother, knowing that this tribute, from the children whom she so dearly loved, would have been prized by her above all else. When the coffin had been lowered, and her favorite flower (mignonette) thrown into the grave, the following verses were repeated:—

Calmly, calmly lay her down,  
She hath fought the noble fight;  
She hath battled for the right,  
She hath won th' unfading crown.

Kind and gentle was her soul,  
Yet it glowed with glorious might—  
Filling clouded minds with light,  
Making wounded spirits whole.

Dying, she can never die;  
To the dust her dust we give,  
In our hearts her heart shall live—  
Moving, guiding, working, aye!

Some further particulars of Mrs. Law's career and services to Freethought will appear in our next number.

J. M. WHEELER.

### BOOK CHAT.

In the *Temple Magazine* Dean Farrar, writing on "Men I have Known," mentions Bishop Colenso, of whom he says: "I was grieved to see him universally treated as if he were a pariah." The Bishop's laundress, it appears, declined to wash for him any more, "because by doing so she lost customers"; and Dean Farrar tells how, one day, after preaching a sermon in a large West-end church, he was making his way, accompanied by his friend, through the crowd of worshippers, when he heard in audible and awe-struck whispers the words, "He's walking with Bishop Colenso!"

"He told me how once, seeing an English bishop at Euston Station, the bishop, to his great surprise, advanced most cordially to meet him, and gave him a warm shake of the hand, which Colenso as warmly returned. But, alas, the next moment the English prelate said, 'The Bishop of Calcutta, I believe?' (or some other see). 'No,' replied Colenso, 'the Bishop of Natal.' The effect, he said, was electrical. The English bishop almost rebounded with an 'Oh,' and left him with a much-alarmed and distant bow, as though after shaking hands with him he needed a purifying bath."

"Future times will remember Bishop Colenso with honor and gratitude, when the names of nineteen-twentieths of his accusers have been buried in merciful oblivion. They will remember how, almost alone among Colonial Bishops, he not only devoted nearly the whole of his years to the duties of his see until his death, but also, 'with intense, indefatigable labor,' mastered the Zulu language, produced a Zulu grammar and dictionary, translated into Zulu much of the Bible (correcting inconceivably frightful errors in some small previous attempts), and, in the cause of the oppressed, braving all hostile combinations, came home only to plead the wrongs of Langalibalde, and did his best to obtain justice for King Cetshwayo."

"In his (Colenso's) book on the Pentateuch he has referred to the fact that I had been asked to write the article on 'Deluge' for Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. I wrote it, but took the views about the non-universality of the Deluge which most inquirers now hold. The editor and publishers, alarmed at this deviation from stereotyped opinion, postponed the insertion of the article, and in volume i. inserted 'Deluge: see Flood.' But even when they had got as far as 'Flood,' they had not made up their minds, and said, 'Flood: see Noah.' My article was consequently sacrificed; for 'Noah' had been already assigned to the present Bishop of Worcester. Yet, after all, Dr. Perowne (as he then was) came to much the same conclusion as myself, for he wrote 'that even the language used with

regard to the Flood itself—strong as it undoubtedly is—does not oblige us to suppose that the Deluge was universal."

\* \* \*

Miss Freer, the so-called clairvoyant who signs herself X, because her occult attainments are an unknown quantity, has, at the persuasion of that good man Stead, consented to publish her psychical experiences. It is said that Miss Freer, like Mr. Stead, is freer with her imagination than with her facts.

\* \* \*

The late Sir John Bucknill was much noticed in the papers as the originator of the volunteer movement. He deserves remembrance also for his efforts on behalf of the better treatment of the insane. His book on *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare* is an interesting one.

\* \* \*

It is noted in a postscript to Mr. F. S. Lowndes's *Bishops of the Day*, just published by Mr. Grant Richards, Henrietta-street, that a large number of the Anglican bishops followed secular professions before their ordination. Commissions in the army were held by the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of St. Helena and Colchester. Eleven American bishops served in the Civil War in the States, mostly as combatants. Several bishops have been in actual practice as lawyers, and one has been a banker. This bishop is now supposed to have given up Mammon. If so, he is an exception among our fathers-in-God.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### AGNOSTICISM AND COWARDICE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am sorry if I've trodden on the corns of "Rex" or W. P. Ball. It comes from my rude way of slinging adjectives. When I wrote "cowardly Agnosticism," I did not mean that all who call themselves Agnostics are cowards, but that there is a variety of Agnosticism of that description. I gave an illustration of one who refused to deny or affirm what I conceive to be palpable absurdities. When I wrote of lily-livered Ethical Culturists, I did not mean the term to absolutely cover the entire *genus*, but only a specific, well-marked, and painfully familiar variety, who see that Christianity is not true, but will not say it is false. Trimmers and cowards skulk round every camp. They always keep out of the fight, and come up for the spoil. The traitors are not those who point them out, but those who encourage them. "Rex" wants me to define an Agnostic. There I'm baffled. I do not know what a Christian is, but I know certain persons call themselves Christians. So others call themselves Agnostics, and seem proud of it. I always thought Agnostic meant *ignoramus*. I call myself an *ignoramus*, but I am not proud of it. PLAINSPeAKER.

### PROFANE JOKES.

A STRONG-MINDED and loquacious old lady was arguing strongly the other day for women's rights in the way of preaching, when an old deacon attempted to put her down by remarking that St. Paul once gave it as his opinion that women should remain silent in church. "Oh, did he?" retorted the old dame, sharply. "Well, that's where me and Paul differ; and if he were here I'd tell him the same to his very face."

A good cricket story is told of a certain bishop. He was batting in a local cricket-match when the bowler sent a ball very wide of the wicket. "Keep the ball in the parish!" cried the irascible prelate. The next ball sent down knocked his lordship's middle stump out. The bowler shouted, "I think that's somewhere about the diocese, my lud!"

A parish beadle was lately much exercised at the appearance of a strange old gentleman who, when the sermon was about to begin, took an ear-trumpet, in two parts, out of his pocket and began screwing them together. The beadle watched him until the process was completed, and then, going stealthily up, whispered: "Ye mauna play that here! If ye dae, I'll turn ye oot!"

An Irishman, on being asked why there was no record or trace of any of his race being found in Noah's Ark, replied that "all his countrymen at that time were very rich, and had boats of their own. And, besides, they would not sail with beasts, anyhow, as old Noah did."

The Sunday-school class was singing, "I want to be an angel." "Why don't you sing louder, Bobby?" asked the teacher. "I'm singing as loud as I feel," explained Bobby.



## 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. G. W. Foote, "New Sayings of Jesus from an Old Egyptian Dust Bin." BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15. H. P. Ward, "Jesus, the Infidel."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen. CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, C. Cohen. EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Yarns." FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, H. P. Ward, "Shall We Live After Death?" HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, A lecture. HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, A lecture. ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, Debate between Messrs. Maccock and Guest on "Should Christ's Teachings be Adopted?" KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, Stanley Jones. KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones. LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack. MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford; 7, H. P. Ward. August 4, at 8, C. Cohen. VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones. WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, H. P. Ward, "The Faith that Failed."

### COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. B. Thomson, M.G.S.B., "The New Education Bills: Governments by Priests and Parsons." DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, A Reading. OX HILL AND STANLEY (West Stanley Board Schools): July 31, at 6, J. Taylor, "Authenticity of the Scriptures." PONTYPRIDD (23 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited. SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Social Growth." At 8, probable announcement of next excursion. SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, D. R. Bowe, "The Industrial Outlook."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11.15, W. Thompson, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 1, m, Camberwell; a, Peckham Rye. 8, m, Mile End; a, Victoria Park; e, Edmonton.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—August 8, m, Camberwell; a, Peckham Rye. 22, a, Peckham Rye. 22, m, Wood Green. 29, Edmonton.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—August 8, a, Harrow; e, Kilburn. September 19, e, Hammersmith. 26, m, Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—August 1, m, Wood Green; a, Finsbury Park; e, Bradlaugh Club. 8, m, Limehouse; a, Peckham Rye. 15, m, Clerkenwell Green; e, Bradlaugh Club. 22, m, Mile End Waste; a, Harrow-road. 29, m, Camberwell; a, Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—August 1, m, Limehouse; e, Clerkenwell Green. 15, m, Camberwell; a, Peckham Rye. 22, Limehouse. 29, m, Mile End. September 5, e, Clerkenwell Green. 12, m, Kingland. 19, m, Camberwell; a, Peckham Rye. 26, m, Mile End; a, Finsbury Park. October 17, m, Camberwell.

## POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Binford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

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