

# The Free Thinker

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## THE DOOM OF CHRISTIAN SPAIN.

### III.—THE SPANISH CURSE IN AMERICA.

AMERICA was discovered by a Spaniard of Italian extraction. Christopher Columbus was really born at Genoa and educated at the University of Pavia. But it was in the service of the King and Queen of Spain that he made that memorable voyage across the Atlantic. The islands known as the West Indies were discovered first, the continent was not touched till some time afterwards. It was on those islands that the Spaniards established their earliest dominion in the new world, and there that they began their ceaseless policy of oppression and slaughter.

Columbus was a really great man, and his name, as Helps says, is "one of those beacon-fires which carry on from period to period the tidings of the world's great history through successive ages." But he was a superstitious son of the Church, and his motives were mainly religious. He dreamed of finding Paradise, and when he found a new world his chief thought was the conquest of fresh adherents to Catholicism. It is a dark blot on his great memory that he introduced slavery in America, and he lived long enough to see that he had brought a curse rather than a blessing. Only five years after he landed at Hispaniola he said: "I swear that numbers of men have gone to the Indies who did not deserve water from God or man." On the other hand, the natives of the Indies were kind and gentle, and easy victims of the wretches who came from Spain. Columbus was once wrecked on the coast of St. Domingo, and the natives gave him the most generous assistance. His heart was touched by their kindness. "They are a loving, uncovetous people," he wrote, "so docile in all things that I assure your highness I believe in all the world there is not a better people, or a better country; they love their neighbors as themselves, and they have the sweetest and gentlest way of talking in the world, and always with a smile." Columbus built a fort and left a small colony there, but when he returned, after a voyage to Spain and back, he found that every one of them was dead. They were so quarrelsome and licentious that the natives were obliged to kill them all in mere self-defence.

But before we go further let us see how the Spaniards stood related to Christendom in general, and on what ground they rested their rights in the new world. They had, as they conceived, a stronger claim than that of conquest; they acted on the authority of the Pope, who was God's representative on earth. A bull was issued by this vicerent of the Almighty giving Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, and their successors, an absolute dominion over all lands that were or might be discovered west of the Azores; all to the east of that point having already been consigned to the Catholic King of Portugal. This Pope who gave away lands he did not even know to exist was Alexander VI. Robertson calls him "a pontiff infamous for every crime." Mosheim says he was destitute of "decency and shame." Symonds says that his sensualities were "as unrestrained as Nero's." Some of them defy description. "He died," says Ranke, "of the poison he had prepared for another." Designing to take off a rich cardinal, he prepared a medicated dish for the purpose, but the intended victim gained over the head cook, and what was meant for the cardinal was given to the pope. Such was the wretch whose signature was regarded as a perfectly

valid authority by the Spaniards for all their conquests in America.

Mindful of the claims of piety, the Spanish government was very anxious about the conversion of the Indians. It was this, says Prescott, that gave the expeditions to the new world the air of a crusade.

"No doubt was entertained of the efficacy of conversion, however sudden might be the change, or however violent the means. The sword was a good argument when the tongue failed.....The Spanish cavalier felt he had a high mission to accomplish as a soldier of the Cross.....To him it was a holy war. He was in arms against the infidel. Not to care for the soul of his benighted enemy was to put his own in jeopardy. The conversion of a single soul might cure a multitude of sins. It was not for morals he was concerned, but for the faith."

Robertson, in the appendix to his *History of America*, translates a long Spanish document which may be taken as a fair specimen of hundreds. It is a pious message from a Spanish priest to an Indian chief, and is in substance as follows: There is one God, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There is only one true religion, namely, that of the Roman Catholic Church. The head of this Church is the Pope at Rome, who is God's delegate on earth, having inherited the position from Peter, to whom it was first assigned. This mighty person has given all the lands in this part of the world to the King of Spain, and we are come to take possession of them. If you submit, and accept the Holy Catholic Religion, which will be explained to you, the King of Spain will regard you as his good subjects, and treat you accordingly. But if you do not submit, and particularly if you do not embrace the only true religion, we shall fall upon you with the sword. Your wives and children will be massacred, and all the men who are spared will be reduced to slavery.

This was the spirit in which the Spaniards went to work, and their deeds were calculated to strike horror into the lowest depths of hell. They had the Cross upon their standards, and they imitated the example of Bible heroes like Moses and Joshua. They slew men, women, and children indiscriminately. They roasted Indians on grid-irons, and trained bloodhounds to tear them in pieces. They hung the natives up in rows of thirteen, in honor of Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles, and burnt them alive. In Cuba itself, according to Las Casas, who was an eye-witness, there was such cruelty perpetrated that "never any man living either has or shall see the like." In three months he saw six thousand children die miserably, being plucked away from their fathers and mothers, who were sent to work in the mines. Multitudes of the natives committed suicide to escape the awful curse that had fallen upon them. On one occasion an Indian chief was fastened to the stake, and a Franciscan friar promised him the joys of heaven if he would only embrace the Christian religion. "Are there any Spaniards in heaven?" he asked, and on being told that there were he replied, "Then I will go to hell." The West Indies were desolated and depopulated. The million inhabitants of Hispaniola were reduced in fifteen years to sixty thousand. And it was just the same on the mainland. Fifty thousand were slain and half a million transported in Nicaragua. Four millions were butchered in Mexico, two millions in Honduras, four millions in Guatemala, and an untold number in Peru and Paraguay. In the last country the Spaniards baptized the natives by thousands, and then made slaves of them; often, however, they "cut their



throats (as Howitt says) that they might prevent all possibility of a relapse, and send them straight to heaven."

The story of "the devildoms of Spain," as Tennyson calls them, horrified the more humane minds in Europe. One remembers the noble protest of the sceptic Montaigne. All classes of people in England, as Froude says, were filled with "a genuine human indignation," and her sailors fought the Spaniards not only as Catholics, but as merciless fiends. Sir Walter Raleigh gave eloquent expression to the feeling of a host of his countrymen.

Who will not be persuaded that now at length the great Judge of the world hath heard the sighs, groans, and lamentations, hath seen the tears and blood of so many millions of innocent men, women, and children, afflicted, robbed, reviled, branded with hot irons, roasted, dismembered, mangled, stabbed, whipped, racked, scalded with hot oil, put to the strapads, ripped alive, beheaded in sport, drowned, dashed against the rocks, famished, devoured by mastiffs, burned, and by infinite cruelties consumed, and purposeth to scourge and plague that cursed nation, and to take the yoke of servitude from that distressed people, as free by nature as any Christian.

Grand old Walter Raleigh! He was one of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived; soldier, sailor, statesman, and writer, and splendid at every point. That last expression does him infinite credit, penned as it was when the principle of toleration was so little understood. *As free by nature as any Christian.* What a golden phrase for that age! No wonder he was called an Atheist, not only in private but in public, when he stood for trial in that infamous court set in motion by the subtle and greedy pedant who sat upon the throne of England. It is one of the ironies of history that Raleigh was sacrificed, and his brave heart's blood poured out on the scaffold, to please the very Spain he impeached so magnificently.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## THEOSOPHY AND ITS ETHICS.

WHATEVER we may believe as to the truth and utility of what is termed Theosophy, there can be no reasonable doubt that many of its adherents are sincere, and that some of the objects they profess to have in view are commendable. It is said that in the teachings of Theosophy is to be found an explanation of the real nature of man, and that its ethics contains the essentials of human progress. Any theory which tends to solve the problems of existence and to exalt the character of mankind deserves our hearty support. The world, more than ever, requires correct knowledge of the laws that regulate the universe, and also solid rules whereby human actions should be so regulated that our conduct may be creditable to ourselves and have a beneficial influence upon others. In order, however, to possess these advantages, all wild and superstitious conjectures should be avoided, and the rules prescribed for the regulation of daily life should have a firm basis and moral sanctions that can be readily understood. They should accord with known facts and harmonize with cultivated reason.

Now, as we understand Theosophy, it does not furnish either of these requisites. It has been defined as "the name given to those systems of philosophy which profess to attain to a knowledge of the Divine Being by spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition, or direct individual relations." Here we have, as Hamlet said, "words, words, words," but no information that has a practical bearing upon mundane affairs. When and where has such "knowledge of the Divine Being" been attained? Besides, all "knowledge" gained by "spiritual ecstasy," or intuition, is worthless as a guide in life, inasmuch as it depends upon the physical and mental condition of the person in whom it is manifested, and it is both varied and conflicting. Personally, we object to all forms of spiritualism as a factor in human conduct, for the following reasons. Spirit is not a *known* property of matter; if it exist, it is a foreign element, and may prove a danger in destroying all scientific certainty. The stability of natural law recognises no "spiritual" operations. This so-called spiritualism must be either governed by natural laws, or it must act in defiance of them. If it be so governed, it is material; but if it is not so governed, we

are ignorant of it, and therefore it is to us non-existent. The supposed proof of its reality is purely subjective, and is only felt by the individual as a rule when he is in a highly nervous or in some other abnormal condition.

Strictly speaking, it appears to us that Theosophy has no practical ethical code, for we are told that its highest aim is to reach the "inner circle." To do this, however, we have to pass through the portals of credulity into the halls of mystery, and there dwell in solitude and in a state of celibacy, which is often productive of conduct the opposite of moral. It is, in fact, the teaching of pure asceticism, and that no ethical system of to-day advocates as a rule of life. Even Mrs. Besant wrote, in her tract on *Secular Morality*: "Asceticism, in any shape, is immoral; it decreases the amount of temporal happiness; and whether it pleases God or no, whether it give a seat in heaven or no, whether it bring happiness in a future life or no, it is equally immoral, it is equally wrong." This mode of existence might have satisfied those who lived in remote times, amid the mystic realms of spiritual delusion; but it is not suited to the requirements of the matter-of-fact nineteenth century. We agree with Gerald Massey: "The very essence of all such mysteries as are got up from the refuse leavings of the past is pretence, imposition, and imposture. Public experimental research, the printing press, and a Freethought platform have abolished the need of mystery."

According to the late Madame Blavatsky, Mrs. Besant, and other Theosophists, the keynote to their ethical code is in the doctrine of Karma, which, says Mrs. Besant, "is the expression of eternal justice, whereby each reaps exactly as he has sown. It is the impersonal law of retribution, distributing the fruit of good and bad actions. During one incarnation is wrought the Karma which shall mould the circumstances of the next, so that each man beautifies or mars his own future. None can escape from the operation of Karma, nor modify it save by the creation of fresh. Karma presides, so to speak, over each re-incarnation, so that the ego passes into such physical and mental environment as it deserves." It would be interesting to learn what is here meant by the term "eternal justice." We fail to see any evidence of it in this life, and if there be a future one we can have no knowledge of its conditions while we are in our present state. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his *Science of Ethics*, says: "Justice, in a certain sense, means reasonableness." But is it reasonable to suppose that injustice here will be followed by justice hereafter? Upon what grounds does such a notion rest? Moreover, does not the fact that injustice obtains here destroy the theory of "eternal justice"? Further, *why* should we have to suffer wrong here which is to be compensated for in some other life? Is it not more reasonable to believe that the evils endured on earth are largely the result of man's own ignorance, indifference, and false conceptions of the duties of existence? In such cases it may be said that each person does reap what he has sown. Still, we cannot admit that it is strictly accurate to allege that always "each reaps exactly as he has sown." This theory does not accord with the law of heredity and that of cause and effect. For instance, an individual may be sober, chaste, and honorable in the morning of his life, and yet subsequently be broken down physically and morally, and that not from his own fault, but in consequence of the wrong-doing of his parents prior to his birth. And even those very parents themselves might have died without experiencing any serious effects of their bad actions.

We are told that it is "the Karma which shall mould the circumstances." Are we to understand by this that the Karma is an entity separate from the man? If so, it must be something more than "eternal justice." If, on the other hand, it is a part of the man, it must depend for its power upon his nature and environment. If "none can escape from the operation of Karma, nor modify it save by the creation of fresh," who, or what, creates the "fresh" Karma? Then it is responsible for the "fresh creation." If, however, Karma is not the creative force, man and his environments are; and the latter appears to us to be the fact. Instead of saying that each man reaps exactly as he has sown, we should urge that mankind are what they are, not merely as the result of their own conduct, but also in consequence of their general surroundings. Hence the necessity of each and all living active, useful, and pure lives, so that thereby the legitimate operation of the law of cause and effect may be fully realized.



To say that Theosophy, with its theory of Karma, is a "working hypothesis" is to indulge in vague and misleading language. John Stuart Mill, in his *System of Logic*, says: "An hypothesis is any supposition which we make (either without actual evidence or on evidence avowedly insufficient) in order to endeavor to deduce from it conclusions in accordance with facts which are known to be real, under the idea that, if the conclusions to which the hypothesis leads are known truths, the hypothesis itself must either be, or at least is likely to be, true. . . . An hypothesis being merely a supposition, there are no other limits to hypotheses than those of the human imagination. We may, if we please, imagine, by way of accounting for an effect, some cause of a kind utterly unknown, and acting according to a law altogether fictitious" (book iii., chap. xiv.).

It is, in our opinion, equally as misleading to speak of the "ego passing into such physical and mental environment as it deserves." It is here assumed that the "ego" is an entity independent of the body. But where is the evidence that it is so? Professor Ribot, in his book on *The Diseases of Personality*, writes: "The ego is not an entity acting where it chooses or as it pleases, controlling the organs in its own way, and limiting its domain according to its own wish. On the contrary, it is a resultant, even to such a degree that its domain is strictly determined by the anatomical connections with the brain" (p. 45). But if the "ego" were an entity, it would be influenced in its nature by the organization which contained it. Supposing it were transmitted from one body to another, it would be surrounded by "fresh" conditions, which must necessarily affect the very nature of the "ego." This appears to us to show the utter fallacy of the Theosophic notion of reincarnation, which means that we shall continue our present "ego" in other organizations. But how can we reasonably suppose that a person who dies to-day will reappear, say, a hundred years hence, as the same individual? The conditions having changed, the result must be different. Besides, the link in the progress from a lower to a higher form of existence would be broken. For instance, a person dies in a licentious and drunken condition; will he reappear in the same wretched state? If so, where is "the expression of eternal justice"? Has a reformation taken place? If so, what has been reformed? Not the Karma, surely; for that is supposed to be the reforming agency. It cannot be the "ego," inasmuch as, apart from the brain, nerves, and the entire organization (which, after death, no longer exist), it has no functional reality.

CHARLES WATTS.

#### A FINGER-NAIL LEGEND.

In the third century of the Christian era a story was composed concerning the visit of a holy hermit, Zosimus, to the Land of the Blessed. This was, perhaps, added to in the course of time, and it was translated from Greek into Slavonic, Syrian, Ethiopic, and Arabic. It gives an interesting view of the early monkish ideas of the earthly paradise, or heaven on earth.

Zosimus lived in the desert for forty years, and ate no bread, and drank no wine, and saw the face of no man—a curious illustration of the inverted life philosophy of the early Christian ascetics, who were possessed by a fury of renunciation, and put a ban upon civilized food and all things that cheer, and even upon the sight of the human form. At length Zosimus was rendered sufficiently holy by forty years of contempt for the human race, and he issued from his cave and travelled forty days and fell exhausted. In this condition he gave himself up to prayer for three days, and if the author of the story had any skill in psychology he may have intended this episode to be a hint as to the relation between prayer and intellectual weakness. Then there came a beast from the desert "whose name is the camel." The camel knelt and Zosimus mounted. Amid a waste region haunted by wild beasts and reeking with poisonous plants the hermit passed in fear and trembling. Then the mode of conveyance changed. A great earthquake occurred, and a hurricane lifted Zosimus from his saddle, and the wind spirited him away to the banks of a very broad stream. But over the waters of the river arose a gigantic wall of cloud, and the cloud spoke and said: "Zosimus, man of God, through me

no bird passes out of this world, nor breath of wind, nor the sun itself, nor can the Tempter in this world pass through me." However, since Zosimus was neither bird, wind, sun, nor Tempter, admission was possible. And if ever I go to heaven I could not choose a more romantic method of entrance. A fruit tree suddenly sprang up on the bank where Zosimus waited, and its topmost branches bent down, enwrapped the astonished Christian, and then suspended him in mid-air across the middle of the resounding stream. Thereupon a similar tree arose on the opposite bank, and its upper boughs grasped Zosimus, and then gently deposited him on the further side of the dividing waters. Thus, then, the hermit had reached the Land of the Blessed, which he perceived to be an extensive plain strewn with brilliant flowers.

He set out on his tour of exploration, and naturally hoped to come across a guide who knew the ins and outs of the locality. Such a guide he found in a singular person who was naked except for a thin costume of lightning which played and flickered over his face and limbs. The Man of Lightning introduced him to the Blessed Ones, who welcomed him, and, in response to his entreaty, gave him an account of their origin and of their life in the earthly paradise. Somewhat quaintly, instead of relating their story by word of mouth, they wrote it on slabs of stone with their finger-nails. Their narrative was, in summary, as follows:—

In the time of Jeremiah the prophet the city of Jerusalem was threatened with dire peril from an army of destroyers; and Jeremiah declared that the place would certainly be delivered into the hands of the enemy unless strong efforts were made to turn away God's anger. Pious Rechab arose, and advised all his family to strip, to fast, and to avoid strong drink, and to pray mightily. Then the Lord pitied Jerusalem, and the foe was turned back. The children of Rechab kept up the teetotal custom thus commenced, and so also did the Rechabites, their descendants. It would even appear from the finger-nail report that they abjured the use of clothing, and refused to eat bread baked by the heat of fire; and the legend may be an attempt to explain the origin of one of the extraordinary ascetic communities which scandalized common sense in the early centuries. A certain king tried to induce the Rechabites to dress decently, to drink wine and eat bread. As usual with fanatical people, instead of basing their habits upon utilitarian or æsthetic reasons, they extracted their logic from the bottomless pit of piety, and said: "We will not disobey God." So the king cast them into prison. But an angel came amid a blaze of light, and clasped hold of all the prisoners by the hair of their heads, and carried them in a bunch to the river, and he put them upon the water, which floated and floated and floated until they found themselves in the centre of a broad lake. The water dried up, except on the margin, thus leaving them in a region encircled by a kind of moat and walled in by a lofty rampart of cloud. In this Utopia the happy teetotallers dwell, feeding on fruit (they are vegetarians also), and dispensing with tools, ploughs, houses, swords (they are a kind of Quakers), silver and gold. They are even Malthusian, for the families never exceed two. There is but one craft or industry, and that is prayer. "We are praying night and day, and this is all our occupation." Under such conditions, the modern difficulty of want of employment is not likely to arise, unless the supply of subjects for prayer becomes exhausted. At night the happy teetotallers lie on couches of dry leaves. They are not immortal, but die at the age of 360 or 680. When the day of death draws near there is no sickness and no decline. The angels give a summons: "The Lord calls thee"; and in peace the body sinks and yields up the soul. The Blessed Ones have no tools, and so the angels dig the grave, and the soul, "as a shape of light, perfect in all the body apart from the distinction of male and female," ascends amid troops of angels to the rosy firmament above; and, as it rises, the angels sing overhead, and the choir of the Blessed Ones chant responsively below—which surely is no unskilful touch of poetry.

Here the finger-nail legend closes; and Zosimus is carried back across the cloud, and on the wings of the wind, and on the back of the camel, to his familiar cave in the wilderness.

Then the poetry drops to the gross and absurd, as if a later hand had added to the original story. The Devil is jealous of the honor paid to Zosimus by the special



revelation of the tablets, and he defies the poor hermit to combat, and, very unfairly, brings with him a corps of 1,360 demons. And so, says the much-trying Zosimus, "they dragged me from the cave as I prayed, tossing me about between them, for forty days"—an adventure which reminds us of Sancho Panza being tossed in the blanket. However, the Devil was worsted, and was duly despatched to his native and congenial brimstone. And Zosimus died in peace, and the monks buried him, and over his tomb seven palm-trees rose miraculously and gave pleasant shade to the pilgrims who stayed to drink of the holy well.\*

I often wonder, when I read such Christian legends, what Paul the tent-maker would have thought if he could have seen to what depths of vagary and folly his cherished gospel would descend in the course of a few centuries. I think he might have paused. Perhaps he would have taken counsel with the Greek scholars whom he was inclined to despise, and endeavored to strengthen his new religion with enough of their disciplined intellect to guard Christianity from the meanness of monkish superstition. Plato had his myths, it is true; but his myths were inspired with a dignity and noble sentiment which few of the Christian legends could approach.

I do not doubt that the Christian gospel was a vehicle by which some beneficent ideas were liberated and evolved. But when Christianity came into the world it seemed also to give the signal for the wild outbreak of a thousand useless fanaticisms. It was as if, while releasing an innocent man from jail, the prison-doors were flung wide and a whole troop of criminals let loose at the same time. There are magnificent passages and sentiments in the New Testament and some other Christian writings of the early period. Against these we must set off all the dead-weight of gospel-miracle and the mass of dreary speculations about the future life. It was a sorry step downwards from the dialogues of Plato to the finger-nail essays of Zosimus.

F. J. GOULD.

### THE CLERGY ON CHURCH-GOING.

A CONFERENCE of the clergy and laity of South London was held a fortnight ago to consider two very important matters, at all events to the clergy, and one of them of considerable interest, though of no keen anxiety, to Free-thinkers and the public generally. The first was the consideration of "a proposal for the reconstruction of the diocese of Rochester"; the second was "to obtain an opinion on the reported alienation of many from the outward profession of religion."

Over the deliberations of the clergy and laity who met to discuss these questions the Rural Dean of Southwark, the Rev. W. Lees Bell, presided. And, according to the report of a local journal which lies before me, some very frank admissions were made during the conference. The question of the reconstruction of the diocese was only interesting as indicating the views of some of the clergy as to the best method of bringing the richer parts of Kent within the boundary of the diocese, and of judiciously dropping out some of the poorer districts. To us, however, as Free-thinkers, the entire interest of the discussion turned on the question of the "reported alienation of many from the 'outward profession' of religion." Of course, by the wording of the question we are led to infer that there are many people who, although "outwardly" alienated from religion, are, nevertheless, "inwardly" very pious. But these people do not attend church, and the clergy are naturally very concerned in respect to their persistent absence.

The chairman gave it as his opinion that the lapse in Sunday observance was very largely due to the popularity of the bicycle. "If so many young men did not ride into the country on Sundays," said he, "they would go to—(a voice: Public-houses)—they would attend church." But the Rural Dean did not give any evidence in support of his belief. Surely he must know that the proportion of young men in his own district—viz., Bermondsey—who ride bicycles does not exceed five per cent. of the population. And, supposing all these went riding into the country, what are the other ninety-five per cent. doing on Sundays?

All he can be certain about is that they do not attend church. A Mr. Layman followed. He thought "that the decline in the observance of religion was due to the fact that the clergy did not work enough, as a general rule." "The general opinion," he continued, "of the working classes was that the clergy did not do any work, or very little." This statement was received with cries of "Oh, oh," and laughter, which no doubt came from the clergy; but that it expresses the truth in respect to the opinions of a large section of the working classes there can be no doubt, as a discussion of the question at any of our Radical Clubs would abundantly prove.

The Rev. Canon Beck, who, in addition to being the Rector of Rotherhithe, is chaplain to one of the City Aldermen, and an old-fashioned Tory in politics and religion, spoke in favor of more visiting as a means of inducing people to attend church. But of course the visiting was to be done by his curates, who have also to perform the larger portion of the rector's duties. He was very much opposed to the "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons" given in some chapels, which he described as "perfectly disgraceful." "There were some such places in Rotherhithe," he declared, and he could imagine John Wesley kicking his successors out of their chapels if he could come to life again.

The next speaker, Mr. Mitcham, a prominent member of a local Conservative Club, said that it would be better if the clergy did not attempt to preach extempore sermons. Apparently many good pious persons could not stand them at any price. He did not believe in churches pandering to the people. Bands parading the streets on a Sunday afternoon were an intolerable nuisance. They disturbed those people who were having a nap. Referring to the P. S. A. meetings, he said: "People were induced to attend them under false pretences; and, instead of religious services, they were treated to political lectures. This was the reason of Radicalism being so rampant in the district." (Derisive laughter.) The real cause of the alienation of so many people from the profession of Christianity was, however, given by the Rev. H. Lewis, who attributed it to "the toning down of many prominent features of Christianity by the Higher Criticism." He also affirmed "that the prosperity of the country was a prolific cause of unspirituality." "When a country was in distress," he continued, "then the people were more religious." And with this statement Free-thinkers will cordially agree. But if the clergy would care to know the reason, from a Free-thought standpoint, why so many people have given up attending church, they will find it in the fact that a large number of intelligent persons have discovered that the clergy have nothing to teach, and, further, that Christianity is only one of a number of superstitions, and that it is false from its very foundation. Science has destroyed the story of man's alleged fall, and done away with the necessity of an atonement. It has, moreover, undermined all forms of supernaturalism, and weakened the faith of mankind in all religions that rest upon this basis. And so Christianity, in common with other ancient forms of superstition, is doomed. How long it will survive depends entirely upon the growth of intelligence among the masses.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### A QUESTION OF GEOGRAPHY.

WE read in Rabelais that Plantagrue made his appearance into this world shouting: "Drink, drink; give me something to drink!" The first thing that most of us do when we are born is to sneeze, and then yell with all the strength of our lungs. We realize that great sensation (whether illusory or not)—viz., that we exist; and, according to Schopenhauer, to exist is to suffer, and we suffer because we are something that ought not to be.

As we grow older we are confronted with the intricate problem of life. "I do not know," said Voltaire, "what the future life will be like, and, what is more, I do not care. All I know is that this life is nothing less than an insipid jest; that toads are made to be devoured by snakes, and men's hearts by sorrows." To me, life seems to be composed of some exquisite moments, but of too many *mauvais quarts d'heure*; and, in my opinion, it is one of the greatest misfortunes to be obliged to work for your living

\* The story of Zosimus is printed in the latest volume of the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*.



at some uncongenial occupation. There is an immense advantage in being able to say, as you rise in the morning: "This day belongs to me!"

What is more prosaic than the life of the ordinary individual! He is like a cab-horse, from "early morn to dewy eve" continually at work, and at the mercy of the driver's whip. Such a man does not live, he vegetates; he has no ambitions, no aspirations, his head is like a bladder full of.....air! To him the world is a sealed book, and he knows no more about it than a blackbeetle knows about natural history. Opinions he has none; they are given to him, he repeats what he hears, and even that he does imperfectly. Philosophical ideas are beyond him; his religion is his metaphysics. He sincerely abominates work, and next to that there is nothing he so cordially hates as thinking. Other people do that for him. You can guess his religion by asking him where he was born. With him, and with most people, it is a question of geography. If he is born in England, he is a Protestant; if in Italy, a Roman Catholic; if in China, a Buddhist. He is contented (simple-minded fool!) with his religion. It was good enough for his forefathers, so therefore it is good enough for him, quite oblivious of the fact that we live in a progressive and evolutionary age. He is a Christian, and he will live and die a Christian. To him, a Freethinker is a wicked, immoral, and unscrupulous person. He avoids the Freethinker, when all the time it is this latter who is trying to avoid him.

So much for the commonplace individual; let us now turn to those in a higher sphere—that is to say, the well-to-do, the aristocrats.

There are three kinds of aristocracy: the aristocracy of talent, which has no wealth; the aristocracy of wealth, which has no talent; and the aristocracy of birth, which often has neither wealth nor talent. The future aristocracy of England, I fear, will be composed of our retired tradespeople. God help us then! These aristocrats profess a religion because it is respectable to do so—a kind of formal etiquette. As for the persons holding eminent or important positions, whether it is at the head of a City firm, a large company, or an institute, or some Government post, they also have to stoop to the hypocrisy of professing a religion. Their position demands it. It is this general belief—for people will make it so—that a religious man inspires confidence; but I know better! All these people profess a religion as a necessity; to act otherwise would be equal to quarrelling with their bread and butter, and nobody can afford to do this now-a-days. As for the people who profess religion as a trade (I mean the Clergy, with a big C), they may, perhaps, be sceptics at heart, but they must stick to their gospel-shops; they have a wife and children to keep, and it would be the act of a madman to cut above your head the rope from which you are hanging.

Another factor which has a great influence in making people hold to religion is the so-called consolations of Christianity, the indescribable joys of Paradise, that beautiful cuckoo-land above of everlasting spring, and full of music and sunshine. Now, what can Freethought offer in comparison? Nothing but the stern fact that you must comply with the duties of life and seek for no reward. Freethought teaches you to dry your tears, and to endure what cannot be cured. Christianity is not the passport to another world, and death is but the key to the Great Nirvana, where there is nothing but rest and peace. Death, to the Freethinker, is a profound and eternal sleep, in which no hideous nightmares disturb the mind of the slumberer.

I am not one of those who think that Freethought should show the same proselytizing spirit as Christianity. It is only a fanatic who wants to convert everybody to his opinion. Different minds, different opinions. Those who wish to enrol themselves under the valiant flag of Freethought, let them come and join us. They will be always welcome.

Man is the creature of circumstances and the result of his surroundings; and, as I have said before, his religion is merely a question of geography. In the same manner as mushrooms will grow wherever there is moisture, so will a man as naturally adopt the religion of the country in which he is born, unless by a great effort of mind he manages to tear from his eyes the scales of superstition.

Most people believe the religion of their country to be the true one, and when they die they expect to go straight to

heaven, where they will meet a benevolent-looking gentleman, with long beard, who will say to them: "Bless you, my children; here are plenty of tops and marbles, ginger-beer and lollipops, which your dear Dad has prepared for you." All this may sound very pretty, but what we want is facts.

F. MALIBRAN.

### "THE THEOLOGIAN BLOCKS THE WAY."

THESE notable words spoken at the recent conference of the National Union, of Teachers have a significance in the Freethought movement which ought not to be undervalued by Freethinkers. Coming as they do from the President of the Union, they give voice to the opinion of the majority of teachers in elementary schools, many of whom are members of the Anglican and of the Roman Catholic Church. They indicate to the outside public, not only that elementary teachers are dissatisfied with the hindrances placed in their way by the theologian, but that within the teaching profession the light of reason is showing up the defects of the Christian superstition. The shackles of theology impede progress. Recent events go to prove, too, that the Churches are awaking to the need of securing for themselves, if they are to survive, the control of the education of the children of this country. And the new associations of voluntary schools are being everywhere secured by the theologian. How many of these associations are diocesan? There is here a source of danger to Freethought. Teachers will be compelled to teach in the so-called voluntary schools dogmas which they know are not only repulsive to reason, but which are absolutely unfit for the child-mind. There is no co-relation between dogma and morals, between religious instruction and behavior. In our Church schools the first hour of the morning session is devoted to lessons on dogma, doctrine, and religious history. The fear of the Diocesan examination hangs like the sword of Damocles over the heads of teachers and class during this instruction, and the boy or girl is too often crammed with facts that are fables, with history that is myth, in order that the sop of a good report by the Diocesan Theological Inspector may satisfy the theological parson-manager. Whatever lessons are obtained from the biblical story have to be permeated by the ecclesiastical tinge, and if the instruction has not been of a "definite church" character, so much the worse for the courageous teacher. The Catechism is repeated *ad nauseam*, and the God-the-father-and-holy-ghost phase is driven to the death. But the most distressing aspect of the question is, that the religious instruction is entirely waste unless an ethical import can be given to the Bible story. That it may be sometimes done we do not dispute. That the religious instruction bears little fruit in the conduct of the pupil is recognised by those most capable of forming an opinion. There is too much dogma, too little ethic. There is no co-relation of religion and behavior. When the "theologic" hour is past "secular" instruction holds the field, and here no real help is obtained from the sanctions of the Scriptures. The hour spent in acquiring myth, fable, and dogma could be more profitably spent otherwise. A formal lesson in ethics, and a practical application of right principles to the work of the day, will have a more appreciable effect on the character of the children than all the ecclesiastical clap-trap taught in the schools of the people. It is to the teachers we must look for freedom here. Freethought is making progress in their ranks. They have begun to realize that, "looked at from every standpoint, the theologian blocks the way." Moreover, the spread of Freethought among the teachers of this generation is an earnest of the dissemination of Freethought among their pupils.

I. S.

### "Providential" Escape of a Georgia Editor.

The editor of a Georgia newspaper the other week published this note: "During our absence from the office on Wednesday evening last some evil-minded person, thinking that we were seated at our desk, fired a load of buckshot through our window. But, as a kind, protecting Providence would have it, the entire load was received by a stranger who was waiting for our return. There is no trace of the assassin, and at this writing the stranger who so fortunately filled our place at the time is too weak to talk. Thus is another midnight assassin foiled. The Lord will provide."



### A LOST WORKER.

FEW men to whom a great name has been given have better illustrated it in their lives than Joseph Mazzini Wheeler did in his. He had much of the silent devotion, disinterestedness, and incessant effort associated with that name. I often think children should have the right of two names—the one given by parents in honor of someone whose career has great value in their eyes, and a second name which should be the child's right of selection when he comes of age and is able to decide for himself under what name he will be known. Mr. Wilks, an editor of the *Morning Star*, had been more fortunate had he not borne the great name of "Washington."

Mr. Wheeler was happier in his name, as he really had qualities which illustrated it. He gave all his days and more than all his strength to the service of Freethought. He was the most painstaking of all those who have written on the careers of heretical thinkers. He was the biographer of the soldiers of the cause of unfriended progress. He took unstinted pains to find out the facts. He wrote books himself which could be trusted for substantial accuracy. He was more than a historian; he was himself a thinker. In reviewing Grant Allen's notable book on the *Idea of God*, Mr. Wheeler wrote this memorable sentence: "To me, it appears that the necessity man is under of interpreting things outside himself in terms of his own consciousness is a sufficient explanation of the origin of all theistic beliefs."\* He who could write this was an authority in thought. There is a campaign in the sentence; there is a volume in it. I know of no sentence on the subject so simple, so comprehensive.

Behind the veil of Mr. Wheeler's modesty there were usefulness and power of no ordinary kind. It may be truly said of him, his life helped to shorten the days of superstition and to lengthen the days of reason.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

### WHERE WAS GOD ALMIGHTY?

A VESSEFUL of missionaries sailed the other day  
Towards the land of Wollywog, ten thousand miles away;  
They wished to show the heathen the way to Kingdom  
Come,  
So off they sailed from London Bridge with Bibles—and  
with rum.

Along the River Thames the *Pilot* bore her precious charge;  
Soon after leaving London Bridge she ran against a barge.  
Those missionaries never saw the heathen Wollywogs,  
Their ship was wrecked and they were drowned, just off the  
Isle of Dogs.

The heathen still are worshipping their wooden "Fee-Fo-  
Fum,"  
They're on the road that leads to Hell, instead of Kingdom  
Come:  
They're lost through never having heard those missionaries  
speak,  
Oh, where was God Almighty when the *Pilot* sprang a leak?

A "Liner" was upon the sea one stormy Sabbath day,  
The passengers on board of her began to sing and pray;  
The service was conducted by an orthodox "Divine,"  
He served out God Almighty in the shape of bread and  
wine.

The bread and wine they swallowed just like ordinary  
grub,  
And ordinary port, or porter, purchased at a "pub."  
The wine, if 'twasn't part of Christ, was like him—it was  
dead,  
And rose again, soon after it was buried, with the bread.

"The Lord be with you," said the priest; the people cried  
"Amen";  
And if the words of Christ are true, as represented, then  
The Lord was with them all, no doubt, *inside* for "half-a-  
tick"—

But where was God Almighty when those passengers were  
sick?

There was a mighty Joss-house, not a hundred miles from  
town:  
At other buildings roundabout that Joss-house seemed to  
frown:

Inside its gloomy walls a priest, to people—mostly "mugs"—  
Proclaimed some doctrines worse than those of Hottentots  
or Thugs.\*

'Tis said that all is for the best—so p'raps 'twas just as well  
That Joss-house caught on fire one day, and blazed away  
like hell.

The worshippers thought otherwise—they offered up a  
prayer;

But God is like a p'liceman—when required, he wasn't there.

We know there is a cistern in his mansion in the sky,  
For years ago he drowned the world with water, mountains  
high.

But stay—perhaps the author of that story was a liar—  
For where was God Almighty when his Joss-house caught  
on fire?

ESS JAY BEE.

### "OH, SLEEP, IT IS A GENTLE THING."

THE impassioned appeal of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the recent S. P. G. meeting produced a most remarkable effect upon the front bench on the platform. Even before the Primate had finished speaking Sir Richard Temple had gently subsided into slumbers soft, and during the address of the following speaker, Bishop Mylne, Bishop Barry followed Sir Richard's example. The mild applause at the close of Dr. Mylne's address aroused the rector of Piccadilly for a while; but when Bishop Goulburn had got half way through the statistics of his Australian diocese, the soporific influences had become terribly contagious, and the remarkable spectacle was revealed of the Primate, Bishop Barry, Sir R. Temple, and Mr. J. G. Talbot all asleep in a row. Only the happy collapse of an umbrella on the platform prevented the Bishop of Winchester from joining so goodly a company, and the joke was that the Archbishop, at the top of his voice—that voice of old—had just been scolding everybody for not arousing and awaking to a sense of their duty to mission work.—*Westminster Gazette*.

### ACID DROPS.

CHRISTIANS are talking and writing a lot of nonsense about the dying of Mr. Gladstone. He is so resigned, so patient, and so this, that, and the other—and all because he is a Christian! One would think that men of other faiths, or of no faith at all, were in the habit of howling and kicking at the approach of death. But this is not enough for Canon Ainger, who, having edited Charles Lamb, ought to know better. Preaching at the Temple Church last Sunday morning, this reverend gentleman referred to the Grand Old Man's "steadfast adherence to and public championship of the truth in Jesus Christ," and said it was his "faith" that sustained him in his last hours of suffering. Are we to suppose, then, that without this "faith" Mr. Gladstone would be making an exhibition of himself on his death bed? We decline to believe it.

Canon Ainger also spoke of Mr. Gladstone as "never failing to arise and cut through with his strong arm the ever-shifting sophistries of unbelief." If this refers to his controversies with Huxley and Ingersoll, it is singularly infelicitous. Churchmen like Canon Driver and Dean Farrar were too well acquainted with the subject to set a high value, or any value at all, on Mr. Gladstone's defence of the Bible cosmogony against a master of science like Professor Huxley.

Mr. John Morley has paid Mr. Gladstone a last visit at Hawarden, and the *Daily Mail* says that "on taking his departure he asked for Divine interposition on behalf of the aged invalid." Of course this is a serious subject, and we have as much sympathy for Mr. Gladstone as the next; but we can't help saying that some wag must have supplied the *Mail* with that paragraph. John Morley at prayers is really too much for our risible faculties. They demand exercise.

The author of the converted "Atheist Shoemaker" is at it again. "Mr. Hugh Price Hughes," says the *Light of Faith*, "is responsible for the statement that another of our statesmen, formerly identified with the most extreme anti-Christian position, has come to see things in quite a new light." Now there is only one "statesman" to whom this could possibly apply, and that is Mr. John Morley. We therefore invite Mr. Hughes, if he has any real manliness left in him,

\* *Freethinker*, January 16, 1898.

\* Hell-fire, predestination, etc.



to drop these skulking insinuations and plainly say what he knows. We have a shrewd suspicion that he knows nothing, but is simply romancing—that's a polite word, isn't it?—for the glory of Christ.

There was a comic note in the Milan terror. According to the *Daily News*, the soldiers who had to capture the Capucine Monastery arrested a lot of monks, who were mostly "great, stout, well-fed men," not at all in want of bread. When they were searched for concealed weapons, it was found that their belts contained nothing more deadly than money—not a little, but good, round sums. Naturally there was much laughter at the expense of these lazy, grasping fellows.

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, the pious sentimentalist among our batch of younger poets, is at present in America, where he has published a terribly wooden War Poem. Two lines of one verse run thus:—

This is God's mighty moment  
To make an end of Spain.

But why should God make an end of Spain? Why not call home his priests and supply their places with schoolmasters? That would reform Spain, which is far better than ending her.

"Sister Imos" writes a pretty letter from Madrid, and it is published in the *Cork Constitution*. She says that all the Spanish soldiers and sailors, before they leave their native land to go in search of the enemy, whom they don't seem very anxious to find, confess and receive the Holy Communion. They also wear the scapular of the "Immaculate Conception" outside their uniform. Scapulars, by the way, are bits of woollen stuff blessed by the priests, and are supposed to protect the wearers against all sorts of dangers. We guess, however, that a Yankee bullet would go through it all right.

"We are uneasy," the lady says, "about our sisters in Manila, as the Americans were to attack the Philippines to-day." No doubt she fancies they will all be ravished and murdered by the Yankees. That is the sort of insular ignorance in which most Spaniards live. They believe that they themselves are at the very top of civilization, and that all other people, especially non-Catholics, are horrid savages.

"Sister Imos" is indignant because none of the Powers have come to the aid of Spain. "But our Blessed Lady," she says, "is more powerful, and I'm sure she will help us." Yes, and she has, with a vengeance. The Spanish fleet is destroyed, and Admiral Dewey, in spite of the Virgin, holds Manila in the hollow of his hand.

Catholic sympathy all over Europe is naturally with Spain. The Provincial Superintendent of the Order of Capuchins at Toulouse, in a circular to his monks, makes the following declaration: "The war now beginning is not merely a war of races and a groundless war of greed against justice. More than all this it is a war of religions; Protestantism comes once again to attack the Catholic Church and the Cross of Calvary." The writer of this statement ignores the fact that the Protestants have just as much stock in the Cross of Calvary as the Catholics. Both sides have a heavy investment and a good dividend.

The Pope's anxiety about the fate of Spain is said to have a temporal reason. The Roman Catholic Church holds a vast quantity of Spanish securities bearing interest, and stands to lose terribly by the bankruptcy of Spain. There is generally some such reason behind every move of the astute hierarchy at Rome.

Colonel Murray, of the Seaforth Highlanders, who was at the battle (or battue) of Atbara, pays a tribute to the religious sincerity of the Arabs. They believe that if they kill an unbeliever they will certainly go to paradise, and have a good place in its very best department. Accordingly they are reckless in battle, courting rather than shunning death. "Everyone of those men," Colonel Murray says, "believes in his religion, which we do not."

Instead of reporting the May meetings in the old, dry fashion, the *Daily News* has gone in this year for descriptive accounts, which occasionally are not very flattering. Spicy stories are reproduced which do not always tend to the advantage of the societies concerned. Here is one, for instance, relating to missionary work in New Guinea. When the missionary schooner arrived there, one of the men sang out to a native: "Hallo, Jimmy, are you a policeman now?" And the converted heathen replied: "Policeman—no fear; too much hard work policeman; me deacon now."

A most amusing incident—though it was not meant to be amusing—occurred the other day in the Upper House of

Convocation. The Bishop of Bath and Wells asked whether the Archbishop of Canterbury was going to order a special form of prayer for the cessation of the war between America and Spain; and his fifteen-thousand-a-year Grace replied that we had no very special or particular interest in this war as compared with other wars, consequently he did not propose to issue any special prayer. The amusing feature of this incident is the gravity of the episcopal tomfoolery. Their lordships pull long faces, and pretend to think it matters whether they pray or not. The tragic feature of the incident is the attitude of the Church, which, through the lips of the Archbishop of Canterbury, declares that England has no special interest in this great struggle. But his Grace is mistaken. England has.

It seems quite clear that the Church has been working in concert with all the elements of disorder in Italy. The clergy have done their best to undermine the State, and they begin to see that they have gone too far. They forget, as the *Daily News* remarks, that they were weakening the one guarantee for the security of their own property and lives. "The Pope," our contemporary says, "protested against the celebration of Italian unity when he should have been protesting against jobbery and breach of trust."

The superstition of the Italian people is still remarkable. At Pontedera, in Tuscany, a little boy, aping his elders, ran through the streets flourishing a stick and crying, "Give us bread! Give us work!" Hundreds soon followed him, declaring he was inspired, and calling him "The Angel of the Revolution."

The miser mill-owner, who was hacked to pieces by the riotous mob at Minervino, was pious as well as mercenary. "Only a few days before his death," says the *Daily News* correspondent, "he had a thanksgiving Mass read in presence of all his employees and some priests in his private chapel, because the Madonna had made it possible for him to sell the corn at fifty francs per hundredweight."

David Hume lived and died a sceptic, and his friend, Adam Smith, while admitting this frankly, said that he was as near to the ideal of a wise and good man as the nature of human frailty would permit. Joseph de Maistre, the great Catholic champion, plainly called Hume an Atheist, and declared that his cold venom was far more deadly than the poison of Voltaire. But it seems that the whole world has been mistaken in "Saint David," as the wags called him. According to Professor Calderwood, who has just written a little book on Hume, he was really "a witness for Christianity," and his "testimony" is all the more valuable because it is "beset with so many and such grave doubts." This is extremely exquisite. Hume asserted that no man could believe Christianity unless he was conscious of a miracle worked inside him; at the same time he argued that miracles were incredible. Religion, he held, was not a matter of reason at all, but entirely a matter of faith. "Very well then," says Professor Calderwood, "that's all right. Religion is a matter of faith; so Hume was a first-rate Christian after all; and the fact that he didn't believe Christianity shows how true he felt it to be after all." This seems the long and short of Professor Calderwood's argument, and it is worthy of Bedlam—or of latter-day Christianity.

Canon Woodward, Vicar of Folkestone, is dead, and his body was "watched" in the Catholic church the night before the funeral, no doubt by order of his widow, who is reported to be a Papist. Prayers are offered for the repose of the dead man's soul, and perhaps they are very necessary if he knows all that is going on.

Another Peculiar People case has occurred at Canning Town. Hilda Marsh, thirteen months old, died of pneumonia, and, as no doctor was called in, an inquest had to be held on her body. A medical man was ready to testify that a doctor could have saved the child's life, but the jury could not agree upon a verdict, and the inquest was adjourned for three weeks. We shall watch this case with close attention.

Mr. Gladstone calls the University of Oxford "God-fearing and God-sustaining." We did not know that God wanted any sustaining. We thought he was omnipotent. Perhaps this expression of Mr. Gladstone's may be regarded as letting the cat out of the bag by accident. Truth often slips out in an unguarded moment.

The *Oxford Times* is beginning to see that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. It now admits that the prosecution of the Socialists on account of their outdoor meetings is "bringing into contempt the administration of the law," for the simple reason that religionists and other bodies are not interfered with, however much "obstruction" they may cause. "The whole matter," it says, "requires dealing with in some comprehensive and just manner, which



will include in its operation all classes and conditions of men."

Bournemouth is a fine watering place with a fine pier, which is much patronized on warm Sunday evenings during the summer. Of course it would be very nice to have a good band playing there, but the Town Council has just rejected, though by a narrow majority, a proposal to that effect. The music was to be "sacred," but even that kind was too much for the nerves of the Sabbatarians. No doubt, when they get to heaven they'll have the hallelujah chorus stopped every Saturday night at twelve.

Birmingham is in a sad state of spiritual destitution. It has plenty of Pushful Joe, but not enough of Jesus Christ. And this fact is exercising the mind of the Bishop of Worcester, who declares that the great Midland capital requires seventy-three more clergymen and another twelve or thirteen thousand pounds a year. How curious it is that the amount of religion wanted can always be figured up in men and money.

Dean Farrar has been holding forth at Birmingham on the indifference of the laity—that is, the people who are expected to support the men of God, and somehow fail to rise to the full height of their glorious privilege. This eloquent, well-paid Jeremiah predicted the speedy smash-up of the British Empire if the people of this country did not forsake their evil ways, among which he included "a growing contempt for Sundays and public worship." There you are now! It's that tarnation bicycle. As the old farmer with the stiff legs said when a rational dress girl scraped his shins with her front wheel—"That damned thing'll be the ruin o' England."

Mr. Marriott, the rich Yorkshire manufacturer, who left such a huge sum of money for Anglican Church purposes, left not a single penny to an aged cousin who had resided with him for years in the capacity of housekeeper. Mr. Marriott did not leave his money till his money left him. He seems to have invested it all in fire insurance.

"Our contemporary," says the *Methodist Times*, "is whirling a double-edged sword, and undermining its own position." What a remarkable simile!

Mr. W. T. Stead writes to the *Christian World* with a view to the appointment of a committee or something to collect "evidence of the financial potency of prayer." What an admirable expression! How characteristic of the Mowbray House oracle! The "potency" of prayer is all very well, but the "financial potency," ay, that's the thing! If God will only send us money, we'll pray like steam-engines.

Here is another answer to prayer. Mrs. Bagnall, of Birmingham, visited the Roman Catholic cemetery at Dudley, and knelt down to pray at the foot of her brother's grave. She was a weighty lady of about seventeen stone, and the ground gave way beneath her. She fell into an old vault, and when extricated she was dead.

Japan is frequently tormented by "Providence." Earthquakes and tidal waves are the principal agency of its inflictions. The latest news from Yokohama is of a terrible storm on the Swale coast. Over 200 fishing boats and 1,500 men are reported to be missing.

Canon Garratt made a curious speech at the annual meeting of the London City Mission. He referred to good old Jonah who took that wonderful submarine excursion in a whale, and declared that if Nineveh had listened to him longer it would have been a great city still. This was funny enough, but it was followed by something funnier. Canon Garratt contended that the London City Mission, "by converting the burglar, reduced the rates and made the lives of the people more secure." He did not state how many burglars had been thus converted, and what proportion they bore to the total number engaged in that enterprising profession. He overlooked the fact, too, that the rates go up in London instead of down. But anything is good enough for a May meeting.

Another speaker, the Rev. J. E. Wakerley, superintendent of the Central Wesleyan Mission, told the meeting that he "preached in what was once the Hall of Science, and the place could not hold the people that came." This gentleman seems to have a romantic imagination. The building he refers to was pulled down some time ago. He was just as accurate in his statement that "militant Atheism was dead or on its last legs." It cannot possibly be both, and the conjunction "or" simply betrays his ignorance of the real fact.

Lichfield Cathedral, on Saturday, May 14, was the scene of the public deposition and excommunication of the Rev.

Gerald T. G. Hayward, who had been found guilty of indecent conduct. The Church is now able to get rid of its black sheep, and there appears to be a good many of them.

The *Engineering and Mining Journal*, quoted in the *New York Truthseeker*, has a very low opinion of men of God in business. "A mining enterprise," it says, "run by a minister of the gospel, of any sect or church, is a thing to leave alone. We cannot recall a single instance where it was not either an outright swindle or a bungling failure."

They have had a nice row on the Grimsby School Board over the question of religious education. It was proposed to pay Church and Nonconformist ministers for "examining" the children, but this was strenuously opposed by Mr. Maddock, who made things very lively. He actually said that all the unfortunate women on the streets of Grimsby had received religious instruction at school, and he didn't see what good it had done them. Unfortunately he had no supporter, so the motion passed easily enough, and twenty-eight guineas will be divided among a few men of God, who can afford to smile—for the present.

According to the Rev. C. S. Hope, of Holy Trinity Church, Southport, those who try to divorce religion from education in elementary schools are "trying to destroy the character of the future men and women of this country." This is a terrible prospect, but we feel a bit reassured when we reflect that the speaker is in the religious line of business himself. Every trade has its little tricks, and nobody cries stinking fish.

The *Sydney Daily Telegraph* reports that a certain Anglican Bishop of that colony held a mortgage over certain disorderly houses in the city. Residents in the neighborhood often complained to him, but ineffectually. His lordship said he was "very sorry, but he had invested money in the place, and he was afraid if he took any action he would lose by it." The Bishop's agent took the ground that "the people in question paid higher rents than others, and their money was as good as anyone else's." Even a man of God doesn't haggle at trifles in face of a good ten per cent. dividend.

Charlotte Burton, of Rochester, aged fifty-two, got dead drunk and fell in front of the fire. When discovered she was all in flames, which were with difficulty extinguished. The only remark she made was, "Flo, will the Lord help me?" The Lord didn't. The result was a coroner's inquest.

Mr. James Bryce, M.P., is an able political writer, but in religion he is a Presbyterian. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Foreign Missions, he declared that it was urgently necessary to Christianise the heathen, otherwise "generations would grow up living without religion—the most terrible habit any people could form." This is a safe assertion at a Presbyterian meeting, but Mr. Bryce would find it a dangerous one in a free and open discussion.

Mr. W. T. Stead once boasted of receiving "tips" from God. He now tells us that President McKinley is "fighting the Lord's battle." But that is just what the Spaniards say they are doing. It is obviously a very mixed affair from this point of view. The only certain point seems to be this, that God Almighty can't fight his own battle—which is rather odd.

### The Faith-Hag.

And third came she who gives dark creeds their power,  
Silabbat-Paramasa, sorceress,  
Draped fair in many lands as lowly Faith,  
But ever juggling souls with rites and prayers;  
The keeper of those keys which lock up Hells  
And open Heavens. "Wilt thou dare," she said,  
"Put by our sacred books, dethrone our gods,  
Unpeople all the temples, shaking down  
That law which feeds the priests and props the realms?  
But Buddha answered: "What thou bidd'st me keep  
Is form which passes, but the free truth stands:  
Get thee unto thy darkness!"

—Sir E. Arnold, "Light of Asia."

A missionary in an Indian reservation was in the habit of giving cider to the Indians who passed an examination in Scripture. One day a strange Indian called. He opened fire upon the astonished missionary thus: "Abraham, Jacob, Jonah, Job, Satan, Beelzebub," and then paused, evidently expecting a reply. "What on earth do you mean?" asked the missionary, he not having been christened after either of them, drawing himself up in a dignified manner. The Indian pithily replied: "I mean cider." Volumes could not have said more,



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, May 22, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "William Ewart Gladstone: Statesman, Moralist, and Theologian."

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 22, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton.
- W. BRADURN.—We had noted it. Thanks.
- ALBERT.—We are obliged for enclosure and cuttings.
- HENRY R. CLIFTON.—Many thanks for supplying us with a verbatim report of Mr. Foote's address at Mr. Wheeler's grave; also for your expression of sympathy.
- W. SULSTON.—See "Sugar Plums."
- H. R. WRIGHT.—Pleased to hear from you as a convert gained through our old Lecture Scheme. Thanks for enclosure, which is under consideration.
- A. J. HOOPER.—Will be acknowledged next week. See our "Special."
- A. B. MOSS.—Mr. Foote's address is printed in full on another page. He is fortunately in excellent health.
- S. GRAHAM.—Thanks.
- J. WADMORE.—We presume what you sent us is a copy of your letter to the gentleman. Did you get a reply?
- H. L. C. R.—You are one of many who will miss Mr. Wheeler's articles in the *Freethinker*.
- G. W. BLYTHE.—What have *wishes* to do with the matter? It is a question of evidence. A man may wish to be King of England. Is that any reason for believing he will be?
- T. PERKINS.—We do not know yet whether there is now any likelihood of the second volume of Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* being published. The *Torch of Reason* and the *Freethinker's Magazine* cannot be obtained here. They are published in America, and you would have to get them by subscription from their respective offices. We dare say there are other Freethinkers in your Methodist-ridden district if you only knew them.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for your weekly batch of cuttings.
- J. PARTRIDGE.—We have conveyed the Birmingham Branch's vote of condolence to Mrs. Wheeler. Pray regard this as an acknowledgment. Pleased to hear Mr. Watts had such good meetings.
- B. MILLICAMP.—Thanks for the information.
- T. HOPKINS.—Haven't got your address, so can't write. Thanks.
- L. ORGAN.—Always glad to receive cuttings. Thanks.
- N. ASHWORTH.—The Blackburn Branch's "heartfelt sympathy" is duly conveyed to Mrs. Wheeler. Our own share of the sympathy is hereby acknowledged.
- M. E. PEGG writes:—"The committee of the Manchester Branch wish me to convey to Mrs. Wheeler and yourself their deepest sympathy with you in the irreplaceable loss of husband and friend."
- J. HAYES.—Received with thanks. Sorry to hear you are so unwell.
- A. J. MARRIOTT, 311 Edgware-road, W., will be obliged to any reader of this journal who can give him the precise date of a police-court case at Manchester some years ago, in which a publican complained that some of his customers had been incited against him by their priest because he had not contributed towards the building of a new church.
- G. BEDBOROUGH.—Inserted in the ordinary list of lecture announcements.
- S. HOLMES.—Thanks. We wish you all success in your new venture.
- DELIA POWELL SWEETLAND.—It is pleasant to receive such a sympathetic letter from a woman who read and appreciated Mr. Wheeler's articles.
- GEORGE DIXON.—Glad to have your kind letter. We "accomplish so much," as you are good enough to put it, by living temperately, working seven days a week, and declining to be worried into ill-health.
- F. WILCOCKSON.—We can hardly afford to give illustrations at present in the *Freethinker*, but we will bear in mind your generous offer.
- A. E. WADE.—We are obliged.
- R. M. B.—Your telegram was duly received.
- A. G. LEVETT.—We are obliged for the cutting. See "Acid Drops."
- W. FISH (Chester).—Thanks for copy of your letter, which the local paper would not insert. Our policy is not to advertise these unscrupulous "infidel slayers." No amount of exposure injures them in the eyes of their dupes. We dare say Walton Powell will start again in the anti-infidel line as soon as he comes out of prison.
- F. HOLTEAD.—Thanks for your sympathetic letter. One falls, and another falls, but the flag of Freethought will be kept flying.
- W. FOSTER.—We have not seen the English translation of Guyau's *L'Irreligion de l'Avenir*. We reviewed the original on its first publication, many years ago, in *Progress*. It is an admirable book in every respect. Guyau died young, but not before he had turned out a fine body of work.
- FRANCIS NEALE.—Thanks, though we had already seen it. We are in communication with the person to whom it should refer.

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

**SPECIAL.**

I HAVE to appeal to the Freethought party on behalf of the widow of my dead friend and colleague, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. He tried to insure his life, but no office would grant him a policy after his break-down at the time of my imprisonment in 1883, and this was, of course, a very distinct disadvantage. I have looked into his affairs as his executor, and I find that the matter stands thus. The furniture is worth but little, and Mrs. Wheeler will require it all. The library is not very valuable commercially. Heaps of the books were useful to Mr. Wheeler, but would fetch a poor price in the open market. Altogether, I should not put them at a higher figure than £60, although more might be realized by very judicious distribution. The small house, which the Wheelers partly occupied, was his own property. The lease may be worth £200, but the house requires doing up. Mrs. Wheeler would like to continue living there, letting as much as possible; and this seems the most reasonable and economical course. Of course she cannot live on tables and chairs and bricks and mortar, and there are circumstances that prevent her from doing much to earn a living for herself. What the letting in the house will bring her, after deducting ground rent, rates, and other charges, is only a very miserable pittance. I think therefore that the Freethought party, to which Mr. Wheeler gave his life, should show its appreciation of his work and character in a practical way by assisting the woman he loved so dearly. There are no children; only the widow. And when his brain was going he kept saying to me: "Mind Jennie, you know." Well, I am minding her for the present, and others should mind her for the future. I invite them to do so. I am asking Mr. Hartmann, the N. S. S. treasurer, to act as treasurer for this fund. Meanwhile subscriptions can be sent to me, and will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. G. W. FOOTE.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

THERE was a crowded audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Meaning of Death." Many strangers were present, who seemed to be as much interested as the regular attendants. Nothing could be more gratifying to a lecturer than the sympathetic attention that was displayed throughout. Reference was made to the death of J. M. Wheeler both by Mr. Foote and by the chairman, Mr. Thompson, of Chatham, who made an earnest appeal for active help in the work of the movement.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening, May 22. His subject will be "William Ewart Gladstone: Statesman, Moralist, and Theologian." Freethinkers are particularly invited to bring this lecture to the notice of their orthodox friends and acquaintances.

After attending Mr. Wheeler's funeral on Saturday last, Mr. Watts proceeded by a late train to Birmingham, where he lectured on Sunday and Monday last. The audiences were good and enthusiastic. On the Sunday night the place was crowded, and many additional seats had to be provided. Mr. Watts, we are informed, was in capital form, and all his lectures "caught on." Both Mr. Ridgway (who presided) and Mr. Watts paid a high tribute to Mr. Wheeler, and spoke of his unique services to the Secular cause. We are pleased to hear that Miss Baker, the daughter of the late veteran Daniel Baker, was present at Mr. Watts's Sunday morning lecture. At each meeting there was a great demand for the *Freethinker*, every copy on hand being sold on the Sunday, and many more could have been disposed of.

Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day, Sunday, May 22, in the Science Hall, Rockingham-street, Sheffield, where he hopes to have good audiences. His subjects are attractive, and ought to call forth some interesting discussion.

We omitted to mention last week that Mr. Charles Watts's lectures in Manchester on Sunday, May 8, were very successful. The local friends are looking forward with much interest to the coming Conference of the N. S. S., which is to be held in their city on Whit-Sunday.



Previous to his evening lecture Mr. Watts spoke in feeling terms of the death of Mr. Wheeler, and a unanimous vote of condolence with Mrs. Wheeler was passed by the sympathetic audience.

Mr. Victor Roger, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, and as bright and genial a man as you'll meet in a day's march, was on the Progressive list for the recent Vestry elections at Lambeth. The Free Church party put their heads together for all they were worth and prepared a list of candidates they could recommend "after careful inquiry," and this list included all the Progressives but Mr. Roger, who thereupon asked why his name was omitted. After some shilly-shallying, he was told that it was because he was a Freethinker. "Well," he said, "I don't mind that at all, if you only state it on the bills. Tell the electors you don't recommend me because I am not a Christian, and I'm perfectly satisfied. I'm not ashamed of the fact; I want everybody to know it. But as the matter stands you lead people to think you've something up your sleeve against my character." Mr. Roger threatened to get out a bill on the subject himself, so the Free Church party "reconsidered" it, and got some fresh bills printed themselves, and wrote a letter of apology. Mr. Roger was successful at the poll, and so was another member of the N. S. S., Mr. Wood, whom the Free Church party couldn't stand because he opened his shop on Sunday morning.

The Manchester friends are making the best possible preparations for the National Secular Society's Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday. They have decided that it will be impossible to meet delegates and visitors at so many different stations. It is therefore requested that Freethinkers as they arrive will make their way to the Secular Hall in Rusholme-road, All Saints, where the Committee will be in attendance. Those arriving at Victoria or Exchange station will walk to the Cromwell monument and take an Oxford-street, or Burlington-street, or Moss-lane tram to Rusholme-road. Those arriving at Central station will walk to St. Peter's Church, and take one of the same trams. Those arriving at London-road station will take a Longsight tram to Rusholme-road, or one of the first-named trams at the Royal Hotel, Piccadilly.

Arrangements are made for a circular drive of thirty miles on Whit-Monday to Lynn *via* Northenden and Bowden Downs, returning through Dunham Massey and Broadheath, in time for a tea and social at the Secular Hall commencing at 6.30. Tickets for the drive 2s. 6d., and for the tea 1s.—for which application should be made as early as possible. Address, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, 15 Mytton-street, Hulme, Manchester.

London friends who wish to attend the N. S. S. Conference, and want to travel cheaply, will find that reduced-rate tickets are issued by the three great railway companies—Midland, Great Northern, and North-Western. The Sunday League is also running a special excursion, leaving St. Pancras at 12.5 (midnight) Saturday, May 28, and returning from Central Station, Manchester, at 12.20 (midnight) on May 31. The return fare is 10s.

Mr. C. Cohen lectures on Monday and Tuesday, May 23 and 24, in the Queen's Hall, Cloughton-road, Birkenhead. We presume the admission is free, under the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme, and we hope there will be large meetings.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured to a very large audience in Hyde Park on Sunday; in the evening he addressed another fine outdoor meeting at Kilburn.

We have received a copy of the balance-sheet of the Bradlaugh Memorial Bust Fund, which shows a slight sum in hand. The bust and pedestal cost £86, and may be seen in the Hoxton Free Library. The bust is by Verheyden, and is said to be "a magnificent presentment of Mr. Bradlaugh." The small surplus is to be spent on a complete set of Mr. Bradlaugh's works for the Library.

The *Critic*, which sympathetically notices the death of J. M. Wheeler, and calls him "one of the ablest publicists, as Bradlaugh was one of the finest orators, connected with the Freethought movement in England," is not in love with the Bradlaugh bust at Hoxton, which it says is more like Henry Ward Beecher than "Iconoclast."

The *Dominion Review*, a monthly edited by J. S. Ellis, Toronto, is well got-up, readable, and instructive. The April number opens with the last instalment of B. F. Underwood's able essay on "The Influence of Christianity on Civilization." Among the shorter items is a reproduction of Mr. Foote's article on "Zola's Trial" from the *Freethinker*.

"When G. W. Foote was in New York in 1896," says George Macdonald in the *Truthseeker*, "I expressed to him

the thought that the purpose of a novel was to tell a story. He took the higher grounds, and maintained that the speciality of the truly great novelist was the creation of characters. Of course there is a great deal in Mr. Foote's view, and the more I regard it the cruder my own conception appears. When I recall the best novels I have read, I can see that, while the thread of their narrative has escaped me, the images of the characters created by their authors are still vivid." Precisely so, friend George; it was only a question of living a little longer; you were bound to realize all that in time. But it isn't every man who has modesty and magnanimity enough to admit that he was wrong and somebody else right, and even to go a bit out of his way to do it.

Mr. Shufflebotham, of the Bolton School Board, is a courageous man. He moved a resolution which would practically have abolished religious instruction in all the Board schools. In doing so he denied that religion was necessary or even useful to morality, and contended that Bible-reading and the growth of crime went on extremely well together. Were the feelings of the parents properly tested, he believed that most of them would prefer English history to Bible history for their children. He ended by pleading for pure secular education in schools maintained by all the citizens, whether they belonged to this or that religion or to no religion at all. Unfortunately there was no one to second Mr. Shufflebotham, so he was answered in dead silence by passing to the next business. However, we hope he won't be discouraged, but try, try, try again.

President J. E. Remsburg, of the American Secular Union, is once more active in the lecture field. He is addressing meetings daily in Kansas.

Our valued contemporary, the *Boston Investigator*, reaches us very irregularly, either through the freakishness of the post or because we get overlooked by the publisher. If this meets the eye of anyone in the editorial room, we hope the matter will be set right if possible. The last number (and a good one) to hand is dated April 23. It is the first we have received for weeks.

The last number of the *Boston Investigator* to hand, for April 23, is an excellent one. We note the reproduction of Mr. Foote's article on "Is Freethought Desirable?" It is pleasant to see the writings of an English Freethinker introduced in this way to a wide circle of American readers. We have often reproduced something from our Boston contemporary. Doing so is a means of promoting the international solidarity of Freethought.

The Hyndman dinner at the Monico, on Wednesday, May 11, was a great success. About two hundred "advanced" people assembled to do honor to the guest of the evening, and the whole affair reflected much credit on Mr. W. M. Thompson, the editor of *Reynolds*, who did most of the work of organizing the gathering. It is impossible in our restricted space to give a list of those who were present. The Secular party was represented by G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote, and Charles Watts. Mr. A. E. Fletcher presided, and delivered a good introductory speech. Mr. Edward Bernstein followed with the toast of "International Solidarity and Progress," to which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji responded. Mr. Tom Mann, who spoke to the same toast, hardly did himself justice, though he occupied a good deal of time. The Rev. Stewart Headlam was genial and witty in proposing the toast of the evening. Mr. Holyoake, who seconded the toast, was in his best form. His little speech was well conceived and well expressed; it bristled with good points, and every word told. Mr. Hyndman responded with fluency, force, and modest sincerity. Mr. Herbert Burrows followed, then came Mr. Thompson, Mr. Quelch, Mr. Hill (of the *Westminster*), and Mr. Foote. The two last were commendably brief.

It is gratifying to learn that our inhuman prison system is to be seriously reformed. The plank bed—that ingenious device of an otherwise dull-headed Tory Home Secretary—is to be abolished; degrading, useless labor, such as turning a crank and walking the treadmill, is to go with it; prisoners are no longer to be condemned to absolute silence; and the starvation diet is to be eliminated from the prison menu. All this is in the right direction, but it has been effected in spite of the Government rather than with its assistance.

*Reynolds's Newspaper* calls the May meetings "stupid" assemblies. With regard to the "reverend" gentlemen who attend them, our Radical contemporary says: "One is struck with the paltriness of the business that brings them together. It is apparently to make most rapid speeches interlarded with pious ejaculations about nothing at all. In the many thousands of such meetings that have been held it would be difficult to indicate one useful suggestion of practical benefit to mankind which has been made."



## FUNERAL OF JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER.

The funeral of the late Joseph Mazzini Wheeler took place at Finchley Cemetery on Saturday afternoon, May 14, at four o'clock. Beautiful wreaths covered the coffin from Mrs. Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. Foote, Mr. Graham, the Misses Bell (Glasgow), Mr. and Mrs. Pilcher, the N. S. S. Executive, and Edith Vance and Annie Brown. A large number of London Freethinkers were gathered round the open grave. There were also Captain Adams (of Montreal), Mr. Pinder (Leicester), and Mr. W. B. Thompson (Chatham). The N. S. S. Executive was represented by G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, R. Forder, E. M. Vance, Annie Brown, E. Truelove, S. Hartmann, P. Sabine, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, W. Leat, T. Gorniot, and F. Schaller. Among the crowd of mourners were Toby King, Miss Truelove, Mr. and Mrs. Bonner, Mrs. Forder, Mr. G. Bedborough, Mr. and Mrs. Chilperic Edwards, Mr. Tom Shore, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Watts, Mr. C. Herbert, Mr. and Mrs. Standing, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. Fagan, Mr. and Mrs. Caisey, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, Mr. H. R. Clifton, Mr. W. P. Ball, Mr. Pitt (Birmingham), and many other well-known ladies and gentlemen whom we have not space to enumerate. The beautiful weather gave the fullest opportunity to Freethinkers from all parts of London of paying the last sad mark of respect to the deceased, who was respected and loved by all. When the coffin was lowered into the grave Mr. Foote delivered a brief address. He spoke under great emotion and with much difficulty. The following report of what he said is furnished by Mr. H. R. Clifton:—

Joseph Mazzini Wheeler is dead. To those who knew him, especially to those who knew him well, that single sentence involves everything. There is no necessity for more to be said. Yet we feel on these occasions that there is a relief to the living in giving some kind of articulate expression of our respect for the dead, and of our thoughts in the presence of death. Mr. Wheeler would have been the very last to sanction any cowardice. There are those who, when they have emancipated themselves from the thralldom of superstition, still shrink with perhaps an old inherited instinct of awe from Death. But our friend knew that death is as natural as birth. He would have thought it cowardice to hide from, and shudder at, what is inevitable, and is also connected with all our sympathies and affections. For death is the lot of all, and as we enter life we must leave it. The sun which is shining upon us now might, if we had a darker philosophy, seem a solemn mockery of our grief. He whose mortal remains we here consign to earth would have felt that this was something morbid. It is the duty of all of us to live our lives with the utmost usefulness to Humanity, and that cannot be done except by discarding useless, however natural, grief for the dead, by refraining from indulgence in the luxury of woe. Mr. Wheeler would have thought more of any grief for him that expressed itself in loving service to the living he left behind him, than of the grief which shed an ocean of tears at his death.

Our friend was as good a man as ever breathed. The frailties of mortality clung to him as to all of us; but in his case they were never dark frailties, they were only the frailties of our common imperfection. There was nothing malignant about him. He had no taste for cruelty. He was full of loving kindness. He was always ready to sympathize with another's trouble, and to help where help could be given. He was gentle. There was a certain delicacy about his mind as there was about his physical constitution. Nothing impure—certainly nothing approaching to baseness—could ever have found a harbor in his mind. I speak from a full knowledge. He was my friend of thirty years. I knew him almost from boyhood. I speak from knowledge and long experience, and I say that no gentler or more beautiful spirit inhabited the earth. He was also a brave man. He had the soul of a hero. It was enshrined in a frail casket, and yet I am sure that if it had ever fallen to his lot to meet the martyr's doom, he would never have quailed. In a sense he *has* met a martyr's doom, for undoubtedly what strength he had was sorely smitten by the sad events of fourteen or fifteen years ago. It is not pleasant to open recollections of bigotry and fanaticism on such an occasion as this, but we who know how he suffered, and what dealt the blow, will feel that his life was shortened by his devotion to principle in the hour of danger.

I can say from intimate knowledge of him that there was not a shadow of cowardice about his nature. His intellectual gifts, his wonderfully wide reading, his large powers of work, would in all probability have gained for him a wider distinction and a higher pecuniary reward in the great world of literature at large. But he preferred to devote all his gifts—without himself recognising that he had many—to a poor, unpopular cause. In serving it he asked for no more, he expected no more, than a soldier's wages and rations, so that at least he might continue living to do his work. He wanted no more; he got no more. And when one thinks of men without a tithe of his knowledge and capacity who earn large incomes by flattering all the vested

interests of society and pandering to ancient superstitions which they do not themselves believe, one feels that the loss of such a warrior for freedom as this was a terrible one to the cause which had the devotion of his life. There is no one to fill his place. He was unique. Yet, at such a moment, he would have been the first to recognise that intellectual gifts are as nothing compared with character; with strength, devotion, and loyalty to one's convictions. In all that he excelled—not so much in a popular way, because he wielded the pen and not the tongue. But thousands of readers, I should imagine, will recollect his writings for many, many years. And as he always said what he thought, and as what he thought was always the result of profound research and long meditation, he has enriched the intellectual life-blood of a large number of his fellow men and women. And in that he would feel—notwithstanding all the painful circumstances of his death, and the other painful circumstances that long ago preceded them—that he had his reward. He wanted no other reward than the soldier's acclaim of "Well done!"

We shall never see him again, but it will be long before we shall cease to think of him. So beautiful a mind, so gentle a character, will be a delightful memory with us as long as we live. We shall forget this coffin and this heaped earth, and all the adjuncts of his burial. We shall think of him as he was. What we leave in the grave is, as I said, but the mortal part of him. The immortal part of him is the word and deed that have entered into the general life of humanity. Death comes with its final consecration, and all that is mean and poor and petty falls away, and only that which is eternal remains. And the eternal part of him—his work for the world, his fine example—remains with us. If ever we are tempted to shirk our duty, to mask our principles, to hide our convictions, it would shame us to think that one who had so many difficulties in life to face, one who was not altogether treated kindly by nature or the world, nevertheless acted so bravely. If he was brave, should we be cowardly and weak? Let us leave this place feeling that we have buried the mortal part of a true warrior of progress, a valiant soldier in the great army of human liberation. All of them fall in time. He has fallen; but he was fighting to the end. He met, so to speak, a soldier's death. We may say that he died upon the battlefield. He was fighting to the very last for the highest interests of mankind.

We shall always think of him, the beautiful, the gentle man whom we have all lost, as the loving friend. He will linger in our minds as long as memory lasts. To me this duty is painful, but it must be fulfilled. I know how, with that modesty of his, he would have been glad to think that the one whom, by mere accident of fortune, he called his chief should speak the word of fond farewell at his grave. I was not his chief in any other sense. He was not my subordinate in any other sense. He was my brother soldier and he has fallen. And I stand, and you stand. And our highest duty is to pledge ourselves by his open grave to be as brave and true as he was, to emulate his fine, generous, and noble example. When our time comes may those we leave behind us be able to say that we did so.

But perhaps that is too personal a note to depart from this grave with. Over us all—the dead and the living—is the great Humanity, like the sky which is stretched over our heads. It is in that we live, and move, and have our being. And just as birth and fatherhood and motherhood touch us at life-points with the sense of human fellowship, so death touches us at the last point, and gives a solemn consecration to all the rest. It is just now that our dead brother has entered finally into communion with that great Humanity. In Shakespeare we read:—

The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with their bones.

But that is not so, and probably Shakespeare himself did not think so. Just as Nature takes all corruption and covers it in and works her beautiful green grass over it, so in the course of time all vile and evil things get covered in and forgotten, except by the student of the past. It is only the true and the good which live on for ever and ever. And in that eternal existence our friend is now sharing. He will live in our recollections. We shall speak of him to others who never saw him. Something of him will pass, perhaps, into the recognition of future history. And even if his name should be utterly forgotten, as most names must be, nevertheless the good he did, the beautiful life he led, will have influenced all who knew him, and through them it will influence all whom they affect until the end of time. Therefore, in the name, not only of Freethought—for which our brother lived and died—but in the name of Humanity, I say:—Farewell here, but your life still lives in us, and the thought of you will always be with us as a benediction.

He who puts Christianity before truth will go on to put the Church before Christianity, and will end by putting himself before the Church.—*Professor Porson.*



## IN THE POWER OF WITCHES.

CURIOUS OUTBREAK IN A COMMUNITY IN THE MOUNTAINS OF WEST VIRGINIA.

REV. DR. C. HUMBLE, a Presbyterian minister, reports a curious outbreak of a belief in witchcraft in a community living along Clear Creek, near Lawson Post Office, in a mountainous part of Raleigh County. The people thereabouts are kindly, hospitable, and many of them fairly well educated.

A short time ago four children of Griffith Jarrell were seized with convulsions, and the neighbors said they were bewitched. One of the children was a boy ten years old, and the other three were girls ranging in age from eleven to fifteen years. The boy was not only sure that he had been bewitched, but furthermore insisted that he could identify the witches as an old man named Blizzard and an old woman named Likens, who lived in the mountains. The parents sent for a witch doctor, who, after diagnosing the cases, declared that the suspicions of the neighbors were correct. He said that he could put a stop to the spell, and, in order to do so, molded a silver bullet for a rifle. Then he made effigies of the old man and the old woman, and stood them up against the barn. The mountaineers—all good shots—then blazed away at the figures. They found no difficulty in hitting the effigy of the old man with the silver bullet, but, so the story goes, the best shots in the crowd could not hit the figure representing old Mrs. Likens. So a party started out to kill the old woman. They surrounded her house up in the mountains, but she had seen them coming, and had escaped into the depths of the forest. She has not been seen since.

The witch doctor next adopted another plan to rid the Jarrells of the spell. He took a bottle and filled it with needles, pins, and water, and corked it up tight.

"Now," said he, "I'll put the bottle on the fire, and when it boils some one will call and ask a favor. He or she will be the witch who is killing the children."

The bottle was put on the fire, and, as might have been foreseen, soon burst. It so happened that the old man Blizzard stopped at the house to borrow some buckshot just as the bottle burst. He would probably have been killed immediately but for the fact that when the bottle exploded about five hundred needles and pins were sent flying about the room, and for some time afterwards everybody was kept busy picking bits of metal out of his wounds. So Blizzard got away.

By this time the entire community had become excited over the matter. The neighbors advised Jarrell to change his doctor. He followed their advice, and sent for another witch doctor who lived further up the mountain. The new doctor made preparations to work a grand counter spell, which would take nine days to develop. Before his remedy could take effect, the story became known at Raleigh Court-house, and Dr. Daniels, a reputable physician, was sent to the scene. With the help of Dr. Humble he cured the children.

The trouble had spread, however. One boy was attacked with convulsions, it is said, by merely looking at young Jarrell. Another, James Shepherd, was told by young Jarrell that he would be stricken, and would never recover. This frightened Shepherd so that he has become crazy, and has been sent to an asylum.

Dr. Humble says it is surprising how firmly the belief in witchcraft is grounded in the community in which the Jarrells reside. One old lady of unusual education and intelligence for that region described to the doctor, with all sincerity and honest belief in the truth of her words, how a certain old woman had bewitched her sheep and cattle, causing them to die. The same old lady told the doctor that the witch would have killed her son by evil spells had not a witch doctor neutralized their potency by a powerful incantation.

—Chicago Journal.

## THE DECAY OF FAITH.

At the present time, when the secular world is darkened with threatening clouds of war, ominous signs of approaching disaster appear in the religious world. It is not too much to say that the Presbyterian Church, holding the very citadel of Protestantism, is proceeding irresistibly towards disintegration and destruction.

The seeds of this decay were first sown by Dr. Briggs and his school, in their denial of the infallibility of the Scriptures, upon which alone rests the faith of orthodox Protestantism. His logical place thereafter was in Unitarianism or in Agnosticism; but actually he has carried his infidelity over to the Episcopal Church, into whose ministry he is preparing to enter. Dr. Shields, of Princetown, a life-long Presbyterian, has left that communion in his old age simply because under its discipline affecting the ministry he was

subject to reprobation for assisting in procuring a liquor licence; and he also has gone over to the Episcopal Church as a more agreeable branch of the "Church Catholic." Dr. Patton, President of the Princeton University, has declined to be a delegate to the forthcoming General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, though for many years past he has been a foremost figure in its sessions. Several of the clerical members of the Princeton faculty have refused the same commission, and for the like reason, that they want to avoid all shadow of responsibility for the judgment of the Presbyterian supreme ecclesiastical court. The Cleveland Presbytery has adopted a resolution which strikes directly at Princeton, President Patton, and Dr. Shields, by calling on the General Assembly to "withhold its approval of all educational institutions whose officials lend their influence to the support of the saloon." Dr. Shields left the Presbyterian Church, and sought refuge in the Episcopal Church, in order to be free to lend that very influence, and inferentially he has been sustained in his rejection of Presbyterian authority by President Patton and the faculty of Princeton. Meantime, in New York, Presbyterians of wealth are taking pews in Episcopal churches.

All this looks very ominous. It shows that the depth and earnestness of conviction upon which the Presbyterian Church rested are passing away, and in many minds have already gone. What is to be the consequence to the Episcopal Church of such an accession of cold or lukewarm faith is a question which disturbs seriously a large party in its membership. These Presbyterian rebels and deserters do not come as converts, but simply to find a convenient refuge from the consequences of conduct and teaching destructive of all ecclesiastical organization, and even of faith in the supernatural itself. They do not fly to the Episcopal Church because of belief in the divine authority which belongs to it peculiarly, according to the conviction of earnest faith in it, but because they are wholly indifferent to such pretensions, and care nothing about the mere organization or the theories on which it is based. They are no longer Presbyterians, but neither are they Episcopalians in truth. They have lost genuine faith, and seek simply to tickle their æsthetic tastes and retain the conventional appearance of orthodoxy.

Mr. Wilfred Ward, in his notable book on the life and times of Cardinal Wiseman, says that while that distinguished convert to Rome was still in the Church of England "he foresaw that, a few years later, the crucial controversy would not be about the Thirty-nine Articles, but about all belief in a supernatural world." "Fifty years hence," he said one day to the divines in the middle of a theological lecture, "the professors of this place will be endeavoring to prove, not transubstantiation, but the existence of God."

That describes generally the situation in the Presbyterian Church. It is going into disintegration because its foremost teachers are losing their faith in the very essence of religion. At the bottom, to use Cardinal Wiseman's words, they are demanding that even the existence of God shall be demonstrated scientifically to their sceptical intellects. They are losing "all belief in the supernatural world."

—New York Sun.

### Think Freely.

We will speak out, we will be heard,  
Though all earth's systems crack;  
We will not bate a single word,  
Nor take a letter back.

We speak the truth, and what care we  
For hissing and for scorn,  
While some faint gleamings we can see  
Of freedom's coming morn?

Let liars fear, let cowards shrink;  
Let traitors turn away;  
Whate'er we've dared to think  
That dare we also say.

### Death of Colonel Ingersoll's Brother.

The Waukesha (Wis.) *Freeman* records the death, on April 14, of Dr. John L. Ingersoll, for nearly half a century a practising physician in Waukesha county. Dr. Ingersoll was the elder brother of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and was born in Pittsford, Vermont, October 20, 1823. His father was the Rev. John Ingersoll, a Congregational minister, and his mother Mary Livingston, daughter of Judge Livingston, a pioneer of St. Lawrence county, New York. The family consisted of two daughters, both now deceased, and three sons, John L., Eben C., and Robert G. Eben died in 1879, so that Robert is now the sole survivor of the family. All three sons were men of talent and distinction. Dr. John Ingersoll was an Abolitionist before the war, and of late years a Prohibitionist. He is described as a most benevolent man. He was immensely proud of his famous brother Robert, whom he often quoted. He leaves two sons and two daughters, all residents of Prospect, Wis.—*Truthseeker* (New York)



CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LATE MR. J. M. WHEELER.  
TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It was with sincere regret that the secretaries of the Christian Evidence Society heard of the death of your sub-editor. For many years we had admired the ability with which his weekly articles were written ; we could appreciate his scholarly attainments, while we rejected his conclusions. In your current number there are several warm testimonies to the excellence of his character ; of that till now we knew nothing, but we are glad to learn that he was a man of real worth, and we desire through your columns to express our sympathy with Mrs. Wheeler, whose loss is, indeed, great, and with yourself in losing so loved and trusted a colleague.  
C. LLOYD ENGSTROM.

WIDOWS.

SHE was a lone widow, and was spending her last day upon earth. The mild young curate at her bedside remarked that the end was very near. "Yes," she responded, "it's very comforting to think that before to-night I shall be folded in Beelzebub's bosom." "My good lady, you mean Abraham's bosom," corrected the young apostle. "Ah, well," responded the departing one, "it doesn't matter. After twenty years of widowhood, I'm not particular as to what the gentleman's name might be." And in this sweet truthfulness she died.

He gazed around the cheerful and comfortable-looking apartments ; then, addressing the widow, he said : "Your husband's been dead over a year now?" "Yes," she answered, with a sigh ; "over a year." "I remember reading his obituary," he said, "and I thought it contained a misstatement of facts." "A misstatement of facts?" "Yes ; it said he had gone to a better home. In my opinion, it would be impossible for him to find a more cheerful, more comfortable, and, with you in it, a more charming and desirable home than this." The widow smiled sweetly, then he was accepted.

A clerical gentleman was the other day walking along the main street of a village where he had once been minister, and, on meeting one of his old parishioners, paused to speak with her. "How are you, Mrs. Block?" said he, kindly. "Vera weel, sir," replied the woman, plaintively. "And how is your husband?" "My man, sir, is in heaven, sir, this twa year." "In heaven? I am very sorry to hear it!" responded the clergyman absently, as he passed on, leaving the poor woman dumb with astonishment.

An old Yorkshire woman being much distressed at the sudden loss of her husband, the dissenting minister assured her consolingly : "He is now with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." "That's the worst of it," she sobbed ; "and he always was so shy among strangers."

THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

ON ye, who prate of love and truth,  
Ye men ecclesiastic,  
We've looked for guidance ; but, forsooth,  
You've consciences elastic.  
The holy spoils cause bloody broils  
'Twixt State man and dissenter ;  
On either side the parson's palm  
You grease, then heaven enter.  
The angels there have naught to do  
But howling out hosannahs ;  
It's a parson's pandemonium :  
There's lyres and drums and banners.  
But 'fore you reach this heavenly home,  
Which is than earth much sweeter,  
Don't put your all in parsons' palms ;  
At heaven's gate there's Peter.

JOSEPH ALLEN.

God's Apologies.

Small Boy—"Does God make apologies?"  
Clerical Visitor—"Certainly not."  
Small Boy—"Didn't he make you?"  
Clerical Visitor—"Certainly."  
Small Boy—"Well, pa says you are only an apology for a man."  
—Sporting Times.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THAT which mankind needs most is to secure standing room for his genuine convictions. He must be true to himself and sincere with others. We must strive to remove all artificial hindrances to the progress of civilized communities. There are certain institutions, habits, and customs which have been outgrown by the more civilized of the human race, and which cannot be protected from eventual destruction, and it would surely be a blessing to have such things removed at once, and thus shorten the period of transition always so inconvenient and distressing. We are now in the midst of a period of demolition and suffering. Perhaps several generations of our race will have to endure this dreary sojourn amid ruins. But sooner or later men will find out how to secure their own comfort and convenience, and coming generations will attain to a peaceful happiness far beyond anything yet experienced by their race.—*Max Nordau.*

The first use of all knowledge is the right ordering of all actions.—*Herbert Spencer.*

My task is to destroy old and wrong notions, and shame their vendors out of circulating them. Religious notions and practices are all wrong, most of them as false as possible. And if truth is a benefit to man, and falsehood an injury, no work could be greater or more useful than mine. Let those who think otherwise enjoy their own opinions ; that is nothing to me. I follow my own leading. Let others do as they can.—*Joseph Symes.*

I am just and honest, not because I expect to live in another world, but because, having felt the pain of injustice and dishonesty towards myself, I have a fellow feeling with other men who would suffer the same pains if I were unjust or dishonest towards them. Why should I give my neighbor short weight in this world because there is not another world in which I should have nothing to weigh out to him? I am honest because I don't like to inflict evil on others in this life, not because I am afraid of evil to myself in another. It is a pang to me to witness the suffering of a fellow being, and I feel his suffering the more because he is mortal, because his life is so short, and I would have it, if possible, filled with happiness, and not misery.—*George Eliot.*

Many men believe not themselves what they would persuade others.—*Ben Jonson.*

I would rather know that all the earth,  
That every source of joy, of love, or mirth,  
And everything of life that loved the light,  
Would sleep forever in eternal night,  
Than think one soul on which the light of reason fell  
Should suffer torment in a Christian hell.—*Anon.*

PROFANE JOKES.

SKY PILOT—"The streets of heaven are paved with gold. Don't you want to go there when you die, Ephraim?" Ephraim Geehaw (emphatically)—"No, I don't. Dad says gold bricks are gol darned fakes, an' dad he knows what he's talkin' about, he docs, 'cause he's had some on 'em."

Mamma (excitedly and sympathetically)—"Never mind, Harold ; God will punish Tommy for striking you." Harold's Brother—"He has punished Tommy already, I think, mamma." Mamma—"How do you know?" Harold's Brother—"Cause I just now busted his drum for him."

Mother—"How's this, Tommy? You've been fighting Billy Jones again when I forbade it." Tommy—"Didn't yer tell me to return good for evil, ma? Well, he gave me a bad lickin' yesterday, an' I gave him a good one to-day."

Sunday-school Teacher (illustrating the "still, small voice")—"What is it, dear children, that makes you feel so uncomfortable and unhappy after you have done something which you ought not to do?" Dear Child—"A lickin'."

Two Highlanders found themselves unable to get into harbor in their boat, the waves driving it out to sea so persistently that Donald, after obstinately battling with the elements, cried out to Duncan, in a dialect which we will not attempt fully to represent, "Go doon on your knees, mon, and offer a bit prayer." But before Duncan was on his knees the boat's keel grated on the beach, whereupon Donald shouted, "Stop praying ; we've come ashore by our own exertions, and I'll no' be beholden to anybody."

"Why do you keep up a revival all the time in your church?" was asked of an Arkansaw negro preacher. "Has ter do it, sah," he replied. "Whut de land boom is ter de small town de 'vival is ter de church, an' ef yer let it go down de cause gwine to suffer. Tell yer what's er fack, ef I didn't keep dese niggers shoutin' all de time da'd let me starve ter def. Ef er nigger preacher let's de rope slack, he's gone."



## 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, "William Ewart Gladstone: Statesman, Moralist, and Theologian."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Social evening. May 26, at 8.30, Stanley Jones, "History of Spain."

ST. JAMES'S HALL (French Room, Restaurant Entrance, Piccadilly): 7.30, Lillian Harman, "The Regeneration of Society."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Annual Congress of Union of Ethical Societies. Stanton Coit will preside. 3, Peckham Rye (near band-stand), H. O. Newland.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Children's Festival.

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Windsor Castle" Coffee Tavern, Harrow-road, near Westbourne Park): Tuesday, at 9, General meeting to discuss Conference Agenda.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15 H. P. Ward.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A lecture. Peckham Rye: A. B. Moss—3.15, "A New Age of Reason"; 6.30, "The Religion of the Future."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30 and 7, W. J. Ramsey. May 25, at 8, W. J. Ramsey.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr. Ward, "Why I Dare not be a Christian."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, A lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lucretius Keen—11.30, "Creation: Is it True?"; 8.30, "What after Death?"

KILBURN (High road, corner Victoria-road): 7, Stanley Jones.

KINGSLAND (Bidley-road): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is the Bible Contradictory?"

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, S. Jones. May 24, at 8, W. J. Ramsey.

WOOD GREEN: (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Christianity: How it Began, and Why it Lives."

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 7, G. Bayliffe, "Mystery and Superstition."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Councillor W. J. Lewington, "Local Self-Government."

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market place): 7, Mr. Daniell.

GLASGOW BRANCH: Picnic to Greenock; train leaves St. Enoch at 7.50 a.m.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Ross, "Vaccination."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): O. Cohen—11, "The Man versus the State"; 6.30, "The Benefits of Unbelief"; 3 (Alexandra Park, near flag-pole), "Reasons for Rejecting Christianity."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (lecture-room, corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 7, R. Mitchell, "The Freethinker and Death."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): O. Watts—11, "Can God Do Wrong?" 3, "Christ not Wanted"; 7, "Is Religion a Curse or a Blessing?" Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Conference Agenda.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—May 22, Manchester; 29, N. S. S. Conference. June 5, Camberwell; 12, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 19 and 26, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—May 22, m., Wood Green. June 5, Mile End; 12, Mile End; 19, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammer-smith; 26, m., Finsbury; a., Peckham Rye. July 2, m., Mile End; 10, m., Mile End; 17, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 31, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

H. PEROY WARD, 4 Sidmouth-street, Gray's Inn-road, W.C.—May 22, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 24, e., Limehouse; 25, e., Mile End Waste; 29, N. S. S. Conference.

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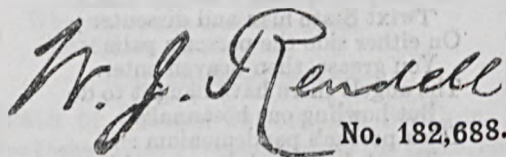
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