

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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MR. GLADSTONE'S RELIGION.

IV.

MR. GLADSTONE was broken to pieces by Professor Huxley. It was reserved for Colonel Ingersoll to grind him to powder. And nobody could pity him, for his fate was of his own seeking. Ingersoll had been discussing in the *North American Review* with the Rev. Dr. Field, and Mr. Gladstone gratuitously interposed to give his view of the battle and the combatants. When we say *gratuitously* we do not mean that he wrote for nothing, for he received a very handsome cheque (£200 it is said) for his very indifferent performance. What we mean is, that there was no sort of necessity for his intervention. The fight was in America, and it might have been left to the Americans. Of course there *may* have been the idea that no Christian in the United States was big enough to tackle Ingersoll successfully, and that the job might be managed by the Grand Old Man of England, who was an old parliamentary hand, and had been engaged all his long lifetime in the practice of dialectics. But if this idea *was* entertained, those who held it were doomed to a signal disappointment. Mr. Gladstone never cut such a poor figure in any previous controversy. This time he more than found his match. Colonel Ingersoll outdid him in knowledge and command of the subject, in argument and illustration, in subtlety and eloquence, and even in politeness. Mr. Gladstone himself admitted that his adversary wrote "with a rare and enviable brilliancy." No one was ever tempted to say that of Mr. Gladstone. Both men were accounted great orators, but when their words had to be read, instead of heard, one of them was obviously superior to the other. The great Freethinker packed his paragraphs with thoughts; the great Christian spread out one thought over a whole paragraph. And the one who was most fertile in ideas was also the most lucid in expression. Colonel Ingersoll's eloquence, compared with that of Mr. Gladstone, was as a fountain to a pump. One was spontaneous, the other labored; one most natural, the other most artificial; one changing with every variation of the theme, the other as monotonous as a straight, dusty road. The Freethinker wrote strong, simple, beautiful English; the Christian wrote an English that was pompous and turgid—a cross between parliamentary rhetoric and pulpit exhortation.

Even in the matter of quickness and dexterity the Freethinker had all the best of it. Colonel Ingersoll had called Shakespeare the greatest of the sons of men. It was an incidental observation, but Mr. Gladstone thought fit to take it up. It might be true, he said, but it was disputable, and how did Colonel Ingersoll know it? But having solemnly protested, Mr. Gladstone fell into the same "rashness" himself. He called Aristotle the greatest thinker of antiquity. It might be true, said Colonel Ingersoll, but it was disputable, and how did Mr. Gladstone know that? Mr. Gladstone took a whole page to administer his rebuke. Colonel Ingersoll answered him in a single sentence.

Mr. Gladstone's high-and-mighty tone must have infinitely amused his opponent. Ingersoll had said to Dr. Field: "You are shocked at the Hindu mother, when she gives her child to death at the supposed command of her God. What do you think of Abraham? of Jephthah? What is your opinion of Jehovah himself?" The question had the force and directness of truth itself. It was not

loaded with an epithet or a suggestion. There was absolutely no room for impoliteness. But it provoked Mr. Gladstone into writing another page of stern reproof. He warned his opponent that such a lofty subject should "only be approached in a deep, reverential calm." But this was not enough. Mr. Gladstone concluded his article as follows:—

"And whereas the highest self-restraint is necessary in these dark but, therefore, all the more exciting inquiries, in order to keep steady the ever-quivering balance of our faculty of judgment, this writer chooses to ride an unbroken horse, and to throw the reins upon his neck. I have endeavored to give a sample of the results."

The last sentence was short, sharp—and insolent. But the Freethought champion did not lose his temper. He returned the thrust with a smile, but he transfixed his adversary. This is what he said:—

"And after all it may be that 'to ride an unbroken horse with the reins thrown upon his neck,' as you charge me with doing, gives a greater variety of sensations, a keener delight, and a better prospect of winning the race, than to sit solemnly astride of a dead one, in 'a deep reverential calm,' with the bridle firmly in your hand."

Mr. Gladstone did not see what a splendid opportunity he gave his opponent. Ingersoll seized and made the most of it. He left Mr. Gladstone sitting solemnly astride of a dead horse, which was what the Grand Old Man, as a theologian, had been doing all his life.

The only important point of the controversy we have time to touch is that relating to will and judgment. Ingersoll had said that belief was independent of volition. It was a result—the effect of evidence upon the mind. "The scales," he finely said, "turn in spite of him who watches. There is no opportunity of being honest, or dishonest, in the formation of an opinion." Mr. Gladstone's answer to this was a perfect chaos. He did not understand his opponent's position or his own. He would not say that we *were* responsible for our opinions, and he would not say that we were *not*. He asked whether there was no such thing in the world as bias, prejudice, or prepossession. Ingersoll's reply was triumphant. We cannot be consciously swayed by prejudice; the moment we are conscious of it its power is gone. Prejudice is honest, like every other mistake. A jury is not dishonest because it is prejudiced; it is only dishonest when it gives a verdict which it knows to be against the weight of evidence. The intellect may be mistaken, but it cannot be moral or immoral. Those epithets can only apply to actions or intentions. Thus the ground is cut from under those who would punish men for their belief, either in this world or in the next.

Ingersoll concluded this part of his reply with a gorgeous passage on "the brain, that wondrous world with one inhabitant." It is a passage of some twenty lines, the work of a poet and a philosopher, and worth more than all the pages Mr. Gladstone ever filled.

We have little space left for referring to Mr. Gladstone's bulky volume of *Essays on the philosophy of Bishop Butler*. In some respects it is the best of his writings on the subject of religion. He frankly confessed that science and philosophy shed little, if any, light on the question of a future life. He rested his own faith on the teaching of the Bible and the promises of Christ. He denied that man's natural immortality was a Scriptural doctrine. All who go to heaven will be kept alive there by a kind of

perpetual miracle. With regard to the damned, he thought they might in time be extinguished, or perhaps degenerate into animals, and end in that way. That they would suffer most damnably he thoroughly believed. He regretted that the doctrine of hell was dropping into the background. He thought that the Church's ear was getting too "delicate." Of course he was pretty confident that *he* was not going to hell. His seat was numbered and reserved in the other place.

On the problem of evil he said something very sensible, but he borrowed it from Cardinal Newman. The mystery of mysteries, in regard to the evil in this world, is not how it is to end, but how it began. On that point Mr. Gladstone confessed that argument was hopeless. What a Christian had to do was to silence his questioning intellect, and bow himself in humble faith before his God. Mr. Gladstone held that we are bound to trust God implicitly. He did not admit that God owed us any kind of explanation. His faith has justly been described as "child-like," and this is generally regarded as a compliment—which only proves the stultifying influence of superstition.

Mr. Gladstone's last effort in a religious direction was his appeal to the Pope on the subject of Anglican orders. He desired the reunion of Christendom, and fancied it might be brought about by an amicable arrangement between the Catholic and the Protestant Churches. He might have known better. The Pope soon told him (in effect) that if the Catholic lion and the Protestant lamb ever laid down together, the Protestant lamb would have to be inside. Mr. Gladstone did not understand his own religion. Christianity will always have various meanings while the right of private judgment obtains. Divisions are inevitable under the Protestant *régime*. The only possible unanimity is the unanimity of Rome, with its infallible dogmatism, its resolute intolerance, and its cunning organisation. The Pope's reply to Mr. Gladstone was really a smile and a shrug of the shoulders at his marvellous simplicity.

G. W. FOOTE.

"THE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL."

EXETER HALL may be termed the home of theological mystery and religious fanaticism. It is there the pious folk, month after month, talk of the unknown and conjecture about the impossible. At the present time a course of lectures is being given upon "Lost Israel," a subject which, for many years, has agitated the minds of certain curious theologians. It is said that Professor Goldwin Smith was once waited upon and asked for a donation to help on the work of discovering the lost tribes of Israel. The Professor is stated to have replied: "I can give nothing to aid you in discovering the ten tribes that are said to have been lost, but I will give you a big donation if you can manage to lose the other two." If the theory that the tribes were lost be true, it indicates great neglect on the part of God towards his "chosen people"; and if it be a fact, as alleged, that the ten tribes have been found, they are no longer lost, and therefore it is absurd to speak of them as if they were.

It is stated that the ten "lost tribes" are identical with the British people. That a theory so utterly absurd should find any supporters among fairly educated people would be astonishing did we not remember that, despite the intelligence of the age, we have in our midst such crazes as "Christian science," "Esoteric Buddhism," "Spiritualism," and "Theosophy." No doubt there is some truth connected with each of these theories, but they are all surrounded with so much that is absurd that the little truth they may contain is lost in the superstitious pretensions set forth. It is worthy of note that the "Israelitish origin of the British people" is advocated, with but few exceptions, by exceedingly uneducated persons. The theory, we believe, originated about sixty years ago in the fertile brain of a man named John Wilson, who resided in England. His work upon the subject, which was nothing but a hash-up of a number of so-called Bible prophecies, with his own comments thereon, has been the text-book from which his disciples have drawn their inspiration, and upon which they have based their crude notions. After Mr. Wilson the most popular advocate of the theory was

a very illiterate man named Hime, who, in addition to telling us that we are all Israelites, gave us the equally scientific information that the Copernican system of astronomy is all wrong, that the earth is a plane, and that the sun actually revolves round it every twenty-four hours.

The theory expounded by these modern prophets is briefly this. The twelve sons of Jacob spoken of in the Old Testament became the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. These continued for some time, according to the Bible story, as a united people. After the death of Solomon, however, a revolt took place, and two tribes alone remained faithful to David's successor. The other ten tribes chose for their king Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had previously revolted against Solomon. It appears that Rehoboam was unable to crush this rebellion, and from that time there were two distinct kingdoms, that of Israel (the ten tribes) and that of Judah (the two tribes). Later on the ten tribes forsook their religion, and engaged in many conflicts, and were eventually defeated by the surrounding powers. After the captivity the ten tribes gradually dispersed, and finally disappeared among the neighboring peoples; while the two tribes remained intact until the destruction of Jerusalem. Now these two tribes constituting Judah, or what we now call the Jews, have preserved their identity in their physical and mental characteristics down to the present time, while the ten tribes were utterly lost. Several conjectures have appeared in reference to their present location. The Mormons maintain that they constitute the Red Indians of the American continent, and the Book of Mormon is mainly occupied with an account of their passage from the Old to the New World. Of course this theory is thoroughly absurd, but not more so than that which identifies this lost Israel with the British people.

It should be observed that the advocates of this latter theory are not at all agreed as to what is included in the term British people. Hime maintains that the Irish, so far from belonging to Israel, are really the descendants of the Canaanites, and that they will forever remain a thorn in the side of Israel—that is the British. On the other hand, it is held by some that the Irish are a part of Israel, as they must be if the Saxons are so, since the Saxon and the Celt had the same origin. Then again it is urged that the inhabitants of the United States, while included in Israel, are the descendants of Manasseh, and that the people of England are the descendants of Ephraim. The absurdity of this contention must be apparent when it is remembered that these people were one not more than a century ago. In the whole scheme there is a ridiculous laudation of England and its government. Queen Victoria is said to sit on David's throne, is descended from the prophet Jeremiah, who was once in Ireland, and the stone on which she was crowned is that on which Jacob rested his head on the night of his famous vision, when he saw the ladder reaching from earth to heaven. Such is the theory, in a few words, of the lost tribes of Israel, and a curious specimen it presents of the follies of a perverted imagination. No notions seem too fallacious and no ideas too absurd for a mind warped by theology.

We have not space in this article to point out at any length the scientific objections to the theory of the "lost tribes of Israel," but even a superficial knowledge of the science of ethnology is sufficient to show its absurd fallacy. From that science we learn that a distinction of races has existed from the earliest times known to man; that the history of the Aryan race to which the British people belong can be traced back to a very early period; that the Aryan race has always been distinct from the Semitic, which includes the Israelites; and that races which are lost have disappeared either by amalgamation with others, or by dying out, and in neither case can they again be found. For instance, the number of different people entering into the composition of the inhabitants of Great Britain and her colonies is so great that, if we suppose a search being made for any one of the elements which go to make up the composition of the British people, the absurdity of the search for the lost tribes of Israel will be apparent. When we are asked what has become of these tribes, our reply is they have ceased to exist. Not that all their descendants have necessarily become extinct, but the elements which constituted their individuality have thoroughly disappeared in reverting back to the stronger race with which they became associated. Suppose that all the Jews from o-day were to freely intermarry with the people of the

nations amongst whom they dwell. The result of this would be that in a few hundred years the entire race, except perhaps in a few individual instances, would disappear, and the remaining two tribes would share the fate of the other ten. It is not meant that the descendants of the Jews would all die out in the process supposed, but that their characteristics would be no longer visible. The Jews themselves are fully aware of this fact, hence the whole of the orthodox party among them strictly prohibit mixed marriages. This they have done for eighteen hundred years, and so strenuously has their principle been carried out that any Jewish woman, if she married a Gentile, unless the husband became a Jew, was at once cut off from the people, disowned by her parents, and excommunicated by a rite horrible to contemplate.

The truth is the search for the ten tribes of Israel is about as absurd as searching for the aborigines of Tasmania, not one of whom is supposed to be left. To us, personally, the subject is of no importance, but as the craze is once more being resumed it may be useful to state what the facts of the case are in the light of science and of our present knowledge. We are persistent foes to all kinds of superstition, and we deem it our duty to expose the pernicious influence of its manifestation whenever and wherever it is brought to our notice. Like most theological pretensions, this craze about the "lost tribes of Israel" is a wild and whimsical notion opposed to the facts of history and to the dictates of cultivated reason. CHARLES WATTS.

BENEDICT SPINOZA.

(Continued from page 373.)

DR. VAN VLOTEN has, fortunately, obtained a copy of the curse against Spinoza from the present secretary of the Portuguese Jewish Church at Amsterdam. It is in the Spanish language, and is thus rendered into English by Mr. Pollock:—

"With the judgment of the angels and of the saints we excommunicate, cut off, curse, and anathematise Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of the elders and of all this holy congregation, in the presence of the holy books; by the 613 precepts which are written therein, with the anathema wherewith Joshua cursed Jericho, with the curse which Elisha laid upon the children, and with all the curses which are written in the law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night. Cursed be he in sleeping and cursed be he in waking, cursed in going out and cursed in coming in. The Lord shall not pardon him, the wrath and fury of the Lord shall henceforth be kindled against this man, and shall lay upon him all the curses which are written in the book of the law. The Lord shall destroy his name under the sun, and cut him off for his undoing from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of the firmament which are written in the book of the law. But ye that cleave unto the Lord your God, live all of you this day.

"And we warn you that none may speak with him by word of mouth nor by writing, nor show any favor to him, nor be under one roof with him, nor come within four cubits of him, nor read any paper composed or written by him."

"With these amenities, the current compliments of theological parting," says Matthew Arnold, with delicious humor, "the Jews of the Portuguese Synagogue at Amsterdam took, in 1656, their leave of their erring brother, Baruch or Benedict Spinoza. They remained children of Israel, and he became a child of modern Europe."

Amsterdam, at least the Jewish part of it, was in an uproar; but the innocent cause of the commotion was probably not much disturbed. Excommunication from one church in the midst of many others was not fraught with such dreadful consequences as followed excommunication where but one church existed; there was a great world outside the Jewish fold affording ample space for movement. He is said to have sent a reply in Spanish to the anathema, but Van Vloten has in vain, though eagerly and industriously, searched for it. When informed of the excommunication, he is said to have replied: "Well and good; but this will force me to nothing I should not have been ready to do without it." The greatest trial of all was yet to come. No orthodox Jew could shelter beneath his roof one under the ban of excommunication, even though

his own son. Spinoza had, therefore, to quit his home for ever.

Spinoza's classical acquirements stood him now in good stead. He at once found an engagement in the educational establishment of Dr. Francis Van den Ende, amongst whose pupils were the sons of some of the wealthiest and most distinguished citizens. Van den Ende was skilful, accomplished, and, in private, of irreproachable character, but was suspected of adding a grain of Atheism to every dose of Latin. At the doctor's school commenced also the one romance of the outcast's life. Van den Ende's daughter, a charming girl of twelve or thirteen, assisted in the tuition of the younger pupils; indeed, it is said (and upon its possible truth Mr. Lewes draws a very pretty picture of dawning love) that she aided Spinoza in his Latin studies. This, however, is highly improbable. That he became deeply attached to her is, nevertheless, certain; and he seems to have cherished the hope of one day being able to make her his wife. He is reported to have said to one of his friends that "he had made up his mind to ask Mdlle. Van den Ende in marriage, not carried away by her charms as one of the most beautiful or faultlessly formed of women, but admiring her, loving her because she was rarely gifted with understanding, possessed of much good sense, and, moreover, of a pleasant and lively disposition." When the maiden grew to womanhood years after, poor Spinoza was not the only suitor; he had a rival in a certain Dietrich Kerekkrink, a much wealthier man than himself. The rival's attentions were backed with costly presents, and finally the fair one consented to become his wife.

Such is the old story of Spinoza's love affair. "But here romance," says Dr. Martineau, "not the first time, gets itself into a scrape by neglect of dates. Dr. Van Vloten, provokingly turning to the register of this marriage on February 5, 1671, finds that the bride was then 27 years of age, and could not have been more than twelve in 1655, the reputed time of the rivalry for her hand." Despite the facts, however, Dr. Martineau clings to the old story as highly probable; and something of the same disposition is shown by Mr. Pollock, who remarks that Beatrice was only nine years old when she showed herself to the eyes of Dante and became immortally the "glorious lady of his soul."

Spinoza never felt his vocation to be that of an instructor of youth, as indeed he subsequently confessed on being offered a professorship in the University of Heidelberg, and the drudgery of an usher's place was extremely distasteful. He, therefore, remained but a brief period with Van den Ende. Fortunately, there were other means open of earning bread. It was the custom for the youths in Jewish schools to be prepared for professional life, or initiated into some handicraft, as well as instructed in book-lore. Spinoza had acquired the art of grinding and polishing lenses for optical purposes—spectacles, reading glasses, microscopes, and telescopes—and had attained to such proficiency in the business that his manufactures were readily disposed of, their sale producing sufficient to supply his modest wants.

Naturally, while he remained in Amsterdam, he had to brook the scowls of his former co-religionists, which perhaps he soon learned to bear with equanimity. But he had yet to experience to what lengths fanaticism would go. A hot-blooded fanatic waylaid him one night, and attempted his assassination. Happily the intended victim perceived the gesture of the villain as he raised his arm to strike, and foiled him by a rapid movement. The dagger thrust was received through the coat collar, and Spinoza escaped with a slight wound on the neck.

The chiefs of the synagogue, sensible of Spinoza's magnificent intellectual gifts, were still anxious to secure his service, notwithstanding the terrible excommunication they had themselves pronounced. Intimidation had signally failed to induce submission; might not some more successful method be adopted for the recovery of the precious lost sheep? Might not a pecuniary bribe affect what threats had failed to achieve? They offered to remove the ban of excommunication, and to guarantee to him for the rest of his life a pension of 1,000 florins per annum, if he only would acknowledge his error and submit to the mildest censures of the Church. Egregiously had they mistaken the character of the man. He had no error to acknowledge, and money was the last thing for which he cared.

Censure, excommunication, attempted assassination,

flattery, and bribes, all had failed to move the obstinate heretic; if not to be won he must somehow be removed. As a last resource they petitioned for his expulsion from the city. But there was no precedent for such banishment. Amsterdam was a free city, where all religious denominations were tolerated. Nevertheless the magistrates, unwilling to disoblige a powerful section of the community, referred the case to the Synod of the Reform Church, for their advice and opinion. With characteristic intolerance the Synod recommended a temporary banishment at least. Whether the authorities acted on this advice or not is unknown; but it is certain that for some reason Spinoza left Amsterdam towards the close of 1656. He was yet only twenty-four years old, and the events recorded since the excommunication had all occurred within the space of a few months. He found shelter with a Christian friend, whose hospitality overleapt the narrow bounds of sectarian intolerance. The name of this good man is unrecorded, but his house still remains, and the lane in which it stands is still known under the name of Spinoza-lane.

We lose sight of Spinoza for some years until 1660, when he was still residing at Rhynsburg; but in all probability a portion of the interval was spent at Amsterdam. He still practised his handicraft of glass-polishing, and earned an independent livelihood, asking gifts of no man. Those four years were as important as any of his life, for during that time there dawned on his mind those great principles which were to be indelibly stamped with his name. He had also formed many valuable friendships with Dr. Louis Meyer; Drs. Bresser and Shaller, physicians; Simon de Fries, a young gentleman of fortune, of whom we shall hereafter hear good account; and, above all, Henry Oldenburg, with whom throughout his lifetime he maintained correspondence. Oldenburg was the intimate friend of Robert Boyle, and helped in the foundation of the Royal Society of Great Britain. He was also the Hague Consul in London when Cromwell was Protector, and distinguished himself by highly commendable efforts to secure toleration for the Jews in England.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

MODERN criticism has made it abundantly clear that Christianity, like every other historical religion, has accumulated around it numerous legendary accretions which form no part of its original contents, and from which it is the business of its best friends to disengage it as far as is now possible. What is known as the Messianic idea is doubtless responsible for many of the myths which soon gathered around the name of Jesus of Galilee. Certain things were expected of the Jewish Messiah, and therefore they were said to be done "that the saying might be fulfilled." Moses brought water from the rock and fed the Israelites with manna, so Jesus turns water into wine and feeds thousands miraculously. As Elijah restored the widow's son at Zarephath, so Jesus is said to have raised the widow's son at Nain. Some of the gospel legends, however, are decidedly of an un-Jewish character. The doctrine of the incarnation, for instance, is to this day to the Jews a stumbling-block, inconsistent with their monotheistic conception. There is much reason to believe that the direct source of this and of other dogmas of orthodox Christianity is to be found in Egypt. The influence of the eclectic school of Alexandria upon early Christianity has yet to be properly estimated, and we shall not be surprised at the presence of ideas native to India if we have reason to believe those ideas found their way to Alexandria.

Since the unearthing of the sources of Buddhism during the last fifty years, there have been repeated questions as to the possible influence of this great missionary religion on Christianity. Dean Milman long ago remarked that "Asiatic influences have worked more completely into the body of Christianity than any other foreign element; and it is by no means improbable that tenets which had their origin in India have for many centuries predominated, or

materially affected, the Christianity of the whole Western world." A Hindu origin to Manicheism was assigned by the Christian fathers, Cyril and Epiphanius; and numerous critics, from Baur to Mansel, have pointed out similarities between Hindu mysticism and the Gnosticism which was rather a precursor than an heretical offshoot of Christianity. The latter says:—

"The Indian influence in a modified form may chiefly be traced in those forms of Gnosticism which sprang up in Egypt, which appears to have been visited by Buddhist missionaries from India within two generations from the time of Alexander the Great, and where we find permanent traces of Buddhist influence, established at all events before the Christian era. The Therapeutæ, or contemplative monks of Egypt, described by Philo, whom Eusebius by an anachronism confounds with the early Christians, appear to have sprung from a union of the Alexandrian Judaism with the precepts and modes of life of the Buddhist devotees, and, though their asceticism fell short of the rigor of the Indian practice, as their religious belief mitigated the extravagance of the Indian speculation, yet in their ascetic life, in their mortification of the body and their devotion to pure contemplation, we may trace at least a sufficient affinity to the Indian mystics to indicate a common origin" (*The Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries*, pp. 31-32; London, 1875. See also C. W. King's *The Gnostics and their Remains*, pp. 21-26; 1864).

The connection of the Buddhists with the Essenes, and the consequent influence of Buddhism on Christianity, is argued in a curious work by Ernest von Bunsen, *The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians* (Longmans, 1880). This author declares (p. 50) that "with the remarkable exception of the death of Jesus on the Cross and of the doctrine of Atonement by vicarious sacrifice, which is absolutely excluded by Buddhism, the most ancient of the Buddhist records known to us contain statements about the life and the doctrines of Gautama Buddha which correspond in a remarkable manner, and impossibly by mere chance, with the traditions recorded in the Gospels about the life and doctrines of Jesus Christ." The value of Bunsen's work, however, is seriously diminished by his many surmises, and his frequent reliance upon untrustworthy sources of information. Far more accurate in its scholarship and logical in its reasoning was a very candid and exhaustive examination of the question by Professor J. Estlin Carpenter, in the *Nineteenth Century* for December, 1880, under the title of "The Obligations of the New Testament to Buddhism." The result of Professor Carpenter's extensive survey was the negative conclusion that there was no evidence of any channel of communication between the two religions; in this view following the authority of Max Müller, who, while denying the connection, says: "That there are startling coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity cannot be denied, and it must likewise be admitted that Buddhism existed at least four hundred years before Christianity." Professor Carpenter's view has also the support of T. W. Rhys Davids, who, in his *Hibbert Lectures* (lecture iv.), after pointing out that "the Cakkavatti Buddha was to the early Buddhists what the Messiah Logos was to the early Christians," says: "I can find no evidence whatever of any actual and direct communication of any of these ideas from the East to the West. Where the gospel narratives resemble the Buddhist ones, they seem to me to have been independently developed on the shores of the Mediterranean and in the valley of the Ganges; and, strikingly similar as they often are at first sight, the slightest comparison is sufficient to show that they rested throughout on a basis of doctrine fundamentally opposed."

The appearance, however, of two considerable works—*Buddha and Early Buddhism*, by Arthur Lillie (Trübner, 1881), and *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinem Verhältnissen zu Buddha-sage und Buddha-lehre*, by Rudolf Seydel (Leipzig, 1882)—both advocating at length the indebtedness of Christianity to Buddhism, and the endorsement of this view in such works as J. F. Yorke's *Notes on Evolution and Christianity*, and H. Coko's *Creed of To-day*, serves to show the question is by no means exhausted. My present purpose is not to attempt any decision upon the subject, the weight of authority upon which certainly remains with Professor Carpenter, but to take a survey of the question from a somewhat different point of view.

In the first place, it must be definitely allowed that the

fundamental doctrines and underlying ideas of Christianity and Buddhism are widely distinct. The one was a reformation of Pantheistic Brahmanism under the influence of the doctrine of transmigration; the other a reformation of Judaism founded on the Messianic idea. Buddhism was in its origin rather a philosophy of life, attempting to seek release from the suffering of repeated births, than a religion; Christianity at the outset proclaimed a direct relation of the soul to God; Buddhism acknowledges neither. The great theme of Christianity was the near approach of the end of the world; that of Buddhism the impermanence of all conditions. If, however, Jesus preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, no less earnestly had his Hindu precursor commenced by preaching the foundation of the kingdom of righteousness. Of the Hindu it may quite as truly be said as of the Jew, that he was animated by the "enthusiasm of humanity." It is not in its philosophical doctrines, but in its ethics, and still more in its legends and ritual, that Buddhism may be alleged to have anticipated Christianity. Nothing could well be more divergent from the spirit of Buddhism than the dogmas of orthodox Christianity, such as the necessity of belief in the trinity, the fall, and the redemption through the blood of Jesus.

Buddhism has frequently been called the Christianity of the East. It would be more correct to describe it as Oriental Freethought; for, in regarding human agency as the only method of human redemption, it is essentially at one with the modern spirit. Whether Christianity does not rather deserve to be called the Buddhism of the West depends upon the importance attached to their points of similarity, and to the evidence of their communication, which I now proceed to examine.

First, in regard to ethics. It is undeniable that much of what Christians consider as peculiarly Christian morality was taught by Gautama Buddha four centuries before the date assigned to Jesus. Both laid stress on the mild and unobtrusive virtues of temperance, purity, humility, self-control, long-suffering, and loving-kindness. Long before Jesus said "Love your enemies," Gautama taught that "hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love; this is an old rule" (Dhammapada, verse 5). "A man who foolishly does me wrong (or regards me as being, or doing, wrong) I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me" (Sutra of 42 sections, chap. lxvii.). "Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality; the liar by truth" (Dhammapada, verse 223). Centuries before Jesus denounced the Pharisees for their making clean the outside of the platter, Gautama had said, "A man does not become a Brāhmana by his platted hair, by his family, or by birth; in whom there is truth and righteousness, he is blessed, he is a Brāhmana. What is the use of platted hair, O fool! What of the raiment of goatskins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean" (Dhammapada, verses 393, 394). Of the priority of the Buddhist books there can be no question. In the words of T. R. Davids, "The age of these writings can be fixed, without much uncertainty, at about the latter end of the fourth, or the beginning of the third, century before the commencement of the Christian era" ("Sacred Books of the East," vol. xi., p. 10).

Those who know, however, that the doctrine of returning good for evil was as explicitly taught by Gautama's Chinese predecessor, Lao-tse (Tau-teh-King, chap. xlix.), and that Confucius had both taught the golden rule and declared "in the Book of Poetry are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in that one sentence, Have no depraved thoughts," will not be ready to suppose that Jesus necessarily copied his ethical maxims from Buddhism. The truth is, what is known as Christian morality was the common property of civilised paganism ere Christianity appeared.

When we come to the legends common to Buddhism and its Western counterpart there seems much more reason to admit the theory of borrowing upon the one side or the other. In the history of Christianity legends of its saints spread in many quarters where its essential doctrines were little heeded, and we may be pretty sure that this was the case with Buddhism, whose folk-lore, we know, penetrated to districts where its founder was unknown. Max Müller long since pointed out how Gautama had virtually been made a Christian saint by the legend of his renunciation

through the four visions having been incorporated with the story of St. Josaphat. The coincidences between the legends related by Christians and those related by Buddhists of the founder of their religion are numerous and startling. The Buddhists relate of Gautama that he had pre-existence, and that he was miraculously born in order to redeem the world. They believe that he was of royal descent, and that at his birth from an immaculate mother the heavenly hosts assembled, and that sages and prophets foretold his wondrous doings. They tell how in his youth he excelled all his companions, and taught the doctors with whom he disputed; how he fasted and was tempted in the wilderness, resisting and overcoming the Evil One. They believe that his life was one of sinlessness and willing self-sacrifice, and, though he was by right king of kings and lord of lords, he elected to go about doing good, wandering as a beggar, a friend of publicans and sinners, teaching castes and outcasts, and commanding his disciples to proclaim the kingdom of righteousness to all people. They further believe that he foretold his own death, at which a great earthquake occurred; and, though he wrote nothing with his own hands, he did not leave himself without witness, inasmuch as his teaching was recorded by his disciples in sacred books, and his spirit yet abides in the head of the Church.

(To be concluded.)

THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

ON Monday morning I again went to Bow-street Police Court to be present at the adjourned hearing of this case. It will be remembered that Mr. George Bedborough was arrested and charged with publishing and selling an obscene book—to wit, Dr. Havelock Ellis's first volume of a work on the Psychology of Sex, being entitled *Sexual Inversion*. Sir John Bridge, the presiding magistrate, is a very old-fashioned gentleman, and at a certain stage of the proceedings he solemnly declared that the moment had arrived for every decent woman to leave the court. He did not say that every decent man should follow her example. The half-dozen or so of ladies who were present did not budge, and the worthy magistrate fairly gasped with astonishment. He gave the ladies another vicious dig, and then subsided. But one ought not to be angry with him. He belongs to an older generation, who thought that women should be fenced in and coddled, and kept innocent by the cheap and easy method of ignorance—although, of course, they were not half as ignorant, after all, as the men imagined.

The hearing was timed for half-past ten, but it began at half-past eleven. During that long hour I sat and swore inwardly, until I remembered "the law's delay" in Shakespeare, and then I was off in mind with the mighty "Williams," as the French used to call him, who was always there before you wherever you happen to go, his experience seeming to have been as universal as his mind.

At last a legal gentleman arrived, loud, fat, and smiling, apparently fresh from a week end at Margate or some other seaside resort. When he smiled several ounces of oleaginous matter crinkled about his eyes. Judging by appearances, you would have set him down as a prosperous publican who did a bit of bookmaking. This was Mr. Danckwerts, who was introduced to do the talking in opposition to the thin and alert Mr. Ivory, who appeared for the defence. As I watched the unctuous antics of Mr. Danckwerts, and the rancid smiles with which he referred to "obscenity," I could not help feeling how much real horror prevailed as to the sins of that summer-costumed prisoner in the dock.

Had there been any honorable seriousness in the prosecution, Mr. Bedborough would not have stood there alone. He had sold a copy of the incriminated book, but if that was a crime the worst culprits were the author, the printer, and the publisher, whose names were all given, and who could easily have been found and arrested. But they were not there. What is more, there was no suggestion that they would be molested. That was enough for me. I could see at once what was the real object of the prosecution. It did not astonish me to hear Mr. Danckwerts denouncing the Legitimation League as "a conspiracy against the system of legal marriage," or to find him

including several of its publications in the charge against Mr. Bedborough.

The word "conspiracy" is ridiculous in this connection. I do not hold with the Legitimation League—far otherwise—but all its propaganda has been open and above-board. It is also ridiculous to talk about a "conspiracy" to alter the laws of the country, for to attempt this is the right of all citizens, either individually or collectively. If one set of men could make laws, and send others to prison for trying to alter them, we should be living under a monstrous despotism. Fortunately we have not come to that yet, and the prosecution must be taught so with the utmost plainness.

Personally, I am of opinion that Dr. Havelock Ellis's book, though dealing with a very unpleasant subject, is written in a scientific spirit. Such works are published openly on the Continent. The study of criminology has led to the study of other abnormalities, and it is in vain to resist the progress of scientific research. The only thing that can reasonably be demanded is that such works shall not be thrust upon the attention of young people before they are old enough to understand the normal outcome of certain elements of their nature. But it is not alleged that anything of the kind has been done in this case. The subject is not one in which I have a passionate interest, but I do not propose to set myself up as a standard for other people. The principle of freedom covers them as well as me. I shall therefore do what I can to defend the right of free publication now it is attacked.

With regard to the Legitimation League, I repeat that I am utterly and absolutely opposed to its teaching on marriage. I believe that marriage, with the probability of offspring, is not a private but a social act, and should be surrounded by social sanctions. But nothing is more calculated to damage this institution than to protect it from inquiry and discussion. The greatest and wisest of men said that "Truth can never be confirmed enough, though doubt did ever sleep." And while we have a most irrational law of divorce, which will not allow ill-mated couples to sever unless they drag themselves through the mire of adultery, it is inevitable that certain enthusiastic spirits should denounce marriage itself as a senseless bondage. I am confident that they are mistaken, but I am not at all for silencing them by any other agency than persuasion. I shall therefore defend the right of the Legitimation League to carry on its propaganda; that is to say, I shall protest against constables and gaolers being used in my name, as a citizen, to suppress opinions of any kind, however much I happen to dissent from them.

Further, I must observe that it is not *illegal* for men and women to associate without being married. Those who like to take the social risks are free to do so. What the law really does, in the name of society, is to afford certain definite protections, especially to women, and still more especially to children. Those who do not avail themselves of these protections are not further penalised. What is the use, then, of talking as though they were guilty of some crime, when they give a public reason for their conduct?

The man who will only defend the right of free publication and expression as far as his own opinions go stands up for himself, but not for a principle. Liberty does not mean this man's opinion, or that man's opinion; it means the equal right of *all* opinions. This is the spirit in which I shall act now, and in which I hope I shall always act. In this spirit I am joining the Free Press Defence Committee, with the resolution to do what I can to stop this encroachment on the right of free Englishmen to think, to know, to speak, and to pursue truth, not in one or two directions, but at every point of the compass. No one can say I have acted hastily. I trust no Freethinker will say I have acted unwisely.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Sword of Balaam.

A Scotsman on a recent visit to Dublin went to see a private museum, which was advertised to contain the oldest and queerest antiquities in the world.

The Irish showman brought out a large sword and said: "This is the sword that Balaam slew his ass with."

The Scotsman, being well up in Bible history, here interrupted and said: "Balaam did not slay his ass; he only wished for a sword to slay it."

"Oh!" returned Pat, "then this is the very sword he wished for."—*Spare Moments.*

ACID DROPS.

THERE are no greater humbugs in the world than the fellows who live on popular credulity by foretelling the end of the world. Prophet Baxter is the chief practitioner in this profitable line of business, in succession to the late Dr. Cumming, who is now supposed to be in heaven. Dr. Cumming once declared that the end of all things would take place in fifteen years, and then took a thirty years' lease of a house to live in. Prophet Baxter has gone one better than that. Having foretold the general winding-up of this world's affairs any time during the last forty years—shifting the date further and further forward as his prophecy was proved to be chronologically false—he has now, we believe, fixed upon 1908 as the last year of our mundane dispensation. This is what he tells the open-mouthed fools that listen to him and the goggle-eyed fools that read his weekly religious paper. But how far he believes it, or any part of it, himself may be inferred from the following fact. On Thursday, June 9, at a meeting of the Court of Common Council, held at the Guildhall, the Lord Mayor of London presiding, it was resolved that, on the Rev. M. P. Baxter surrendering his present lease of premises in Tudor-street, a building lease be granted him for eighty years from Midsummer next, at ground rents varying from £90 to £424 per annum. This beats Dr. Cumming's little affair hollow. Prophet Baxter actually surrenders a lease that would last him till the end of the world, on his own reckoning, in order to obtain another lease for the best part of a century afterwards.

Even the grave *Daily News* waxes facetious over Prophet Baxter's new investment. "These leases of the Prophets," it says, "are the hopes of the race. The Rev. Dr. Cumming, who used to be just as pitiless about immediate liquidation, did precisely the same thing as Mr. Baxter. He took a lease, and that has served to carry us on comfortably to the present time. Thanks to Mr. Baxter's influence, for perhaps it is a case of influence after all, we are safe to 1978. It is quite conceivable that Daniel has merely shown a natural willingness to oblige a friend. The lease has been taken in the very nick of time."

Prophet Baxter writes to the *Daily News* explaining that he has done nothing inconsistent with his principles in taking that eighty years' lease. It is not the end of the world which is to happen in 1908. That event will come off a thousand years later. Christ is to descend at the great battle of Armageddon ten years hence, and then the millennium will begin. During all that period, although everybody will be good and happy, and Christ will reign in person, religious journals will be as much wanted as ever, in fact there will be an increased demand for them. Prophet Baxter is looking forward—or pretending to look forward—to a gigantic circulation of his own paper, the *Christian Herald*. Evidently the fool-crop will be still more plentiful in the new era, though it is rank enough now, judging by the present circulation of Prophet Baxter's journal.

In the middle of next October we shall be able to sing:—

Oh dear, what can the matter be?

Emperor William's gone where he ought to be.

He is going to Palestine, and will probably visit Jericho. Anyhow he will visit Jerusalem, where he is billed—we beg pardon, booked—to be present at the consecration of the new church of St. Saviour's. It is reported that Emperor William is going to arrange with his crony, the Great Assassin, for the settlement of German emigrants in Asia Minor. Millions of poor devils from the Fatherland might settle there, and take the wind out of the sails of the Zionists who contemplate the establishment of a strong Jewish nation in the vicinity. Further, if Social Democracy should overturn Emperor William's shaky throne, he would then be able to travel with his crown and sceptre eastward, and rule over plenty of lager-beer subjects there.

The American Methodists have followed the example of their English brethren, and declined to admit a lady delegate to their Annual Conference. Being Christians, they are a hundred years behind Freethinkers. In the course of time, however, they will have to admit women, and when they have once done so they will doubtless declare that women owe them an immense debt of gratitude.

It is astonishing what drink will do for a man's immortal soul. The other day an inquest was held at Charing Cross Hospital on the dead body of Alfred Edward Down, a solicitor's clerk, aged thirty-six, who was run over on the District Railway. When a porter, named Frederick Lusher, found him under the ledge of the platform, his right foot, which had been cut off, was lying in the boot close by. When he was raised up he grunted and asked to be left alone as he was just comfortable. He didn't feel his injury

at all. The whiskey, or whatever it was, made him sublimely happy. His soul was in the drunkard's heaven.

The Hospital Sunday sermon at Harrow was preached by Mr. Welldon, the Headmaster. He paid a high compliment to the philanthropists (Mr. Hooley was not mentioned) who made "a golden bridge of sympathy" between the rich and the poor, calling them the true saviors of society—which they undoubtedly are if society means the classes who live on the fashionable side of the bridge. What the preacher omitted to state was this, that the only philanthropy open to a Christian, according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, is to divide all his property amongst the destitute, keeping back nothing for himself. No doubt this is rather a silly proceeding, but it is Christianity nevertheless.

The Rev. John James, a brother-in-law of Bishop Wilberforce, affixed a notice in the porch of Ovington parish church, Berkshire, that "kneeling never burst silk stockings"—which is a quotation from old George Herbert. Perhaps it is true. But can it be said that kneeling never injured a pair of good trousers? In the days of our childhood we have often seen a worshipper with a delicate pair on spread his handkerchief out carefully before lowering himself to address his Maker. His devotion may have been sincere enough, but twenty-five shilling pants were not to be trifled with.

When the political rivalry between Gladstone and Disraeli was at its height, says a correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle*, the former said something very severe about the latter in the family circle. His son Herbert, then a child, looked up and said: "But tell me, papa, suppose you met Mr. Disraeli in the street to-morrow, would you slay him?" Gladstone's answer is not recorded, but the child's question shows that the G. O. M. was not altogether devoid of what is sometimes called "human nature."

Burial in Westminster Abbey is an expensive affair, for everybody, from the Dean downward, has got to be paid handsomely. The maximum cost appears to be £110 4s. 8d., and the bill cannot possibly fall more than £20 below that amount. The fees to the Dean and Sub-Dean amount to £40 6s.

Mr. John Morley, in his eloquent tribute to Gladstone at Leeds, spoke of the dead statesman's "most noble and unstinted toleration for difference of opinion, even upon things which, to him, were most important." This sounds well, but we are afraid it will not bear examination. It is only because Gladstone was a Christian that there is room for anything to be said about his toleration. No one thought of saying that Bradlaugh was tolerant in all matters of opinion. As a Freethinker he could not well be otherwise. But it is a different matter with a Christian. His religion is an intolerant one, and if he is tolerant it is in spite of his religion, and therefore creditable to him personally. Consequently, if you praise a Christian for his toleration, you give a backhanded slap at his faith.

Nor is this the end of criticism on this part of Mr. Morley's panegyric. Gladstone's toleration was not as comprehensive as is suggested. It included Mr. Morley—for which he is duly grateful; but Mr. Morley has been particularly careful to keep quiet on the subject of religion ever since he became one of Gladstone's lieutenants, although the Grand Old Man himself was always pounding away at "infidelity." It is not on record, however, that Gladstone viewed Bradlaugh with anything but personal dislike. He could not help admiring the splendid fight the infidel made against terrible odds, and he spoke eloquently on behalf of the infidel's constitutional right to take his seat in the House of Commons. But there, we believe, his sympathy ended. It is also a fact that when Mr. Foote was imprisoned for "blasphemy"—that is, for attacking Christianity too uncompromisingly—and Gladstone was appealed to on the matter, he coldly "regretted that he could do nothing"—probably because Mr. Foote was an English Freethinker, and not a Bulgarian Christian. Further—to speak frankly—it was an open secret that Gladstone was privately opposed to any mitigation of Mr. Foote's infamous sentence. Mr. Foote was made aware of this, and he therefore knew that he would have to serve out his sentence to the last minute.

Gladstone remarked that Providence had beautifully fitted the world for man's habitation, and declared that all of us were bound to recognise God's fatherly care for his children. Gladstone had a good time of it in this world, and spoke from his own pleasant experience. Perhaps he would have thought—or, at any rate, felt—differently if he had lived in the shadow instead of in the sunshine. He had not the sad knowledge of the bitterness of life that was possessed by James Campbell, an old beggar and vendor of bootlaces, who recently hanged himself in a Glasgow lodging-house. He had been blind for fifty years, and was tired of begging his bread. No doubt he had been tired often

enough before during all those weary years of blindness and poverty, but at last the feeling became intolerable, and he ended the sordid tragedy, leaving his pendent old body as his last protest against the regulation of this world's affairs by the celestial government.

Canon Body, preaching at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, after a highly ritualistic service, as near as possible to the forms of the Catholic Church, declared that the Liberalism of John Stuart Mill was dead and done with. The world (he said) was now contending for Socialism, which, in its true form, the Church had advocated for nineteen centuries. We presume he meant by the Socialism of the Church a benevolent theocracy, with gentlemen like Canon Body at the top regulating everything, and a mass of common working people at the bottom, accepting all they are taught and doing all they are told. This is the sort of dream which is cherished by most of the Christian Socialists. How far it is likely to be realised every man of common sense may be left to judge for himself.

Religion is always the same, east, west, north, and south. On June 1 a lot of Mohammedans and Hindus had a fine old religious shindy at Multan, in the Punjab. Knives were used freely, and many persons were injured. A squadron of lancers had to patrol the city. Since then we have had a worse exhibition of the same spirit at Belfast. There again the soldiers had to be called in (the police being powerless) to prevent Catholics and Protestants from murdering each other. When a man is "full of God" his neighbors have to look out for their throats.

Mr. Gerald Balfour's official statement in the House of Commons as to the Belfast riots is worth noticing. No less than 103 men of the Royal Irish Constabulary were injured on the Monday night; of those, two were still in a critical condition, and nine were suffering from serious injuries. Had it not been for the arrival of the military, half the police in Belfast would have been in the cemetery or on the sick-list. And the cause of it all was religion!

The Rev. H. W. Clarke, in his recent book on *The City Churches*, draws attention to the large income of some of these establishments, and the microscopic character of their congregations. He complains of the "gradual conversion of City churches into concert houses," by the eagerness of incumbents to draw attendants by hook or crook. "The whole cheap concert business," he says, "has thus taken the place of prayers and preaching, and for the amusement of the City clerks when they are out for their mid-day luncheons. The church officials are stationed at the doors with bags and plates to collect money from those who attend. Where the concerts are held, congregations varying from 130 to 300 can be attracted; whereas for prayers and preaching, except in cases of good preaching, not more than from two to twelve can be got to attend."

Raffling for Bibles recently took place at St. Ives Church Hunts. It is a mild form of gambling, and as an annual event is calculated to relieve the dull monotony of religious life in the town. It seems, however, to be doomed, as the Charity Commissioners have intervened.

The Bishop of Norwich puts forward his solution of the religious difficulty in public schools. Parents, he says, have a rightful claim that their children should be brought up in the tenets of their own religion; and, for this purpose, Nonconformists should have the right of access to Church schools, and clergy should have the right of access to Board schools. This is a little game at which the Church stands to win a great deal, and the Nonconformists very little. The latter, therefore, are not likely to join in it. But they will have to do something, for the Church evidently means business, and it will, sooner or later, drive them into formulating a new counter policy, or taking their stand on the true Nonconformist policy of secular education in State schools.

Mdlle. Couesdon, the French lady who claims to receive tips from the Angel Gabriel, and takes money for communicating them to her less fortunate fellow-creatures, appears to have stirred up the whole fraternity of fortune-tellers, who have petitioned the French parliament to license them and let them follow their trade openly. For our part we do not see on what principle their request can be refused. France is a Catholic country, where priests are allowed to take money for praying hypothetical souls out of an unknown purgatory. This is quite on all fours with fortune-telling, and if one is penalised so should be the other.

Mr. Edward Reeves, who has just issued a notable book on the South Sea Islands, has no very high opinion of the missionaries. Take the following passage: "The truth is that nine-tenths of foreign missions are not got up for the benefit of the heathen abroad, but for the good of the sect at home.....When one sect intrudes upon the field of

another, the improvement of the native character comes to a standstill.....the temptation to run down each other's faith, works, and power to the native is usually too strong for the priestly mind to resist. Tahiti, Samoa, and New Zealand testify to this melancholy truth. Birds of a feather may flock together, but when they do they usually fight over the carcass.....If you want real mischief done, place your cause in the hands of a few 'earnest' and 'well-meaning' men."

All the churches, Mr. Reeves says, hate each other bitterly, and "are ready to use unscrupulously all the temporal and spiritual powers they can get hold of to damage and circumvent their competitors for island souls." They all grasp unceasingly at "ecclesiastical, temporal, and political power," and "power with them means persecution."

Mr. E. T. Hooley, the colossal company promoter, who has just found his way to the Bankruptcy Court, gave away a lot of money to churches during his heyday of mushroom prosperity. One of his gifts was a gold communion service to St. Paul's Cathedral. Of course the Cathedral authorities accepted it without asking questions. It was not their policy to look a gift horse in the mouth when he carried a precious load on his back. And, after all, we daresay Mr. Hooley reckoned himself a very good Christian. He made money as fast as he could by the gambling methods that are prevalent in the financial world throughout Christendom; but he didn't preach "Blessed be ye poor" and live in a palace on ten thousand a year for doing it; and, on the whole, he seems to us to be quite as good a Christian as the Bishop of London or the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Leyland railway disaster afforded a singular illustration of the efficacy of prayer and the watchfulness of "Providence." The excursion train that was run into had on it a Band of Hope party numbering six hundred. Many of the adults were singing hymns when the other train smashed into them.

A little girl of eight, named Polly Hazlewood, attended Dale-street Free Methodist Chapel, Burton, on a recent Sunday evening. A storm was raging outside, and after an exceptionally vivid flash of lightning the little one exclaimed, "Oh, granny!" and buried her head in her grandmother's shawl. A doctor had to be called in when she reached home, and she died soon afterwards from acute meningitis, which the doctor attributes directly to the lightning flash. On the theory of a particular Providence, it was particularly mean to strike down that innocent, harmless child.

The ethics of lying has been gone into deeply by Roman casuists and a vast number of other philosophers, but nobody hesitates to stigmatise the lie for gain as vicious. But, of all lies for gain, the holy lie is the most audacious, unscrupulous, pernicious, and mean. The most common form of this is the little booklet written by clergymen purporting to be the experiences of converts from opposite sects. Dr. Parker has celebrated his jubilee by publishing one of these, *The Confessions of a Hindu Lady Convert to Christianity*, who gushes in the conventional European manner about having entered into the Holy Spirit of Jesus while walking with him, which seems a reflection of the Jesuit accounts of the rhapsodies of Margaret Mary Whicoyne.

We are glad to note that the Doctor's last venture has not met with the approval of one of his staunch supporters—the *Daily Chronicle*. It strikes us as if we saw the Doctor putting on and off the highly picturesque costume of a Hindu lady, and continuing his discourse from the City Temple pulpit at each stage of the array or disarray.

"Pictures in Parliament.—Happy India!—Famine, Plague, War, and Earthquake." So ran three *Daily News*' headlines recently. The man who doesn't see the hand of Providence in all this must be positively stupid.

Good old parsons! How they do love charity! And how they love justice! The Rev. G. B. Browne, vicar of Aston, in Staffordshire, has got Mr. Plant, the schoolmaster, discharged after forty-two years' service, apparently because he is not strong enough to chaunt the psalms in the man of God's gospel-shop.

The new vicar of Clerkenwell has to be elected by the parish. Every ratepayer is entitled to vote, whether Churchman, Catholic, Dissenter, Jew, Secularist, or Heathen. Two candidates are in the field, and the walls are placarded with their addresses and requests for "support and interest." Could anything be better calculated to bring religion into contempt?

Mr. Henry Smith, Vestry Clerk of Lambeth, recently

gave evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Burial Grounds. He submitted a table showing that his vestry had paid to the clergy of Lambeth in respect of burial fees in London cemeteries during the past five years a total amount of £2,680 7s. These fees were payable under Section 36 of the Burial Boards Act, 1852, and the clergy did nothing in return for the money thus received. Mr. Smith advocated the abolition of these preposterous fees, if not immediately at least after a certain number of years. We are glad to see that the London Vestries are taking joint action in this matter. It is high time to put an end to the performance of these clerical bloodsuckers, who have been gorging themselves for nearly half a century.

Mr. Price Hughes's paper, the *Methodist Times*, has a leading article on "The Christian Conception of Sin," in which there is a very curious reference to the Humanitarian League. After referring to the May Meetings as "the most splendid manifestation" of the "philanthropic conscience," the writer continues: "Then, in our own time, there has been developed in an unprecedented degree a realisation of our moral relation to all sentient animals, bringing into activity the humanitarian conscience, which has finally organised itself into the Humanitarian League." Passing by the absurdity of writing as though man had several sorts of conscience, we may remark that the Humanitarian League owes a good deal more to Freethinkers than to Christians. Its devoted honorary secretary, Mr. H. S. Salt, is an avowed Atheist. We do not say this for the purpose of alienating Christian support from the League. We only say it with a view to repressing Christian exultation.

The Prince Bishop of Trient posted up an interdict at all the church doors in his diocese, forbidding Roman Catholics to read or circulate the *Bozener Zeitung*, because it "systematically attacked the Church and despised the mysteries of our holy religion." The editor of this boycotted journal is bringing an action against the Bishop, who is alleged to have acted without authorisation. We hope he will win, but we are afraid he won't.

Henry James Arthur Marsh, one of the West Ham "Peculiar People," whose case we referred to last week, has been since committed for trial on the charge of manslaughter. Like the rest of his sect, he obeyed the Bible and had prayers said over his child (who died), instead of calling in a doctor. When this case comes on for trial we shall give it our careful attention. Meanwhile we venture to note the remark of Mr. H. C. Biron, who prosecuted for the Treasury. He said it was the duty of the Treasury to "try and bring home to these misguided people—whatever their religious belief—that they must bow to the law of the land." Yes, but if the law of the land declares the Bible to be the word of God, with what conscience can the authorities of the land prosecute these people for believing it and acting upon it?

France has followed the lead of Germany in the far East. Satisfaction (as it is called) for the murder of Father Berthollet has been received from the Chinese Government. Those who sent that French missionary to heaven have been sent to the other place themselves, the sum of £4,000 has been paid to his Order, and France has been granted a railway concession to connect the Si-Kiang and Nanning-Fu valleys with the Gulf of Tonkin. One cannot but admire this beautiful blending of religion and commercialism. No doubt the Chinese will henceforth lend a more willing ear to Christian missionaries from the disinterested West.

Obituary.

ON Tuesday, May 31, the remains of the late Betsy Ternant, wife of Mr. Henry Ternant, of the "Black Bull" Inn, Bedlington, were interred in Bedlington Cemetery, in the presence of a large and deeply sympathetic gathering. The deceased lady was highly esteemed by all who knew her, always ready to help those less fortunate than herself, a consistent and avowed Freethinker, and—with her husband—warmly admired and supported our great and lamented leader, Charles Bradlaugh, in his heroic struggle with English bigotry; and it was a generally-noticed and freely-commented-upon fact that, on the already too-fully-inscribed stone at the head of the Ternant burial-space, the names of Hypatia and Charles Bradlaugh Ternant bore testimony to the bent of the parental mind. Deceased, who was forty-eight years old, and in good health (apparently), was assisting to prepare the body of a neighbor for the grave when she herself was suddenly stricken with death. Mr. Ternant (who is in ill-health) was, at his wife's urgent request, taking a rest in a distant country village when the sad event took place, which poignantly adds to his severe bereavement.—M. WEATHERBURN.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, June 19, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. : 7.30, "Why Not Prosecute the Bible?"

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.

S. WARWICK.—Thanks for copies of the papers you kindly send us. Perhaps it doesn't much matter, but it is just as well to be accurate. Joseph Mazzini Wheeler did not suggest the name of the *Freethinker*, nor had he anything to do with the starting of this journal. He contributed to it at first gratuitously, as he had contributed to the *Secularist* and the *Liberal*. He became sub-editor some months subsequently when he left Edinburgh to live in London, partly on Mr. Foote's invitation. His name was placed at the top of the paper, together with Mr. Foote's, after the latter's release from Holloway Gaol in 1884. Nor is it quite true that his marriage cured him of his malady, for his worst breakdown occurred six months after it. Mr. Foote was a free man then, and able to look after his friend and colleague carefully. From the time of Mr. Wheeler's complete recovery from that attack there can be no doubt that his wife and his home brought an element of peace, comfort, and orderliness into his life that helped to prolong it. We believe he would have broken down again much sooner had it not been for that wholesome domesticity. With respect to Mr. Wheeler's salary, it was of course not a large one, but it was enough to live on; and we are not aware that any other Freethought journal ever afforded a sub-editor as much for so many years. Mr. J. M. Robertson's obituary notice was admirably written and full of good feeling. The other notices you refer to is best treated with silence. We are not to be caught with such poor bait.

INQUIRER.—Grant Allen's important new book on *The Evolution of the Idea of God* was reviewed at some length in our columns by the late J. M. Wheeler. There are some features of it which our late colleague had not time and space to deal with, and these may be dealt with before long by Mr. Foote. By the way, we happen to know that Grant Allen wrote Mr. Wheeler a friendly appreciative letter, expressing admiration for his *Footsteps of the Past*, and regretting that he (Mr. Allen) had not met with it before publishing his own book.

A. ADDY.—Your letter, being addressed to 376 Strand, which is not our address, reached us too late for this week. The matter will be noted in our next.

F. WILMOT.—Sorry to hear of the disturbance at Mr. Pack's lecture on Peckham Rye. It is only too easy for a few rabid and reckless Christians to create disorder. We hope the Secularist platform will be well supported by local friends.

A. G. LEVETT.—Pleased to hear that the police insisted on Mr. Pack's right to deliver his lecture without molestation.

H. BISHOP.—Acknowledged without initials, as you omit them.

J. R. HOLMES.—Thanks. In our next.

OCTAVIUS DREWELL.—Thanks for your sympathetic and encouraging letter.

A. J. HOOPER.—See paragraph.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Mr. Foote will probably be unable to do any provincial lecturing before September. He will be very happy to pay Newcastle a visit then.

F. J. BOORMAN.—We hope the Chatham Branch will be able to raise the funds required. It is a hard-working, praiseworthy Branch, with a good record, and, we hope, a promising future.

W. WAYMARK.—Thanks for your letter and correction.

G. ROBERT.—We regret we cannot take up the matter for you.

J. BARRY.—At present the Fund does not seem likely to reach the proportions we suggested. Still, there is time for the general body of our readers to respond.

C. E. SMITH.—Received with thanks. Will make use of most.

J. H. BAIN.—We are obliged for your good wishes. Subscription acknowledged elsewhere. There ought to be a far more general response to our appeal on behalf of Joseph Mazzini Wheeler's widow. Hundreds, instead of tens, of Freethinkers should be sending in their donations. Perhaps they mean to do so. In that case, we beg them to be as prompt as possible.

C. HEATON.—It was duly received. Thanks. Many, like yourself, will miss our dead colleague's contributions to the *Freethinker*.

LOUIS LEVINE (Charlestown, U.S.A.) writes:—"Don't let faithful Mr. Wheeler's name pass out of the journal he loved to give his best to. Can't you print weekly some article of his from some of the old back numbers? Most would be new now to many of your readers. Even repetition of a good thing is valuable." We are at present reprinting a few of Mr. Wheeler's articles that appeared many years ago in *Progress*.

J. HIPWELL.—Depend upon it we shall keep the old flag flying all right.

W. H. DEAKIN.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. J. MARSHALL.—Sorry to hear of your misfortune. Your subscription is valued all the more in the circumstances.

MARTIN WEATHERBURN.—Inserted. We sometimes think of you in the far north.

THE Treasurer of the Defence Fund in the Bodborough case is Mrs. Gladys Dawson, Bodford Hotel, Covent Garden. The Bankers are the London and Midland Bank, Cornhill. The Secretary is Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges (per C. Cohen):—F. F., 10s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Truthseeker—Berwick Advertiser—Isle of Man Times—Weekly Citizen—Oxford Times—Islamic World—Progressive Thinker—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Cape Times—Brann's Iconoclast—People's Newspaper—Crescent—Sydney Bulletin—Secular Thought—Discontent—Cape Argus—Public Opinion.

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectured at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The God of Battles." Mr. Charles Watts occupied the chair. This evening (June 19) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same platform, taking for his subject "Why Not Prosecute the Bible?" There ought to be a large audience on this occasion. Freethinkers should bring along their more orthodox friends to hear something novel and striking about "the blessed book."

The *Berwick Advertiser* quotes our recent paragraph on Sunday music at Berwick. We are glad to see that our northern contemporary has the courage to do this.

The following appears in the *Crescent*, the organ of the Mohammedans in Liverpool: "It is with great regret that we hear of the recent death of Mr. Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, which occurred on May 15. The late Mr. Wheeler was a man of great culture and deep reading, and a zealous advocate of freedom of thought in every form. He worked quietly and unostentatiously, but zealously and continuously, to expose the fallacious foundation upon which Christianity has raised such an astonishing superstructure of fable and foolishness, and for many years prior to his death had been sub-editor of the weekly journal, the *Freethinker*."

Secular Thought (Toronto) says that by the death of Joseph Mazzini Wheeler "the cause of Freethought has lost a most powerful champion." "Freethinkers," it says, "on both sides of the Atlantic will mourn the loss of a noble fellow-worker for humanity."

"Sermons and Services" is the title of an interesting article in the *Glasgow Weekly Citizen*. It declares that the bulk of the people of Scotland take a diminished interest in theology, that the din of religious battle there has ceased, and that, "save for a few half-hearted disputes on minor points, the whole affair seems to have settled into stagnation."

One good result of the prosecution of the Socialists on account of their outdoor meetings at Oxford is the publication of some outspoken correspondence in the *Oxford Times*. Some of the writers, particularly Harry Organ, give expression to strong Freethought sentiments.

A correspondent writes to say that on Sunday evening last a minister at a Congregational church in N.E. London commenced his discourse with Emerson, and quoted George Eliot later on; and the choir afterwards sang Longfellow's "Psalm of Life."

Tyneside friends are requested to note that Mr. Cohen has been specially engaged by the Newcastle Branch for what is known as "Race Sunday" (to-day, June 19), which is a great day on the Newcastle Town Moor for all kinds of public meetings. Mr. Cohen will speak on the Quayside at 11. The evening meeting on the Moor will be near the Military Sports stand, at 6.30. Friends are requested to muster in strong force, and those who are able to assist financially are specially requested to do so, as the Branch cannot hope to meet the expenses out of the collections. Mr. Cohen will also lecture in Newcastle on June 26.

The committee of the Birmingham Branch set to work in real earnest on behalf of the Wheeler Fund. In conjunction with Mr. Percy Ward, they arranged for a lecture on Sunday, June 5. Mr. Ward was in good form, and had a fine audience; and last Sunday a large crowd assembled at the Bristol-street Schools, where a miscellaneous entertainment was given in aid of the Fund. Mr. A. Scrimshire

gave two capital readings, and songs were contributed by Misses Skett, Willeen, Hackett, Blanche, Mrs. Harrison, and Messrs. D. T. Bullows and W. Instead. The instrumental portion of the programme was supplied by Misses Berkeley and Davies, and Messrs. Koller, Fathers, Moyle, and Dawson, the chair being occupied by C. H. Cattell. The financial result will be announced in our next issue.

The N. S. S. Chatham Branch has resolved to make some structural improvements in the Secular Hall, involving an outlay of about £60. Several members have taken additional £1 shares, besides doing a large amount of work gratuitously. They would be glad if friends of the Freethought cause elsewhere could render them any assistance, either by taking some shares, or by forwarding donations. From June, 1892, to June, 1898, no less a sum than £1,070 has been raised by shares, loans, and contributions. This is a splendid record for a small band of workers, none of whom are blessed with any superfluity of income. We should be glad to hear that some donations in response to this appeal have reached the secretary, Mr. F. J. Boorman, 253, Napier-road, New Brompton, Kent.

A SECULAR INCORPORATION.

FROM time to time in the *Freethinker* I have mentioned that I was engaged in maturing a scheme that would counteract the disabilities laid upon our party by the Blasphemy Laws. Hitherto, when we wanted to secure the complete use of premises for our own objects, we have had to form ordinary Limited Liability Companies; and in nearly every case these have been sooner or later failures. There were the usual commercial expenses and risks; the shares often passed into the hands of persons who simply wanted a dividend, and had a very small (if any) interest in Freethought; there was always the danger of disagreement and dissension between the Society that used the premises and the Company that owned them; and if a Club was established it generally ended by swamping every element of education and propaganda.

I thought over this matter long and deeply after we left the Hall of Science, and at last I fancied I saw a way out of the difficulty. Lord Coleridge's judgment on the occasion of my third trial for "blasphemy" gave me the first clue. His lordship laid it down that the common law of Blasphemy had altered with the progress of time and public opinion; it was no longer true that Christianity was part and parcel of the law of the land; the very fundamentals of Christianity might be assailed, provided it was done in a proper and becoming spirit. Very well, then, I thought, Secular propaganda in itself is no longer illegal, and a Secular Society may be legally incorporated. I consulted a solicitor who was in Mr. Bradlaugh's confidence. He shook his head, and thought my idea impossible. But the more he looked at it the more he thought there was something in it. We went to work together, slowly and carefully. After many months we took counsel's opinion on the completed scheme. After long discussion, which necessitated a few slight changes, he gave us his opinion in favor of its legal safety. Then I looked about for some Freethinker of means who would enable me to launch the scheme with *éclat*. Among other persons I approached the late Mr. William Westwell, of Manchester. I took a great deal of trouble to secure several thousand pounds which he really wished to devote to the Freethought movement. He had a printed copy of my scheme in his possession when he died suddenly at Douglas, and I know that it had the approval of his solicitor there, although adverse influences were at work in Manchester.

For some time afterwards I had good reasons for waiting. At length, however, I went to work again; and now, after some further trouble, I have to announce that I have succeeded in incorporating the Secular Society (Limited). It has cost me much time and thought and considerable expense, which I think I am entitled to have recouped.

My first object was to get something as near as possible to a Trust, such as the religious bodies enjoy. This is provided by the Memorandum of Association, which runs as follows:—

- 1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.
- 2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.
- 3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—

- (a) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.
- (b) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.
- (c) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.
- (d) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.
- (e) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.
- (f) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.
- (g) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.
- (h) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.
- (i) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.
- (j) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.
- (k) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.
- (l) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.
- (m) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.
- (n) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.
- (o) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

This is a very large and, I think, satisfactory program. It includes all the essentials of Secularism. Clause (a) is of the highest importance, and governs everything else. The Society's powers are comprehensive, and could, if necessary, be increased.

The objects of the Society are specific, the members are bound by them, and the Directors are legally obliged to promote them. Money given or bequeathed to the Society cannot possibly be spent on any other objects, except by specific directions on the part of a donor or testator, in which case the Society would be acting as trustee.

The Society is limited by Guarantee. Supposing the Society should be at any time wound up, every member is responsible for any sum that may be required up to £1. There is no further liability. The Society cannot, however, be voluntarily wound up except by the consent of at least nine-tenths of its members.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and after the first year an annual fee of five shillings.

No member, as such, can derive any profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or otherwise.

These are the salient features of the Society. Next week I shall print the whole Memorandum and Articles of Association in the *Freethinker*. Persons wanting a separate copy can apply to me for one.

The signatories, and therefore the first Directors, are:—G. W. Foote, S. Hartmann, Charles Watts, Robert Forder, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, and W. Heaford. Mr. Wheeler signed, but he is dead. A members' meeting must be held within four months.

I shall be glad to hear from Freethinkers all over the country who wish to become members. Ten shillings must be sent with each application.

The Secular Society (Limited) affords full legal security to donors and testators. Henceforth there need be no trouble in that respect. In the next issue of the *Freethinker* I shall dilate on the advantages and promises of this important incorporation, and state particulars of a handsome offer made to me by a generous friend of our movement, which may lead to our beginning business very shortly.

G. W. FOOTE.

(President, National Secular Society.)

A POPULAR PORTRAIT.

THE Atheist is a creature vile ;
 'Tis a fact that goes without saying—
 No man can be possibly free from guile
 Who isn't incessantly praying.
 He's a thing of unparalleled moral deformity,
 He is ready for every crime and enormity ;
 True virtue he seeks and endeavors to storm it, he
 'S a terror to sweethearts and wives.

All Atheists burn the book divine
 As a formal farewell to morality ;
 They are sworn to debauchery, women, and wine,
 And adepts at all vice and rascality.

The lock-ups, police-courts, and prisons are crammed with 'em,
 The publics and pawnshops and unions are jammed with 'em ;
 Cut them all dead, or you'll surely be damned with 'em—
 Beware ! as you value your lives.

An Atheist's glance is cold and chill,
 His physog's like nobody else's ;
 Despair and remorse his leisure fill,
 His motto : "Despair *in excelsis*."
 He is loveless and earthy, uncouth, unpoetic ;
 A clockwork automaton, peripatetic ;
 He murders himself—he's so hipped and splenetic—
 As only these Atheists do.

The dying Atheist tries to pray,
 His endeavors resulting in curses ;
 He shudders and shrieks, and kicks all day,
 But at nightfall the spectacle worse is.

Then, his blasphemous tongue waxes fouler and glibber,
 More devils than ever tormented a "bibber"
 With goblins and spectres around his couch gibber ;
 Chains clank, and the candle turns blue.

On an Atheist's head fierce horns you'll find,
 If you seek 'em in faith (as you oughter) ;
 He has hoofs, not feet ; a barbed tail behind ;
 He hisses if sprinkled with water.

An odor of sulphur pervades his vicinity,
 Proclaiming his Beelzebubic affinity ;
 He worships Old Nick, to which grisly divinity
 His soul a dead bargain he sells.

The Atheist is doomed to roast
 Through the hot everlasting hereafter ;
 He'll be tied to a stout, incombustible post,
 And his groans will be greeted with laughter ;
 or, enjoying the view of the bottomless pit,
 he saints on the ramparts of heaven will sit,
 And they'll merrily roar at his efforts to quit,
 At his struggles, contortions and yells.

EX-RITUALIST.

MORE MISSIONARY JOTTINGS.

AFTER four months' absence I am once more back in London. During that period I have travelled over two thousand miles, delivered eighty-seven lectures—nineteen of which were under the Society's Lecture Scheme—and held four public debates. I feel, therefore, quite secure from the reproach of not having done enough, while the results of my labors have been, with one or two exceptions, eminently satisfactory.

The account I have to render is necessarily of a monotonous, although cheerful, character—monotonous because one lecturing trip is very like another in its main features, and cheerful because I have to record that, instead of Secularism showing signs of weakening, I found our friends rousing to fresh endeavors, and our enemies regarding with growing respect principles that were once brushed on one side with a bitter curse or a careless laugh.

In Scotland, to commence farthest away, I found all the places visited—Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paisley, Greenock, Motherwell, and Law—well up to their usual level. Glasgow is in a better position, financially and numerically, than it has been for some years. Motherwell has an energetic little band of workers, who are so pleased with their past successes as to be already making plans for a more extended series of lectures during the coming winter. At Law Junction the flag is kept flying mainly by one energetic individual, who has already done wonders in the way of popularising our views in that quarter.

Instead of lecturing at Law, I held a debate with a local evangelist on "The Belief in God." Although conducted under somewhat unfair conditions, not even our share of the rent of the hall being allowed out of the pro-

ceeds of the meeting, it was one of the most pleasing debates I have yet held. The hall was crowded, and the behavior of the audience admirable. Every point was followed with the utmost attention, and often with appreciation. Indeed, it has often struck me that Scotch audiences are far more at home than English ones in discussing theological questions. The average Englishman simply doesn't care to discuss religion. He pays professionals, and prefers to leave the matter to them. The average Scotchman shows no such disinclination. He is always ready to discuss knotty theological problems, to assist God Almighty with his advice whenever opportunity occurs, and generally speaks of Jehovah with the same familiarity as he does of a tax-gatherer. Dean Ramsay's "Oh Lord, give us receptivity—that is to say, Oh Lord, make us capable of receiving things"—hits off a Scottish religious peculiarity that is far from extinct. It was in a recent issue of a Glasgow religious journal that I came across the advice that those who prayed were not to be chary of entering into details in their prayers ; they were to "explain their wants fully." Moreover, the whole religious life of Scotland, since the time of Knox, has been such as to render the mass of the people tolerably familiar with the details of religious arguments that are in England, so far as the majority are concerned, mere phrases. The result of this training is far from disadvantageous to Free-thought. When the Scottish Christian becomes a Free-thinker he is all the firmer in his new position from having fully understood the old one. "They are slow to move, but they arrive, nevertheless," said Voltaire, speaking of the English ; and this is specially true the other side of the border. The Scot moves slowly, but once he does move there is little fear of him retreating.

On the Tyneside renewed activity is manifested. I lectured at Gateshead, Newcastle, Stanley, and West Pelton. Thanks to the energetic efforts of Mr. J. G. Bartram, an attempt is being made to re-establish the North-Eastern Secular Federation, and if only sympathisers support this endeavor as it deserves, the outlying districts should present a fertile field for the dissemination of Free-thought.

Coming further south, I lectured for five Sundays and several week nights to good audiences at Liverpool. The Branch here has had to face considerable difficulties of late, but it possesses an able and energetic committee, besides several local speakers of considerable ability, which enables it to carry on a continuous propaganda.

During my stay in Liverpool I broke comparatively new ground at Prescott and Birkenhead. At the former place a report of my lecture, extending over two columns, appeared in the local paper, thus carrying our views over a wider area than could be reached by addressing any audience. At Birkenhead I held three meetings. The first was a reply to an attack upon Secularism delivered by a local parson ; and, at the conclusion of the meeting, the chairman, Mr. Hammond, received the names of twelve gentlemen who were desirous of forming a Branch in the town. My second lecture drew the vicar of St. Margaret's Church as an opponent. Those who expected from a professional preacher of the gospel a smart defence were doomed to a woeful disappointment. All the stalest, tamest absurdities of the Christian Want of Evidence platform were served up with a solemnity and a profundity only to be acquired by a long sojourn in pulpitania. Secularism was altogether demoralising, but Christianity included all secular teaching and much more. Women in Pagan Rome were the mere chattels of men, but enjoyed so much licence as to commonly boast of the number of husbands they had had, and dated their correspondence from "the fourth year of my fifth husband," etc., etc. It never seemed to strike the speaker that these positions were mutually destructive. I asked for proof of the latter statement, and was referred to Tacitus and *others of the Roman satirists!* He had probably taken his Roman history from Barrett's *Sign of the Cross*. Personally I know of but one passage in the Latin writers that would give any support to this often-quoted charge. This occurs in Juvenal ; it is there mentioned, I think, of *one* woman ; while the mere fact of a satirist seizing upon it as a subject for his satire effectually disposes of the commonness of its occurrence. As a plain matter of historic fact, however faulty the position of women may have been in pre-Christian Rome, their position was so much worse under Christianity that even a Christian in the position

of Professor Donaldson is compelled to admit that "during the first three centuries of its existence Christianity did nothing but lower their character and restrict the range of their activity."

Blackburn I visited seven times, and found a good audience on each occasion. Preston, the most Catholic town in England, also furnished a fine meeting. In Birmingham, since the Branch occupied the Board schools for its meetings, it has made splendid headway. The audiences have improved, and, in spite of there being a charge for admission, the Branch is holding its own bravely. At Manchester I am always sure of a warm reception and a good audience. I lectured there in January, February, and twice during the month of May. On the last two occasions, in addition to the lectures in the hall, a new move was made by holding a couple of meetings in Alexandra Park. These were the first Freethought meetings ever held in the park, and were as successful as one could reasonably wish. On each occasion I addressed a huge audience, attentive and well-behaved generally; and although during one of the meetings we had to face unwelcome opposition in the shape of a heavy shower of rain, several hundred people stood through it all while I addressed them from the shelter of an umbrella.

I concluded my provincial tour by attending the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday, and on June 5 commenced the London session by addressing three bumper meetings at Camberwell and on Peckham Rye.

At a number of my meetings I was able, thanks to the kindness of some friends, to distribute gratuitously considerable quantities of literature. It is much to be regretted that the resources of the Society prevent the free gift of literature becoming a permanent feature at all meetings. I am convinced that were this possible, or if a special fund were established for this purpose, a great deal of good might be done. Meanwhile I shall always be pleased to attend to the disposal of whatever reading matter any friends of the movement may care to send me.

The press reports during my tour have been unusually lengthy and appreciative, a circumstance that bears strong evidence of the growth of our views and of the necessity of increased propaganda. The press usually follows, sometimes interprets, but seldom leads public opinion, and one may safely assume that when reports of Freethought meetings begin to appear in the daily and weekly press it is largely due to the growth of that spirit of rational inquiry and healthy humanitarianism to which Freethought primarily appeals.

With the exception of a week's visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne (June 19-26), I remain in London until September, and at the conclusion of that period I hope to be able to give as good a report of my work in the Metropolis as I have given of my provincial labors. C. COHEN.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

COLLIP, 1s.; Steel, 1s.; McGasker, 1s.; King, 1s.; Bishop, 1s.; A. G., 1s.; W. Fairchild, 1s.; Walter Fairchild, 1s.; C. J. Whitwell, 1s.; James Fulton, 10s.; A. G. Barker, 2s.; T. A. Sutton, 2s.; G. Grizzell, 1s. 6d.; Few Glasgow Socialists, 3s.; T. H., 1s.; R. Nicholls, £1 1s.; J. H. Bain, 2s. 6d.; R. W., 2s. 6d.; B. Wallis, 5s.; C. Heaton, 2s. 6d.; J. Hipwell, 1s.; Mrs. Hipwell, 1s.; W. Stephens, 1s.; C. Lamb, 1s.; W. H. Deakin, £1; R. B. Harrison, 1s.; W. Squire, 1s.; J. Barry, 10s.; W. J. Marshall, 10s.; T. J. Thurlow (collection), 3s. 6d.; F. W. Read, 10s.

Per C. Cohen.—F. F., 10s.; C. Cohen, 10s.

Per Miss Vance.—C. Shepherd, 2s.; Pattie Dyre, 1s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Bowman, 10s.; W. H. Barker, 2s.

Per R. Forder.—G. C. W., 10s.; A. Lewis, 10s.; W. Stewart, 1s.; W. Swinburne, 1s.

Correction.—W. Waymark, 1s., was wrongly acknowledged as 5s.

Pious Grandmother (wearisomely dealing out religious instruction to 'cute six-year-old Ada)—"Yes, my dear, all our good thoughts are suggested to us by God, and all our wicked thoughts come from Satan." Little Ada (brightening up)—"Grandma, do you know what Satan is telling me to say to you?" Pious Grandmother—"What is it, my dear?" Ada—"He is telling me to say, 'Shut up, grandma!' but God won't let me say it."

MADE ON EARTH.

WHEN the world was young, when the morning stars sang together, when the music of the spheres traversed space unmeasured and fell upon no ear of god or beast, there was no man to need a god, and no god to need a man. Then upon this planet, ere sentient life began, no moan of anguish, no sound of pain, came from everywhere to find an answering god nowhere. But after millions of years and cycles of changes, from the imponderable primal-mist by slow evolution through countless changes of many forms of life in an ever-ascending gradation, the noblest animal, Man, with intelligence (yet small), appeared. In the earth's heyday of youth man spoke to man, and speech differentiated him from all animals around him. And since those days when man had no god, when wonderment at the world without had not brought worship of the unknown, down to these days when the batteries of Freethought demolish one by one the forts and strongholds of superstition, persecution, bigotry, priestcraft, and bibliolatry; since those early days, to these later days, man always and everywhere has made his own gods. It could not be otherwise. And as the man, so the god. Is man bloodthirsty?—his God is bloody. Is man libidinous?—his God is lustful. Is man vengeful?—his God is vengeful, not on our generation, but unto the third and fourth generation. In the beginning man created God in his own image, and in his own image he has created him ever since. And man saw his work that it was good. Very man of very man has man made him. Begotten of men's dread or hope, created in the imagination, being of one substance with his father, such has God been. Moreover, as man's mental horizon widened, as knowledge grew from more to more, so has God increased in wisdom and stature. Whether the image carved by his hand, or the ancestral totem or lares; whether the sun, or the moon, or the stars; whether Jupiter or Christ or Krishna or Buddha or Isis or Venus or Lais, man has here, there, and everywhere made his own god; until, in the fulness of time, the great human heart, wrung with the wrongs of centuries crying for deliverance from anguish, pain, torture, and agony, created a Savior who was powerless to save, a Physician who was powerless to heal.

Councils and conclaves have made our modern God, but his features, his words, change with the changing years. As waves of religious fanaticism roll over the nations, the God alters. Now a Huguenot, then a Roman Catholic, here a Presbyterian, there a Priest-God, in no two sects, in no two countries are his characteristics the same; nay, not two individuals have the same God, for to each he is self-created, and they create him in their own likeness. They may name their God by the same name, and they do. There are among the Christians some who, rising superior to the superstition in whose atmosphere they live, create for themselves an ideal Christ. It is this ideal they endeavor to attain. They, like the Freethinker, want to live the highest life possible. Pygmalion creates in his imagination the loveliest nymph, and carves her perfect form in marble. Galatea receives the breath of life. Thus the Freethinker and the nobler sort of Christian, endeavoring to translate the idealised imagined good into the realised good of perfect thought expressed, or noble deed done, may unhesitatingly claim kinship here. But there is a difference. The Freethinker, working out the salvation of himself and others, is self-reliant, self-dependent, trusting to no outside help from a God of whom he knows nothing, of whom he can know nothing. The Christian seeks aid, adventitious and fictitious, from a Christ who never comes, from a Jesus who never saves, from a God who allows his children to cry in vain. The noble Christian seeks man's good as does the Freethinker. The former is a slave, the latter is a free man. It is not for him to create God. It is for him to make man—first himself, then the race. It is a work on which he may expend profitably any energies he may have left from the struggle for existence.

The human race is evolving. Evolution is a slow but sure process. It is for Freethinkers to look one step forward and secure that step. The next step forward is thus assured. The possibilities of the future are infinite. The climax of man's development is not attained. The apex of the pyramid of his acquirements is not reached. Man, with the accumulated knowledge of centuries, is but an

infant in the school of life. He is but a dwarf; he will be a giant—nay, a god. Man is not MAN as yet. And, instead of making a god that is not, never was, could not be, it is the inspiring work of the Freethinker to enable men (his brothers) to work out, without fear and trembling, their own salvation from the Egypt-bondage of superstition, prejudice, priestcraft, and bibliolatry, and to enable them by virtue of this freedom to live noble lives, devoted to the service of mankind. For, in the worship of man, man himself becomes divine.

J. S.

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. HERBERT SPENCER, who is in his seventy-ninth year, is engaged on a revised edition of his *Principles of Biology*, which was first published more than thirty years ago. There are other grand old men besides Gladstone, and they are not all Christians.

* * *

Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole has written a *Life of Saladin* for the Heroes of the Nations series. It is based almost entirely upon Arabic sources. Putnam's Sons are the publishers, and the book will appear shortly. Saladin, the Mohammedan, shone in contrast with the Christian crusaders. When they captured Jerusalem they indulged in a week's massacre; when he captured it he behaved with magnanimity and humanity. He left a large sum of money at his death to be divided amongst Mohammedans, Christians, and Jews impartially.

* * *

Humanity (organ of the Humanitarian League) for June contains a tribute (already quoted in our columns) to the late J. M. Wheeler. This is an admirably conducted, brave little champion of a very great cause. We wish every Freethinker would help to circulate it.

* * *

The Humanitarian League has published a new edition of Edward Carpenter's pamphlet on *Vivisection*, price one penny. It is a forceful and, in some parts, beautiful protest against this abominable practice. We hope it will be widely circulated.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"PROVIDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I see nothing whatever unphilosophical in the remarks continually appearing in the *Freethinker* upon the ills supposed to be inflicted by God or "Providence." Such apply not exclusively to the assumed God of the Christians, but to all other postulated Gods; and as Mr. Edgley believes in a God he calls "Jehovah," I, for one, shall be glad of a definition of such. Is such God intelligent? is he moral? and of what sex? What evidence is there of such existence? I must remind your correspondent that in endeavoring to enthrone his God, maker, or controller of the universe, he must draw his analogies from the known; he cannot reason from the unknown to establish an unknown. He tells us he has considered the subject to the best of his ability, and has come to the conclusion that "the elements of the universe are controlled in the best manner they can be to produce the best results," and it is on this principle that he bases his belief in a "controller of space and maker"; but this refers only to his personal beliefs, and counts for nothing. It is the answer ignorance has given in all ages; a mere child can say as much. I would remind him that many other individuals, embracing many of the grandest intellects of past and present, have also considered, and have come to the opposite conclusion; but "belief" is not necessarily knowledge, and it devolves upon those who assert the existence of a God or creator to prove such by evidence drawn from nature and the known. Before attempting such a task I desire to ask Mr. Edgley whether he knows of a time when the universe was not, and needed creating or making? I am of opinion that the very basis whereon he must inevitably build his story of creation is wanting. As far back as man can trace the history of the universe it always was, never was not; therefore where does the necessity for creation come in? Before calling in the assistance of Gods or creators to explain the presence of and phenomena of matter, it must be shown conclusively that nature, unaided, is incapable of producing those various phenomena of the universe we witness. Matter devoid of properties is an abstraction of which man has no conception, and my opinion is that matter and the phenomena of such are all with which man is acquainted; all additions are superfluous. Mr. Edgley asks "how the elements of the earth can be better managed than they are." Well, I think that if nature were a little

less prodigal and bloodthirsty, if we were treated to less droughts, floods, and deadly hereditary diseases, the absence of such alone would be no detriment at least; but, as your correspondent is so infatuated with the "controlling" of the universe, I ask him what he thinks of the condition of many infants born blind, eyes fashioned, yet failing to carry out the very purpose for which they are of use; of others malformed for life, and of that section so ill-constructed that, unless man intervened to repair, rearrange, and manipulate the handy work of Mr. Edgley's "controller," they could never live even for a single week? I desire he shall but glance at the animal world; it is a veritable cock-pit, or gladiators' show, running red with blood, the swift taking advantage of the less swift, the cunning of the less cunning, life preying upon life. One-half the infants born die before they reach the fifth year—myriads so malformed that man recoils from their presence with a shudder. All this is understood when attributed to the blind blunderings of untutored, unguided nature; but place a god or controller behind, and you have an incarnate fiend.

The murderer lifts his hand and strikes the deadly blow; the cowardly seducer calmly lures his victim on to destruction; the innocent, helpless child is outraged, foully murdered, and its bleeding body tossed into the nearest ditch. Mr. Edgley says a God overrules all these things—"could not be better managed." I am sorry for him, and ask him to think deeper before awarding his Jehovah the credit. Surely he believes that many innocent suffer the grossest injustice, while the guilty are free; that vice and laziness revel in luxury, while honesty and industry too frequently shiver in rags. Does he really believe that justice always prevails, and that truth is an impenetrable shield? If not, why not, if a good God presides? Surely he will admit many men have bestial, and even murderous, propensities. If he believes in a "maker of all," I would ask him who placed those propensities in man's nature? Man created nothing, he is but the heir of ages; and, if the God idea be claimed, then every faculty capable of being exercised is also the handiwork of such. If a God is claimed, then I want him to take the credit of all the bad or evil in the universe, as well as the good.

Possibly, if Mr. Edgley had a cancer in the stomach, a tapeworm in his intestines, and an incurable hereditary blood disease, which should embitter his whole life, he might be inclined to believe the very reverse of what he now does. I ask him, in conclusion, if he had an only daughter, the innocent prey to some malignant disease, apparently slowly sinking into a premature grave, would he leave such child to the tender mercies of his Jehovah, believing all is controlled so well that no improvement could be made, and not do his utmost to alleviate such suffering, thus thwarting the ends of his Providence and prolonging such life? If yes, then for such inhuman conduct he would stand a good chance of being dragged before a criminal court on a charge of manslaughter for not seeking worldly, medical assistance. If, on the other hand, he would act the part of a father—take the best steps to alleviate, cheat the grave of its intended victim, not look upon disease as Providential, but as a curse—then it would show clearly that he, like all the professed God believers I have ever met, is only theoretical, and in no sense practical.

OCTAVIUS DREWELL.

Bobby Knew.

The following story is told by a resident of Bloomington, Macon County, as having occurred at a district school near there recently. It was Friday, the day of original compositions. Each scholar had to memorise his or her production. A little girl with blue eyes and sandy hair lisped:—

The dawning shafts of light came out
To greet the lark's refrain,
And every gladdened heart sang out—

Then she stopped. A blue-shirted urchin raised his hand and snapped his fingers.

"What is it, Bobby?" asked the teacher.

"I knows it."

"Know what?"

"The line she's forgot."

"You do," said the teacher, in surprise. "What is it?"

Promptly as a rifle shot came the answer that completed the verse: "To h — with Spain."—*Kansas City Times*.

The Elder Matron—"You shouldn't mind the baby crying a little. It strengthens his lungs." The Younger Matron—"Oh, no doubt, but it weakens his father's religion so."—*Indianapolis Journal*.

Sunday-school Teacher—"What is meant by a Sabbath day's journey?" Bright Pupil—"From the beginning to the end of a Sunday newspaper, I guess."

"Do not rob us of the blessed hope of knowing that millions of millions are damned."—*Religion Condensed*.

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, "Why Not Prosecute the Bible?"
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Grand display of Animated Photographs. June 23, at 8.30, Stanley Jones.
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Bow): 7.30, J. C. Millington, B.A., "The Survival of the Broadest."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Stanton Coit, "The Sermon on the Mount." Peckham Rye: 8, Mr. Clarke.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Sermon on the Mount."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, R. P. Edwards.
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward. Peckham Rye: 3.15 and 6.30, H. P. Ward.
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr. Ramsey.
FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Mistakes of Jesus."
FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 3.15, H. Snell, "Zola and Religion."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30 and 7, S. Jones. June 22, at 8, S. Jones.
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, A. B. Moss, "A New Bible."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): A. B. Moss—11.30, "The Wandering Jews"; 3.30, "Bible Prophets."
KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A. lecture.
KINGSLAND (Kidley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford.
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. June 21, at 8, S. Jones.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 7, Members' meeting.
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Lawrence Bergman, B.Sc., "Christianity and Secularism."
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): C. Cohen—11; 6.30, Town Moor, near Military Sports stand.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—June 19 and 26, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—June 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 26, Mile End Waste.

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HARRY SEYMOUR, *Interim Editor.*

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Contents: To the Breach, Freeman! Henry Seymour—The Prosecution, Lillian Harman—The Question of Children: A Symposium; I, R. B. Kerr; II, Henry Seymour—Monogamy, Variety, and Ideals, R. Braithwaite—Free Speech, William Platt—The Economic Position of Women, Egeria—The Hardwicke Society, J. W. Mason—Etc., etc. Price 3d., postage 1d.; 51 Arundel-square, N., and R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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