

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

## THE BIBLE IN BOARD SCHOOLS.

WHEN a Nonconformist deputation waited on Lord Salisbury, a year or so ago, he told them that he was not surprised at their wishing to maintain the existing religious instruction in Board schools, as it was Nonconformist religion that was taught there. Mr. Price Hughes and other Nonconformist representatives called this a cynical insinuation. Yet it appears to us that Lord Salisbury was essentially right. If it is not exactly Nonconformist religion which is taught in Board schools, it is the religion which it suits Nonconformists to have taught. It is the irreducible minimum on which their various sects are agreed, first as among themselves, and secondly in view of their common enemy, the Church of England. They feel, if they do not see, that if dogmatic religious teaching is once introduced it will soon have a Church of England color, since the Church party is not only overwhelmingly strong in comparison with any single Dissenting body, but probably strong enough to beat them all collectively.

The struggle between "Moderates" and "Progressives" in London, the great centre of this warfare, is in our judgment a fight between Church and Chapel. Of course it would not do for either side to say so plainly, since a large body of outsiders—mere citizens, and persons who will take no part in open religious quarrels—have to be judiciously considered. In this case, as in so many others, the public label does not accurately denote the private intention. One side calls itself "Moderate" because that is a good name with one-half the public; the other side calls itself "Progressive" because that is a good name with the other half of the public. But the "Moderates" do not mean to be moderate, if they have the chance of being otherwise; and the "Progressives" do not mean to progress, for they flatly declare that the Compromise of 1871 is the topmost summit of practical wisdom.

Between or beyond these two great parties, which are undoubtedly at present in possession of the field, stands the much smaller but ever-growing party of Secular Education. This party holds that the State, including the Municipality, should have nothing whatever to do with religion, either by way of support, patronage, or protection. Religion is a private question; besides, it is a matter of opinion, and of infinite diversity of opinion. Once allow religion to be taught by State servants in State institutions, and the question must sooner or later arise, What is the *true* religion? To let the State servants teach what they please is sheer chaos. Now when this question arises, it can only be answered in one of two ways: either by appealing to a clear and universally recognised authority, or by counting heads. The first method is impracticable, because no such authority exists; and the second is a tremendous absurdity. Counting heads is the modern way of deciding what shall be done at a given time and in given circumstances, and what is done by it to-day may be undone by it to-morrow. But counting heads to determine truth and error is the most stupid device that ever occurred to a bovine imagination.

Properly all the Nonconformists should support Secular Education. Dr. Parker still advocates this policy. He sees no difference between established religion in State churches and established religion in State schools. Nor do we, except that the latter is the worse of the two; for the law allows grown-up people to stay away from church, while it compels children to go to school.

No. 851.

The Church party is striving to introduce what it regards as true religion in the Board schools. The Nonconformist party is striving to stave off this difficulty by supporting the Compromise. It wants to keep the Bible in the schools as a religious text-book. But there is just as much disagreement about the Bible as about the various dogmas of Christianity. Those who deny this are reckless or ignorant. One might safely challenge the Christian sects in England to formulate a definite view of the Bible which they all hold in common. Moreover, the Bible is objected to by thousands of Freethinkers as an unfit book for children. Not only does it present false old views of man's origin, position, and destiny, but its morality is often imperfect and sometimes barbarous, while its ethical sanction is entirely supernatural. Further, the Bible contains many passages, and some whole chapters, which no minister would dare to read out to a mixed congregation; passages of gross expression, of bestial narrative, of prurient suggestion. Even if religious teaching were allowable in Board schools on the most certain grounds of fairness and justice to all sections of the community, these objections to the Bible as a text-book would still stand, and especially the last objection, which is the concern of every parent who would guard his children's minds from pollution.

Referring to this matter recently, we pointed out that there are worse things than the Apostles' Creed, inasmuch as bestiality is worse than absurdity. At a meeting of the Metropolitan Free Church Federation, a speech was made by the Rev. Dr. Clifford, in which he accused the Church party of wanting to "divest the religious instruction of its simple Biblical character." Whereupon we expressed an objection to Board school children reading about "Judah and Tamar, and Onan, and Lot and his daughters, and the Levite and his concubine, and the amours of Solomon, and the bawdy adventures of Aholah and Aholibah." Our paragraph met the eye of Dr. Clifford, who has written us the following letter:—

"SIR,—In reference to your notes on the reading of the Bible in Board Schools, permit me to say that the children are only introduced to 'selections' of Scripture suited to their age and capacity. I enclose a copy of the selections; and I think you will be prepared to allow that they offer some of the finest poetry, of the loftiest ethics, and of the most inspiring history the literature of the world contains. I should resist as strongly as yourself the reading in our schools of the passages to which you refer. Believe me, this is not a quarrel between Churchmen and Dissenters. It is a fight of a 'priest' party against the citizenhood of the metropolis. If I thought I was to gain anything for *myself* by it, I would not utter another word. The aim of the 'priest' party is to destroy the schools of the people; to take away their democratic elements; and that I shall resist as long as I can.—Yours truly,

"JOHN CLIFFORD."

We will deal with the second half of this letter first. We have no wish to suggest that Dr. Clifford desires to gain anything for *himself*. We do not doubt his honesty. But is he absolutely free from the bias of his profession? The doctor who wants to see one's children vaccinated is personally honorable, but he may unconsciously be prejudiced in favor of a lucrative practice. With regard to the "priest party," we have to say that every Christian minister is a *priest* in the eyes of Secularists as far as he aims at a public privilege for his religion. Nor can we quite see how the triumph of the Church party would destroy the "democratic elements" in the "schools of the

people," any more than the triumph of the Nonconformist party. In either case, the question of Bible reading *versus* the Apostles' Creed does not seem a particularly democratic issue.

We will now deal with the question of Bible "selections." Dr. Clifford says that they are suited to the children's "age and capacity." But we suspect that this is a euphemism for their "innocence." Anyhow, we must ask why "selections" are necessary, if the Bible is the Word of God—and it is surely presented as such in the religious instruction. Thomas Paine said that no system could be true which shocked the mind of a child; and can a book be inspired if it contains passages that have to be carefully concealed from boys and girls? And, after all, is there any success in this policy of concealment? The Bible is placed in children's hands in its entirety. It is not expurgated. What is not read out to them, they can read for themselves. We dare affirm, not from hearsay, but from personal knowledge, that the more than questionable parts of the Bible are eagerly read and freely canvassed by children. Dr. Clifford was once a boy himself. Let him lay his hand upon his heart, and say whether he admits or contests our affirmation.

Both in America and in England men have been found guilty of obscenity for copying by no means the worst of Bible-texts on postcards. Is it fair, is it honest, is it decent, to place the book containing such texts, and *worse* texts, in the hands of children? We ask for a candid reply.

With regard to the "selections" sent us by Dr. Clifford, we have first to notice that they are printed as a leaflet by the Progressive School Board Election Council. Such a leaflet precludes the possibility of honest co-operation with the "Progressives" by Jews, Atheists, Agnostics, Secularists, and Freethinkers. And if Mr. John Burns is still the president of that Council, as we believe he is, we should like to know how he reconciles this leaflet with his own convictions.

These "selections" are really the Syllabus of Lessons for 1897-98, approved by the London School Board, and "which the Progressives do not wish to disturb." There is a special division for each of the seven standards. Every one of them begins with "the Lord's Prayer." Now on the face of it this is a theological document. Who is the Lord? Jesus Christ? And who is he? The Son of God—or, to put it more technically, God the Son. This is what the "Progressives" wish to teach the children; yet they exclaim against the Church party for wanting to emphasize "the deity of Christ."

"God tempteth no man," we read in one part of the New Testament. Nevertheless, children are to pray to this same God, "Lead us not into temptation." They are told that their father is in heaven, when he is probably at work, earning the family dinner. They are taught to ask God for their daily bread, though thousands attend school with half-filled or empty stomachs. Some of them, too, may read in the newspapers that poor humble Christians, like the Peculiar People, are liable to imprisonment for relying on the efficacy of prayer. And the only part of the Lord's Prayer which has the least ethical pretension is "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"—a principle which Christians do not act upon, and which ought in practice to be beyond the "age and capacity" of Board school children.

These "selections" offer what Dr. Clifford calls "the most inspiring history." Let us see. There are "lessons from the life of Moses," who is probably as legendary as Lycurgus. "Lessons from the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," who are doubtless as legendary as Romulus and Remus. "Lessons from the lives of Samuel and David," when the man after God's own heart was one of the last persons whom we should wish our boys to imitate. On the whole, we consider Plutarch far more "inspiring." And why go back to these ancient, disputable Jews, when there is "inspiring history" enough in the authentic records of more civilized nations?

"Finest poetry" is largely a matter of taste and opinion. We admit that the Bible contains some fine poetry, a good deal of which seems due to the English of the Authorized Version; but we did not understand that it was as a poetry-book that the Bible was introduced in the Board schools.

"Loftiest ethics" is a rather more definite phrase, although the adjective leaves room for great diversity of taste and prepossession. But we must reserve our criticism on this head till next week.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## CHRISTIANS AND HEATHENS.

WHEN very young, I not only held that Britons "never, never, never shall be slaves," but proudly regarded my country as the friend of freedom all over the world. In my idea its mission was that of the humane emancipator and elevator of the race. I rejoiced to think that my heart throbbed in unison with that of my country, with regard to Garibaldi in Italy, and Lincoln in the United States. Study of history brought horror at the shameful treatment of the heathen nations wherever Christian civilization extended its sway. The brutal conduct of the Spaniards in Mexico, the West Indies, and Peru, and of the Portuguese in Brazil and India, might perhaps be accounted for by the fact that they were Roman Catholics. But the Jamaica massacres gave me a rude shock, and *Max Havelaar* opened my eyes to the fact that similar cruelties and injustice had been perpetrated by the Protestant Dutch in Java. Herman Melville's works showed, too, how the missionary business was made the cloak for greed and tyranny in the South Sea Islands. It was with sorrow I learnt, especially from natives of India, that my ideal England was non-existent to the other inhabitants of this globe, and that, so far from being the apostle of freedom, it was regarded as pre-eminently the aggressive spoliator, whose career had been mainly one of force and fraud.

Wholesale accusations of any kind are usually unjust as well as useless; but there is very much in our treatment of the native races which have come under our sway that should make us chary of expatiating on the iniquity of other nations. Quite recently Lord Wolseley declared at Glasgow that "our army, alone of all armies, is almost always at war somewhere or other." And the reason given was that "Year after year the necessities of our empire and the aggressions of frontier tribes force Britain to fight." Our Commander-in-Chief appears to be a subtle humorist, with the picture he calls up of bloodthirsty tribes compelling a peace-loving nation to take their lands in the interests of peace. But what would be the version of the same frontier tribes? Methinks they might give us a picture of a powerful, well-armed people, ever encroaching on other people's lands, ever filching from them fresh territory. Only occasionally does the other side find a voice. In the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. H. Fox Bourne, author of *The Story of Our Colonies*, a careful and responsible writer, tells of the disgraceful treatment of the natives of Bechuanaland. He declares that, having been expelled from their coveted reserves by force of arms, the majority of the survivors have been left to starve, or die of their wounds and diseases in the inhospitable deserts of the country, while the prisoners have been made virtual slaves, "contracts" having been forced upon them which make them veritable serfs in everything save name. This is not a solitary instance. The treatment of the Kanakas in Australia and the South Sea Islands, where Christian merchants still go "blackbirding"—as the trade in human lives is euphemistically called—the extermination of the Hottentots and Bushmen, the degradation of the Kaffirs in Africa, and the extermination and degradation of the Maories in New Zealand, tell the same tale.

It is far more true to say that Christianity exterminates the heathen than that it converts and civilizes them. It insists on habits which are unsuited to them. They are compelled to wear clothes; become no whit more modest, but do become more susceptible to cold and disease. It introduces virtues and vices with which they were before unacquainted. The virtues are hard to acquire, but the vices are easily picked up. Missionary reports are full of assurances of the prevalence of piety and the signal triumphs of divine grace among the converted heathen. But secular travellers tell another tale. Their testimony in India, Africa, and Australasia is that a Christianized native is a native spoiled—one who is pretty sure to have acquired Christian vices, while losing simple native virtues. In parts where the Anglo-Saxon can colonize the natives are being exterminated by disease and drink. The process seems one which it is difficult to avert, but it is nonetheless deplorable. Sir Richard Burton, and many other eminent African travellers, have given their testimony that the evils of the slave trade were not greater than those produced by drink introduced by Christian traders; that Islam with temperance and the curse of slavery is not so bad as

Christianity with the curse of drunkenness. In China the inhabitants at least ascribe the curse of opium to Christian influence. Wong Chin Foo, the Chinese writer of "Why I am a Heathen" in the *North American Review*, said:—

"When the English wanted the Chinaman's gold and trade, they said they wanted 'to open China for their missionaries.' And opium was the chief—in fact, only—missionary they looked after when they forced the ports open. And this infamous Christian introduction among Chinamen has done more injury, social and moral, in China than all the humanitarian agencies of Christianity could remedy in two hundred years. And on you Christians, and on your greed of gold, we lay the burden of the crime resulting; of tens of millions of honest, useful men and women sent thereby to premature death after a short, miserable life, besides the physical and moral prostration it entails, even where it does not prematurely kill! And this great national curse was thrust on us at the points of Christian bayonets. And you wonder why we are heathen!"

Dr. Robert Needham Cust testifies in the current *Asiatic Quarterly Review* that the condition of the people of Africa under the discreditable game of grab, carried on, at their expense, by France, Germany, and England, has been such that "the sufferings of Armenia under the Turk are as nothing in comparison." The entire population of at least one hundred and thirty millions has been injuriously affected. But I must cite Dr. Cust, and let him take the responsibility of his own words:—

"Attila and Genghis Khan could not have done worse than these nominal Christian states. Murder, confiscation, rapine, have been the results. Deception and diplomacy have been the machinery. Lust of land and gold have been the motive power. What a mockery it seems with one hand to stop the deportation of slaves, and with the other to introduce millions of casks of alcoholic liquors! One missionary reports his landing from a ship with ten thousand gallons of alcohol. Lord Salisbury is credited with the assertion that the settlement of religious missionary bodies in a region to which they had come to preach the gospel helped to make up the proof of the occupation of the region, which was required to justify a claim to its sovereignty! Treaties were made by missionaries, scientific explorers, designing speculators, and the chief who put his mark to a treaty knew not what he was doing; the brandy bottle was placed generally by his side, and the pen put in his hand: he often, in ignorance, assigning the same lands to rival adventurers.

"Throughout there was an utter neglect of the interests of the unhappy population; they were to be saved indeed from deportation across the Atlantic to a country into which men of the same blood have developed into nine millions of freed men (citizens of the United States) in a stage of European culture; they were to remain at home and be slaves there, to see their lands and cattle confiscated, their villages destroyed; their chieftains, like poor Bushiri, hung by the Germans; their women, as in the Cameroons, flogged by the 'most cultured' Europeans, or worse. The missionaries of different churches and denominations flock in, and become a portion of the conquering race; one missionary near Lake Nyanza is said to have actually hanged a man—another missionary near Victoria Nyanza to have burned a village—some sections of Christians actually wage war with other sections. Things are done which would be deemed to be impossible out of Pandemonium; and yet this is complacently described as the advance of civilization and Christianity."

The pretext of colonization can no more apply to Central and Northern Africa than to India. We can neither kill out nor replace the dark races in torrid regions. But we can make their lives miserable, or help to make them brighter. It is in vain to speak of the benefits of colonization in equatorial regions. But that is no reason they should not have the benefit of civilization. The national conscience needs quickening in this matter. There used to be a British and Foreign Aborigines Protection Society; but I have seen no evidence of its existence for a long time. Races that have for ages elaborated a social polity of their own are being stamped out before even an attempt is made to understand them. Our missionaries go to them with an intolerant faith, claiming exclusive possession of truth, and with a fetish book which warrants the extermination of idolaters. What wonder that the heathen are treated as little better than noxious animals. How different it might be if missionaries were simply bent on improving the secular lives of the heathen, instead of preparing them for kingdom come.

J. M. WHEELER.

## CHRISTIANS IN CONGRESS.

(Concluded from page 708.)

FROM what we wrote in our article upon this subject last week, it will be seen that the "National Protestant Congress" was composed of the usual self-satisfied believers in Christian theology. They seemed to be impressed with the notion that their views of Christianity must be correct, and that those who entertained opposite opinions were necessarily wrong. This has been the great mistake always made by the orthodox party. Its members have assumed that they possess "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Throughout the entire proceedings of the Congress these enthusiastic Protestants claimed to be the only true interpreters of Christ and the Bible, while they condemned Roman Catholics, in language both offensive and unjust, as being in error without one redeeming feature, and as carrying on a propaganda cruel and pernicious. Now, who made these Protestants the sole judges of what Christianity is? Have not Roman Catholics, or Secularists, a right to form their opinions as to the meaning of the Bible, and the teachings ascribed to Christ? True, the Catholics say that the Church is necessary to explain the Bible, and that priestcraft is indispensable to their religion. And they consistently act upon their avowal. The Protestants deny both of these allegations, and yet they act upon them. Priestcraft has shown its "pernicious influence" among the followers of Luther; and their Church has more than once dictated what were the doctrines of the Bible. Within the Protestant ranks personal opinion has often had to yield to ecclesiastical decisions.

The fact is, "private judgment," with Protestants, means their judgment; and sad indeed has been the fate of those who differed from them. Buckle has stated that in Sweden, "which is one of the oldest Protestant countries in Europe, there is not occasionally, but habitually, an intolerance and a spirit of persecution which would be discreditable to a Catholic country." The same might have been said of Scotland before Freethought exercised its humanizing influence upon the orthodox mind there. The Christian writer, Dr. Dick, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, writes: "Notwithstanding the unjust and cruel sufferings which English Protestants endured from Popish priests and rulers, a short period only elapsed, after they had risen to power, before they began, in their turn, to harass their Dissenting brethren with vexatious and cruel persecutions, and fines and imprisonments, till they were forced to seek for shelter in a distant land" (pp. 367 and 368). In 1611 two men—Legat and Wightman—were publicly burned by English bishops for holding heretical opinions, (Buckle, vol. i., p. 316). Passing over the horrors of the Star Chamber, the murder of Servetus, the persecutions in Switzerland, the imprisonment by Protestants in the seventeenth century of sixty thousand of their co-religionists, we come down to our own times, when Freethinkers, such as Carlile, Hetherington, Watson, Southwell, G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote, and others, were imprisoned for exercising the right of private judgment. Truly did Buckle write: "The Protestants, who professed to take their stand on the right of private judgment, became early in the seventeenth century more intolerant than the Catholics, who based their religion on the dictates of an infallible Church. This is one of the many instances which show how superficial is the opinion of those speculative writers who believe that the Protestant religion is necessarily more liberal than the Catholic."

These facts—and there are many more of a similar kind that could be cited—ought to convince the members of the Protestant Congress of the folly of indulging in such dogmatic statements as they did at Blackburn. Judging from the speeches made at that assembly, the rev. gentlemen had no special intellectual qualifications to justify the superior attitude they assumed. The language used was not that of scholars or dispassionate reasoners, but rather the declarations of local preachers, and the exultations of contented believers in things as they are. All progress in Biblical criticism was ignored, and all scientific discoveries were discredited. For instance, the Rev. J. Urquhart, in speaking of the Bible and science, said: "God has been wonderfully confirming the Bible, for many discoveries show that it is the Bible which is scientific, and these scientists are unscientific." To support his allegation this

Rev. "Second Daniel" contended that the Bible statement as to the Flood and the age of man upon the earth is perfectly true. He says there was "a great flood over the whole earth, and of recent date"; and that "many eminent geologists" put the age of the human race on the earth to about "seven thousand years." This is the kind of milk which these clerical nurses provide for their theological babes. It is fortunate that, as he says, "the Higher Criticism is undermining the faith of many." And such erroneous statements as those made by the rev. gentleman will not stop the process. We should be interested, however, to know where are the records of "a recent great flood that was over the whole earth"; also, who are the "eminent geologists" who allege, as a fact, that man's first appearance on the earth was "seven thousand years ago." These are the wild imaginations of men whose theology is more potent than their regard for historical and scientific evidence.

We have not space in the present article to deal with the question of Bible and science, further than to say that we are prepared to demonstrate that the antiquity of man has been proved to be considerably greater than the Bible alleges; geology has demonstrated that the world existed thousands of years before the time of creation as stated in the Jewish account; the theory that all mankind descended from one primeval pair is now given up as unreliable; the astronomy of the Bible has long been exploded; the universal flood as mentioned in Genesis finds no scientific supporters; the possession of devils by the human body, as believed in by Christ, is regarded as an exploded superstition; the teaching of the New Testament, that the world and its contents are to be destroyed by fire, has but few believers; a burning hell for the "wicked souls of the departed" is deemed too revolting and absurd to be regarded as more than a fiction; hence science has practically killed the belief in the Devil, and firmly closed for ever his supposed illuminated habitation. The Bible teaches that mankind has degenerated from a state of perfection; science, on the contrary, indicates that the career of man has been progressive, and that each age, profiting by experience, has been superior to its predecessor. The Bible affirms that at a certain command the sun and moon stood still; science declares that such an event could never have happened. The Bible asserts that all the kingdoms of the world were visible from a certain high mountain; geography teaches that there are many parts of the world totally invisible from any one elevation. The Bible says that an iron axe floated on the surface of the water; experience proves this to be impossible. In almost every field the "sacred writings" appear to be the very antithesis of the teachings of science.

There were a few important concessions made at the Congress which we think will not be appreciated by the Christian exponents who have been recently debating the claims of their faith. The Rev. Dr. Wright stated: "The point we stand on is that Christ endorsed the Old Testament." This is more than Christ's polemical defenders of to-day have the courage to do; for in all our discussions with Christian ministers they have insisted that the Old Testament should not be brought into the debate. The book is regarded by them to be good enough to preach from; but to attempt to discuss its contents in connection with Christianity is too much, even for them. And yet it is the basis of the Christian faith, for without it Christianity falls to the ground. The Rev. Dr. Giles observes, in his *Hebrew Records*: "Christianity and Judaism are inseparably united; neither can exist without the other; .....they must maintain their ground or fall together..... All that gives to it [Christianity] the character of a Divine revelation becomes destitute of meaning until they are explained by the antecedents of the Jewish Scriptures, concerning the temptation of Eve, the fall of Adam, and his rejection from Paradise" (Introduction, pp. 18, 19).

Again, at the Congress the Rev. D. M. B. Chapman alleged: "There is probably no one who knows better the value of the Bible than the Devil. He has ever stood against it. He cannot stop it spreading now, so he tries to nullify it." This is a frank admission of the existence of a personal Devil—an admission, by the way, that will not, we venture to think, be endorsed by the more "advanced" Christians. Probably it is true that, if the Devil exist, he does not know the value of the Bible—at least, to him. Its perplexing and contradictory character is so difficult to understand that but few, if any, can grasp its meaning;

and, therefore, if belief in it is necessary to salvation, the Devil has no fear that the book will deprive him of many residents in his warm habitation. Another peculiar statement at the Congress was made by Dr. Grattan Guinness, who, in speaking of the Christian Church, said that before the time of Luther the "Church was where it ought to have been—in the wilderness." Now, the Rev. T. Theodore Hitchens, referring to the unfortunate period of "the Dark Ages," pointed out that "it was found in the history of those four hundred years preceding the Reformation, when the Church was paramount, and popes ruled Europe's kings and people, and the Bible was hidden in dusty libraries, comparatively unknown and unread, morality and spirituality were at their lowest ebb." It appears strange to us that God should have allowed the "true Church" to have remained in the "wilderness" doing nothing, while a "false Church" was producing such disasters among his people. But "God's ways are not our ways," and it is fortunate for the world sometimes that they are not.

CHARLES WATTS.

### THE SCHOOL BOARD "COMPROMISE" AND MORAL INSTRUCTION.

EXCEPT for the sake of convenience in public discussion, it is absurd to speak of the School Board "Compromise." The system of teaching known as the Compromise is not a middle way between opposed methods. It is not a treaty of peace between rivals. It is Christian orthodoxy, naked and unashamed. It embraces objectionable ethics, out-of-date sociology, ignorance of history, ignorance of science, and ignorance of the true character of the Bible. Whoever supports the Compromise supports a bad plan of education. The Moderate party supports this bad plan; and the Progressive party supports it. The Moderates and the Progressives fight each other with toy swords. They are practically united in the interests of a common folly. Neither party deserves the vote of rational electors. If Mr. Athelstan Riley were again standing as a candidate, and if I lived in his division, I should feel half inclined to plump for so frank and honest a Churchman. He believes in the Christian religion, and wants it taught in the most finished ecclesiastical form. I am quite sure some of the Progressives do not believe in orthodox Christianity. Yet they are maintaining orthodox teaching. They have neither Mr. Riley's faith nor his sincerity.

The only effective means of ending the wrangle over the Compromise consists in the secularization of the schools. All the school time should be placed under the control of the Education Department. Nevertheless, the old issue between Christianity and purely secular instruction is likely to yield to another phase of agitation. The Moral Instruction party has appeared. Of course, the movement is too young to appreciably affect the current School Board contest. But it will assuredly grow, and, in due time, it will change the balance of educational parties. This new party says that morality should be the chief aim of the school life. It demands that ideas of duty and of citizenship should form the centre-point of the teaching, and that theology should be shut out. In other words, it works for such a system of secular and moral teaching as might obtain the assent of all members of the commonwealth, whether Freethinkers, Churchmen, or Dissenters. It ought to obtain their assent because it will encircle elements of ethics common to all schools of thought. These elements are self-mastery, self-reliance, truthfulness, gentleness, good habits, industry, honesty, honor, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, art, music, and refinement of pleasures.

With all its faults, it may be admitted that the present plan of religious teaching does comprise good moral features. In a haphazard way the children are already taught certain useful moral lessons. The good portion of the instruction is too small, and it is more or less spoiled by conjunction with a hopeless theology. But the question arises, Ought the Moral Instruction party under any circumstances to maintain the Compromise on account of its moral elements? In giving an answer to this question, I speak only for myself. My answer is: No; under no circumstances ought we to support the Compromise. But suppose advanced Churchmen should attempt to introduce a more highly developed system of dogma. Suppose they desired to add the Apostles' Creed, etc., to the Com-

promise. Ought not the Moral Instruction party to stand up for the present system as better than a more sacerdotal one? I say, No; one system is as bad as the other. Both include belief in miracles; both found morality upon divine commandments; both imply the false principle of salvation through a Messiah, instead of through self-discipline and social co-operation. In the presence of such glaring errors we ought not to display a shadow of concern for the nominal differences between the Apostles' Creed party and the "unsectarian" party.

But does not the Moral Instruction party advocate a gradual introduction of the secular ethical lessons? Yes, it does. And why gradual? Why not immediate? Because such a sudden reform is both impracticable and undesirable. It is undesirable in view of the fact that teachers are not yet prepared to undertake the proposed method. For centuries past children have been educated on a theistic basis. Not all at once can educators throw over old traditions. We must give them opportunities for training. And again, the immediate abolition of the Compromise is impracticable. The public does not care much for theology, but it will not yet consent to fling theology out of the school, because it imagines theology is necessary to morals. Very well, we must begin converting the public; we must convert the teachers; we must convert the School Board. Freethought will do this. Orthodoxy will invoke the name of God, and will lose. Freethought will invoke the name of Humanity, and will win.

For the sake of argument, however, let us assume the Compromise could be all at once stroke voted out of existence. Would moral instruction be in peril? No; for at once all good educationists would turn to the Education Department. Not many people seem to see the significance of the fact, but it is undoubtedly the case that the Government Code already provides for non-theological ethical teaching. Article 101b of the Code states that the inspector, in recommending grants, "will have special regard to the moral training and conduct of the children." In the "Revised Instructions" to Inspectors (1897) various motives are catalogued as having prompted alterations in recent annual Codes, and among these is named the following: "To emphasize, by means of a special and graduated grant for discipline and organization, the importance of conduct and moral training as essential factors of the success or usefulness of a public elementary school." That is the key to the situation. Our object must be, step by step, to drive out theology; and, step by step, to build up a sound ethical system upon the foundation already laid in the Codes which the Department, year by year, presents to "both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty." I am very well aware that the Inspectors, perhaps acting under the impression that the theological instruction amply secures moral training, have hitherto given inadequate attention to the ethics of the schools. If it were not so, there would be no need for a Moral Instruction League. But my point is that, even if the Compromise were to disappear to-morrow, the secular Education Code provides the germs of the reform which we desire, and which we shall some day secure.

F. J. GOULD.

### TO SKY-PILOTS AND DEVIL-DODGERS.

In the Old Testament there was no revelation to the Jews about a future life; it was a matter still in doubt at the time of Christ's advent on the stage of earth. The Pharisees and Sadducees were divided on this point; the former asserting, the latter denying, a future life. It was reserved for what is now styled the Christian dispensation to distinctly assert the reality of a future life in another existence after death.

In early youth I was compelled to listen to, and absorb as my natural food, the story of the fall of man, of inherited original sin, of the consequent inherent and universal depravity of the human race; the statement that "all men are sinners"; that "there is none righteous, no not one"; that "all men have come short of the glory of God." What a reflection on the character of the power that created them all—bad to start with! I was told that all mankind was, in consequence, condemned to eternal destruction in a place called hell, expressly prepared for their accommodation by that old Jew God, now appearing in a new character as the Christian God. I thought I ought

to have been consulted before I was born as to whether I cared to put on this mortal coil, and to exist in a universe under the tyranny of such a deity.

Now, as I was saying, this old Jew-God comes out again in a sort of second edition in the New Testament, considerably changed for the worse; for, not content with ill-using his creatures in this life, this New Testament Deity super-adds the misery of a future existence. You understand, having created them, he knew how they would behave, and so got hell ready for them. What a monstrous outrage on common sense is this silly priest's story! What a palpable lie! Don't you think, if this story were true, or if Christians really believed it, that every Christian married couple begetting a child commit a crime, knowing the child might go to hell?

Even death, we are told, came into the world only by sin. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans v. 12). This text has long ago been proved to be false by geology, which shows that man has lived and died on this earth during hundreds of thousands of years, and that other animals, birds, reptiles, fish, and still lower forms of life, have lived and died, in countless myriads of millions, many hundreds of thousands of years before man appeared on this earth. Had man and all the lower forms of life not successively in their generations disappeared, there would have been no room left for the existence of their progeny; and, also, a most fatal bar to improvement, both physical and mental, would have existed, which, by the law of death, is effectually removed.

In Genesis iii. 16 we are told that the pains of childbirth are a direct consequence of Eve's transgression; and so, when chloroform was first used in midwifery, its employment was denounced by the stupid priests and parsons of that day as an attempt to thwart the divine will. Is not all this disgraceful ignorance and fanaticism, and also inhuman and revolting?

### BOARD SCHOOLS.

How dare you put this Bible, containing all these horrid dogmas about miracles, witchcraft, human sacrifices, hell, etc., into the hands of young children? How dare you commit the vile outrage, which you do commit when you insist upon your atrocious, cruel, and absurd superstition being forced upon the tender, unformed mind of youth? How dare you put the Bible, without any reserve, into the hands of those who are not old enough to think for themselves, and therefore totally unable to defend their innocent ignorance and simple intelligence against all the absurd nonsense and all the obscenities contained in your so-called sacred Scriptures, you being perfectly aware all the time that such stories as that of Lot and his two daughters abound in that savage, barbarous, old collection of books called the Bible, and that such phrases as "he went in unto her, and she conceived and bare a son," etc., abound in the Old Testament? As some of your parsons are sufficiently impudent to deny the facts above stated, I must refer the reader to the following passages as samples: Leviticus xviii. 6-23; Numbers xxv. 6-8; Deuteronomy xxii. 13-30. Numbers xii. describes a gross injustice done by God to Miriam; Aaron, equally guilty, escaping. Deuteronomy xxv. 11 and 12; Judges iii. 15-22. Really there are some very peculiar—not to say comically gross and dirty—stories in your Bible. Finally, we have a very peculiar command in Deuteronomy xxiii. 1, which has the flavor of a bad oyster.

Were it not for the astounding ignorance of the masses of the people in this country, and the brutal apathy of their spiritual guides and of the so-called upper classes, this fearful abuse and outrage on the innocence of childhood would not be permitted to exist another hour.

So much for your Bible in connection with the Board schools, or any other schools. It is true that there is a Conscience Clause which permits parents, on behalf of their children, to decline your *religious instruction*, as you call it; but you do everything in your power to prevent the free use of this constitutional right by petty persecution of the poor children; as, for instance, putting all those who refuse to listen to your humbug apart in a corner, as though they were lepers, thus exposing them to the gibes and sneers of their school-mates. In country villages and hamlets, which are generally under the despotic rule—

socially speaking—of the squire and the parson, you make it as "hot" as you can for those parents who conscientiously refuse to allow their children's minds to be distorted and crippled by your horrid superstition, with all its brutalizing beliefs and terrors and obscenities.

VARÓN.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury is an astute gentleman. Being asked to subscribe for the wives and children of the unskilled laborers thrown out of employment in the great Engineering quarrel, His Grace replied that to give money to either party would be to take a side in the dispute. "I pray God," he concluded, "to open the eyes of both." If God hears that prayer, how he must smile!

Dr. Walsham How, the late Bishop of Wakefield, left a big pile of money behind him—not being able to take it with him to the place of his destination, where perhaps it would have melted. He took care, however, in his will to explain that this money was not saved out of his episcopal income. It came to him from his father and his wife's parents. Dr. How states that one-fifth of his episcopal income was spent every year in charity. He also states his opinion that "there is no class which approaches that of the clergy in self-sacrifice." No doubt this is a professional view of the matter.

What is "the most important command in the Bible"? According to the Rev. Beauchamp Stannus, rector of Arrow, Alcester, it is to "preach the gospel to every creature." Those who cannot do it themselves must pay for those who can; hence, if you don't subscribe to a Missionary Society it is useless to "hope for heaven." The golden gates of the New Jerusalem must be lubricated with subscription oil.

Parson Stannus, in his parish magazine, points out that in heathen lands there is "only one missionary for one million." How deplorable! especially where the heathen have contracted a taste for broiled missionary. What is one among so many? This is a matter that ought to be seen to immediately.

At the annual meeting of the American Board of Missions it was announced that the expenditure exceeded the income by £9,000. The treasurer informed the Board that, for the work to be kept up, £26,000 more income must be raised in the coming year than was at the disposal of the committee during the past year.

Cardinal Vaughan's latest letter on the coming School Board elections is straight and emphatic. He has a definite policy, and he sticks to it, which is one of the ways to success. It was said of Alcibiades that he always knew what he wanted, and thus succeeded when men of greater powers of mind failed. Cardinal Vaughan insists that public elementary education for Catholic children must be "distinctly and frankly Catholic." "The Catholic demand," he says, "is Catholic education given by competent Catholic teachers to Catholic children." He declines to have anything to do with "partial Christianity" as embodied in the Compromise. "Better a thousand times," he exclaims, "purely secular instruction, supplemented as best may be elsewhere, than unsound and faulty instruction in the truths of Christianity." This is an attitude which commands our respect. We are as much opposed to Cardinal Vaughan as possible, intellectually speaking; but the position he takes up is logical, and it is well that the Education battle should be fought upon the solid ground of a clear and definite issue.

G. Leonard, professor of occult science, Chicago, has predicted that Colonel Ingersoll will visit that city in the near future and preach a sermon endorsing Liberal Christianity. "He will tell that there is a God; that the Bible tells the truth; and that all should believe and teach it." Prophet Leonard is evidently one of those who predict what the people would like, for "Liberal Christianity," blessed name, is in the ascendant at Chicago. Were Calvinism to the fore there, he might have added that the Colonel would come to believe that hell is paved with infants not a span long.

Body-stealers will not have much chance with the corpse of the late George M. Pullman, the Chicago millionaire. It is thoroughly walled up in Graceland Cemetery. The coffin was first encased in asphalt an inch thick, and lowered eight feet on a concrete flooring. A fresh mass of concrete was built up all round to the height of an inch above the coffin, which was then bolted down with eight heavy steel rods. More concrete was laid above that, and George M. Pullman is safe from all the body-stealers in the universe. But how on

earth will he get out when Gabriel blows the resurrection trumpet?

The degradation of Captain Dreyfus was a horrible affair. We even venture to call it infamous. It was a bestial vengeance, and not a just punishment, to subject him to such treatment. The officers and soldiers who took part in it must have felt half-sick when it was over. As a matter of fact, it was Dreyfus himself who went best through the ordeal. Whether innocent or guilty, he bore himself proudly and defiantly. And now they are declaring in Paris that he is an innocent man after all. Supposing, however, that a fresh trial proves him not guilty—what atonement can be made for the public indignities that were heaped upon him? Such gratuitous cruelty is foreign to the spirit of Humanity. It is a legacy from the old days of savage ethics, based upon the supposed commands of a savage God.

Trusting to Providence when you are ill is a species of suicide. We have the word of a London coroner for it. Down at Silvertown a member of the Peculiar People, an aged widow named Caroline Benton, died without medical attendance, and twelve men sat upon her corpse to find out the cause of her decease. One witness testified that the poor old woman was asked whether she would have a doctor, and she replied: "No, Jesus is my doctor." Dr. Fairfax, of Barking-road, deposed that if medical aid had been called in the deceased's life might have been prolonged for several years. Whereupon a juror remarked: "You can't compel a person to have a doctor." "No," said the coroner, "but in my idea it was a species of suicide." There, now! Just fancy it! That coroner probably goes to church on Sundays. But when he gets outside church, and talks like a man of the world, he declares that it is a species of suicide to trust in Doctor Jesus. We quite agree with him. Only it sounds odd from the mouth of a Christian.

A peculiar notion of Providence is displayed by the reporters who tell of "Providential escapes" from accidents which take many lives. Another curious illustration is supplied by the clerical writer of the *Humorous Side of Clerical Life*, who tells how his parish clerk said "one day, when I happened to remark on the number of burials, that it was quite providential, as he wanted some extra earth for banking up in another part of the cemetery." The same worthy remarked: "I often think to myself, at the Resurrection, when all these folks get up, what a 'um there'll be."

There are 13,800 benefices in the Church of England. Of these only thirty-four are in the hands of the people themselves. A far larger number are in the hands of each archbishop and bishop, and of some of the sporting members of the aristocracy, not to mention the Lord High Jobber.

According to the *Daily News*, Mr. F. D. Perrott, formerly vicar of Ixworth, near Bury St. Edmunds, had the strange idea that it was the parson's business to be the people's friend. He ought to have known from history that it is the chief function of the Church to keep the masses submissively content, and direct their minds to another world. He tried to get the housing of the Working-Classes Act put in force to provide a few cottages, but brought such a hornet's nest about his ears that he was compelled to give up the living. He is now studying for the less questionable and more independent profession of the law.

Under the caption, "A Clerical Casino at Newark," *Nottingham Daily Express* remarks that "visitors to church bazaars are becoming accustomed to the use of racing machines and lotteries of various kinds; but this form of gambling was indulged in at the bazaar organized by the clergy and congregation of St. Leonard's, Newark, on a scale altogether unprecedented in the locality. Articles from the various stalls, which could not be sold in the ordinary manner, were put up as prizes for the racing-machine. Visitors backed the horse they fancied with stakes proportionate to the value of the article put up, and the gambling fever—especially among ladies and young people—reached an intensity which could scarcely be surpassed at the gaming tables of Monte Carlo." The vicar won a pig in a raffle.

The *Express* observes: "The love and longing for gambling, once inculcated, is not easily eradicated; and at whose door shall the blame be laid if some of those young persons who gambled at the St. Leonard's Church bazaar with such eagerness shall henceforth become inveterate devotees to the gaming table? Intemperance, too, is censured in the pulpits of the Church, and the growth of the liquor traffic is deplored; and yet last year the promoters of the Newark St. Leonard's bazaar applied for a license to sell intoxicating liquors at their function. This was very properly refused, the Mayor remarking that the granting of such a license

would practically place the bazaar on the same footing as a common public-house. But who shall speak against that which is done in the name of religion, and under the protecting wing of Holy Church?"

A correspondent of the *Woolwich Herald* sends the following story of Bible instruction in that town: "Told to write a sketch of Moses, a little fellow wrote: 'Moses was a very naughty boy. His mother spanked him, and spanked him, and spanked him, and when she could not spank him any longer she put him in among the reeds in the river.' The teacher or examiner was at a loss to understand how the little man had got astray, and took up his Bible to read again the lesson to discover how this perverted reading had been arrived at. He speedily perceived where the boy had gone off the tract when he read, 'And when his mother could no longer hide him.....' The rest of the story was drowned in laughter."

Roman Catholics like Mr. Mivart and Father Zahm take to themselves a large liberty in dealing with the Bible to make it accord with modern science and criticism. In his *Encyclical* of November 8, 1893, however, the Pope laid down the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture in express terms. He wrote: "It is absolutely wrong and forbidden either to narrow inspiration only to certain parts of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred." Since then the Holy Father has laid it down that the manifest interpolation in 1 John v. 7 must not be questioned by any Catholic.

When the Jews have freedom they depart considerably from orthodoxy. This is specially seen in America, where many Jews are on the platform of the Ethical Culturists. The Reformed Jews in the States have eliminated from their prayer-book every reference to the restoration of sacrifices, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the return to Zion. They have ceased to pray for the advent of a personal Messiah. This has given place to the doctrine of a Messianic age. "Not a Jew" (to quote Dr. Philipson), "but the Jew, is the Messiah. Israel is the Messiah of the peoples of the earth." The Reformed Jews admit proselytes; some without circumcision.

Dr. Andrews, the president of Brown University, Chicago, has given great offence to the pious Christian world by stating that the Armenians are far less trustworthy and noble than the Turks. But in this matter Dr. Brown finds plenty of travellers to bear him out.

In an address to the students Dr. Andrews gave it as his belief, based on personal observation, that "in the East the Crescent is in the ascendant over the Cross, and Mohammedanism is making greater advances than is Christianity. Common report agrees in the statement that Mohammedan and Buddhist missionaries in America and Europe are making more converts to their faith than are Christian missionaries in Asia and Africa." This does not say much for a faith supposed to be divinely revealed.

The average Christian knows as much about the evidences of Christianity as a blind cat knows about astronomy. And it is pretty much the same with the average journalist. Here is a newspaper like the *Standard*, the first Conservative organ in England, and a very ably conducted one too, letting its Rome correspondent write a lot of rubbish about the alleged discovery in the Vatican archives of a communication addressed by Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius respecting the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The editor of the *Standard* ought to know that this is a very ancient chestnut. That alleged letter from Pilate to Tiberius used to be one of the stock pieces of Christian Evidence, but every scholar knows it to be a ridiculous forgery, and it has long been abandoned.

It is almost needless to say that no Roman historian ever heard of this alleged letter. It was first referred to by Justin Martyr in the second century. This "father" is described by Jortin as "of a warm and credulous temper," by Mosheim as "wholly undeserving of credit in much of what he relates," and by Middleton as the author of many "silly writings." Justin's legend passed through many later hands, including those of the astute and unscrupulous Eusebius, and became embodied in the so-called *Acts of Pilate*. This is now commonly printed with the "apocryphal" gospels and other rejected writings of the early Christians.

The *Tablet* (November 6) says the papers in the Vatican archives referred to were "not the originals [no, indeed!], but some papers referring to a documentary report, sent by Pontius Pilate to Tiberius immediately after the commencement of the Christian era"—that would be thirty years before the crucifixion. The *Tablet* adds that they are of no authority.

Another precious forgery of the same character is the

alleged correspondence between Jesus Christ and Abgarus, Prince of Edessa. Eusebius, who stuck at nothing, or at very little, professed to have translated this correspondence, or had it translated, from the archives of that city. Jortin did not go to the length of saying that Eusebius forged it himself, but he did not hesitate to say that "there is abundant reason to account it a forgery, and a foolish one too." Addison was the last eminent writer who was imposed upon by it. Lardner finally settled its claims to authenticity, and it has disappeared from Christian Evidences ever since.

The *South Wales Echo* says that the rector of St. David's Church, Neath, appealed to his congregation to send him on the morrow £18 to pay off a debt contracted for the supply of surplices to the choir. He then went on to declare that his text was from Matthew vi. 34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

The attempt by that good man Stead to reincarnate old ghostism and occultism in *Borderland* has not brought in the return expected, and the good man announces its suspension. There is still much fascination in mysteries, but Stead's news from the other world was so palpably news from nowhere that we do not wonder at *Borderland* sinking into merited oblivion. Mrs. Piper is nearly played out.

That pretentious preacher, Dr. Horton, in his *Women of the Old Testament*, has a pathetic picture of how Mrs. Potiphar "awoke to find herself bound to a man it was impossible for her to love.....the volcanic nature of the woman was as yet untouched," and young Joseph unsuspectingly caused an explosion. Another beautiful study is on Rahab the harlot, who, we are told, "if we cannot claim her as a prophetess, as Clement does, we are at least forced to recognise that she turned from this life of shame uncontaminated, to become a mother in Israel." In regard to the Queen of Sheba, Dr. Horton betrays his ignorance by saying: "No tradition preserved the notes of what passed between the King and the Queen." On the contrary, tradition has preserved the curious riddles she is said to have asked him. As for the Shulamite of the erotic Song of Songs, which is not Solomon's, the Hampstead divine says: "From that delicious fountain of waters, so modestly concealed, only he can drink." He also treats us to a dissertation on the wife of Hosea, whom God told to marry an adulteress. Fie for shame!

A pious and poetic vagrant recently wrote in a Sunderland police-cell:—

Here I am to-day;  
Where to-morrow I cannot say;  
Durham or where, I do not know—  
Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

This individual seems to have some of the true spirit of early Christianity; and yet even he takes a little more thought for the morrow than the lilies of the field.

Here is another brace of repartees from the *Daily News*: Bishop Warburton was holding forth to Quin, the actor, in behalf of prerogative. "Spare me, my lord," cried Quin; "you are not acquainted with my principles. I am a Republican, and perhaps I even think that the execution of Charles I. may be justified." "Ay," demanded Warburton, "by what law?" Quin replied, "by all the laws that he had left them." This was admirable; but the bishop, we are told, "would have got off upon judgments," and charged Quin to remember that all the regicides came to violent ends. "That, if I am not mistaken, my lord," was the actor's reply, "was also the case with the twelve Apostles."

One of Voltaire's many repartees is better worth recording than most of those preserved in the *Daily News*. He was highly praising Heller to a Swiss gentleman, who observed: "I'm surprised to hear you speak so of Heller, as he invariably disparages you in most abominable terms." "Ah, yes," said Voltaire with a leer; "I'm afraid we each entertain very false impressions of the other."

Janet MacMurdo, tried at the Ruthin Assizes for the concealment of the birth of her child, had a sad tale to tell of her seduction by a Nonconformist minister under promise of marriage. She had been a Sunday-school teacher, and was let off with one day's imprisonment.

Marylebone Presbyterian Church was startled last Sunday morning by an explosion. It was nothing very serious, only a "bust-up" of one of the pipes connected with the heating apparatus under the floor. But the worshippers were dreadfully anxious to avoid going to heaven, and there was a scene of wild excitement, with a great rush to the exits. Happily no one was killed or seriously injured, but several female candidates for heaven fainted.

The *Northern Daily Telegraph*, in an article on the Browne case, admits that the Old Testament "now and then speaks with a literalness to which we are now unaccustomed." "Nothing else," it goes on to say, "could have been expected, and yet the places in the Old Testament where this is done are, as every reader knows, very few." "Very few" is scarcely correct. There are, it has been reckoned, about three hundred chapters in the Word of God which contain words of indecent signification.

The Rev. Father Halst was defendant in a proceeding in a Long Island City court last week, charging him with the conversion of money entrusted to him, by a widow now deceased, for the benefit of two infants. The priest stated that a large part of the money had been spent on masses for the repose of the soul of the widow and her husband.

The spiritual adviser of Mrs. Mary Johnson, a wealthy but ignorant and bibulous woman of New York, worth a half-million, induced her to will the whole of her fortune to the Catholic Church. Mrs. Johnson had forty-three cousins, and they are fighting the will in the courts, alleging drunkenness on the part of the woman, and undue influence on the part of the priest.

The West Rand has become the peculiar South African home of religious—or should I say irreligious?—humor of late. An amusing story of mistranslation is now reported from the Krugersdorp district. A European minister was preaching recently at a native church. The pastor did not sufficiently understand Kaffir to express himself in that tongue, and further complications were introduced owing to the fact that the flock required two or three interpreters, as they used several dialects.

Each interpreter translated what the chief one had given as his version of the preacher's thought. All went well until the rev. gentleman exclaimed in impassioned tones: "Sin may be sweet at first, but it is bitter at the end." This, at its third translation, was given to one tribe as "Sin may be bitter at the first, but it will be better by and bye." This consoling doctrine hugely commended itself to the congregation, and the preacher wondered at the evident joy of a large section of his hearers.—*African Critic*.

Booth understands the virtue of the big drum in religion. Herein he only copied savage Shamans, a chief item of whose cult is making a big noise, the original idea being to scare away evil spirits, as wild beasts are frightened off by noises. The *African Critic* claims that the South African native can beat Booth hollow. The other day an Afrikaner gentleman heard a fearful din in a location, and went there to quell what he thought a riotous outbreak. He found a prayer-meeting in full swing, the leader thereof beating an oil-can with a hammer, for all he was worth.

Those who have read the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, edited by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler—also called *The Jewish Life of Christ*—will remember that one passage is printed in Latin, instead of in English. It is really no more crude than scores of passages in the Authorized English Version; but as there is one law for Christian publishers, and quite another law for Free-thought publishers, it was thought advisable to veil that particular passage in a dead language. Over in America, however, even this device would scarcely be safe; for we see that Anthony Comstock, the great smut-smeller of the United States, is prosecuting a Jewish bookseller named Meyer Chinsky for selling the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu* in the original Hebrew. We also see that the great smut-smeller made himself so officious in court that the judge ordered him outside the place reserved for lawyers, and made him sit still. Comstock treated this as a deadly insult, and swore to be revenged on the judge—that is, if he ever has a chance, which is very problematical.

John Wannamaker, the pious millionaire Philadelphia Universal Provider, undertakes also to decide what the people shall not be provided with. The Board of Education, which he is said to boss, will not allow any portion of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* to be used as a French textbook in the Philadelphia High School for Girls.

At the Truro Diocesan Conference one reverend gentleman protested against the Committee "investing Christian money, raised for the House of God, in any security of a Mohammedan Government." It was pointed out that the Church Building Society also invested in Turkish stock, and that "the Jews were allowed to borrow from the Egyptians." In this case the borrowing meant "spoiling."

The Rev. A. W. Jephson, of St. John's, Walworth, is scarcely the sort of person we should recommend to instruct people in the duties of citizenship. Preaching on Citizen Sunday, he said: "If this life was all, then let a man grab everything he could get hold of and stick to it." If this is his notion of natural morality, we should say that, however

excellent he may be as a sky-pilot, as a citizen of this world his ethics are not to be trusted.

Mr. Howard Evans, of the Liberation Society, makes public a few questions and answers prepared by the Rector of Canton (a suburb of Cardiff) for use in the Church Day Schools: "Who alone is the true ruler of Christ's Church in this diocese? Answer—The Bishop of Llandaff. How are we to know when men are true or real pastors? Answer—They must be priests or deacons, ordained by the Bishop or Chief Pastor. Are Dissenting ministers ordained? Answer—No. Would it, then, be right to join any of their congregations? Answer—No; it would be very foolish and wrong."

Mr. Evans notices that the expenditure of these schools was £1,047, of which only £178 was voluntarily contributed. Under the new grant of last year these schools will get £137 more. So that, for a paltry sum of £40 contributed by his flock, the rector is able to teach this intolerant rubbish to more than five hundred children at the expense of the nation.

An action for \$25,000 damages has been instituted against Mrs. Hannah V. Ross, a prominent Spiritualistic medium of Boston, and her divorced husband, Charles R. Ross, of Providence, R.I., by Mrs. Eliza B. Dean, of Onset, Mass., for the purpose of recovering bonds and cash aggregating over \$8,000, which the medium and her husband are alleged to have obtained from Mrs. Dean, formerly a well-to-do resident of Washington, D.C., but who claims to have been stripped of all her possessions by the "spirit controls."

Bishop Joseph Richter, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, has been arraigned on a charge of perjury preferred by Rev. Father Augustin Slorsizk.

The Rev. P. Szulerecki, pastor of the St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church, Milwaukee, has been sued for \$10,000 damages by John Gleyzewski, a mechanic, who charges the priest with alienating the affections of his wife.

The Rev. Frank H. Cummings, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Geneseo, New York, has just fallen from grace together with two of the young female members of his congregation.

God's pretty little house at Oldbury-on-Severn was laid in ruins by a fire on Sunday morning. It is only about a dozen years since the church was thoroughly restored. The insurance will not cover half the loss, so Providence has been very negligent of its own.

The *Church Times* regards the Sunday-school as a great source of mischief to public worship, of which it is regarded as a form. Children, it is urged, ought to go to church with their parents. Instead of this, both are satisfied with Sunday-school, and when they grow too big for school they "chuck" it and church together.

Newspaper boys are often run in for crying their wares on Sundays. But there is no remedy for the jangling and the clanging of discordant church bells, for which there is not the same excuse. The boys are earning their living, and apprising some inhabitants of what they want. But church bells are an unmitigated nuisance, unneeded by churchgoers, and detested by non-churchgoers, who in all large towns are a majority.

The High Church conscience has been outraged by the refusal of the Bishop of Liverpool to license the Rev. Morley Richards, curate of St. Bartholomew's, Brighton, to the living of St. Thomas, Toxteth, to which he has been presented by Mr. Gladstone, unless he gives a written guarantee not to hear confessions. Mr. Richards drew the attention of the Bishop to the countenance giving to confession and absolution in the Prayer-book; but Bishop Ryle is not a man to be moved by Ritualist arguments, and, being within his right, the High Churchman will probably have to confess the girls of Brighton instead of the Lancashire witches.

In the *Nineteenth Century* Sir Joshua Fitch warns the clericals that every supporter of the teaching of the creed in the schools, and all who seek by means of the "Orpington" or other device to secure the introduction of the clergy and sectarian teachers into the schools, will, in the first place, be raising expectations they will find themselves powerless to fulfil, and in the second will be doing something to make the present compromise less easy to maintain, and so to bring nearer the adoption of an absolutely secular system.

Abel Andrew says in the *Universal Republic* that we go to church and sing "Behold, behold the Lamb!" and then go home and eat the lamb with mint sauce.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 14, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "The Philosophy of *Hamlet*."  
November 28, Leicester.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—November 14, Edinburgh; 18, Wood Green; 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, London. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Efra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

W. HOPKIN.—Thanks for paper. See "Acid Drops."

NEWARK FRIEND.—You were quite right to be discreet in such a hotbed of superstition. Christians would ruin you if they could, if they only knew of your unbelief.

R. W. CHAINY (Boston).—Thanks for your marked copy of the *Investigator* for October 23. We do not care to reproduce all the flattering things you say about us. Some day we hope to meet you and Mr. Mendum again in your own city.

SUNDERLAND.—All Freethought literature can be obtained from Mr. J. Carr, bookseller, 8 Villiers-street.

J. W. B.—Mr. Forder will gladly hear from any one likely to purchase Browne's pictures for the benefit of his family.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Kindly send the conclusion. We like to see the whole of the copy before insertion.

BLOOMFIELD STEVENS.—Received on Tuesday. Will be read in a day or two with a view to publication.

N. L. HOWE.—We had already written a paragraph on the late Bishop of Wakefield's will. We note your promise of 5s. to the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme. Glad to know you spend many pleasant hours in reading the *Freethinker*.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Per C. Watts: W. McLean, Dundee, £1.

R. FORDER, hon. sec. N. S. S., acknowledges the following subscriptions towards the Treasurer's Scheme:—Mrs. Small, 10s. (p); J. Briery, 10s. (p); W. Cross, 4s. 4d. (p); E. S., 1s. (p); "Freethinker" Subscriber, 4s. (p); J. Barry, 3s. (p); W. Barks, 5s. (p); A. C. Browne, 10s.; W. H. Putz, 5s.; H. Barrow, 5s.; E. Baynes, 5s.; W. Pike, 2s. 6d.

C. COHEN acknowledges the following subscriptions towards the Treasurer's Scheme: J. Umpleby, £5 (p); J. Harley, 1s. 6d. (p); J. Titherington, 10s. (p); J. Leach, 5s. (p); R. Ashworth, 2s. 6d. (p); J. Howarth, 5s. (p); T. Hampson, 5s. (p); Mrs. Knowles, 5s. (p); H. Jones 5s. (p); N. Ashworth, 5s.

MISS E. M. VANCE acknowledges on behalf of the Treasurer's Scheme:—Netherfield and Carlton Branch, 5s. (p); G. Smith, 10s. (p); Scotius, 5s. (p); W. Waymark, 5s. (p); M. L. (Glasgow), £1 (p); F. G., West London, 5s. (p); Mrs. Henderson, 5s. (p).

ALERT.—Thanks for cuttings. The inquiry into the condition of the natives of Fiji was, we believe, instituted by the new Government of the Island. What is certain is that the Wesleyans made a lot of money out of Fiji coconuts, and that the native inhabitants, who in 1859 were 200,000, are now less than half that number.

F. COTTRELL writes: "The Annual General Meeting of the Camberwell Branch instructed me to convey to you the thanks of the members for your kindness in lecturing for the Branch gratuitously on Sunday morning. Everyone would be pleased to see you again at the earliest opportunity. Your last two visits have brought us seventeen new members."

H. TAYLOR.—Glad to hear the Failsworth Bazaar was so successful.

J. UMPLEBY, a veteran Freethinker, and one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, promises to give £50 to the Treasurer's Scheme if fifty others will do the same. We fear this is too large a number to expect, but we should like to hear from all who are willing to take up this challenge.

THE HOOPER FUND.—Mr. J. Bellamy, 6 Thoresby-street, Sneinton, Nottingham, acknowledges:—H. Dodsworth, 2s. 6d.; G. C., 2s. 6d.; B., 2s. 6d.; R. Jones, 2s. 6d.; D., 1s.; J. Ross, 1s.; Dalmer, 6d.; Gilbert, 6d.; Hammond, 1s.; Allen, 2s.; Howard, 1s.; J. W., 1s.; Davies, 1s.; J. Brown, 6d.; C. Stocker, 6d.; J. Clarkson, collected at Sneinton Market, 2s. 9d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Scrapes—Yarmouth Independent—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Sydney Bulletin—Liberator—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—Lucifer—Freidenker—Fria Tankar—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Torch of Reason—Portsmouth Evening News—De Dagoraad.

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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE opened the Sunday morning lectures in the Camberwell Secular Hall with a talk on "Church, Chapel, and Common Sense in the Coming School Board Elections." There was a very good attendance, Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. W. Heaford being among the audience; and an excellent collection was taken up in aid of the Branch work. In the evening Mr. Foote lectured at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Mr. Le Gallienne's new book entitled *If I were God*, which will form the subject of an article in next week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. Foote lectures again at the Athenæum Hall this evening (November 14), taking for his subject "The Philosophy of *Hamlet*: Glimpses of the Thought of Shakespeare." This lecture will be illustrated with special passages. It should be interesting to all Freethinkers, and perhaps to many others.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow. Mr. Black presided on each occasion. The audiences in the morning and afternoon were not so large as they generally are at Mr. Watts's visits, but in the evening there was a splendid gathering, the hall being full. Mr. McLean came all the way from Dundee on purpose to hear the lectures; and one working man walked ten miles to hear Mr. Watts, and he proudly said that he "would do it again." The lectures were enthusiastically received, and many friends expressed their pleasure at listening to three new lectures in one day.

During the past week Mr. Watts has been lecturing in Scotland under Mr. Hartmann's scheme. In our next issue will appear an account by Mr. Watts of his "Fortnight's Work in the North," including special reference to his debate with the Rev. A. J. Waldron at Stanley.

To-day, Sunday, November 14, Mr. Watts lectures afternoon and evening in Edinburgh.

Mr. Forder visits Birmingham on Sunday after a long absence, and will be glad to have a chat after the lectures with friends on the Treasurer's Scheme and other matters.

Mr. W. B. Thompson, of the Gillingham School Board, has a very good letter in the *Chatham and Rochester News* on the case of Miss Alice Hill, who was rejected as a paid monitress on account of her father being a Freethinker, as adverted to in our issue of October 31.

Mr. C. Harwood, secretary of the Edmonton Branch, sends us an encouraging report of Freethought work there. Open-air lectures throughout the summer and autumn have been attended by large and orderly audiences. Quite lately the Rev. Tom Collins, "the dossier parson," has opened a Church school for lectures and discussions. He invited the Branch to arrange one, and Mr. Ramsey lectured on "Why I am a Secularist." Mr. Ward lectures there on Sunday, November 28, at 3 o'clock.

That our Camberwell friends are looking up is sufficiently shown by the fact that, although the Branch three months ago was about £20 behind, it now has a balance on the right side. At the annual General Meeting last Sunday afternoon Mr. S. Hartmann was re-elected president, Mr. F. Cottrell secretary, and Mr. P. Sabine member on the Executive Council. A strong committee was formed, including two lady members.

In the evening about three hundred attended a most enjoyable dance and entertainment, contributed to by Mrs. Maclean, the Sisters Roberts, Mr. H. Lindsey, Mr. C. Chapman, Mr. C. Conyers, and Mr. E. Pack. It might have done Sabbatarians good to have witnessed the enjoyment of the dancers; though, had they seen the sleight-of-hand entertainment of Mr. John Warren, they would, perhaps, have been confirmed in the delusion of Satanic agency. Five working vice-presidents of the N. S. S. were present, and that these social evenings help the cause was proved by the enrolment of half-a-dozen new members.

The current number of the *English Historical Review* has an article on "The Unstamped Press, 1815-1836," by J. Holland Rose. It was Freethinkers who were foremost in maintaining this. Wooler with his *Black Dwarf*; Carlile with his *Republican*, *Deist*, *Lion*, *Prompter*, and *Gauntlet*. Then there was *The Theological and Political Comet*, and, finally, Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian*. Hetherington Mr. Rose calls "the father of the free press"; but the title is no less deserved by his forerunner, Richard Carlile. Mr. Rose shows that the Chartist demand for universal suffrage, short parliaments, vote by ballot, and no property qualification was voiced by the *Poor Man's Guardian* in its early issues.

Godly Sabbatarian Glasgow is to be afflicted with a Sacred Concert Company, which designs to supply an orchestra of twenty-five musicians for Sabbath performances. As the managing director took a leading part in the obnoxious Sunday steamer-traffic, it is feared that the concert may be more in evidence than its sacredness.

Among candidates who support Secular Education are C. Davis, Marylebone; W. J. Barwick, Finsbury; H. Quelch, East Lambeth; F. P. Cambridge, B.A., West Lambeth; and G. Pearson, Tower Hamlets. The last-named gentleman is recommended by the East London Branch of the N. S. S.

The Bradlaugh Club commemorates George Eliot's birthday on Sunday, November 21, with a tea, dramatic performance, etc. Tickets one shilling.

Mr. C. Cohen will pay his first visit to Chester on November 17. We have not received particulars of his lecture, but friends in the district will look out for the local advertisement and give Mr. Cohen a hearty reception.

A meeting for the purpose of reorganizing the North Eastern Secular Federation will be held at Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, Newbridge-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Wednesday evening, November 17, at 8 o'clock (first floor upstairs). Branch secretaries, delegates, vice-presidents, and others interested, are specially requested to attend. Correspondence to be sent to J. G. Bartram, 117 Morley-street, Heaton.

Saturday, October 30, saw an enthusiastic crowd of people at the opening of the Bazaar which has been held in the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school to provide the funds required for the necessary enlargement of the school buildings. During the opening proceedings the chair was taken by Mr. Thomas Hayes, of Crumpsall, and the Bazaar was opened by Alderman Healey, Mayor of Heywood. Lot Hilton, Esq., C.C., moved the vote of thanks to Mr. Healey for his kindness in opening the Bazaar. At the second day's proceedings, on November 1, the Bazaar was opened by Mr. James Aldred, of Stockport; the chair being taken by Mr. Councillor Hilton. The Bazaar realized the sum of £300, for which excellent result the best thanks are due, not only to the earnest workers and friends in connection with the school, but to those gentlemen who kindly gave their presence and support at the opening ceremonies.

The East London Branch started last Sunday evening upon its winter campaign at the King's Hall, 83 and 85 Commercial-road, E. Mr. Heaford was the lecturer, and was in good form. The hall was filled to its utmost seating capacity, about 120 persons being present. The committee were highly satisfied, and so was the audience, judging by frequent applause and a good collection. Six new members were enrolled after the lecture.

Mr. Heaford lectures three times next Sunday at Sheffield, and it is hoped the local friends will rally around him then. On Monday he goes to Netherfield, under the Treasurer's Scheme.

The Liverpool Branch is assisting in a practical way to get S. Reeves elected on the School Board. To say that Mr. Reeves is in favour of teaching children "manners and morals" instead of theology will be sufficient to induce all Freethinkers not only to plump for him, but also to prevail upon other voters to do the same.

### The Evangelical Pulpit.

In the face of physical science, of modern Biblical criticism, and of all the light which history and comparative mythology have of late years thrown on the genesis of religions, the old theory of verbal inspiration, the old methods of Biblical interpretation, and the pre-scientific conception of a world governed by perpetual acts of supernatural interference still hold their ground in the Evangelical pulpit. The incursions of erudite science have been met by the barrier of an invincible prejudice—by the belief, sedulously inculcated from childhood, that what are termed orthodox opinions are essential to salvation, and that doubt, and every course of inquiry which leads to doubt, should be avoided as a crime. It is a belief which is not only fatal to habits of intellectual honesty and independence in those who accept it, but it is also a serious obstacle in the path of those who do not. The knowledge that many about him will regard any deviation from the traditional cast of opinions as the greatest of calamities and crimes seldom fails, according to the disposition of the inquirer, to drive him into hypocritical concealments, or into extreme and exaggerated bitterness.—*W. E. H. Lecky, in "History of Eighteenth Century."*

## THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

### XII.—CHRIST'S ALLEGORICAL TEACHING.

WE are told in the Gospels that "God so loved the world" that he sent down "his only begotten Son," in order that through him all mankind might "have eternal life" (John iii. 16, 17), and that this Son, who was named Jesus, "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). The object here attributed to the Almighty was, no doubt, eminently praiseworthy; but, unfortunately, the Savior whom he sent had not the smallest idea how to set about the work entrusted to him.

In the first place, this Savior confined his teaching (if his utterances can be dignified by such a name) to one small province in Palestine, and no one in any other part of the Roman Empire appears ever to have heard of him, or to have known anything about his divine mission. According to Mark (i. 14, 15), "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.'" One can hardly conceive of a sane teacher going about repeating these bald, stereotyped sentences, and never attempting, or deeming it necessary, to explain them. The expression, "kingdom of God," is used more than a hundred times in the four Gospels; but never once did Jesus inform his hearers what he meant by it; neither did he say why they were to "repent," nor what they were to repent of; nor did he tell them what was the "gospel" they were to believe to obtain the promised "eternal life," nor even what was meant by the last-named term.

In the next place, this Savior wrote nothing for the benefit of future generations, not even the conditions of God's plan of salvation; nor does he seem to have seen the necessity for a written gospel. A more incompetent messenger could scarcely have been chosen. Also, according to the Fourth Gospel, this divine Savior spent the greater part of his time in wrangling and quibbling with the scribes and Pharisees, and senselessly employed silly, metaphorical language which his hearers could not understand. He was a Good Shepherd, a Door, a Vine, living Bread, living Water, the Light of the World, and goodness knows what; and the Jews were to eat his flesh and drink his blood, and be born again, and believe on him—though what they were exactly to believe concerning him is not stated. A more absurd and illogical messenger of salvation it is scarcely possible to imagine.

In the Synoptical Gospels this most ridiculous Savior is represented as teaching the people by means of allegorical stories called "parables," or rather as narrating to the multitude these supposititious stories, without explaining the hidden meaning. These parables, which number thirty-one, are thus recorded:—

Matthew, Mark, Luke.....	3
Matthew and Luke.....	2
Matthew only.....	11
Mark            ".....	1
Luke            ".....	14

From the foregoing it will be seen that twenty-six out of the thirty-one parables are vouched for by only one evangelist, who places them in the mouth of Jesus without saying from what documents he took them; it will also be seen that Luke, who tells us in his Preface that the matters he records had been handed down to his time, gives fourteen parables of which Matthew and Mark appear never to have heard. When, further, it is borne in mind that Matthew and Luke, who are responsible for twenty-five of these parables, have been convicted of fraud and misrepresentation, the probability that Jesus really gave utterance to these allegorical stories is very small indeed. Assuming, however, that he actually did so, no instruction could have been derived from them by his hearers.

As already stated, Christ related only the narrative portion of the parables to the people, not the meaning which was intended to be drawn from them. As an example, I take the first of these similitudes:—

"The sower went forth to sow his seed: and as he sowed some fell by the way-side; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of heaven devoured it. And other fell on the rock; and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns grew with it

and choked it. And other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth a hundred fold" (Luke viii. 5-8).

This is a sample of the fables which Jesus is said to have narrated to the multitude, and we may safely say that, after hearing it, the people were just as wise as they were before. It is simply impossible they could have known the lesson intended to be taught by it. When Christ was alone, it is said, "his disciples asked him what this parable might be," whereupon he gave them the key to the enigma:—

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart," etc.

The next parable is the Tares, after the delivery of which "he left the multitudes and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field" (Matt. xiii. 36). With this reasonable request Jesus graciously complied: "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it: and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things" (Mark iv. 33, 34). It would thus seem that one reason why Christ explained his parables only to his disciples was that the minds of the learned scribes and lawyers were not "able to bear it," their intelligence being not of such a high order as that of the fishermen Peter, Andrew, James, and John. But this was not the main reason why only the husks were given to the public and the kernels to the disciples, as will be seen from the following passage (Mark iv. 10-12):—

"And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him [the explanation of] the parables. And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them."

Here the reason is plainly stated. Jesus did not expound his allegories to the common herd because he did not wish those people to understand; for, had he done so, some of them might have repented, and have obtained forgiveness. He came only to save a select few. We are told, it is true, that it was "not the will of the Father" that any one should "perish" (Matt. xviii. 14); but "the Father" evidently reckoned without "the Son," who, though he may have said that he "came to seek and to save" those who were "lost," had no intention of saving many. This fact is also evident from his prediction that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction," and "narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it" (Matt. vii. 13, 14).

But why, it may be asked, did Jesus waste his time in going about telling the people unintelligible stories, without explaining what the stories were intended to teach? The answer to this question is thus stated by Matthew (xiii. 34, 35):—

"All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."

According to this passage, Jesus spoke to the people in parables because an ancient Hebrew prophet had predicted that the Jewish Messiah should employ this method of teaching. The statement, however, rests solely on the authority of Matthew, who, it has been shown, was not particularly noted for veracity. It will therefore be necessary to verify it. The quotation is from the 78th Psalm, which, if we believe its inscription, was composed by Asaph, one of David's choir leaders. This singer, whom Christ calls a "prophet," says (1-3):—

"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."

Here the first point to be noticed is that it was the writer himself who was to open his mouth in a parable; he does not predict that another person, in a later age, should do so.

In the next place, the word "parable" in the passage does not mean an allegory or a short fictitious story, like the parables in the Gospels. Only two such allegories are found in the Old Testament—Jothan's fable of the trees and Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb. The word "parable" in the Hebrew Scriptures means an oracular saying or speech, a song, or the poetic recital of a number of events. Thus it is said of the prophet Balaam: "And he took up his parable and said, Rise up, Balaam, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor," etc. (Num. xxiii. 18). In the 78th Psalm the word has the last-named meaning, and is employed merely as an introduction to a recital of the wonders which were said to have been wrought by the God Jehovah on behalf of his chosen people. These wonders were not matters which had been "hidden from the foundation of the world" (as stated in the Gospel); they were events which the Jews of that time "had heard and known," and which "their fathers had told them." The writer of the Psalm begins by saying he is about to recite "the dark sayings of old"—i.e., the mighty acts of the Hebrew deity—and then proceeds to do so. He continues his narration through a long chapter of seventy-two verses, and recounts all the signs and wonders which he had heard ascribed to Jehovah. He says, for example (13-16):—

"He clave the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. In the daytime, also, he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He clave rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as out of the depths. He brought streams also out of the rock," etc.

This Psalm, it will be seen, is not in any sense an allegory; it is given as a historical narration of well-known facts. It is, in fact, a Hebrew psalm—a song extolling the wonderful doings of the God Yahveh. Thus the statement of Matthew, that Jesus went about telling the people little allegorical stories in order to fulfil a prediction in the Old Testament, is shown to be false. There is no such prediction in the Hebrew Scriptures. Matthew's statement is but another sample of that unscrupulous perverter's systematic misrepresentations.

Bearing the latter fact in mind, it is really amusing to note the cool assurance with which the great Dean Farrar says (*Witness of History to Christ*, p. 54):—

"To the blank Atheism and credulous incredulity of those controversialists who deny to religion any objective truth, and are not ashamed to accuse the Evangelists of deliberate and conscious fraud, we need not reply. The dignity of controversy is lost if she condescend to enter the arena with the coarse gladiators of an offensive infidelity."

Judging by his admissions in his recent works, this arrogant Churchman is himself an example of "deliberate and conscious fraud" in defending what he must know to be fraudulent. According to this upholder of error, the truthfulness and honesty of the evangelists are not to be questioned. Those writers might, possibly, be grossly ignorant and inordinately superstitious, and they might sometimes, perhaps, be mistaken as to matters of fact; but to tell a lie, or be guilty of "deliberate and conscious fraud"—no, never! Not one of them would utter a falsehood to save his life—not even for "the glory of God," or to gain converts to his religion. All the admittedly lying narratives in the Apocryphal Gospels were written by Pagans; or, if they were not, the evangelists who concocted them must not be accused of "deliberate and conscious fraud"; or, if it be admitted they were guilty, this does not affect the compilers of the canonical Gospels; for the latter were incapable of misrepresenting or fabricating any of the matters they record. To accuse them of doing so, even when the fact that they have done so is proved beyond all doubt, would be to exhibit a "coarse and offensive infidelity" subversive of "the dignity of controversy." This is probably the reason why the clergy can so seldom be induced to discuss the question of the truth or falseness of the Gospel narratives.

ABRACADABRA.

Men of thought, with iron nerve,  
Fronting error take your stand;  
Never from your purpose swerve  
Till it cease throughout the land.  
Long and dread the strife may be;  
Ye yet shall have the mastery. —W. S. Landor.

## RELIGION v. RELIGION.

[The Archbishop of York said the other day, in St. Paul's, to a congregation of medical men: "Yours is a religious calling."]

THE founder of "the only true religion"  
Prescribes for all diseases one specific,  
Dispensed by an assistant ghost, or pigeon,  
To anyone—except the scientific.

To get it, simply pray with true intention,  
And "laying on of hands," or some such caper;  
"No coupon is required," you merely mention  
The Doctor's name; but, mind! don't name this  
paper!

'Tis silly to prefer man's costly guesses  
To costless certitudes of one far wiser,  
Who freely cures diseases and distresses—  
For testimonials, see His *Advertiser*.

His freely-offered ghostly panacea  
Condemns the doctor's art, by implication;  
Opposing Doctor Jesus of Judea  
Is blasphemous in ev'ry Christian nation.

Though Christ thus works, a bishop honorific  
Says doctors' work is verily religious!  
Thus, Christless substitutes for Christ's specific,  
Though *anti-Christian*, yet, are *pro-*, prodigious!

This palaced vicar of the Gospel gipsy  
Is not a simple bishop, but an "arch" one;  
And yet his words are words of one that's tippy,  
Dishonest, or as mad's a hare—a "march" one.

"'Tis Pray'r!" the true religion's aye asserting;  
"'Tis Pills!" say true religion's lauded leeches;  
Religion, thus, Religion is subverting!  
'Tis odd! Thus, nathless, true religion teaches!

The Church tells all to lay on Christ their sorrows,  
And do whate'er the blessed Bible bids them,  
While she, for love of God, their lucre "borrows,"  
And humbly, in the name of Jesus—"kids" them!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## WATTS AND WALDRON DEBATE.

THIS debate, which took place in Stanley, Durham, on October 30 and November 1, 2, and 3, seems to have been successful. The *Consett Chronicle* of November 5 gives a four-column report, and "Free Lance," who is understood to be the editor, has the following comments upon the discussion. Considering the *Chronicle* is a very religious paper, the report and comments are very fair. "Free Lance" says:—

"During the current week the chief, almost the sole, topic of conversation in and around Stanley has been the great debate, between Messrs. Waldron and Watts, regarding the relative claims of Christianity and Secularism, for 'this and any other life.' The debate proper opened on Saturday evening, and, though the spacious Co-operative Hall was not absolutely crowded, as some had anticipated, the attendance must have been satisfactory to the promoters of the affair. Mr. Green, as chairman, had an easy time, for the respective champions appeared well aware of the rules of the debate, and adhered to them. Interruption, I am glad to say, was conspicuously absent, and both gentlemen were allowed to state their cases free of interruption. As an orator, Mr. Watts is perhaps a trifle ahead of his opponent; but the Christian champion was worthy of his steel, and he not only stood manfully to his colors, but gave quite as many blows as he received. The discussion was carried on with the greatest good humor and courtesy. I do not think that these discussions are likely to benefit anyone. I certainly prefer a debate between gentlemen than one in which discourtesy and rudeness are prevalent, and where personalities are ever present.

"Mr. Watts presents an imposing platform appearance, and Mr. Waldron appears to be an attractive personality. As a specimen of his ability in the way of repartee, I may quote a very smart hit which he made on Saturday evening, and which was enjoyed by both Mr. Watts and the audience. The venerable Secularist had just referred in terms of condemnation to the saying of Jesus, 'Blessed be ye poor,' and had expressed himself rather forcibly on the matter. Mr. Waldron, on getting his innings, gently suggested that there was no reason why the poor should not be blessed. The audience was convulsed with laughter at this smart turning of the tables.

"Mr. Watts occupied the Co-operative Hall platform on Sunday evening, when he delivered an impressive lecture

on 'The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb.' At the conclusion of the lecture Mr. William Simpson, of the Air Pit, ascended the platform and debated for a few minutes with Mr. Watts. I have not the slightest wish to say anything in disparagement of Mr. Simpson, who is, I feel sure, an excellent and well-meaning man; but I aver most emphatically that for a gentleman of his debating abilities to get on a platform to oppose Mr. Watts shows more zeal than judgment."

## BOOK CHAT.

*Modern Rationalism*, by Joseph McCabe (Watts & Co.; 2s. 6d.), describes itself as "A Sketch of the Progress of the Rationalistic Spirit in the Nineteenth Century." The title at once suggests the work of Mr. Lecky, who, in his *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, had a wider field, and in the treatment of the decay of supernaturalism with regard to witchcraft and miracles had at once more vividly interesting topics and a brighter style. Nonetheless, Mr. McCabe's work is of much interest to all concerned in the growth of Rationalism. He traverses a good deal of ground, and gives, on the whole, a very fair idea of the conquests achieved by the new spirit.

\* \* \*

Mr. Joseph McCabe, who, we understand, had fourteen years of Roman Catholic monkery before he found his way to Rationalism, gives the following account of the position he expounds: "All systems to which the name is applied accepted as their primary and fundamental principle that reason is the supreme criterion of all truth, whether in secular or religious, natural or supernatural, spheres. Any thesis, on whatever authority it may be asserted, which violates the dictates of reason must be rejected. On that test were rejected, first the mysterious rites and dogmas of Christianity, then its sacred literature, and, finally, even the positions of natural theology."

\* \* \*

Mr. McCabe first deals with "Rationalism in Theology," tracing point by point how the Church has surrendered to what it once denounced as infidelity. He says: "The century opens with the apparent triumph of theologians over the Deistic school, the last embodiment of Rationalistic inquiry. A storm of vituperation greets the appearance of *The Age of Reason*. By the middle of the century a book, virtually containing the same principles, is published by a group of professed theologians at Oxford [*Essays and Reviews*, 1861], acclaimed [by half the nation and sanctioned by the highest tribunal of the land. The end of the century is in a fair way to accept even the conclusions of Paine on dogma and scripture." Mr. McCabe traces the growth of the Broad Church, and points out how Freethought criticism has dissolved the old doctrines of eternal torments, original sin, predestination, the merit of faith, and restricted the activity of that important figure in Christian theology—the Devil.

\* \* \*

The author traces the Rationalistic spirit in Biblical criticism, in comparative religion and mythology, in philosophy, in the controversy between religion and science, and, finally, in ethics. Going over so wide a field, it is not surprising that on some few points we find ourselves in disagreement. On one point we must mention our dissatisfaction. Magnifying our own office—that of making the conclusions of the eminent known to the bulk of the people—we are disappointed to find that while the name of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, a thorough Christian, is included among those who "represent uncompromising scepticism," the efforts of the Owenites, the early Rationalists, and fighters for free press—like Hetherington and Watson—of Mr. Holyoake and the writers on the *Reasoner*, Mr. Bradlaugh and the writers on the *National Reformer*, are not as much as mentioned. The last two are barely mentioned in connection with the substitution of the affirmation for an oath.

\* \* \*

The only paragraph devoted to those who have borne the brunt of the struggle which has enabled Rationalists to voice their sentiments with impunity is the following: "In 1819 Richard Carlile was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and £1,500 fine for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*—merely a Deistic publication. Many other severe prosecutions followed for a similar offence, and most of the leading Secularist lecturers have suffered under the blasphemy laws. At the present day the most advanced literature is sold with impunity, and, though Mr. Foote and his colleagues have not sacrificed a tittle of the liberty of speech for which they suffered, the present generation would be startled at any revival of the blasphemy prosecutions. Still, there is much work yet to be done in removing the disabilities of Freethinkers. The grave injuries they are still liable to incur, for instance, with regard to trusts or contracts, or custody of children, or Sunday lectures, etc., reflect deep disgrace upon our legislative machinery."

They are the last relics of that sacerdotal tyranny which dreads discussion, and continues to the last its policy of persecution."

\* \* \*

In conclusion, Mr. McCabe points out that the progress of the Rationalistic spirit must be estimated, not only by the novelty and solidity of its achievements, but also by the universality of its diffusion. It affects all classes and all spheres of activity. In our author's words: "The social and humanitarian movements which the time-spirit has evoked are largely characterized by a purely secular character, which contrasts ominously with earlier movements, and which is anxiously deprecated by theologians. Literature is almost universally secularistic—is very largely anti-dogmatic and anti-sacerdotal. Dogmatism is visibly decaying. The Church is appealing to æsthetic, or ethical, or humanitarian influences, and suffering an unrestrained license of thought in speculative regions. In fine, the progress of the Rationalistic spirit in this nineteenth century is indefinitely greater than during the entire eighteen centuries since the Galilean and his followers infused a new life into the Hebrew, Hindoo, and Egyptian versions of the primitive solar myths." The purport of this is so just that we hardly like to come in at the end with our view that the solar myths are not "primitive."

\* \* \*

Our readers will recollect the exposure by the *Athenæum*, that Mrs. McClure, the wife of the reverend secretary of the S. P. C. K., in translating Maspero's *Struggle of the Nations*, had taken liberties with the original in the interests of orthodoxy. In a letter to the *Athenæum* of January 9, Mr. McClure said that all the alterations were made with Maspero's knowledge and consent. The controversy has continued, and the secretary of the S. P. C. K. has sent out a "true statement," which has by no means bettered his case; for it now appears, from the statement itself, that some of the alterations were made not only without Professor Maspero's consent, but without his knowledge, and that he complained of them as "not corresponding to his thought."

\* \* \*

"Verax," in the *Guardian*, states the case very plainly against the S. P. C. K. He points out that Maspero is a Rationalist, who, in the parts of his volume dealing with the history of the Jews, adopts quite clearly and unambiguously the view taken by modern critics, and, in his notes, refers frequently with express approval to critics and their work. In the translation, without a word in any part of the volume to indicate to readers that they are not reading Professor Maspero's own words, all this is altered by slight but very ingenious and effectual changes in the text. Maspero is made to teach the ordinary view of the literature and history of the Old Testament. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge remains convicted of an impudent pious fraud. If they could not endorse the views of Maspero, they ought to have left his book alone, and not have put forward a version which makes him hold conclusions he repudiates. In putting it forward without any mention of alterations, they showed themselves desirous of using the reputation of a Rationalist to support their irrational dogmas.

\* \* \*

Mr. Herbert Spencer has passed through the press a small volume entitled *Various Fragments*. It will be issued by Messrs. Williams and Norgate as soon as the American edition is ready.

\* \* \*

The *Adult* is in its fourth number. The November issue contains some lively reading for those who are fond of sexual discussions. The best thing in it is a paper on "Spiritual Love," by William Platt, who administers a deserved rebuke to those who treat the love of man and woman as though it were no more than the crossing of flies in the air—to borrow a strong expression from Wordsworth.

### Two Quatrains.

(Translated from Omar Khayyam by F. York Powell, in the "Pageant," 1897.)

The heart wherein Love's wick burns clear and well,  
Whether it swing in mosque, or shrine, or cell,  
If in the Book of Love it be enrolled  
Is free from hope of Heaven, or fear of Hell.

Of duty towards God let preachers whine,  
But do as I command, and Heaven's thine;  
Give freely, slander not, be kindly still;  
That done, have thou no fear, and call for Wine!

"What is faith?" inquired an examiner in "Pass-Divinity." "Faith is the faculty by which we are enabled, to believe that which we know is not true," replied the undergraduate.

### Anthropomorphism.

Anthropomorphism was from the first, and still remains, the inherent vice of thought. The natural illusion which compelled man to regard himself as the centre and end of all things obliged him also to make the world in his own image, to endow things, then groups, then the universal aggregate, with intentions, will, design, whence gods, forces, Providence. Man projected himself, his life and his intelligence, into a nature indifferent to all these things; he attributed passions to phenomena, thus personifying them. Bowing down before these factitious beings, whom he had invested with authority, "fearing the hatred and the wrath of the gods whom he had invented," he wasted thousands of centuries in regulating imaginary relations between them and himself. Clever knaves, half dupes to their own devices, constituted themselves the interpreters and ministers of these powers, making them speak, and selling in their name fancied favors in this life as well as in the next; profiting on earth by the caprice of events, in heaven by the presumptuous credulity of man. Promises, whose fulfilment could not be verified, became articles of faith, axioms, principles, which logic has pretended to deduce from and base upon experience.—*Andre Lefevre.*

### Mercenary Missionaries.

The late Professor Froude, the historian, is credited with the remark that "missionaries spoke in the past and future, but never in the present indicative." It would be more correct to say that they spoke in the future imaginative. It was recently announced from the pulpit of Christ Church that the success of missionary effort was such at Jebu that the doors of the church had to be thrown open to give admission to the rush of converts. More recently it was announced from the same place that the Hinterland was greatly in need of *female workers*. Now, while these beguiling statements serve their purpose of adding piquancy to the reports sent to England to replenish the coffers of the missionary exchequer, it is nothing short of outrageous to address them to an audience who have a knowledge of the facts, and whose minds are not clouded with the visionary fallacies of a mercenary calling.—*Lagos Weekly Record.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE BROWNE CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your readers will remember that the poor man Browne, for whose wife and children a small fund was subscribed, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment three weeks ago. His wife informs me in a letter that he has been declared insane, and has been removed to the County Lunatic Asylum. He has written to her explaining his advantages there—better food, better attendance, more freedom; but still declaring he is quite sane. He has now his *pallette*, and other things requisite for producing pictures, and he hopes to produce pictures which his wife will sell during his detention. I am still assisting his family, and have yet a small balance in hand. Some correspondents have complained that he was not provided with counsel at his trial; but this he resolutely refused to accept, preferring to defend himself. Mrs. Browne's eldest daughter (sixteen years of age) would like a situation if any of our friends need a girl for household work.

R. FORDER, *hon. sec. N. S. S.*

## PROFANE JOKES.

"That will do," said Balaam; "you've talked enough." "Yes," retorted the ass; "I've talked enough to hand you down to immortality." And the patient animal never spoke again.

Deacon Grimes—"I saw you at our church Sunday. That was a masterful arraignment of Satan that Mr. Texter gave us, wasn't it?" Fogg—"Yes, it was simply awful. But, do you know, I have made it a rule in life not to make up my mind upon any matter until I have heard both sides."

Young Parson—"Yes, sinners shall be washed white as snow." Granny—"But not them as truly repents, I hope, sir."

"The contribution box will now be passed round for the heathen fund," announced the minister. "Why, pa, you put that bad half-crown on the plate," whispered Miss Bagley. "That's all right," replied the father; "you don't suppose a cannibal knows the difference between that and a good half-crown."

"Dose Puritans vas no goot," said Mr. Isaacheimerstein. "Vhy?" asked his partner. "Vhen dey burned dose vitches dey did not have dem insured."

## 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, "The Philosophy of Hamlet."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Is Paul an Historic Personage?" November 9, at 8.30, Dance.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Sunday Sanctity"; 7, Musical selections; 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Other Religions"  
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. J. Beeves, "Faith or Reason."  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion, "How Far Does Nonconformity Tend Towards Progress?" 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Children's Notions of God."  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Children's Notions of God."  
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 5, Tea and Concert.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): R. Forder—11, "Playing with the Bible"; 7, "The Gospel History."  
BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Oumberland-street): 3, Discussion Class—Leon Dornbush, "How Bad Jews are Made Worse Christians."  
CRATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, A. G. Herzfeld, "Belief and Morals."  
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, Social meeting.  
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Vocal and Instrumental Concert by Mr. Lowe and party.  
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Smith, "The Word and the Spirit—John xvi. 63."  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusho'me-road, All Saints): O. Cohen—11, "Ethics and Economics"; 3, "Is there a Future Life?" 6.30, "The Priest and the Child."  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—11, "Freethought at the Church Congress"; 3, "Old Idols and New Ideals"; 7, "The Evolution of the God Idea." Tea at 5.  
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Address on "The Spread of Secularism."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—November 14, Manchester; 21, Huddersfield.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—November 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

## POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-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.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

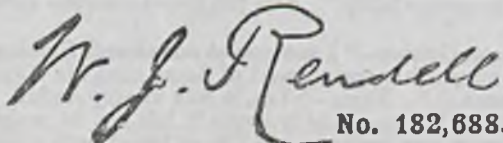
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