

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XVIII.—No. 24.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 1898.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. GLADSTONE'S RELIGION.

III.

MR. GLADSTONE has been celebrated since his death, by many newspaper scribes whose erudition does not go beyond the monthly magazines, as a wonderful scholar. He knew Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and apparently something of German; and to the average journalist this is no doubt wonderful enough. Mr. Gladstone's knowledge of French enabled him to speak it with considerable propriety; his knowledge of Italian enabled him to read and study Dante in the original; his knowledge of Latin enabled him to introduce a telling and sonorous quotation; and his knowledge of Greek enabled him to write more or less seriously about Homer. Upon the great father of epic poetry he affected to be something of an authority, but he was never so regarded by competent Grecians, who often smiled at the mention of his name in the region of *their* studies. He was undoubtedly a very versatile man, but he was really an amateur in everything but politics.

We have a shrewd suspicion that the average journalist admired Mr. Gladstone chiefly for his vices as a rhetorician. Those who have to fill space with words, rather than with ideas, and are therefore prone to speak of *fire* (for instance) as "the devouring element," naturally look up with veneration to a past-master in the art of diffusive utterance.

Mr. Gladstone's writings, as a matter of fact, were always mentioned with most respect by critics who were ignorant of the subjects he treated. Writers like Canon Driver did not think much of his defence of the Bible, but it was referred to with profound respect by the scribblers of the common religious journals.

One feature of Mr. Gladstone's apologetic work on behalf of Christianity was extremely curious. It was always well timed—like his death, which occurred in a long lull of the Spanish-American war. His discussion with Huxley took place on the eve of one general election, and his publication of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* on the eve of another. Both efforts served to show that the Liberal leader was not bitten with the scepticism of his lieutenant, Mr. John Morley.

Mr. Gladstone's set defence of the Bible is really an absurd performance. He deliberately joined the army of "Reconcilers," who are treated so contemptuously by Dean Farrar. He confessed that he knew nothing of Hebrew, and just as much of science. Knowing nothing of either, and just as much of science. Knowing nothing of either, and just as much of science. Knowing nothing of either, and just as much of science. In he was admirably qualified to reconcile them both. In sober verity he wrote as Artemus Ward once proposed to deliver a course of lectures on science. The great American humorist said that his lectures would probably be interesting, as he would speak from an imagination that was untrammelled by the smallest acquaintance with the subject.

The very title of the book was a joke. Why should a layman join the clergy in defending the Rock of Holy Scripture, if it was really Impregnable?

On the appearance of this book we subjected it to a minute criticism, following the author step by step; and

as our criticism is still in print, if anybody cares to read it, we do not feel called upon to repeat any portion of it now. Suffice it to say that Mr. Gladstone brought inadequate information, imperfect reflection, and all the arts of parliamentary dialectic to the defence of a lost cause. Catholic theologians, as well as the "Higher Critics" of the Protestant Churches, have left behind for ever the position which he maintained with such pertinacity, and with such a mixture of verbal modesty and substantial self-confidence. Nothing could be more ridiculous than the lofty way in which he lectured such a master of Biblical Criticism as Wellhausen, and nothing more logically contemptible than his argument that the word "day" in Genesis really meant a chapter in the History of Creation. And the fun grew uproarious when Huxley corrected Mr. Gladstone's classification of organic existence on this planet. "Very well," he replied, in substance, "you are a man of science, and of course you know; but the Creation story agrees with your classification just as well as it does with mine." Mr. Gladstone harmonised Science and the Bible by making the latter mean anything that was wanted.

The Higher Criticism was naturally repugnant to Mr. Gladstone's old-fashioned theology. "There are persons," he said, "who think that such a progressive revelation as this would, for over two thousand years, have palmed upon the whole Jewish and Christian world not only a heartless, but an impossible imposture." He had the sense to see that the Bible could never be the same thing again when the conclusions of the Higher Criticism were once realised. And there is another thing to his credit. He declared that the causes of modern negation were rather moral than intellectual. But he guarded himself against the worst interpretation.

"Such a proposition may, at first sight, appear to carry an odious meaning, pharisaical in the worst sense of the word; a meaning which would provoke, and might justify, an angry reply. It might be interpreted as implying that the elevation of moral character in individuals varied with and according to the amount of their dogmatic belief; a proposition which in my view is untrue, offensive, and even absurd. Had I ever been inclined to such a conception, the experience of my life would long ago have undeceived me."

Having made this honorable admission, however, Mr. Gladstone did his best to minimise it by pointing out that unbelievers had the benefit of the Christian tradition, and that while they reject Christianity they "know not that, in the best of their thought, their nature, and their practice, they are appropriating its fruits." One meets with this argument in a cruder form in ordinary Christian Evidence circles. "Oh yes," says the common apologist of the faith, "you Freethinkers are moral enough, but that is because you live in a Christian society"—just as though there were no morality in heathen countries, or as though there were not splendid morality, which no Christian has excelled, in the old Pagan world—the world of Plutarch's heroes; the world of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; the world of Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus.

Mr. Gladstone's discussion with Professor Huxley on

the scientific value of the book of Genesis was sport for the multitude. Huxley broke him to pieces—civilly, but remorselessly. Mr. Gladstone rushed in where bishops feared to tread, and he paid the penalty of his rashness. One journal, the *Evening Standard*, has had the honesty and courage to admit that the orthodox champion was annihilated in this encounter.

In the course of that discussion something was said about the miracle of the Gadarene swine, and Huxley wished to know whether his opponent really believed in demoniacal possession. Did he believe that Jesus Christ really turned a host of devils out of men and sent them into pigs? This was a straight question, and Mr. Gladstone, in spite of his "child-like" faith, would not answer it. Instead of doing this, he devoted a whole paper to the discussion of whom the pigs belonged to. If they belonged to Gentiles, Jesus Christ had no right to destroy them; if they belonged to Jews, he had, for the Jews were forbidden to touch pork. It was a fine evasion of the real difficulty, and it revealed the old parliamentary hand. But there was something much more regrettable. Two thousand years after Christ a great scientist and a great statesman were discussing that bedevilled pig question. That was the sad thing. Julius Cæsar, who died before Jesus Christ was born, would stand aghast at such a spectacle, if he were able to witness it. He would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect since he fell at the foot of Pompey's statue. And what that blight was he would soon discover. It is the blight of the Christian superstition. The great statesmen of antiquity never condescended to the pigs-and-devils business. They looked upon all that as only fit for the lowest rabble.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

SOCIAL REFORMS.

REFERRING to my article on "The Secular Party," which appeared in the issue of this journal of May 29, a friend suggests that I was not sufficiently explicit in stating the Secular position in reference to the required social reforms of the day. He further adds: "You omit to mention the social reforms which, in your opinion, are necessary, and you fail to grapple with the difficulty of the situation of the problem of Capital and Labor, which is the social question of the day." Now, Secularism does not teach that all its adherents should prescribe any one particular remedy for existing social evils. Taking for its basis the Roman maxim, that "the welfare of the people is the supreme law," the duty of Secularists is to adopt individually that course which they think will have this result. They can recognise only that as being socially useful which tends to the physical, mental, moral, and political improvement of mankind as members of the general commonwealth. Considerations about matters that make the business of this life merely of secondary importance Secularists deem to be, at the most, only of theoretical interest, and of no real service in the social struggle in which society is at present engaged. The very fact that the theological remedy for social wrongs has had a long and fair trial, with such advantages in its favor as wealth, fashion, and untiring devotion, and yet that it has failed to prevent the present deplorable condition of society, is ample proof of its utter inability to successfully grapple with the drawbacks to a healthy state of society. It is therefore, I consider, of the highest importance to seek to destroy faith in theology as a reforming agency, inasmuch as it has been well weighed in the balance of time and experience, and has been found wanting.

Without committing others to my views as here expressed, it appears to me that the principal contest upon social questions is centred in the struggle to solve the problem of the true relationship between Capital and Labor. I shall therefore confine my remarks in this article to a few facts which I consider have a bearing upon this important problem.

1. I regard labor as being the source of wealth. Money of itself has no real value, and is of no actual use in the business of life. It is employed merely as a medium of exchange, which could be dispensed with under other conditions than those now existing. In the Shakers' community there is no buying and selling amongst themselves, and in the scheme of Robert Owen there was a medium of exchange similar to the one described by the late Edward Bellamy in his book entitled *Looking Backward*. If this could be done on a small scale, surely it could be accomplished on a large one if the necessary conditions were present. The uselessness of money of itself will be apparent if we reflect upon what the position would be of a wealthy man to whom all trades should refuse to sell that which he needed. He might have heaps of gold, but, as he could neither eat it nor drink it, he would starve to death if no food were to be had. Gold is not real wealth, and cannot produce it. It is said that the source of wealth is the land, and in a sense that is true; but it is the labor applied to the land that gives it value, for without labor the land itself would be of very little worth. Even if a man lived on wild fruits and animals, he would be compelled to gather the one and hunt for the other, which would be labor.

2. Money, I allege, is not an absolute necessity of human life. Personally, I do not see why, in a properly regulated society, the world could not get on without either gold or silver. If a medium of exchange be needed, a piece of paper could answer the purpose. As a matter of fact, most of the business to-day is carried on by paper. Not only do the banks issue notes as bills, but promissory notes, bills of exchange, and I O U's are given to such an extent as to cover nine-tenths of the world's commerce. It may be said that these represent actual money; but then money itself is but a representative thing—it represents labor. Here we have a representative of a representative, assuredly an absurd superfluity. Why cannot the paper represent the labor direct? Then, again, gold sometimes becomes scarce, and what is the result? Trade is interrupted by the deficiency of an article which is of no actual value in the trade. A has something which B requires; B has something which A requires, and yet they cannot deal with each other because of the absence of a practically useless metal. Of course they can exchange their goods direct, which is really doing without money. But if a third person comes between these two, then some medium of exchange is required, and, in the scarcity of the metal coin, trade becomes at a standstill.

3. In my opinion, the medium of exchange should not be allowed to accumulate beyond certain fixed limits, nor to acquire the power of controlling that which it represents. The accumulation of great wealth in a few hands is to give that few complete control of labor and commerce. They can form trusts and thus cripple business, and for the unjust purpose of adding to their own hoard. Their very wealth reproduces itself by the iniquitous system of usury, as though it were a living thing. The money is put out to interest, which means that those who possess it are to increase their stock by taking from those whose necessities compel them to borrow.

4. The actual amount of labor essential to the real needs of life is really very small. It has been calculated that if all the necessary labor were equally divided, each man taking his share, the whole would be got through in about three or four hours a day. Of course all the work done now may not be thus accomplished, but much of it is quite unnecessary. There are many occupations which, in a proper state of society, would disappear. The classes which stand between the consumer and the producer are useless, and live on the former. An article of manufacture passes through five or six persons' hands, and each makes a profit at the expense of the consumer. Moreover, the necessary labor should be equally divided. No man who is able has a right to live without working during some portion of his life, and each one should perform that kind of work which he is most capable of doing. This plan cannot be fully carried out in the present state of society, but a condition is easily conceivable in which it could.

5. An immediate improvement necessary is the readjustment of the social order, so that no one shall lack the common necessities of life. The earth produces an abundance for all, and if there are any who do not obtain their share of the wealth it is because they are unjustly deprived of it by others who have too much. In the present state of society there would be a difficulty in arranging this, but

that difficulty would arise from the corruptions and cheating to which the existing systems have given rise. There is, on the part of almost every man, a certain amount of anxiety regarding the future both of himself and family, and hence the desire to hoard for the purpose of providing for old age. If, however, the future of each were secured, the motive for, and the necessity of, such hoarding would be removed.

6. A most important consideration is that heredity and the influence of environment should be studied more than they have been by the general masses. It is here that the force of Secular teaching bears directly upon our social condition, for, whatever views may be entertained as to how far man is "the creature of circumstances," there can be no doubt that he is very much what his environment has made him. And then there is heredity, which some writers, adopting a scientific word, call Atavism—that is, an occasional return to the qualities of our ancestors. This may, for a time, produce crime; but in the end the very disposition to crime may be eliminated, or considerably modified, by a judicious system of education and training.

I have now indicated my personal views upon what to me seem the principal points where social reform is needed. If such reform can be secured, the secular status of the community must of necessity thereby be raised to a higher and nobler plane. My desire is not for a sudden and forced revolution, but for a calm and persistent endeavor to so improve the order of things that justice shall be done to each and all, and also that the world shall be the abode of happiness, peace, and comfort for the whole human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

LAOU-TSZE AND THE TAOU-TEH KING.

In China three religions exist side by side: Confucianism, which is the religion of the State and the educated classes; Buddhism, which was introduced into China from India in the century before the Christian era; and Taoism, which claims as its founder Laou-tsze, author of the Taou-teh King. The doctrines of Laou-tsze, however, are no more to be gathered from the practices of the Taoists than those of Jesus from the Jesuits. It is with the sage and his thought we have to do, and not with the corruptions of those who call themselves his followers.

The name Laou-tsze signifies either "the old son" or "the old philosopher." The former is derived from a fabulous account of the sage which makes him to have remained seventy-two years before birth in his mother's womb. He is said to have been born from her side, and to have had white hair at birth. "The old or venerable philosopher," however, is the more reasonable account of the designation. According to the great Chinese historian Sze-ma-Tseen, Laou-tsze's name was Uhr (an ear), and his surname Lo (a plum-tree). From this have arisen myths of his having large ears and being born under a plum-tree. The date of his birth is usually given as 604 B.C., and as he lived to a great age he was probably contemporary with Pythagoras, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Gautama, as he certainly was with his fellow-countryman Confucius, though the latter was his junior by fifty years.

Apart from legends, but little is known of the life of Laou-tsze beyond the fact that, although born of peasant parents, he attained the dignity of keeper of the archives at the Court of Chow. China at that time was a feudal empire in a state of almost chronic misrule, comparable to the condition of Europe when each baron did what was right in his own eyes. Torn by dissensions, its petty states were always warring with each other. In such a time only two courses were open to the patriot and philosopher—to reprove the self-seeking of the princes, or to retire and possess one's soul in patience in unenvied obscurity. Confucius chose the former plan, and had a life of continued disappointment. Laou-tsze chose the latter.

Confucius has been Boswellised for us by his followers. We know his personal appearance, what he ate with his rice, and the position in which he lay in bed. No such particulars are given concerning Laou-tsze, who cannot be said to have had followers in his lifetime. Indeed, the religion which worships him, and is said to be founded on his doctrine, did not take shape till 500 years after his death. Only one detail of his life has been preserved, and that is an account of an interview with Confucius, which

took place in 517 B.C. There was little in common between the meditative recluse and the practical sociologist. The interview might be compared to a talk between Comte and Carlyle. Confucius had been expatiating on the wisdom of the ancients. Laou-tsze: "Those whom you talk about are dead, and their bones mouldered to dust; only their words remain. When the superior man gets his opportunity he mounts aloft; but when the time is against him he moves as if his feet were entangled. I have heard that a good merchant, though he has rich treasures, appears as if he were poor, and that the superior man, whose virtue is complete, is yet, to outward seeming, stupid. Put away your proud air and many desires, your insinuating habit and wild will. These are of no advantage to you. This is what I have to tell you." Confucius, when he left him, said to his disciples: "I know how birds can fly, how fishes can swim, and how beasts can run. And the runner may be snared, the swimmer may be hooked, and the flyer may be shot by the arrow. But there is the dragon. I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Laou-tsze, and can only compare him to the dragon." The dragon being the Chinese symbol of power, this was intended as a compliment.

The Taou-teh King, the only writing of the old philosopher, is a short but very noticeable product of ancient philosophy. It is not half the size of the Gospel of Mark, yet is full of pithy though often obscure utterances. Laou-tsze is a mystic in the sense that his thought goes deeper than his language. Essentially he is a Quietist, with the Quietist's disregard of aught save equanimity. "There is nothing like keeping the inner man," he declares (chap. v., Rev. J. Chalmers's translation). "He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened. He who conquers others is strong. He who conquers himself is mighty. He who knows when he has enough is rich" (chap. xxxiii.).

Of a personal God Laou-tsze knew nothing. The supreme thing with him is Taou, the right way or course of nature. The title of his book may be compared to the Buddhist Dhammapada, or Footsteps of Virtue. The word Taou is not the invention of Laou-tsze. It was often in the mouth of Confucius, and with him it meant the "way." Buddhists also used it in the sense of "intelligence" and "reason." The *Λογος* of John's Gospel is translated in Chinese by the word Taou. "The great Tayou is exceedingly plain, but the people like the footpaths," said Laou-tsze (chap. liii.). It is the eternal course of things, but no being made it, for it is being itself. It is the nature whence all come, and to which all return.

Conformity with nature is the philosophy of Laou-tsze. To him nature taught silent work and patient self-abnegation. His favorite emblem is water. "The highest style of goodness is like water. Water is good to benefit all things; while it does not strive, but runs to the place which all men disdain" (chap. viii.). All his teachings aim at making man a better individual, and a better member of society. In all the operations of nature he finds a lesson. The hard and strong parts of a tree, he points out, are below, supporting the weaker parts; so should it be in human society (chap. lxxvi.). "Of all the weak things in the world nothing exceeds water; and yet of those who attack hard and strong things I know not what is superior to it. The fact that the weak can conquer the strong, and the tender the hard, is known to all the world, yet none can carry it out in practice" (chap. lxxviii.).

Many Christians are under the delusion that humility, forbearance, and forgiveness are peculiarly Christian virtues, though they were taught both by Chinese and Indian moralists ages before Christ. The doctrine of returning good for evil, so distinctly enunciated by Gautama (Dhammapada v., 197, 223), is as certainly enforced by Laou-tsze. He says: "The good I would meet with goodness. The not-good I would also meet with goodness. Virtue is good. The faithful I would meet with faith. The not-faithful I would also meet with faith. Virtue is faithful." "Recompense injury with kindness" (49 and 63). Upon this doctrine being mentioned to Confucius, that practical-minded philosopher remarked: "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness" (Lun-Yu, xiv. 36). Dr. Legge, the missionary translator of the Chinese classics, who takes every opportunity of disparaging Confucius, makes a deal of this as showing how

far his ethics fall below the Christian standard. But, whatever may be the difference between the Chinese sages, it must be allowed that the doctrine of the older one anticipated the teaching of Jesus.

Very similar to the Christian gospel, too, are his exhortations to humility. "The Taou of heaven may be compared to the extending of a bow. It brings down the high and exalts the low." "He that humbles himself shall be preserved entire. He that bends himself shall be straightened. He that is low shall be filled. He that is worn out shall be renewed. He that is diminished shall succeed. He that is increased shall be misled" (lxxvi. 22). "I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize. The first is called compassion, the second is called economy, and the third is called not daring to take the precedence of the world. Being compassionate, I can therefore be brave. Being economical, I can therefore be liberal. Not daring to take the precedence of the world, I can therefore become the chief of all the perfect ones" (67).

Telling rebukes of pride are given in the sentence: "A man on tiptoe cannot stand still; nor can he who takes long strides continue to walk" (24). To do good without making a show of it is constantly the theme of Laou-tsze. In short, his ethics may be summed up in that sentence of Sir Thomas Browne's: "Be substantially great in thyself, and more than thou appearest to others; let the world be deceived in thee as they are in the stars of heaven."

Like Jesus, Laou-tsze deprecated riches, and even more strongly denounced war. He says: "To wear fine clothes, and carry sharp swords—to eat and drink to satiety and lay up superfluous wealth—this I call magnificent robbery. This is not Taou sure enough" (53). Nations fond of military display may note the saying: "As the fish cannot leave the deep and live, so the warlike weapons of a nation cannot be displayed before the people without deadly peril" (36). "When the world has Taou, horses are only used for agriculture. When Taou does not rule, war-horses are bred on the waste common" (46). "Peace is the highest aim of the superior man. When he conquers he is not elated. To be elated is to rejoice at the destruction of human life. He who rejoices at the destruction of human life is not fit to be entrusted with power in the world" (31). Laou-tsze opposes capital punishment and denounces exorbitant taxation as the cause of famine. His word is given against over-legislation. "When the world has many prohibitory enactments the people become more and more poor" (57). "The state is a spiritual vessel, and cannot be manufactured. The meddler mars; the grasper loses" (chap. xxix.). "Make the upright rule the nation" (57). "When the government is liberal the people are rich and noble. When the government is pryingly strict the people are needy and miserable" (58). His hope is in individual reform. He cries out as one may cry still. "Happiness has been too long built on misery. Therefore the sage is himself strictly upright, but does not cut and carve other people" (58). "A wise man takes care of his own part, and exacts nothing of others." "The sage," says he, "is ever the good savior of men. He rejects none. He is ever the good savior of things. He rejects nothing. His I call comprehensive intelligence" (27). "The sage dwells in the world with a timid reserve; but his mind blends in sympathy with all. The people all turn their ears and eyes to him; and the sage thinks of them all as his children" (49).

These passages from this ancient manual of conduct are commended to the attention of those who deem no good can come out of anywhere but Nazareth. "Conduct," says Matthew Arnold, "is three-fourths of life." It is more. It is the basis of society, and makes civilised society possible. The influence of such a teacher as Laou-tsze for twenty-five centuries is incalculable. His maxims must have done much to form the solid and imperturbable character of the Chinese. Much that he inculcated has been left aside as impracticable in this work-a-day world.

In this he only shares the fate of other teachers. Like them, he has suffered from the corruptions and additions of his disciples. Upon his simple politico-ethical treatise has been reared a huge fabric of superstition. Yet, as with Gautama, Aristotle, and Confucius, his moral principles are based on nature and without any reference to supernaturalism. There is rather every indication that he would have agreed with Confucius, who, when asked

by Ke-Loo about serving the spirits of the dead, said: "While you are not able to serve men how can you serve their spirits?" (Lun-Yu, vi. 11). J. M. WHEELER.

THE PHYSIQUE OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

IN the National Gallery we see pictures, executed by painters at the close of the Middle Ages, in which Christ, the saints, and the Christians generally, are represented as singularly thin and bareboned. Was this mere fancy and accident, or did the artists really catch the inspiration of physical meagreness from a close reading of the Gospel story?

It has often occurred to me, as I have read the New Testament, that sickness and anæmia, and general ill-health, must have been very prevalent among the people who originated the Christian religion. To begin with, they were certainly ill-fed. It is remarkable how frequently references to hunger occur in the Gospels. Hunger formed part of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, as if to symbolise the suffering which so many of the early Christians endured in the struggle for existence. The crowds who followed the prophet constantly demanded bread. Two miracles are reported to have been worked on purpose to satisfy thousands of men, women, and children who were short of food. The mob are said to have been ready, in a passion of gratitude, to crown Jesus as king, simply on account of his power to supply them with ample meals. "You seek me," Jesus said reproachfully, "because you ate of the loaves, and were filled." The Master himself adopted bread as his emblem. As the blind King of Bohemia used the three ostrich feathers for his crest, so the leader of the Christian proletariat held up a loaf as the divine token: "I am the bread of life." And one of the joys of heaven consisted in the delight of plentiful meals spread upon the tables of God. I am not now concerned with the question of the authenticity of the passages I have used in illustration. It is of no consequence whether Jesus said such words or did such things as the Gospels report. My point is that, true or not true, they indicate a wide-spread lack of the necessities of life among the humble folk who formed the chief supporters of the new religion.

When we examine the miracles of healing alleged to have been performed by Jesus, we are again struck with the universal presence of pain and ailment. Jesus cured "all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria; and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with devils, and epileptic and palsied, and he healed them." He has no sooner finished the Sermon on the Mount than he is met by the prayer of a leper. From the leper he passes on, only to encounter a Roman soldier who begs him to assist a paralysed servant. The servant is restored, and Jesus finds a woman lying sick of fever and awaiting his magic touch. "And, when evening was come, they brought unto him many possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all that were sick." The woman who had an issue of blood touched the hem of his garment, and the miraculous contact effected more than a whole tribe of well-fee'd physicians. A moment afterwards Jesus was lifting a dead child from her bed. Thence he emerged to be confronted by two blind men. He ministers to the blind, turns round, and is face to face with a deaf and dumb sufferer. In the synagogue he finds a man with a withered hand. He has scarcely assisted this patient when he runs against a man who is both blind and dumb. Hardly has he given the King's touch to the daughter of the Canaanitish woman before he is surrounded by a swarm of mendicants. "There came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet." From the Mount of Transfiguration he descends, and is immediately occupied with an epileptic lad. He journeys to Jerusalem, and is applied to by yet another couple of blind beggars. In the Temple "the blind and the lame came to him." The incidents I have just enumerated are all taken from the first gospel. From the pages of Mark, Luke, and John the same harrowing tale is breathed. The theatre of the preaching of Jesus is a vast hospital.

On all sides rise the sounds of lamentation, of prayer for relief, of sighs such as that of the man who had so long lingered at the pool of Bethesda: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming another steppeth down before me." Even after the passing away of the Master, when we should have expected that only a few isolated specimens of accident and disease were left, the supply of patients is still copious. As Peter traverses the streets of Jerusalem the sick are carried out on beds and couches that at least his shadow might hover over some of them. "And there also came together the multitude from the cities about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one." Like scenes took place in Samaria. Many unclean spirits came out at the summons of Philip, and many that were palsied and lame were healed.

It is clear from an inspection of these cases that the Christian gospel came to birth among a people who were in daily want of bread, and who were only too familiar with various forms of insanity, zymotic disease, and deformity. Economically and physically, the social seed-bed of Christianity was composed of abnormal and unhealthy elements. I say this without any thought of reproach. I have no intention to suggest that the Christian gospel was nothing but a morbid product, and that it had no message of value for the human race. But I do believe that it had weak and unsound tendencies, both intellectual and moral; and I consider that the physical deficiency, the hunger and bloodlessness of the poor folk who formed the first Christian clubs and "churches," largely account for the lack of mental strength in the Christian doctrine of human conduct and human destiny.

F. J. GOULD.

BENEDICT SPINOZA.

THE fame of Spinoza, like that of so many of the world's teachers, has undergone remarkable changes. For many generations after his death he was the object of almost universal execration; Spinozism and Atheism were identical terms; to express any sympathy with the spirit or admiration for the intellect and life of the outcast philosopher was to incur the certainty of being regarded as a wilful child of the Devil. Now, however, the poor Amsterdam Jew is elevated to the metaphysical throne, and before him loyal subjects bow. "The Systematic Atheist" of Bayle is the "God-intoxicated man" of Novalis; since the time of Lessing and Mendelssohn he has profoundly influenced Germany's noblest minds, in particular that of her greatest poet, Goethe; in France he has extorted the homage of the subtlest thinkers; and even in England, averse from ontological speculation as our best intellect is, his rigorous logic and supreme mental grasp and spiritual insight have won high and intense admiration. The grand simplicity of his life, too, has been fully recognised, and no longer are senseless accusations hurled at his memory. Even the most determined opponents acknowledge that his character was free from all meanness, egotism, baseness, and chicanery; nay, they are compelled to admit his claim to rank among the few combinations of sublime genius and heroic fortitude of which the human race can boast. Every one, agreeing or disagreeing intellectually, must feel when perusing his works that they are in the clear air of a great man's presence.

Baruch Despinosa, or, to use the Latin equivalent, Benedictus, was born at Amsterdam on November 24, 1632. He was the eldest of three children—himself, and two sisters, Miriam and Rebecca. His father, one of the Jewish fugitives from Spain, who settled in the Netherlands to avoid their Christian persecutors, was in comfortable, if not affluent circumstances, and derived his income probably from trade. He is reputed to have been a man of excellent understanding, and of this he gave evidence in the care he took to secure to his son the best education the Jewish schools of Amsterdam afforded. The classical languages of Greece and Rome had no place in the curriculum of the Jewish seminaries, but evidently the study of Latin was not interdicted, as Greek was by the Christian hierarchy, for amongst the Jews physicians and naturalists abounded. The Law and the Prophets were expounded by

the rabbis, and diligently studied by the scholars, and the pupils who evinced extraordinary aptitude were selected for study in higher branches of education, with a view to becoming teachers themselves. Young Baruch, a remarkably quick and inquisitive boy, found means to supply himself with Latin, by aid of a German teacher, and afterwards with Greek. The boys on the upper form had the use of a well-furnished library, in which, probably, Spinoza pastured; at least, we know that at a very early age he became acquainted with the writings of Descartes. Mr. Pollock says that his use of Latin in his principal writings is not exactly classical, although it shows a perfect command over the language. His knowledge of Greek "was more limited, and by his own account not critical. Of modern languages he knew French, German, and Italian, besides Portuguese and Spanish, one or both of which were native to him. It appears from evidence made public early in the last century, but afterwards lost sight of until quite recently, that he always regarded Dutch as a foreign language, and wrote it only with difficulty."

In his fifteenth year Baruch was already remarkable for Biblical and Talmudic lore. The Rabbi, Saul Levi Morteira, superintendent and occasional teacher of the upper division of the school, had noticed his great promise, and is said to have taken unusual interest in aiding and directing his studies, flattering himself, doubtless, with the hope that his young pupil would some day occupy a distinguished place among Jewish teachers. But, alas for his preceptors, the curious and eager mind of the boy shot ahead of their limits; doubts, which if they entered his tutors' minds had entered only to be stifled, were to him the unsuspecting dawns of intellectual life. His questions perplexed and annoyed Morteira, who found here material that could not be fashioned into orthodox shape. For awhile, doubtless, no open profession of heresy was made, but the strife within him must have been intense and distressing. At first he endeavored to find some ground of reconciliation between Reason and Scripture, but in vain. "I aver," he says in the "Tractatus," "that, though I long sought for something of the sort, I could never find it. And although nurtured in the current views of the sacred Scriptures, and my mind filled with their teachings, I was nevertheless compelled at length to break with my early beliefs."

His hesitating answers to delicate questions from those who sought him because of his scholarly reputation soon made him an object of suspicion. He became cautious and reticent in his intercourse with the elders of the congregation; he abandoned regular attendance at the Synagogue, and, indeed, gave good cause for being regarded as a very perverse youth. Whether propensely or from instigation, two young men of his own age, amongst others who sought his assistance in the tangled mazes of theology, pressed him on some of the most delicate topics of their faith. His cautious replies roused their anger, and excited them to revenge. At first they spread disadvantageous rumors against him, and then denounced him to the heads of the Jewish Synagogue as an apostate from the true faith. Cited before the elders, he indignantly denied having uttered some of the statements imputed to him. He was reprimanded, and ordered to make instant submission and acknowledgment of wickedness. This he refused to do; such procedure was insufferable to his proud nature. Threat of excommunication was then made, but without effect, and the contumacious youth retired from the presence of his judges.

On July 6, 1636, the Jewish synagogue at Amsterdam was crowded with excited men of Israel, assembled there to witness the excommunication of the recusant Spinoza. Angry frowning faces, and lurid dark eyes, told more eloquently than any words how enraged the faithful were, and how absorbed in the zeal of persecution. What mercy could be shown to a perverse youth who deliberately forsook the religion of his own people and forefathers, and opposed himself to the matchless wisdom of all their rabbis? While the anathema was being pronounced, the long, wailing note of a great horn occasionally sounded; the lights, seen brightly burning at the beginning of the ceremony, were extinguished one by one as it proceeded, till at the end the last went out, and the congregation was left in total darkness, and in the solemn, mysterious gloom the faithful responded with fervid *Amens!*

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

I BROKE my brief holiday on Tuesday and came up to London in order to be present at Bow-street Police-court, so that I might see and hear the proceedings in this case for myself. Mr. George Bedborough, secretary of the Legitimation League, was arrested and charged with publishing and selling an obscene book "with intent to corrupt the morals of Her Majesty's subjects." He was not the publisher of the book at all. It was published by the University Press, printed by A. Bonner, and written by Dr. Havelock Ellis, the well-known editor of the "Contemporary Science Series." The price of the book was half-a-guinea, and there is no allegation that it was sold indiscriminately. I have looked into it since the prosecution began, and I find it is written in a scientific spirit. As the title is *Sexual Inversion*, being the first part of a general work on the Psychology of Sex, it goes without saying that the subject is a very unpleasant one. But, as Bacon said, wounds cannot be healed without searching, and maladies of every kind must be treated frankly if they are to be remedied. For my part, I cannot see the justification for police interference; and, if there is any such necessity, it appears to me that the author, the printer, and the publishers, whose names are all on the book, openly and without the slightest reservation, are the persons who should be prosecuted. Dr. Havelock Ellis honorably came to the court, and stated through his solicitor that he was prepared to take the fullest responsibility for his authorship of the book.

It was a very mean thing to single out Mr. Bedborough for prosecution because he sold a copy to a grown-up detective, who probably knows all that the book could tell him, and a great deal more. Perhaps the intention of the police is to crush the Legitimation League. On this point I have to say—not for the first time—that I utterly and absolutely dissent from the League's teaching on the marriage question; but I believe the question is not too sacred for discussion, and, personally, I do not want the police to silence my adversary in an argument. I want him to have exactly the same rights that I claim and enjoy myself.

Having arrested Mr. Bedborough, the detective raided his house and discovered a private album of what are alleged to be "indecent photographs" in his bedroom. There is no suggestion that he traded in such things, but the discovery will be used against him. I have not seen the photographs, and do not want to. If they correspond to the detective's description, they prove Mr. Bedborough's bad taste. But there is no law against the mere possession of such things, and the fact of his having them (without selling them) should not serve to blind us to the fact that the warrant for his arrest was taken out solely on the ground of his having sold a copy of Dr. Havelock Ellis's book, which, I understand, is to be defended on principle.

I have been pressed to join a Defence Committee, but I must know all the facts before I commit myself, as I have the interests and honor of the Freethought party to consider. The case is adjourned again until next Monday. Mr. Bedborough is meanwhile out on substantial bail, and as I understand the magistrate, the bail will be revoked if he participates in or connives at any kind of meetings on the subject, or if any such meetings are held by persons in any way connected with him or acting in his behalf. For his sake, therefore, I at least shall wait until after next Monday, when perhaps a fight for principle may be commenced on clear and definite grounds. There is no need for hurry, and I for one will not hurry.

G. W. FOOTE.

Who Killed Moses?

Who killed poor Moses
Goethe supposes
That the terrible son
Of a masculine nun,
And Caleb, his crony,
Whose sire was Jephone,
Together killed Moses;
So Goethe supposes.

B. V.

LIFE IS MELTED INTO AN EXPECTATION.

Oh "Days that are to be!"
The ceaseless march of time
Mid funeral knell, and merry wedding chime,
Mid tears and laughter, hours of gloom and shine
We strain our eyes to see
The "Days that are to be!"

Good days that are to be!
Bringing the best of life—
The golden goal of all our strife—
With love's fruition marvellously rife
We dream—and dimly see
The days that are to be.

Free days that are to be!
"Man is not man as yet,"
In leading-strings he still doth fret,
His wistful eyes with unshed tears are wet.
The free-born man we see
In days that are to be!

Bright days that are to be!
Through the dim past we trace
The rude beginnings of our race,
The rugged source of every human grace.
Then turn more strong, more free,
To days that are to be!

Glad days that are to be!
Content are we to spend
Our lives towards this ennobling end;
May all the coming years still upward tend,
Until the dawn we see
Of days that are to be!

LILLIE AROYNE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Gladstone Memorial Service in Hyde Park was a pretty piece of Christian manoeuvring. Lots of people would like to do honor to Gladstone's memory without singing hymns and listening to five platforms-full of preachers. But sectarianism is of the essence of Christianity, so the show was made as strikingly sectarian as possible. Honor was done to Gladstone not as a great Englishman, but as a great Christian.

The clerical speakers at this Gladstone celebration did not fail to improve the opportunity. Dr. Clifford was eloquent on Gladstone's "toleration," which never extended to Freethinkers except on one political occasion, and never to those beyond the pale of Christendom. Mr. Price Hughes declared that Gladstone's real greatness was founded on the fact that he studied the Bible every day. He also drew attention to the G. O. M.'s hopes having been "based upon the divinity of our Lord." Dr. Meyer affirmed that Gladstone's acts as a statesman were framed on his belief as a Christian—just as though Lord Salisbury were not an equally sincere and convinced believer in Christianity. The Rev. J. Ossian Davies said that Gladstone was a great man in many ways, but "above all he was a great Christian, and that was the secret of his marvellous power." Dr. Adderley said that they had met in their myriads to do honor to one who was "pre-eminently a Christian man." And so they went on shouting, in effect, that there's nothing like leather, and turning the demonstration into a huge advertisement for themselves.

It is reported in the *Daily News* that earth from the Garden of Gethsemane—wherever that was—was strewn on Mr. Gladstone's coffin by an admirer who does not wish his name to be disclosed. What the gentleman's object was passes our comprehension.

According to the Hon. Lionel A. Tollemache, who has just published a very interesting *Talks with Gladstone*, the G. O. M. held that the New Testament teaches that the souls of the righteous will go to heaven immediately after their death—though this does not quite accord with what he said in his book on Bishop Butler. Mr. Tollemache asked him what need there was of a Day of Judgment, if the righteous and the wicked ones were already severed. Probably the G. O. M. hadn't thought of this. Anyhow, he seems to have been irritated by it. He replied with unusual heat: "I really cannot answer such questions. The Almighty never took me into his confidence as to why there is to be a Day of Judgment."

This is the first time that Gladstone was clean out of the Almighty's confidence, and perhaps that was owing to his being caught on the hop.

Mr. Tollemache tells us what was known already—namely, that Gladstone regarded Swinburne as our greatest poet after the death of Browning and Tennyson. But he also tells us something new—namely, that it was Swinburne's terrible sonnet on the death of the Czar Alexander II., who was assassinated, that made it utterly impossible for him to become the Poet Laureate.

It appears that Gladstone had some sense of humor after all. In conversation with Mr. Tollemache he told a story of an American who much admired our greatest poet, and seriously declared that "he did not suppose that there were ten men in Boston equal to Shakespeare." That couldn't be beaten, and hardly equalled. Still, the other story of the Baboo student is a very good one. This enterprising Hindu had been reading Shakespeare and Milton, and "hoped soon to produce a poem which would combine the merits of both."

Another good Gladstone story is the one he told of Cobden, who was sometimes a little unhappy in his expressions. In one of his speeches in the House of Commons he referred in this way to his great associate in the Anti-Corn Law agitation: "My honorable friend the member for Rochdale manufactures long yarns at a low price."

Here is another story told by Gladstone to Mr. Tollemache. A Freshwater rustic was asked what the local inhabitants thought of Tennyson, and he replied: "We don't think much of him; he keeps only one man-servant, and *he* sleeps out!" What a flash into the depths of mediocrity!

Mr. Tollemache was warned by a friend never to forget that Gladstone had an unflinching conviction that his own cause was the cause of God. This friend hit off the G. O. M.'s great earnestness by saying: "He will talk about a piece of old china as if he was standing before the judgment-seat of God."

Disraeli said that Gladstone was a pious man without a single redeeming vice. This was cynically clever, but it was something of an exaggeration. Gladstone did not smoke, but he drank wine in moderation and liked it. By the doctor's orders he had to give up taking bitter beer, which he called a "divine drink"—or literally, in the Greek phrase he used, a drink for the gods.

An Irish paper is circulating the report that Mr. John Morley has become a Roman Catholic. Angels and ministers of grace defend us! What next?

Mr. Morley has denied this Irish story of his change of faith, and his denial is sufficiently vehement, for it runs away with his grammar. Speaking to an interviewer, he called the report "a pure, unadulterated fable." In his public speech at Arbroath he alluded to the matter more calmly and satirically.

The present writer was at the seaside last Sunday. He had just dined as well as the heat permitted, and was quietly smoking a cigar, when a Salvation Army band and choir struck up a curious hymn, weird yet rollicking, something that would make one section of hearers incline to prayer and another to dancing. Where had he heard that tune before? It certainly seemed familiar. For awhile he sat scratching his bump of memory, and then it dawned upon him. Yes, he had heard that tune before—at Barnum and Bailey's show; that, or something wonderfully like it. It was sung by black Soudanese, while others beat rude instruments, and dervishes licked red-hot iron. Lively savages in Africa and dull savages in England have pretty much the same religion at bottom.

Madame Antoinette Sterling, a beautiful singer and a woman of rather too impulsive piety, got up at the great Anglo-American Banquet in London and loudly exclaimed: "Let us have but one country, and one dream—to love our God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves." She forgot, perhaps, that something very much like this was said by a Jewish gentleman in Palestine, and that it hasn't done much yet towards regenerating the world—probably because there is so much God in it.

What a wonderful world this is, and what a lot of wonderful people there are in it! Everybody knows how George Bernard Shaw—Atheist, Socialist, vegetarian, and God knows what besides—has shot all the shafts of his wit against marriage as a rotten old bourgeois institution. Yet he has gone and got married himself! What we have to say about it is: "For this relief much thanks." One is glad to find a bit of common every-day human nature about the satirical "G. B. S." Some of us may think that, on this

particular question of marriage, he has really passed from moonshine into daylight.

The last time we heard George Bernard Shaw lecture he said that he once had a talk with William Morris about the bringing up of children, and that they both agreed that, whoever were the *best* persons to take care of children, their parents were the very *worst*. But we haven't the slightest doubt that such a good fellow as Shaw is—for he is as good as gold at heart—will swear off all that bachelor's nonsense when he gets a little experience of his own as a father. At any rate there's a woman in the case, and she'll teach him (if necessary) what a colossal job the State would have to get children away from their mothers. On a subject like this abstract philosophy is absolutely worthless. It is only experience that teaches, because it is only experience that puts you in possession of the most essential facts.

Our opinion is that "G. B. S.," in spite of all his heresies, will make a model husband and father, and we heartily wish him and his wife all happiness. Of course this is a personal note which requires some justification in a public print, and the justification is that "G. B. S." has told the world a great deal about himself, and the personal note is therefore to some extent invited.

Another "Peculiar People" case has occurred at West Ham. Henry James Arthur Marsh, thirty-two, described as a clerk, was charged before Mr. Baggally, the magistrate, with "feloniously killing and slaying Hilda Ruth Marsh, aged thirteen months, by not providing medical assistance for her, whereby she died." Bail was accepted in two sureties of £20 each. We shall watch this case as it proceeds, and deal with it at length in our columns. Our articles on a previous case, some months ago, might be reprinted with advantage for general circulation. It is really the vilest hypocrisy, after all this "praying for Gladstone," to find a poor man in danger of imprisonment for praying for his own child.

Piper Findlater's case is a good illustration of the kindness and consideration dealt out by the State to common soldiers. After plenty of talk about his "heroism"—something too much, we think—he would have been allowed to leave the hospital and crack stones or sweep the streets for a scanty living. But when he tried to get a little money by exhibiting himself on a music-hall stage there was an outcry over his want of "dignity." Certainly the spectacle *was* lacking in dignity, but whose fault was that—Piper Findlater's or the nation's that left him to destitution? You can't fill a big stomach on "dignity." It's as barren that way as Jack Falstaff's "honor." And the authorities have found that out when it was forced upon them. They have now stopped the "scandal" by finding Piper Findlater a post as a gate-keeper at Balmoral. It isn't much, but perhaps as much as he wants. There's something to eat and drink, and a home, however humble. And, after all, a home's a home (beautiful word!) in a cottage as well as in a castle.

"Jesus-poison" is the name the best Chinamen give to the opium brought to their country by Christian merchants, and forced into its markets by Christian governments. That single phrase is a counterpoise to all the boasts of the missionary societies.

We don't mean to stand up for Bryant and May's firm, but we do mean to say that the British public need not be too indignant as long as it is so largely responsible for the "phossy jaw" mischief. If everybody used safety matches, and no others, the mischief would end immediately. It is in the manufacture of other matches that the noxious phosphorous is employed. Let the public, then, buy nothing but safety matches. The purchase of other kinds, when the facts are once known, does away with the right to blame the manufacturers who supply the demand.

A young man named Cowell hung himself in a first-class railway carriage at Leeds on Friday, June 3. He was a local preacher, but he also went in for betting, and it proved a bad mixture.

Charles Dunbar, an elderly man, described as a clergyman, was fined forty shillings and costs at the Westminster Police-court for riding a horse while in a state of intoxication. Next time he gets drunk he should keep in his own house.

Alderman Newlyn withdrew his motion on the Bourne-mouth Town Council in favor of a Sunday band on the Corporation pier. He was frightened by the tremendous rally of clericals against trade competition on their special day of business. Church and Dissent joined together in opposing what would tend to "secularise Sunday" and therefore be "injurious to the community." What fine phrases to mask professional selfishness! You never find these clerical folk speaking honestly. Even when they "go up

higher" they don't say they are taking a better situation with a bigger salary. Oh dear no. What they say is that they have a call to a greater sphere of usefulness.

Reynolds' is getting profane. It gives publicity to the query of a correspondent—"Of what Sex is God?" Well, it all depends on what God he means. God the Father is clearly a male, and God the Devil (according to tradition) very much so. God the Son is of the same persuasion. The difficulty arises as to the Holy Ghost. Nobody seems to know whether this member of the Christian pantheon is "he," "she," or "it." The safest plan is to avoid the pronoun altogether.

A "bookie" gave £25 to the Bath Guardians to be spent in giving the workhouse inmates a treat. The gift was accepted, in spite of the opposition of a Free Church minister. He was not going to share in the treat, so he was very eloquent about his "conscience." Evidently he forgot the good old Bible precedent for spoiling the Egyptians.

Moody isn't going to be kept out of this war business. He doesn't want to fight the Spaniards. That is not very risky, but too risky for an Evangelist. He is going to fight sin—amongst the American soldiers. According to report, he is off to the front already, about a thousand miles from any place where a Spaniard is likely to be seen, except as a prisoner. Moody reckons that this "gospel campaign" of his will cost £20,000, and perhaps he will get that amount. The revival business is more prosperous now than it was in the days of Jesus Christ, who had to fish for half-a-crown when the Roman collector called in for the taxes.

Admiral Dewey licked the Spaniards easily at Manila. We don't want to snatch away his laurels, but the Spanish ships were mostly old tubs, and ill-equipped at that. All the poor devils on board them could do was to die gamely. Admiral Dewey is a brave sailor, and would be the first to admit the real nature of his victory. But this doesn't suit the taste of Dr. Lyman Abbott, the successor of Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church. He talks of the "extraordinary victory at Manila" as a mark of "the Divine hand." Just like these preachers! God's hand is always in it when their side wins. It doesn't occur to them that the "Divine hand" would be more appropriately seen in reformation instead of destruction.

Dr. Abbott has gone one better still. Preaching at New York last Sunday, according to the *Chronicle* correspondent, he "advanced the startling theory" that the Americans are winning almost hands down because they have learned "to lay hold on the muscles of the Almighty and use God's projectiles." It is well that there is a lunatic asylum near New York.

More Catholic and Protestant faction fights in Belfast, with policemen severely injured and the military called out to disperse the mob. What a blessed thing religion is when people are enthusiastic!

Our good Christian government is very slow in moving towards a reform of the prison system. Just look at this change introduced by the new Prisons Bill. Short-time prisoners used to wait three months before they were entitled to write or receive a letter. Henceforth they will only have to wait two months. But why wait so long as this for the first humanising experience in prison life? And why should the prisoner's family, outside the gaol, have to wait two months for the first word from one whom they may still love, and about whom they are grieving all the while? One would think from the government regulations that prisoners were a separate species of the human race. But they are not. They are wonderfully like a lot of people at large. Well did Ingersoll say to the hard, good folk who hold up their hands in horror at the sight of a "criminal": "Think of all the things you would have liked to do. Think of all the things you would have done if nobody was looking on."

The State of Maryland has abolished the oath and kissing the Bible in courts of law. Witnesses now have to say: "In the presence of Almighty God I do solemnly promise and declare." But what if a witness doesn't believe himself, or anybody else, in the presence of Almighty God? Wouldn't it be better if the formula ran: "In the presence of a possible seven years' imprisonment for perjury I solemnly promise and declare"?

Mr. Henry Wilde, of Manchester, has presented £13,000 to the University of Oxford to found a Readership in Mental Philosophy. The Reader, it is announced, is to hold office for five years, and to lecture on the illusions and delusions incident to the human mind. He will never run

short of material, even if he confines himself entirely to the Christian religion.

Canon Scott Holland and Mr. G. W. E. Russell both dwell on Gladstone's "child-like faith." That is what we always thought it, but we never liked to say so. His eulogists have saved us the unpleasantness.

"I have never seen anything so terrible," says Professor A. E. Barker, of University College, London, of the wounds inflicted by the dum-dum bullet. This is the bullet which Christian England has just been using against the heathen Afridis. One would like to have it examined by one of those *opera-bouffe* angels who sang "peace and goodwill" at the birth of Christ.

A great many parsons, according to the *Church Gazette*, preach ridiculously bad sermons because their form of faith is "not faith, but essential unfaith." They have "so little trust in their belief that they are afraid to say a word as to its foundations, lest the superstructure should come tumbling about their ears."

Priests of every religion trade on the fear of death—a sentiment which they cultivate into a most grotesque development. If they would let us alone, our fear of death would cease to be an affliction. It was well remarked by Bacon that almost any passion will conquer this fear, and a very good illustration of this truth occurred in connection with the sinking of the *Merrimac* at the mouth of Santiago harbor. Admiral Sampson asked for volunteers to man the doomed ship, and four thousand officers and men responded—practically the whole *personnel* of the fleet. It looked much like certain death, yet they were all ready to face it; indeed, there was quite a competition for the posts of mortal danger. And that was how the old Greeks and Romans habitually acted before the Christian funk of hell and damnation came in to make brave men cowards.

Everybody remembers the full-flavored old colonel who divided his regiment for divine service on Sunday morning. "Church of England to the right, Roman Catholics to the left," he said; and then he added, "Fancy religions to the rear." He wouldn't waste his time, and perhaps his temper, in reciting a list of the sects of those "damned Dissenters."

Captain Philip Trevor, writing in the *Nineteenth Century*, gives some more modern illustrations of religion in the army. Here is a pretty one: "What's yer religious persuasion?" said the sergeant to the recruit. "My what?" "Yer what?" "Why, what I said. What's yer after o' Sundays?" "Rabbits mostly." "Ere, stow that lip. Come now, Chu'ch, Chapel, or 'oly Roman?" "I ain't nowise pertickler. Put me down Chu'ch of England, sergeant; I'll go with the band."

Here is another. A certain chaplain wanted the choir to practise the eastward position, and, as the result was disappointing, he sought the assistance of the sergeant-major, who addressed the choir before the chaplain in the following way: The mere sound of his voice was electric. No little band boy now lolled on the choir desk. The third fingers of the hands were on the seams of the trousers, and the heads erect. Even the man straggling with the bassoon sat at attention. The sergeant-major proceeded: "When you 'ear the 'oly man say, 'Hi b'lieve,' not a move—them words is only cautionary; but when 'e starts on 'Gord the Father' round yer go on yer 'eels." Then to the chaplain, "Now, sir, you try.".....Success was instantaneous.

Unitarian Sunday-schools don't appear to be flourishing. At the recent annual meeting in Essex Hall it was stated that, while the Association had twelve more schools, it had three hundred less scholars and eighty-one fewer teachers.

Why does the *Daily News* allow its leaderette writers to poke fun at the Holy Scriptures? *Apròpos* of the recent man-and-bear fight in a Birmingham street, our contemporary remarks that bears in the streets of a great city are too dangerous. "Bears," it goes on, "are notoriously averse to ill-behaved children. Our cities abound in such children. One day the mocking infant will meet the indignant bear, and there will be a tragedy at which we shall all stand aghast."

Monsignor Baron, Bishop of Angers, who died at a private hospital in Paris, spoke of himself as "done to death by the poison of malignant tongues." A dead set was made at him by the clergy of his diocese because he was a Republican. Alas for the rarity of Christian charity under the sun!

This above all—to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

—Shakespeare, "Hamlet."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. : 7.30, "The God of Battles."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.
- F. P. PEACOCK (Chicago).—Mr. Watts thanks you for your letter and the enclosed cutting.
- E. JACKSON.—Inserted in another column.
- W. TRUMAN.—We looked into the second volume of Professor Bury's new edition of Gibbon, but saw nothing calling for special mention. What he had to say with regard to Gibbon's attitude towards Christianity was said in the preface to the first volume, which we dealt with at the time of its publication. A thorough annotation of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the *Decline and Fall* is a work which any historian might be proud to undertake.
- HULL.—Mrs. Besant first identified herself with the Freethought party in 1874. We really cannot tell you on what dates she lectured at Bolton; no doubt she did so several times, and, of course, one of her subjects might have been "Is there a God?"
- W. B. D.—Acknowledged according to the initials under your signature. Glad to hear that your wife was so much pleased with Mr. Foote's address at the grave of J. M. Wheeler.
- J. T. GALE.—Your letter and order are handed over to our publisher, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.
- J. G. DOBSON.—Sorry you could not attend this year's Conference, but hope you will, as you expect, be present at next year's.
- A. B. MOSS, subscribing to the Wheeler Memorial Fund, expresses a hope that every Freethinker who has profited by Mr. Wheeler's writings will contribute his mite. We hope so too.
- F. H. WOOLLETT.—Inserted as desired, with an editorial comment, which should be regarded in the same spirit of fair play.
- T. J. THURLOW.—Your address is printed in your list of engagements. Sorry you are wrongly addressed in the Almanack, but we suspect that is more your fault than the editors'. A list of Freethought lecturers is printed every year, and it is a good advertisement for them, but most of them require to be worried into forwarding particulars.
- A. GHYL.—Please convey our thanks to Mr. Shufflebotham.
- N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—H. D. Peters, 10s.; Ch. Strong, 2s. 6d.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—J. Halliwell, 1s.; collected Manchester Conference, £4.
- W. WAYMARK.—Yes, it was received. Thanks.
- "CIVIS" says that the best of Mr. Wheeler's *Freethinker* articles should be collected in a volume. He suggested this years ago, and suggests it the more strongly now.
- H. LEES SUMNER.—Acknowledgment elsewhere. Thanks for your interesting letter. Present our compliments to the lady.
- W. E. W.—Acknowledged as desired. Your sympathy is conveyed to Mrs. Wheeler.
- LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston, U.S.A.).—We have put your remittance to the Wheeler Memorial Fund. Thanks for your kind letter and good wishes.
- J. S. (Lincoln).—Received.
- L. L.—In Scotland, we believe, civil marriages are contracted at the municipal office.
- R. JOHNSON.—True, the Freethought party can ill afford to lose so capable an advocate as J. M. Wheeler.
- W. H. ABDULLAH QUILLIAM, subscribing to the Wheeler Fund, says: "I always enjoyed reading his articles, which were unique in the special field to which he addressed himself. His labors have been most valuable, and the result of his researches will live."
- W. P. BALL.—Once more thanks for your weekly batch of useful cuttings.
- Mr. Foote has been obliged to take a few days' rest and change, owing to which some correspondence stands over till next week, and some acknowledgments for the Wheeler Fund.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Men, Women, and Chance (by William Platt) —Truthseeker—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Crescent —Torch of Reason—Progressive Thinker—Zoophilist—People's Newspaper—New York Herald—New Century—New Century Review—Free Society—Freedom—Birmingham Daily Gazette—Weekly Citizen—Lucifer—Science Siftings—English Mechanic.
- It being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.
- The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.
- THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (June 12), taking for his subject "The God of Battles." Mr. Charles Watts will take the chair. Prior to the lecture, or after it, Mr. Foote will make a further statement as to the Bedborough case, and the attitude of Secularists towards the general and particular right of publication.

The next number of the *Freethinker* will contain an important statement by Mr. Foote respecting the Secular Society (Limited), which is now legally incorporated.

Last Sunday was really the first summer's day we had had this year, which limited the audience at the Athenæum Hall, where Mr. Charles Watts lectured upon "Mr. Gladstone's Death Chamber." His remarks were thoroughly appreciated and heartily applauded. Mr. Harry Brown, as usual, made an excellent chairman.

The London Trades Council has approved the submission to it of a resolution in favor of supporting the Moral Instruction League. The resolution is to be moved by Mr. C. F. Davis, and, if carried, it will be forwarded to the various Trades Councils of the country.

Ibsen spoke at the banquet given in his honor by the Woman's League at the Grand Hotel, Christiania. He warned his hearers that it was a mistake to suppose that he distinguished between the Woman's Cause and the Cause of Humanity. "It has always seemed to me," he said, "that the great problem is to elevate the nation and place it on a higher level. Towards this task two factors must co-operate; and it lies with the mothers of the people, by slow and strenuous work, to arouse in it a conscious sense of *Culture* and of *Discipline*. Such a sense must be begotten in the people before its further elevation can proceed. To the women, then, we must look for the solution of the Problem of Humanity. It must come from them as mothers; that is the mission that lies before them." Wise words these. "Culture and Discipline" is a splendid watchword. Sometimes it is necessary to emphasise the *and*.

The Paris correspondent of the *Daily News* (Mrs. Crawford) writes as follows: "There never, I suppose, was a time when the Voltairian feeling of the *petite bourgeoisie* and the mistrust of the curés by the peasants were more lively..... '*La morale indépendante*,' or morality without any theological prop, goes home to sceptical rustics and working-class folk."

A good thing has happened in America, where a ridiculous perversion of English history has long been used in the public schools, and is largely responsible for the ill-will that, at any rate, *used* to be felt by Americans against their brethren across the Atlantic. Mrs. J. R. Green, the widow of the well-known historian, has been commissioned to write a new history of England for the public schools of the United States.

The Presbyterian General Assembly met at Chicago last month, and Dr. Sheldon Jackson preached the Annual Sermon. In the course of his exhortation he made it appear that the Presbyterian Church is waiting for a new "baptism of the Holy Spirit," which is sadly wanted. "Not only," he said, "is the church not advancing all along the line, but it is not even holding its own. In places it is retreating; needed reinforcements are not furnished; consecrated men and women, separated by the Holy Ghost for mission work, are not and cannot be sent for want of funds. Some churches have been closed; some young converts remanded back to heathenism," etc., etc. We are pleased to hear all this, and not at all astonished that Dr. Jackson asked for many consecrated things, winding up with "consecrated wealth."

Mr. F. H. Woollett, secretary, asks us to find room for the following: "The Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society hereby expresses its pleasure at Mr. Forder's re-election to the Honorary Secretaryship of the Society, and desires to add an expression of its high appreciation of the value of his life services to the cause of Secularism in general, and of the National Secular Society in particular. Further, this Branch regrets the want of complete unanimity manifested with respect to Mr. Forder's election, and regards the opposition offered as thoroughly unwarranted and unjustifiable."

We insert this resolution in order to prevent any possible misunderstanding. We do not see that it is at all necessary. There was no opposition to Mr. Forder's re-election, and the vote was unanimous. But, since the point is raised afresh, we beg to say that, in our opinion, Mr. Watts, while well within his right, and animated by the best of motives, was ill-advised in putting questions on behalf of other members; and that Mr. Forder was equally ill-advised in threatening to resign if anything of the sort occurred again. Mr. Foote did not threaten to resign because one delegate voted against his re-election at the previous Conference.

Mr. Watts was not the only member of the Executive who had some feeling on what may now be called the Forder question. The Executive is no more anxious than the President is to lose Mr. Forder's valuable services, but it felt that the Honorary Secretary ought to attend more than one monthly Executive meeting in the course of the year. It is only on these occasions that Mr. Forder can possibly meet his colleagues together, and it is unpleasant to have to postpone every bit of business that arises in which he happens to be concerned, leaving the President, who has enough to do otherwise, to ascertain the facts and report them accordingly. For the rest it is really absurd to suppose that Mr. Forder's colleagues are making any sort of "set" against him, because they wish to see him more frequently. Sentiment is a good thing, but it ought not to be all on one side, and there should be room somewhere for common sense. And now let us try to bury the incident, hoping that Mr. Forder will be able to bring his long experience to the Executive meetings, where it would be useful and welcome.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured to a large audience at Mile End Waste on Sunday morning, his subject being "The Drama of Christianity." Mr. Moss's annual holiday commences on July 23, and he would like to spend the first week of it in lecturing in the north of England and Scotland. Branches in those parts should please note, and communicate with Mr. Moss at 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.

The New York *Truthseeker* for May 28 announces "the mournful intelligence of the death of Joseph Mazzini Wheeler," and promises a portrait and biography of him in its next issue, with "some tributes from his co-workers in the cause of Freethought."

The *Torch of Reason*, published at Silverton, Oregon, and organ of the Secular Church there, reproduces (with acknowledgment) several of our paragraphs on the Spanish-American war. We hope our far-off Western contemporary is flourishing; in other words, that it has a wide circle of subscribers.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

W. B. D., 2s. 6d.; J. G. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; A. B. Moss, 10s.; A. Powell, 2s. 6d.; John Brady, 3s.; H. Lees Sumner, 4s.; W. E. W., £2 2s.; J. Hayes, 1s.; Louis Levine, £1; J. Robinson, 2s.; R. Johnson, £1; W. Palmer, 2s.; W. H. Abdullah Quilliam, 10s. 6d.; Charles Carrington, 11s.; W. Waymark, 5s.; F. Morgan, 2s. 6d.; W. Robinson, 2s. 6d.; Civis, £3; Charles Watts, £1 1s.

Per R. Forder:—F. J. Voisey, £1 1s.; T. Thurlow, 2s. 6d.; A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.; P. Smith, 1s.; F. W. Donaldson, 10s.; G. L. Mackenzie, 4s.

Per Miss Vance:—J. W. Griffiths, 5s.; C. Mascal, £1; E. Truelove, £1; Mr. and Mrs. John Samson, £2 2s.

Obituary.

It is with deep sorrow that I record the death of my friend, John Etchells, of Mossley, a life-long Freethinker and friend of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote. Several tried to unseat his firm convictions, but of no avail; he died, as he had lived, a thorough Atheist. Mr. Scott, of Duckinfield, read the beautiful service of Austin Holyoake's at his grave-side, amidst a large concourse of friends.—EDWARD JACKSON.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

FACT VERSUS BIBLE.

[It will interest many readers to know that the writer of the following article is in a very humble position in the Royal Navy.—Ed.]

To every thoughtful man who has so far weaned himself from the many hereditary and absurd superstitions of to-day as to take an impartial view of things as we find them, there is much for reflection. No one who has at all looked with an observant eye can fail to find great interest in that most interesting creature, man. Quite a number of authors have found extreme pleasure in picking to pieces, so to speak, the most wondrous work of Nature; and, though many individuals have succeeded in graphically describing the probable origin of man, his multiplex and wonderfully complicated organism, we are still, to a great extent, an enigma to ourselves. Though science has revealed to us many strange, curious, and wonder-striking things, and given a sequel to perplexing questions which have constantly arisen in the mind of man, opening up fields of knowledge which are ever extending, we are to-day asking ourselves the self-same questions which puzzled our forefathers: "Whence came we? From what are we? Why are we? What end do we serve?" But we are nearer than they, perhaps, to their solution. Still, take the ordinary run of man and ask him the questions, he will refer you to the Bible, his accepted source of information, and raise arguments and ideas that are not his own, but those the book has taught him, and betray the teachings at his mother's knee—the impressions made upon the plastic mind of childhood. The deep vein of superstitious belief which runs through the universal mind of man prompts him to acknowledge, much as his material instincts forbid and negate it, the probable existence of a power behind ordinary evolution. He goes wandering up amid the stars, and loses himself; talks like an automatic machine of Biblical history and manifestation; and comes back eventually to where he started, as much in doubt as ever. It sometimes occurs to him to look with askance eye at his Book of Authority; he attacks with vigor one teaching with another, and threshes out the argument in his mind.

Yet still he is undecided—and why?

He reads that, in the first place, an all-wise, all-powerful God divined an idea that He would "make" a world and inhabit it, being probably unaware or ignorant of the fact or theory that things imperishable (which the world is) could not possibly be "made."

Accordingly God set to work, and in six days "made" heaven and earth (not the heaven perhaps where we all hope to go, if such an elysium of bliss is to follow our mortality, but the vast range of sky in which the twinkling orbs of night are poised, and where the sun-god rules the day), declared it to be good, and rested on His labors.

Seeing the good of His creation ("self-praise, etc."), He said: "Come, let Us 'make' man, in Our Own Image, and to Our Glory, that he may inhabit and replenish the earth." Man (so the story goes) came into existence—a gentle, holy, child-like, sinless creature, and, in his solitude, doubtless enjoyed the wondrous work around him, finding wonderment and interest in every object to view. In the compass of a garden were stored the beauties of nature, all for the enjoyment of the man, Adam, but the one forbidden tree.

Yet, with all this charm of nature, it was not good for man to be alone. God, who was before all, was all, know all before all, mighty and omnipotent, had lived alone for ages, but man, His creature, must have a companion.

And now here comes a question: If God was all, know all before all, mighty, all-seeing, all-wise, omnipotent, why did He, knowing full well that man would fall, and how he should fall—why did He, I ask, create man at all, seeing that damnation and death awaited him?

That it was unjust we must admit. For one man's sin (afore-known) the whole human race are accursed! For a companion to man God gave woman (the rib taken from him in his slumber), and by the companion and creature of himself man was to fall. We all know the tale of the serpent so well that it is unnecessary to repeat it. Man, God's holy, undefiled, and spotless creature, succumbed to the influence of woman, prompted by the wily, talking serpent, Satan. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was eaten in company, man with woman,

and they saw that they were naked (only fancy!—was that so very evil?), and they were ashamed (ashamed of what God declared to be good!), inasmuch that they made coverings of fig-leaves, and when sought of God ran to hide themselves, because, as man said, "they were naked."

And here we are face to face with unparalleled injustice! If a father plots and connives the sin and fall of his child, and then takes to task and punishes the child for falling, what fatherly love can be traced in such conduct?

And later in biblical history, when man, whom God had permitted to sin, so far exhausted His patience as to warrant universal destruction and effacement from the earth, why did He (while loving the whole human race so well that He drowned the lot, with the exception of a remnant) sanction a remnant to remain to recommence the sins which before had damned humanity?

If man had necessarily to turn out such a bad bargain—falling into sin on first offer, and, further, to go on sinning in damnable succession until he did "stink in the nostrils of God"—why, seeing such an outlook for man was presented, did not the Creator choke off at once, and nip in the bud, on the first committal of sin, His creation?

We pass over man's ejection from Eden. He failed in excuse to an angry, unjust parent, and was turned out of paradise, as a child is expelled the parents' roof, to seek what fortune offered.

Seeing that man was cursed from the near beginning of existence to wander an outcast from his Maker and God, and that, in the case of Cain, was alienated from his kind, with every man's hand against him, in hourly danger of losing life and limb, we cannot marvel that, as a result of this curse, the generality of mankind are more and more estranged from God. Granted (for convenience sake) there is a God, it is obvious that there can be no love for the Being who deliberately created man that He might damn him in existence, and torture him with hell after death, for sin of His own fathering and making. You hear pious folk talk of the powerlessness of God in the hands of Satan, and that God deplores the evil that obtains throughout the world; but it passes mortal ken to comprehend why He created the elements which marred the beautiful paradise that He had declared with such approval to be good.

It has been generally supposed that the knowledge gained by eating of the prohibited "tree" is the cause of the propagation of the species, which would in all probability have never come about if man had not, through woman's temptation, opened a way up for himself; and that man, with his companion, would have lived on in enjoyment of life to this day, knowing nothing of the natures of each other, having no sexual desire but the mere pleasure of each other's company.

But this supposition seems absurd on the face of it. True to-day many are blind, morally and otherwise; but a good deal of seasoning is required to believe that man or woman could have been long before discovering the difference in each other; indeed, the very make-up of woman gives the lie to it, for it seems to have been premeditated that woman was to conceive and foster the seed of man. A work of good made woman in purity—with all her womanly, wifely, and maternal charms—for man's and their mutual enjoyment; it is monstrous, then, to suppose that man would never have propagated his kind, or that his doing so should be evil. The Biblical phrase, that "I was born in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," seems to libel the holy alliance we are told God permitted, sanctioned, and ordered between the sexes, and practically says the good is evil—a flat contradiction.

Woman's part of man's curse (as the tempter of man) is also said to be pain at birth; but it baffles me to conceive how it is possible to give birth without it. Human skill and ingenuity have considerably relieved the pangs of child-birth, but have never eliminated them, and it seems hard to believe that an accouchement ever could come about (whether you had knowledge of good and evil or not) without the inevitable accompanying distress, pain, and life-risk for birth of life. This, then, is quashed.

Man's curse was death; to toil laboriously, and eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and to be damned to perdition when he could no longer stoke up to keep the fire of life within him.

Death is rigorously carried out, for we all die; how it could be otherwise science does not tell us.

Nature fades to give place to new life; it is universal the world over. Plants, trees, every living thing that

grows, thrives, blossoms, fruits, dies; every beast and bird and fish, and even man himself, must bow—the law is inexorable.

Though man has never found the "elixir of life" that is to overcome and trample down the dragon of death, he has slightly altered or modified the toil part of his inherited curse. Many to-day "toil not, neither do they spin," giving the lie to the Pauline phrase that "He who will not work, neither shall he eat"; imposing their burden on the already overburdened section of humanity, who toil on, toil ever, with unvarying change, from childhood till old age, with little of the sweets of life from birth till death.

Man-made, unnatural, unjust, dishonest systems have truly made man's lot for many a bitter curse; though, if man's creation, fall, and curse (afore-known of God) were just, in like strain we might justify the shiftings of burdens.

Those who believe in man's fall from a state of innocence and accompanying curse are daily becoming fewer in number. It has incontestably been proved that man, far from being lost and on the downgrade, is, and has ever been, struggling upward for ages towards that pitch of perfection which cunning fabulists thought fit to portray as his original estate. Those who no longer believe do not all avow their disbelief. Why? Because it would clash with their interests; would show in all its hideous nakedness the pious fraud which fosters and engenders the lying statements of crafty priests, and which puts a sacred pale around the works of ignorant falsehood which comprise the books of the Bible. Because the avowal would deal such a blow at conventional thought and present institutions as to completely revolutionise society, and to hasten the march of man's destiny. But scientific truths are fast dispelling the darkneses of ignorance, and, though the forces of reaction may strive to cloak the light of the ever-growing day, the refulgent beams of the sun of reason light up man's path, and show clear the way to that happy estate where man, freed from the bondage of ignorance, of fear, and superstition, shall enjoy the grand outcome of ages of martyrdom, of continual struggle, of far-reaching search for knowledge, of scientific progress, of battle against priests and monarchs, of combat with fraud and force, and the oppressors of thought and human liberty, who blindly strive to pervert and stay the great forces which, despite them, are lifting man higher and higher to that grand destiny wherein he shall know and control, and be master of himself and his actions.

JAMES AMOS MORGAN.

GENERAL GRANT ON SECULAR EDUCATION.

THE following is from what is perhaps the most famous speech ever delivered by General U. S. Grant. It was made at a soldiers' reunion at Des Moines, Iowa, in 1876:—

"In a Republic like ours, where the citizen is the sovereign and the official the servant, where no power is exercised except by the will of the people, it is important that the sovereign—the people—should possess intelligence. The free school is the promoter of that intelligence which is to preserve us as a free nation. If we are to have another contest in the near future of our national existence, I predict that the dividing line will not be Mason and Dixon's, but between patriotism and intelligence on the one side, and superstition, ambition, and ignorance on the other. Now, in this centennial year of our existence, I believe it a good time to begin the work of strengthening the foundation of the house commenced by our patriotic fathers one hundred years ago at Concord at Lexington. Let us all labor to add all needful guarantees for the most perfect security of free thought, free speech, and free press, pure morals, unfettered religious sentiments, and of equal rights and privileges to all men, irrespective of nationality, color, or religion. Encourage free schools, and resolve that not one dollar of money appropriated to their support, no matter how raised, shall be appropriated to the support of any sectarian school. Resolve that neither the State nor nation, nor both combined, shall support institutions of learning other than those sufficient to afford every child growing up in the land the opportunity for a good common-school education, unmixed with sectarian, pagan, or Atheistical tenets. Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the Church, and the private school, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the Church and State forever separate. With these safeguards, I believe the battle which created the army of the Tennessee will not have been fought in vain."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

THE EVENING PUBLIC MEETING.

(Reported by J. SEDDON.)

NOTWITHSTANDING the heavy rain, the public meeting in the evening attracted a large audience, which listened attentively to the various speakers. The President was supported on the platform by Messrs. Watts, Cohen, Forder, Ward, Small, and Thurlow.

The PRESIDENT acted as chairman, and in opening the meeting said: Ladies and Gentlemen,—We have been holding in this hall to-day the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society. There has been an excellent attendance of delegates and members from all parts of the country, and I hope that the result of the deliberations will be to the practical promotion of Freethought during the ensuing year. (Applause.) It is always our custom after the business meetings of the Conference in the morning and afternoon to hold a public meeting in the evening. This is the public meeting, and I shall now have pleasure in introducing to you a number of speakers, some of whom are extremely well known, others partially well known, and all of them good workers for the Secular cause. (Applause.) My own remarks, as usual, will be reserved till the last.

The PRESIDENT then called upon Mr. Cohen to address the meeting.

Mr. COHEN, who was received with loud applause, spoke in his usual calm and philosophic manner, and in the course of his remarks said that meetings of this character might be regarded as a call to the unconverted, and also to the converted. A call to the one to be as they (the Secularists) were, and to the other to keep on in the way they are going, with more energy, if possible, than they have been in the habit of showing. Mr. Cohen, continuing his address, spoke in glowing terms of the spread of Secularism, which he attributed in the main to the whole tendency of the age. He would content himself by enumerating the chief points of the Secular position. The first was that all progress is essentially Secular, that all progress is dependent upon the utilisation of those natural forces, moral, physical, and mental, that play through and constitute society; the second, that for the proper utilisation of these natural forces a sound scientific and widely diffused education is indispensable; third, knowledge is not an end in itself. To accumulate knowledge is not much better than accumulating marbles, if you are going to act as an intellectual miser and keep it to yourself. It is valuable only when it leads to the greater happiness of those living within its influence. (Applause.) That is the test of all action, of all civilisation, of every institution; and the civilisation or institution which does not make for the greater happiness of those living under it is a sham, and should be swept out of existence. We reject Christianity on the one hand because it is not true, and on the other because it has not made for the greater happiness of mankind.

Mr. Cohen received a warm reception at the close of his address, and when the enthusiasm had subsided the PRESIDENT, in introducing Mr. H. P. Ward, said that as the meeting had just listened to a young lecturer, who had already won his spurs, they would now have an opportunity of hearing a still younger lecturer who was winning his spurs.

Mr. WARD said that the present Conference was the first at which he had ever spoken, and he thought he would give his reasons for admiring the character of the great founder of the Society, Charles Bradlaugh. It would be a pleasure to him in after years to know that he had once had an opportunity of paying a small tribute to his name. He regarded the character of Charles Bradlaugh as a grand argument for the greatness of Freethought. Atheism could not, he said, be a bad thing when it could give to the world men like him; when it can inspire men with the intense love of truth as it did Charles Bradlaugh. He was an example of what a man could be without superstition. He had a true love for his fellows, and did more for the working people of this country than all the clergy put together. Had all the clergy of his day been stewed down, the lot of them would not have made a Bradlaugh. He admired Charles Bradlaugh because of his uncompromising opposition to superstition, because of his great earnestness, sincerity, and thoroughness. He had never seen Mr. Bradlaugh, but from what he had read and heard of him he was passionately devoted to his memory, and proud to be a member of the Society he founded. In concluding, he said:—Bradlaugh is dead; but, though he is dead, the work he did can never die. His magnetic personality still influences the hearts of others. He is immortalised in the temple of history, and there will always be a niche in which shall be inscribed the sacred memory and never-dying name of Charles Bradlaugh.

Mr. Ward's address evoked much applause. He spoke throughout with earnestness and force that was surprising in so young a man.

The PRESIDENT, in introducing the next speaker, Mr. Laurence Small, B.S., of the Liverpool Branch, remarked that, instead of Secularism declining, it seemed to be breeding young Bradlaughs.

Mr. SMALL said he would address himself particularly to those friends who were with us, but not of us—meaning the Christian portion of the audience. They would see, he said, upon looking around, that Secularists were not downcast at having lost the faith which is so dear to them as Christians. Although free from superstition, they would find that Secularists lived quite as decent lives as themselves. Secularists learn nature's secrets and use them for human advancement. They learn them, not by sitting in their closets like the schoolmen of old, but by investigating Nature herself; by putting questions to her in the way of experiments, by careful observation, and then by applying reason to the experiments.

Mr. Small was heartily applauded.

The PRESIDENT then called upon a speaker who, he said, required no introduction—Mr. Charles Watts.

After a cordial reception had been given to Mr. WATTS, he commenced his address by paying a tribute of admiration to the fine addresses of the other speakers, referring to each in turn. Proceeding, he made an eloquent plea to all Freethinkers to do their best to help on the movement by diffusing those truths which, he said, must ultimately regenerate the world. They would have to show the value of Secular philosophy. That philosophy, which was once so despised, is now an important factor in daily life. The time is slowly coming when the co-operation of the Secular party will be regarded as absolutely necessary to the real salvation of the world. Let them, he urged, continue to band together, and to recognise the doing of their duty, not only to themselves, but to their fellows. They must never be weary in well-doing, and, in the end, just so surely as the application of glass enabled the sun's rays to penetrate into dark rooms and reveal the accumulation of cobwebs and dust, so would the light of reason sweep away from the brains of men the cobwebs of theology and superstition.

Mr. Watts was in excellent form, and at the conclusion of his remarks received a well-earned ovation.

Mr. FOOTE said he had been running the meeting on the American plan. (Laughter.) After having been excited by the enthusiastic speech of his friend, Mr. Watts, they could put their enthusiasm to a good use. He then announced that a collection on behalf of the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund would be made. The collection was taken by Miss Vance and Miss Brown, the amount realised being just £4.

Mr. THURLOW, an old London worker, then addressed the meeting. He said that he thought he deserved a Victoria Cross, or some such honor, for having the courage to speak after the meeting had listened to the brilliant speeches of his predecessors. He then addressed certain questions to an imaginary individual at the end of the room, and these questions, and the witty way in which he answered them, caused much amusement and applause.

Mr. ROBERT FORDER, another hard and well-known worker in the cause, then said a few words. He considered the destructive work of the Society to be not only still necessary, but as useful as ever. In every primary school the very dogmas which the educated treat with derision are being taught—being taught to four millions of the rising generation. Whilst it obtained it was their duty to fight superstition face to face, and show up its absurdities by science, by logic, and even by ridicule. (Applause.)

Mr. FOOTE said:—It falls to my lot to close this meeting, and in doing so I desire, partly as a matter of duty, to address a few observations to you. You have listened to some very excellent speeches. Seeds of truth and wisdom have been scattered around. Some of the speakers I am in hearty agreement with at times; others of the speakers I am in hearty dissent from at times. I think they are right when they say that the time has come to do constructive work, but wrong when they say we should slacken in our destructive work. Mr. Forder undoubtedly touched upon a very important point. All the Church of England ministers in this country; all the teachers and masters in the Church of England schools; all the priests in the Catholic Church, and all the teachers and masters in the Catholic schools, are engaged in manufacturing Christians from the raw material of unsuspecting childhood. While that obtains destructive work lies heavily before us. I believe in secular education; but I am quite sure that the only way to promote it is by making Secularists. You will never get Christians to vote for a purely secular education. It is our duty then to make Secularists; but you cannot make Secularists unless you first of all make Freethinkers. No man can understand the philosophy of this life while his mind is directed almost exclusively to the interests of another life. If we were to take the war which is now going on between the United States and Spain, we would have a very good illustration of how religion throws men backward in the race of civilisation. Spain is a Christian country. It has Christianity badly. (Laughter.) I do not agree with those who say that Protestantism is a better religion than Catholicism. It is only better because

there is less of it. It is better in the same sense that a mild attack of fever is better than a bad attack. The Spaniard is a Catholic. Religion to him is not a pastime; it is a devotion. He regards himself more or less as a soldier of the cross. The Americans are also nominally Christians, but religion in America is not so serious an affair as it is in Spain. Throughout the greater portion of American society you may say that they have just enough religion to amuse them. They have the disease mildly. The Spaniards have it very severely. Naturally they will be licked by people who have more common sense than themselves. Mr. Foote then referred to the death of Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone was a Christian, and that had been put as an argument against Freethought; but he thought that in all the higher qualities which constitute the greatness of human nature William Ewart Gladstone had no real superiority over Charles Bradlaugh. (Loud applause.) After a brief allusion to Mr. Gladstone's controversies with Professor Huxley and Colonel Ingersoll, Mr. Foote concluded as follows: Let me ask you, when you leave this place, not to be satisfied with merely applauding the eloquent speeches of those gentlemen around me, but to be yourselves missionaries and propagandists. It is not only he who speaks or wields the pen who can do the work. Let Freethought have its hundreds of missionaries in this city, and the cause will leap forward. Be you missionaries. Be you propagandists; centres of information and enlightenment. Be you the quickeners and vivifiers in the interests of those countless generations of mankind yet unborn. Every good deed and true word will help on the work after you are dead and forgotten; and the good of to-day will spring from your dust as a splendid harvest for future generations. (Loud and continued applause.)

BOOK CHAT.

MR. ERIC MACKAY, who has just died of pneumonia at the age of forty-seven, was a son of the once famous Charles Mackay, who wrote some forcible popular poems. Marie Corelli, the novelist, is, we believe, his step-sister. His aspirations were with the cause of progress, at least in relation to struggling young nations like Greece. We cannot say that we felt much admiration for Eric Mackay's patriotic verses; they were too artificial and lacking in "go." Nor did we think much of his dramatic poem, *Nero*. There was better work in his *Love Letters of a Violinist*, though some of it was rather wire-drawn and far-fetched. He certainly had a sense of beauty and a delicate faculty of versification.

* * *

The *University Magazine* for June opens with a laudatory review of Mr. Joseph McCabe's book, giving an account of his Twelve Years in a Monastery. Mr. J. M. Robertson concludes his able criticism of Professor James's Plea for Theism. His reply to the Professor's argument, that Theists have a special incentive in life, is very good. "Did Cæsar," Mr. Robertson asks, "become Pontifex Maximus by way of cultivating the Will-to-believe, and so gaining a zest for action which had failed him? Did Napoleon invent his God-in-the-machine as an excuse to himself for making war and coercing the Pope? Were D'Holbach and Diderot, in their atheistic stage, less zealous propagandists than Voltaire? Was Danton so much less strenuous than Robespierre? Did La Place grow languid in his thinking because the theistic hypothesis was to him needless? Did Shelley wax slack in his philanthropy when he wrote himself atheist? Were Shakespeare and Molière paralysed as artists by their unbelief? Was Bakounin dumb; was Feuerbach inert; was Gambetta a skulker? Was Comte a slack constructor? Was Clifford a quietist? Did Arnold grow less productive when he set aside all definite Theism? Did Darwin and Huxley and Spencer flag in their work by reason of their agnosticism? Has Ingersoll been an idler? Was it Bradlaugh or the God-fearing House of Commons that gave way in their six-year battle of one to six hundred?" This is so good a reply that it is a pity that the last query contains too large an implication. Bradlaugh was not exactly one against six hundred, or he would never have won at all. His claim to sit in the House of Commons, even if it had to be allowed by an Affirmation Bill, was supported by a respectable number of members, including such eminent leaders as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. The other contents of this magazine are mostly up to a high level. Agnes Platt writes an unfavorable criticism of Ellen Terry, with a woman's keen (some would say cruel) perception of all the weak places. Ernest Newman contributes a very excellent article on the Eighteenth-century View of Opera, and Mr. John Vickers continues his searching inquiry into Christian Origins.

* * *

We know there are good lovers of poetry amongst the readers of the *Freethinker*, who will thank us for calling their attention to the following delightful poem, which

reads like an Elizabethan song, but is really a recent translation by Mr. H. C. Macdowall from the old French of Agrippa D'Aubigné—one of the Huguenots whom this author has just been writing about in *Henry of Guise and Other Portraits*:—

TO DIANA.

Come, my Diana, let us make
A garden very trim and fair;
And you shall walk as mistress there,
And I will toil with spade and rake.
And there, for our entire delight,
A thousand blossoms shall unfold,
The pansy and the marigold,
The crimson pink, the lily white;
There not a thorn shall mar the rose,
And every sugared fruit that grows
Shall ripen when the flowers are done;
Betwixt us we'll divide the rent—
Your share shall all be pure content,
The tears, the labor, mine alone.

* * *

Mr. Andrew Lang's new book, entitled *The Making of Religion*, will have our detailed attention shortly. Meanwhile we may state that it is Mr. Lang's contention that "The result of criticism and comparison of evidence, savage and civilised, is to indicate that the belief in the soul is supported by facts which Materialism cannot explain." He also contends that the belief in God is not evolved out of the worship of ghosts, as it occurs where ghosts are not yet worshipped. This argument is finally applied to the question of the origin of the Hebrew religion.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PROVIDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The *Freethinker* contains many truths that no man of reason can make a pretence of denying, but it is a pity to observe that your contributors seem to suppose that the belief in a God can only rest upon the Bible, and that the man who believes in God must also believe in that collection of Eastern literature.

Jehovah has never recognised the Bible or any other theological works, and consequently is not responsible for any of the absurd statements contained in them. His presence and his wisdom, however, are in evidence in nature around us, and require no other revelation of the fact.

The most unphilosophical remarks in the *Freethinker* are those which comment upon the ills supposed to be inflicted by God, or "Providence," and I presume that these must be ironical, because the writer does not believe in his existence. However, I have considered that subject to the best of my ability, and have come to the conclusion that the elements of the universe are controlled in the best manner that they can be to produce the best general results. It is on this principally that I base my own belief in a great controller of space and maker (whose best name is "Jehovah"), without paying any attention to the Bible, Koran, Vedas, or any other superstitious production of interested or fallible man.

If any of your readers can write an article showing how the elements of an earth can be better managed in some respects than they are at present, *without more than counterbalancing disadvantages*, or the necessity for Jehovah being a kind of dry nurse to everyone on earth, I shall be glad to read it, and, if necessary, reply to it.

JNO. C. EDGLEY.

THE DEVIL IS DEAD.

You're bid to the funeral, ministers all,
We've dug the old gentleman's bed;
Your black coats will make a most excellent pall
To cover your friend who is dead.

Aye, lower him mournfully into his grave;
Let showers of tear-drops be shed;
Your business is gone—there are no souls to save:
Their tempter, the Devil, is dead.

Woe comes upon woe; it is dreadful to think
Hell's gone, and the demons have fled;
The damned souls have broken their chains' every link—
Their tempter, the Devil, is dead

Camp-meetings henceforth will be needed no more
Revivals are knocked on the head;
The orthodox vessel lies stranded on shore
Their captain, the Devil, is dead.

—*Torch of Reason.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The God of Battles."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): June 16, at 8.30, Stanley Jones, "Natural Law in Races and Religion."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Bow): 7.30, J. R. Macdonald, "Dogma and the Religious Spirit."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Stanton Coit, "The Ten Commandments." Peckham Rye: 8, Mr. Clarke.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Lord's Prayer."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15, C. Cohen.

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, W. Heaford.

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 8.15, A. Guest, "Prophets and their Business."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, H. P. Ward.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 8.30, H. P. Ward.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Kidley-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "God and Man."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, J. Fagan, "Miracles."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 7, Concert for the benefit of Mrs. Wheeler.

DERBY (Central Hall, Market-place): 7.30, Mr. Wright, "The Bedborough Prosecution."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, John Roberts, "God and Nature."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (lecture-room, corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 7, R. Mitchell, "Evolution versus Special Creation."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Excursion to Crich, Derbyshire; train leaves Victoria Station at 9.50; return from Chesterfield at 9.15.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Annual meeting; election of officers.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—June 12, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 19 and 26, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—June 12, Mile End; 19, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 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.

T. J. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—June 12, East London Branch, Swaby's Coffee House, Mile End; 26, Mile End Waste.

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