

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A SECULAR CHARTER.

In the present number of the *Freethinker* I print in full the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Secular Society, Limited, and I invite Freethinkers to read the same with careful attention. I am not so foolish as to claim perfection for this scheme, but I hope the readers will regard it as well thought out. At any rate, it has been thought out to the best of my ability. Even as it stands, I make bold to say it is the most important bit of constructive work ever done for our movement. I do not suppose it will be taken up all at once; a party needs time to get accustomed to novelties; but, when it is taken up fairly, I believe it will supersede, if it does not absorb, all the existing elements of Secular organisation. It really promises to do, in a more business-like way, more effectively, and with legal security, all that previous Secular organisations have ever aimed at, and also something more which has hitherto been regarded as impossible. For this reason I venture to call it a Secular Charter.

Let me dilate a little on its advantages, and then explain my hopes for the immediate future.

First Advantage.—This scheme gets rid of the old difficulty as to giving or bequeathing money, or other property, for Secular purposes. The Secular Society (Limited) is a legally incorporated body. It has all the rights, as far as its Memorandum and Articles go, of an individual citizen. If anything is bequeathed to it, the executors have no alternative but to pay the amount over. That is certain. It does not admit of a moment's doubt. While the registration stands there is absolutely no room for apprehension on this point. A Freethinker may leave for this Society five pounds, or a hundred pounds, or a thousand pounds, with the certitude that all he so leaves will be devoted to the objects set forth in the Memorandum.

Second Advantage.—The Society, like an individual citizen, can act as trustee. Should a Freethinker wish a certain sum of money to be devoted, not to the general objects of the Society, or to any one of them in particular, but to some special object in the same direction, he can so devote it by deed of gift, or in his will, and appoint the Society as trustee for the carrying out of his intentions.

Third Advantage.—While the Society is not nominally a Trust, like the various Christian Churches, it is practically so. Its Memorandum amounts to the same thing as a Trust, because it specifies certain objects to be promoted, generally by the members and particularly by the Directors, and because Article 54 makes it legally impossible for the Society's funds to be expended in any other way.

Fourth Advantage.—Room is made for five hundred members. This number was not exceeded in order to minimise the expenses of registration. But the number can be increased at any time by paying the necessary fee at Somerset House. Five hundred members, however, or even a great many less, are quite sufficient to prevent the possibility of treacherous collusion. This is a moral guarantee of the firmest character. Two or three people might conspire to defraud a society by perverting the use of its resources, but secrecy is indispensable to that end, and in the case of hundreds, or even scores, of members, the thing is inconceivable.

Fifth Advantage.—No member, as a member, can derive any profit, direct or indirect, from the Society. The funds of the Society could not, therefore, be voted in any way to its members. Further, there is no danger of the highest

interests of the Society being injured by a desire on the part of its members for a commercial dividend. There is no room for that desire to operate.

Sixth Advantage.—There is no Share Capital; consequently the danger does not exist of shares passing into indifferent, alien, or hostile hands. This has frequently occurred in the case of ordinary companies, and the result has been ruinous to the objects of the original promoters.

Seventh Advantage.—No temporarily successful faction of malcontent members could have the slightest chance of wrecking the Society, for it cannot be voluntarily wound up except by the consent of at least nine-tenths of its members, which involves practical unanimity. The continuity of the Society is thus guaranteed.

Eighth Advantage.—It could be to no one's personal interest to see the Society wound up, because Article 57 provides that on its winding up its property would have to be given to some kindred society, or to a non-sectarian charity. "It shall not be paid or distributed," the Article says, "amongst the members."

Ninth Advantage.—While there is every security for the rights of members, and for full and perfect publicity, the Society's affairs will be conducted in a business-like way by a Board of Directors, who have legal powers and also legal obligations, which could, if necessary, be enforced.

Tenth Advantage.—The Memorandum gives the Society large and varied powers, if only it can obtain the means to exercise them. The whole field of Secular work and organisation could be covered with adequate resources.

Eleventh Advantage.—Every member having to be proposed and seconded, and admitted or rejected by the Directors, there is a reasonable guarantee that only proper persons will be admitted to the Society; and, as every member has to pay ten shillings on joining, and five shillings a year afterwards, there is a reasonable guarantee that he will be seriously interested in the Society's welfare.

Twelfth Advantage.—This is an indirect one. Henceforth the leading men in our movement will be freed from unjust suspicion and malicious misrepresentation. If one of them was left anything by a friend, who happened to be a Freethinker, it was always open for jealous persons to say, "Oh, it was meant for the movement, but he has stuck to it himself." Mr. Bradlaugh had several such legacies, at least two of them being substantial ones, and he suffered from these traducers, who took advantage of a Christian law to libel their own leader by means of a falsehood that, from the very nature of it, did not admit of a positive refutation. Other leading Freethinkers have suffered from the same cause. But all that is ended now. If a man wishes to leave money to the movement, he can put the Secular Society, Limited, in his will. What he leaves to an individual, henceforth, can only be meant for that individual. And I suppose there will always be some who prefer to help a movement by helping those who labor and sacrifice, and perhaps suffer, to carry it forward.

This scheme, I repeat, has been long and carefully thought out, and it has not been launched hurriedly. I have had the assistance of a competent and painstaking solicitor, who was in the confidence of the late Charles Bradlaugh; and I have the opinion (in writing) of an eminent counsel that the scheme is a safe one. Nothing has been neglected to ensure a solid and durable success.

Now the first thing I want is applications for membership. These must be made in writing, and be accompanied

by the entrance fee of ten shillings. It is highly desirable that a fair number of members should be enrolled before the first General Meeting, which must be held not later than four months after the date of registration. I earnestly invite Freethinkers all over the country to avail themselves of this new instrument of organisation as quickly as possible. The more members joining, the greater will be the inducement to persons of means to give or bequeath money to the Society.

Of course it is always easier to obtain funds for a specific purpose than to obtain it for general purposes. It is also evident that the Society cannot start by operating in every direction at once. I have therefore thought it best to invite the Freethought party to contribute towards the obtaining of suitable premises for our movement in London, including a hall for Sunday lectures and public meetings, and rooms for educational and social purposes. Nothing would be undertaken until enough money was in hand, and all the money would be safely deposited in the Society's banking account.

This would be a first trial of our strength. It would enable us to see what could be done, and would guide our expectations as to future success.

A generous friend of our movement, who does not wish his name to be published at present, authorises me to say that he is prepared to contribute a thousand pounds to this special object, on condition that other members of the party contribute sufficiently, as he thinks they are well able to do, if only they have the interest of the cause at heart. He does not say that this is all he would be prepared to do if the party in general were to show that it really meant business. I believe he would cheerfully increase the amount if others were ready to do their duty in the support of their principles. But this offer of a thousand pounds is the one that he makes at the moment. It is a very liberal offer as it stands, and it ought to stimulate the zeal of every friend of our movement.

Some time ago Mr. J. Umpleby, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, offered to contribute £50 if ten others would do the same. He authorises me to publish that offer now. How many are ready to join in this generous competition? There is no need to send the money just yet. What we want is promises to be redeemed if the prospect is satisfactory.

While awaiting letters on this matter from Secularists all over the kingdom, and perhaps in other lands, I may be pardoned for saying a few personal words in conclusion. When I accepted the presidency of the National Secular Society, in succession to my giant predecessor, Charles Bradlaugh, I felt that I was more bound than ever to devote my time, my energies, and the best of my ability—such as it was—to the service of our movement. I also felt that I ought to think out the problem of its organisation. I have done this as well as I could, and I present the result to our party. If they take it up zealously, I shall be delighted; if not, I shall have done my duty.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE CHURCH IN DANGER.

FOR some time past the Evangelical press of this country has been full of lamentations over what it terms the danger which is threatening the Protestant Church. It recognises the extensive "Romanising practices of many of its clergy," the increased activity of the Nonconformist party, and the rapid spread of scepticism towards "the faith once delivered unto the saints." The present anxiety that is being displayed by the Protestants affords an important object-lesson as to the position which probably the Protestant Church will in the future occupy in the domain of modern thought. It is evident that Christianity has lost that supremacy over intelligent minds which formerly it commanded. It has become a hollow pretension, without a shadow of fidelity to the example and teachings of its alleged founder. This is only what could have been reasonably expected, when the nature of the faith is impartially considered. Uniformity of belief among professed Christians, who take the New Testament for their standard, is really impossible. They are, as St. Paul observes, "All things to all men." We are told that Jesus prayed to his Father for the union of Christendom, and that all his followers might be one. The prayer, however, has not been answered, for, from the very inception

of the Christian Church, it has had to cope with internal disputes and divisions. Even the New Testament records that "contentions," "strife," etc., were prevalent among the earliest devotees of the Christian faith. And we fail to learn from the annals of history that these dissensions have at any period ceased. To-day they are more marked, if possible, than ever, which is a potent argument against the orthodox assertion that Christianity tends to promote harmony and goodwill.

The latest manifestation of alarm at the danger which the Protestant Church is supposed to be in was given at the anniversary of the "National Protestant Christian Union," the proceedings of which were fully reported in the *Rock* newspaper of June 3. The editor of this pious journal seems to be suffering from Roman Catholicism on the brain, for hardly a week passes but what he indulges in language towards Catholics that may be Christian, but which in no way savors of the "brotherly love" so much boasted about in Protestant pulpits. The danger to which the Church is exposed, according to the editor, is the inroad which Catholicism is making in the domain of Protestantism. Referring to the meeting of the N. P. C. U. mentioned above, he said: "We rejoice to learn from the speeches delivered that the great Evangelical party, who have hitherto adopted a very yielding policy in dealing with Romish aggressions, have at length realised that loyalty to Christ and His revealed will in Scripture render it absolutely imperative that His true followers should defend the faith once delivered unto the saints; and that our beloved Church has been betrayed very largely into the hands of the enemy." This feeling of antagonism existing in the Christian "happy family" was shared by all the speakers at the gathering. They were most emphatic in condemning any attempts to secure reunion with Rome, which shows the utter nonsense of the belief that the supposed followers of Christ are "all brethren." Both Catholics and Protestants claim to have the same Father and the same Christ, but it is evident that neither Father nor Son can inspire brotherly fellowship in the family.

Mr. Sydney Gedge, M.P., voiced the opinion of all the other speakers when he said: "I can quite understand men of sentimental mood wishing for the time when all should hold one doctrine, and worship according to one form. A most glorious thing, no doubt, if we had the right doctrine and the right form. But they cry 'Peace, peace!' when there is no peace. There never can be peace with Rome.....I go back for a moment to the subject of reunion with Rome, and ask:—Is it possible? Is it desirable? I think neither. Is it possible? No; there was a great breach made at the Reformation, and that breach is now a great deal wider than it was even then..... Let us hear what Luther said: 'It is for me a great joy to see the Gospel, as of old, the cause of trouble and discord. Let us be careful lest, in thinking to stop these troubles and discords, we persecute God's Word and bring down upon our heads a fearful deluge of insurmountable dangers and dreadful disasters.'"

It is clear the "Fatherhood of God" and the "love of Christ" are powerless to produce peace and union within the Christian fold. And these very men, who are "daggers drawn" among themselves, have the audacity to taunt Freethinkers with a lack of unity. But, to us, the amusing feature in the Christian quarrel is the assumption upon the part of the members of the Church of England that *they* have the "right doctrine and the right form." We have no sympathy for the Roman Catholic Church. It has throughout its entire history been a blight upon the human mind, and a curse to the human race. It has been, and still is, a persistent foe to the agencies of civilisation. But in these particulars wherein does it differ from the Church of England? Until very recently this Church was the open enemy to all progressive measures. It tortured, imprisoned, and put to death those who differed from them "in doctrines and in form." The liberal and Freethought spirit of the age has, however, compelled its members to alter their tactics, and to "assume a virtue if they have it not." And the same influence has had a like effect upon the Roman Catholic Church in countries where scepticism is in the ascendancy. In France and England there is a marked falling off from the Catholic priesthood, and among the laity there is a growing laxity of belief in old doctrines. Moreover, both Churches are branches of the same tree of superstition, and, but for the fact that

scepticism has penetrated the one more than it has the other, both would produce the same poisonous fruit now as they did in the past. The radical evils of both Churches are:—The stubborn adherence to questionable authority, the one to the whims of the Pope, and the other to the fallacies and absurdities of the Prayer Book; the delusion that each Church has the truth, and that those who do not agree with its teachings are necessarily in error; and, finally, that the welfare of the community depends upon theological belief.

Mr. Gedge contended that another evil with which the Church had to contend was Ritualism, which he alleged was an "unsound and heretical doctrine." He said: "We know perfectly—and it is a great danger at the present time—that boys at school, and young men at the Universities, are given up very much to the cultivation of the body; and we know individually that, if we think too much of the body, the body is apt to get too strong for us. St. Paul gives us a good lesson about it. He says: 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.'" Now, the neglect of the "cultivation of the body" has been the great mistake of most of the Christian Churches. They have paid too much attention to what is termed the "spiritual nature of man," hence his physical powers have not received that training necessary to the production of a really true man. Experience has taught us that a sound and healthy mind (which means a well-balanced intellect) depends upon a properly-developed body; therefore its proper cultivation is of the first importance. We are not among those who think that our bodies are necessarily "vile," as stated in the Bible, or that we are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity." On the contrary, with proper discipline the body can be made a noble temple of humanity.

Archdeacon Madden thought "it is time for us, to get on our knees before God.....Let us cast ourselves more and more upon our living Lord and less upon human effort." But for centuries the members of the Church of England have been continually going on their knees, offering special prayers to their "living Lord" for help and guidance; and yet their Church has become surrounded with dangers, to remove which they are appealing for the human effort that the Archdeacon appears to depreciate. We say "appears" because the greater part of his speech was an attempt to stimulate his hearers to energetic action in stemming the tide of Roman Catholicism. The "living Lord" has failed to protect his Church from what it regards as its potent enemy, and now the aid of human effort is evoked to make up for the Lord's deficiency. This is another specimen of the inconsistency of Christians. They profess to rely upon the "Lord," but their practical faith is in man.

We grant the Church is in danger, and it is our firm conviction that no power on earth or in heaven will save it from the fate that awaits it. Its foes are not only those of "its own house," although its having those would be enough, according to the New Testament, to cause its downfall. For therein we are told, "if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand." But the Church has outside dangers which are destroying its very foundations. These are philosophical Freethought, the demand for the open avowal of personal opinion, and the increasing intelligence of the age. Before these combined forces no theological superstition can permanently endure. The Church of England is irrational in its government, absurd and fallacious in its teachings, and it has proved injurious in its influence. We therefore hope and believe that the time will arrive when it will be compelled to yield to the dangers that encompass it.

CHARLES WATTS.

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(Concluded from page 389.)

MUCH of the legendary element in the life of the Buddha depends upon the Sanskrit work, the *Lalita Vistara*, a book of uncertain date, although it is plausibly argued to have been in existence at the council of Kashmir, held under the Buddhist Tartar, King Kanishka, in the first century of the Christian era. The incident of the earthquake at Buddha's death is recorded in one of the oldest canonical books, the *Mahā-parimibbānasutta*, and the fasting

and temptation by Mara is also undoubtedly pre-Christian. That many of the accretions to Buddhism were in existence when Christianity was yet fresh to the world we have some evidence even from the Christian Fathers. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, in his *Stromata*, book i., chap. xv., says: "Some, too, of the Indians obey the precepts of Buddha, whom, on account of his extraordinary sanctity, they have raised to divine honors"; and Jerome (*Contr. Jovin*, i., 26) casually alludes to the birth of Buddha from a virgin.

No one can read the Buddhist books and compare them with the gospels without seeing that Gautama and Jesus have each a distinct and unmistakable personality, and that the similarities are no more than might be expected between two great Asiatic religious reformers. Their discourses are as different as their lives, and the one died ignominiously while still young, and the other lived to an honored old age. There is one feature of the gospel ascribed to John which is decidedly more of a Hindu than a Jewish character. I allude to the doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus (John i. 7; viii. 5-8). This certainly better comports with the Buddhist theory of transmigration than with the evident traces of Jesus being a carpenter, as found in the synoptics. In the curious passage (John ix. 2) where his disciples ask Jesus "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" we are forcibly reminded of a passage translated by Eugène Bournof, in his *Lotus de la bonne Loi* (p. 82, Paris, 1852): "*Alors qu'il y ait un médecin connaissant toutes les maladies; qu'il voie cet homme aveugle de naissance, et que cette réflexion lui vienne à l'esprit, c'est de la conduite coupable de cet homme [dans une vie antérieure] qu'est née cette maladie.*"

It is, however, when we leave alike the Pitakas and the New Testament, and observe the after-development of the two religions, that the most surprising analogies are observed. Neither Gautama nor Jesus is alleged to have written, and the history of the early councils of Buddhism and of the formation of its canon of sacred literature is strikingly similar to that afterwards exemplified in Christianity. Both were made state religions, and became gradually more and more corrupt, and were driven from the lands of their birth, finding reception and eventually attempts at reformation among widely different races. Buddhism has the honor of being the first missionary religion. Max Müller observes: "No Jew, no Greek, no Roman, no Brahman, ever thought of converting people to his own national form of worship." The proselytizing form of religion seems to have been brought into the world by Gautama, who, we are told in the Pitakas, sent sixty disciples each different ways to preach his law. At the council of Patna, held under the Emperor Asoka, who established Buddhism (B.C. 246), missionaries were despatched to all parts of India, Cashmere, Thibet, Ceylon, and the Malay peninsula; and the rock inscriptions of Asoka declare that, finding his pleasure in the conquests of religion, he had sent embassies to his neighboring potentates, mentioning by name Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedon, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Greece, as well as the king of the Huns (Ins. xiii.). Although the statement that they conformed themselves to the religious instruction of the king may be ascribed to Oriental exaggeration, there can be little doubt that the Buddhist envoys were courteously received in these countries, and it does not seem rash to suppose that they may have conveyed some knowledge of their ideas and legends there. In the Singalese work, the *Milindapanha*, the Greek king Menander is represented as a disciple of Buddhism, born at Alasander. A Buddhist missionary is mentioned in the Chinese annuals in the year 217 B.C.; and its surprising spread in that country, so attached to ancestral institutions, may be estimated from the fact that in 65 A.C. it was publicly recognised by the Emperor Ming-ti, who, in the year 76, had the Buddhist canon translated into Chinese.

The developments of Buddhism in Thibet are so like those of Roman Catholicism that Mr. Davids observes of the similarities of ritual: "If all this be chance, it is a most stupendous miracle of coincidence; it is, in fact, ten thousand miracles" (Hibbert Lecture, vi., p. 193). It is now some time since the work of the courageous Abbé Hue had the honor of being put on the Index Expurgatorius for so faithfully describing how he found "The cross, the mitre, the dalmatic, the cope which the Grand Llamas wear on their journeys; the services with double choirs,

the psalmody, the exorcisms, the censers suspended by five chains, the benediction, the chaplet, ecclesiastical celibacy, spiritual retirement, worship of saints, fasts, processions, the holy water" (*Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China*, vol. ii., chap. ii., p. 50; W. Hazlitt's translation). Yet the worthy priest had by no means exhausted the list. He might have added tonsure, relics, monasteries, nunneries, bells, confession (public), penances, pilgrimages, use of flowers and lights before shrines and altars, etc. All these latter particulars were decidedly in use among the Buddhists before they found their way into Christianity. Gautama himself is said to have tonsured his son Rahula, as a sign of his dedication to the contemplative life. Saint-worship was a part of the earlier Hindu cultus. The lights before the altar evidently arose in the cave worship of Buddhism. At the death of Gautama his relics were piously collected by his disciples. His skull is still said to be in India, and his shoulder-blade and eye-tooth in Ceylon. These relics are at least as genuine as those of the Christian saints. James Ferguson, the highest living authority upon ancient architecture, asserts that the details of the early Christian Church were borrowed *en bloc* from the Buddhists. "Relic-worship," he says, "was certainly borrowed from the East, and nine-tenths of the institutes and forms of Latin Christianity from Buddhist sources" (see *Rude Stone Monuments*, pp. 499-503; 1872).

Although it has been argued that the sacerdotal and sacramental system of Thibet, with its triple-tiaraed pope, its cardinals, bishops, and shaven priests in gorgeous robes, with chaunted service in unknown tongue, has been borrowed from Roman Catholicism, we think that the impartial student is more likely to agree with the late Samuel Johnson, that "it is much less improbable that the facts are the other way—that Christian symbolism is very largely of Oriental origin. Buddhism is, as our whole account has shown, genuinely Indian. It made its way into Western Asia some time previous to the Christian era. Its influence in moulding Gnostic, Manichæan, and Neo-Platonic teachers is unquestionable" (*Oriental Religions*, vol. i., ch. vii., p. 792; 1873).

Dr. Oldenburg rightly tells us that the community established by Buddha was a "church of monks and nuns." Gautama, like Jesus, called on his followers to resign earthly possessions, to abandon father and mother, wife and child, to gain inward peace both now and hereafter. To the question whence did monkery and asceticism come into the Christian Church, the Catholics answer that St. Mark, or, still bolder, affirm, with the Abbé Migne, that Jesus was the first monk. From the evidence of Philo, Josephus, and Pliny, however, it is certain that vegetarian, celibate, and contemplative communities, which, in many respects, strikingly remind us of the Buddhists, were in existence anterior to Christianity. If the Theraputs and Essenes were Christians, as asserted by Eusebius, Epiphanius, Sozomen, Cassian, and Jerome, and as argued by De Quincey, besides many Catholic writers, we have the anachronism of Christians before Jesus, and without the distinctive mark of Christianity, the acceptance of a crucified Messiah. On the other hand, their affinities with the assemblies of the early Christians are as striking as those with Buddhism. Philo, indeed, tells us they were to be met with "in all countries, both among Greeks and barbarians," though he speaks of the greatest number as being in Egypt, and especially around Alexandria.

Now, there is a passage in the Buddhist history of Ceylon, the Mahavanso, which may countenance the idea that the monasteries near Alexandria had been planted by Buddhists. In chapter twenty-nine (p. 171, Turnour's translation) it mentions among those who came to a great conference of Buddhists "Maha Dhammarakkita, Thero of Yona, accompanied by thirty thousand priests from the vicinity of Alasadda, the capital of the Yona country." This passage opens up a nice question in ancient geography. The Yona country is about as vague a term as India was to the ancient Europeans. The term Yona, or Yavana, is said to have been derived from the Ionians or descendants of Javan, and to have been applied to the Asiatic Greeks. According to Lassen, it was used to designate the Semitic nations. Mr. Davids considers it refers to Bactria. By Alasadda is clearly meant one of the cities named after the great conqueror, and it has generally been supposed to be the Alexandria Oppiane, now known as Opiam, north of Kabul. If, however, with Hilgenfeld, we may suppose it to refer to the great trade emporium of Egypt with the

east, we have at once the direct connection between Buddhism and Egypt which would explain the hitherto unsolved enigma of the origin of the Essenes. It is true that the establishment of 30,000 Buddhist priests at Alexandria would indeed be a phenomenon of which historians have shown a strange neglect; but the whole account is evidently exaggerated, and the statement may be compared with that of St. Jerome, that as many as 50,000 met at the annual gathering of the general congregation of monasteries under St. Pachome, patriarch of the Thebaid.

Ptolemy, who is mentioned in the Asoka inscriptions, took a lively interest in the trade of India and Egypt. General Cunningham tells us that his Egyptian fleet anchored annually at Barygaza, in Western India, where we know that Buddhism flourished. Ptolemy invited colonists from all parts of the world to settle in Alexandria. The Jews went there in great numbers to escape from their Syrian masters, and later on Dion Chrysostom tells us that Hindus were not uncommon there. From the time of the expedition of Alexandria into India (B.C. 327) communication was constant with the Western world, both by means of merchants and embassies. The accounts given of the religious sects of the Hindus by Megasthenes, who lived at the court of Chandragupta, Asoka's grandfather, who had allied himself by marriage with the Syrian monarch, Seleucus Nicanor, and the later descriptions by the Syrian Christian heretic, Bardasenes, show that the Buddhists were known to the learned Western world, though not by the name of their founder. The fact, moreover, that the Christian heretic, Scythianus, took the name of Buddha, and gave out that he was born of a virgin and reared by an angel on a mountain, is not without significance. Mr. Davids tells us that "in the time of the Ceylon chronicles it was no uncommon thing for boats to cross the Indian Ocean, even at its broadest part." When we remember likewise that the Parthians, who invaded Syria and Palestine B.C. 40, would carry with them not only some knowledge of their own Parsism, but also of the great religion which had penetrated their country, we think, if it would be too bold to assert that Christianity is directly indebted to Buddhism, it would be still bolder to deny that the great Hindu missionary faith had any share in the formation of the great medley of superstitious practices and beliefs which have been so incongruously tacked on to the simple teachings of Jesus of Galilee.

BENEDICT SPINOZA.

(Concluded from page 388.)

SPINOZA appears to have quitted Rhynsburg in 1664 for Voorburg, within about a league of the Hague. His exposition of the Cartesian philosophy had brought celebrity, and he found himself obliged to intermit his studies and meditations to receive friends, and sometimes curious strangers. About two years after his arrival at Voorburg he settled finally at the Hague, boarding at first with the widow Van Velden, in a house on the Veerkay, and occupying the rooms in which Dr. Colerus, his biographer, afterwards lodged; but subsequently, finding the cost of living with Madam Van Velden too great for his means, removing to fresh quarters in the house of Henry Van den Spyck, a painter, which overlooked the Pavilion Canal; and here it was that he passed the rest of his days.

Among Spinoza's warmest friends at the Hague was the unfortunate Grand Pensioner, Jean de Witt, who was, in 1672, literally torn to pieces by an infuriated mob, who baselessly suspected him of complicity with the hated French. The philosopher himself, it may here be remarked, narrowly escaped the same fate a little later, and under the following circumstances:—Lieutenant-Colonel Stoupe, commander of a Swiss regiment in the service of France, being a man of intellectual mark, and anxious to converse with Spinoza, induced the Prince de Condé, Generalissimo of the French Army, to invite the renowned philosopher to their headquarters. The invitation was accepted, but, Condé being suddenly summoned to Paris, his guest waited a week or ten days at Utrecht in hope of his speedy return; then, as much delay occurred, Spinoza took his way back to his home at the Hague. The populace, ignorant of literary or scientific curiosity, could only

interpret the visit as treason to the State. They must have made some threatening demonstrations against the philosopher, for poor Van den Spycck became greatly alarmed, and besought his lodger to quit the house. Spinoza, disdaining flight, assured the timid man, and bade him fear nothing; "for," said he, "I can easily clear myself of all suspicion of treason. There are persons now at the Hague who know the motive of my journey, and who will right me with my townsmen. But be this as it may, should the people show the slightest disposition to molest you, should they even assemble or make a noise before your house, I will go down to them, though it should be to meet the fate of the De Witts." Fortunately, the popular fury subsided, and Spinoza and his host suffered no further molestation.

Jean De Witt was leader of the Republican party, and it was by his strenuous opposition that the Prince of Orange failed in his purpose of having himself elected Stadt-holder for life. Spinoza was Republican on principle and from impulse, feeling the dignity of independence himself, and anxious also to secure it for his fellows. A brotherly affection sprang up between these men. "In all Holland," says Mr. Froude, "there were none like these two; they had found each other now, and they loved each other as only good men love. From him Spinoza accepted a pension, not a very enormous one—some thirty-five pounds a year; the only thing of the kind he ever did accept. Perhaps because De Witt was the only person he had met who exactly understood what it was, and weighed such favors at their exact worth, neither less nor more." This pension was not, however, the only thing of the kind Spinoza ever accepted. Simon de Vries, later in life, brought him a thousand florins as a gift, or rather as a meagre instalment of a heavy debt owing by the pupil to the teacher. Spinoza "laughingly assured him that he was in no need of money, and that such a sum would turn his head. Simon then made a will, bequeathing the whole of his property to Spinoza, who, on hearing of it, at once set off for Amsterdam to remonstrate against such an act so unjust to Simon's brother. His arguments prevailed. The will was destroyed, and the brother finally inherited. Now came a struggle of generosity. The heir protested that he could not accept the property unless he were allowed to settle five hundred florins a year on the disinterested friend; and, after some debate, Spinoza agreed to accept three hundred."

These windfalls made no difference, however, in his mode of life; he was as abstemious as ever, even to the verge of indiscretion. "It approaches the incredible," says Colerus, "with how little in the shape of meat and drink he appears to have been satisfied; and it was from no necessity that he was constrained to live so poorly, but he was by nature abstemious." His ordinary daily diet consisted of a basin of milk porridge, with a little butter, costing about three-halfpence, and a draught of beer costing an additional penny. Occasionally he indulged in wine, but his consumption of that luxury never exceeded two pints a month. Once a quarter he regularly settled his accounts, "to make both ends meet, like the snake that forms a circle with its tale in its mouth," as he playfully said. "Though often invited to dinner," says pastor Colerus, "he preferred the scanty meal that he found at home to dining sumptuously at the expense of another." Yet against this man, for generations, vulgar pretenders to philosophy cast the epithets of "immoral" and "epicurean." His epicureanism stands confest to gods and men at the rate of twopence-halfpenny a day.

It must not be supposed that Spinoza was in any way parsimonious. On the contrary, he was ever liberal to the full extent of his scanty means, affording willing aid to the suffering or needy. Once, at least, he shows himself in the prominent light of a lender; for one to whom he had lent two hundred florins, as we learn, became a bankrupt; whereupon the philosopher calmly remarked: "Well, I must economise, and so make up the loss; at this cost I preserve my equanimity."

Spinoza's fame continued to extend. Early in 1673 he received an invitation, through the learned Fabricius, from the Prince Palatine, Charles Louis, to fill the vacant Chair of Philosophy in the University of Heidelberg, a lucrative and honorable post. After some hesitation, probably to avoid hurting the susceptibilities of his friend, the philosopher declined the chair, "not knowing," as he says in his answer to Fabricius, "within what precise limits the

liberty of philosophising would have to be restricted." Louis XIV. offered him a pension if he would dedicate his next work to him; this also he refused, "having no intention of dedicating anything to that monarch."

Spinoza's personal appearance is described by Colerus, in whose days there were many persons living at the Hague who had been well acquainted with the great man. He was of middling height, and slenderly built; with regular features, forehead broad and high, large eyes dark and lustrous, full dark eyebrows, and hair of the same hue, long and curling. The prevailing expression of the face was that of thought overcast with melancholy. He was never seen either sorely depressed or greatly elated. His dress was that of a sober citizen, plain yet scrupulously neat, for he despised a disorderly and slovenly carriage as a sign either of affectation or of a mean spirit. He mostly spent his time in his own room, engaged in his handiwork (at which he continued to labor), in meditation, or in writing. When wearied with these he would join Van den Spycck and his family in the evening, smoke a pipe of tobacco, and take part in their ordinary chat.

Towards the end of his life Spinoza appears to have been affected with a chronic form of pulmonary consumption. He complains frequently to correspondents of not feeling well. With the coming in of 1677 he grew more seriously indisposed. On Saturday, February 20, he wrote to his friend, Dr. Louis Meyer, requesting a visit, but was still able in the evening to join the family circle and enjoy his pipe. Early the next morning Dr. Meyer arrived, and found his patient worse than was imagined. The philosopher partook of a little chicken broth, and the worthy doctor remained in attendance with him. The painter and his family went to church, and never saw their friend in life again; he had been seized with a sudden difficulty in breathing, and passed peacefully away about three o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, February 21, 1677, aged forty-four years and three months. The funeral took place on February 25, the remains of the philosopher being followed to the grave by a numerous train of respectful inhabitants of the Hague.

Malevolent rumors were circulated as to the manner of Spinoza's death. It was reported by some that he had taken drugs and unconsciously slid into death: by others that he had been heard to exclaim: O God, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner! Colerus made inquiries concerning these rumors, which, of course, proved baseless. A sale of the philosopher's effects realised 400 florins (about £40). Rebecca Spinoza appeared on the scene, but swiftly retreated on finding no spoil. A desk, containing the immortal "Ethics" in MS., was forwarded by Van den Spycck to Jan Reinwertz, a publisher in Amsterdam.

W. Frederic Pollock's work on Spinoza is a monument of learning and criticism, and Dr. James Martineau's *Study of Spinoza* is worthy to rank beside it. Dr. Willis's *Life, Correspondence, and Ethics of Spinoza* is worth consulting, although it is said by very good authorities to be exceedingly untrustworthy. Readers of French will find an admirable translation of Spinoza's principal writings by Emile Saisset. Mr. Froude has an article on Spinoza in his *Short Studies*, and Mr. G. H. Lewes devotes to the subject a chapter of his *Biographical History of Philosophy* and an article in the *Fortnightly Review* of April 1, 1866. Mr. Matthew Arnold's essay on *Spinoza and the Bible* is written in his finest vein.

We conclude with a parting advice. Let the curious reader not be deterred by the rigorous metaphysical system of Spinoza. All such constructions are arbitrary, and of little value except as an exercise for the intellect. They are merely the forms into which a man puts such genius as he has, and that is what the earnest student will seek to discover. In Spinoza's works he will find a rich reward; for his great thoughts on religion, morals, and philosophy are like perfectly wrought statues, which every one may place in the sanctuary of his life. G. W. FOOTE.

On a Bishop.

He is so proud that, should he meet
The twelve Apostles in the street,
He'd turn his nose up at them all
And shove his Savior from the wall.

--Churchill.

THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

MR. GEORGE BEDBOROUGH'S case came on for final hearing at Bow-street Police-court on Tuesday morning. As I saw clearly enough last week, there was no further important evidence against him. Several fresh numbers of the *Adult* were put in—which proves that I was quite right in my judgment that the prosecution is really aimed at Mr. Bedborough as secretary of the Legitimation League. Mr. Avory, who appeared for the defence, stated that Dr. Havelock Ellis's book, on which the prosecution began, would be defended on principle as a scientific book. "Will you defend it?" asked Sir John Bridge. Mr. Avory said he would if he were retained for the defence; at the same time he remarked that the magistrate had no right to ask such a question. It was also announced by Mr. Avory that the alleged "indecent photographs" found in a trunk in a bedroom did not belong to Mr. Bedborough, who was surprised at their being found there. No doubt this matter will be disposed of satisfactorily. Mr. Bedborough was committed for trial, with the same bail as before, two sureties of £500 each, which strikes me as monstrously excessive. The real battle now begins. I have asked Mr. Seymour, the honorary and energetic secretary of the Free Press Defence Committee, to call a meeting immediately. The whole matter is one of considerable delicacy, and it seems to me necessary that the Committee should issue a careful manifesto, setting forth the real principle involved, and clearing away all possibility of misunderstanding. We have nothing to do with the particular principles of Dr. Havelock Ellis, Mr. George Bedborough, or any other member of the Legitimation League. Our concern is simply with the right of free publication. If the case is put in this way before the public, I for one have no doubt that we shall elicit sympathy and support. I may mention that the Committee includes many names besides my own well known to the Freethought party—such as G. J. Holyoake, Charles Watts, J. M. Robertson, Robert Buchanan, George Bernard Shaw, Herbert Burrows, Mr. Hyndman, and Mr. A. E. Fletcher. Let us hope that the principle of a free press will triumph, and Mr. Bedborough be spared the suffering and indignity of imprisonment.

G. W. FOOTE.

ACID DROPS.

THERE is a Bible character called Joseph. In his early youth his "cheek" got him into a bad row with the rest of the family. Later on he resisted the solicitations of Mrs. Potiphar, whose beauty, perhaps, was not equal to the warmth of her feelings. Finally, he became Prime Minister of Egypt, in which capacity he did a remarkably big deal in corn, which was highly successful. There is another Joseph at Chicago who has been trying his hand at a "corner" in wheat. Mr. Leiter, however, has not been as successful as the original Joseph; in fact, he has come to grief. He nearly ruined his rival, Mr. Armour, and now Mr. Armour has the better of him. No doubt it is a very pretty game that these gentlemen are playing, but the bother is that poor people have to eat dear bread in order that millionaires may add to their piles.

Mr. Hooley, the fallen millionaire, who gave that costly gold communion service to St. Paul's Cathedral, was going to build a church "if God prospered him" for the benefit of the people of the Ilkeston division of Derbyshire, which he aspired to represent in Parliament. This was one of the permissible forms of political bribery, but God hasn't prospered Mr. Hooley, and the Ilkeston people will have to look elsewhere for a new church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury thinks that the salaries of Board-school teachers are too high. But what about his own? When a man with £15,000 a year talks about the high salaries of hard-working men with £100 or so, he is guilty of the grossest indecency. What is more, he invites a reduction in his own case. And the sooner it is made the better. Every minister of Jesus Christ is bound in honor to be as poor as possible, and an Archbishop ought to be the poorest of the lot.

What a pity it is that Spain has not a statesman with sufficient courage to propose to put an end to the present war by suing for a more or less honorable peace. The longer the struggle is continued the more Spain must

suffer. It will be a wonder if the whole nation is not reduced to bankruptcy and anarchy in the course of a few months, supposing the war to last so long.

A pretty state of affairs obtains in Italy. The country is almost under martial law already. There is also talk of having to suspend the constitution in Austria. Altogether, the nineteenth century is ending badly all round. Progress, after all, is not an affair of years, but of generations, centuries, and millenniums. Reformers must have patience. It is no use trying to put on the hands of the clock of time. We have to wait for the movement of the works inside.

The vicar of a Kentish parish, according to Mr. Hardy Harwood, told a woman whose child had died unbaptised that it could not have gone to heaven. "Well, sir," she replied, "if the child has not gone to heaven, it's a poor chance for you and me." She had him there.

Bournemouth has decided not to have Sunday music on the Corporation Pier. We also hear that its Free Library committee exercises a very careful censorship. Hall Caine's *The Christian* and Thomas Hardy's *Tess* are not admitted. The latter book is almost a classic. It is too great, honest, and outspoken for the little greengrocer minds of the Bournemouth committee.

The grand jury at the Old Bailey have returned a true bill against Henry James Arthur Marsh, one of the "Peculiar People," who is charged with manslaughter in consequence of the death of his child under the prayer-without-medicine system. We shall watch this case closely, as already announced, with a view to making a special protest against orthodox hypocrisy. We hold that these "Peculiar People" are the true Christians, and that it is the sham Christians who prosecute them.

Oh, the humbug of Rome! Some time ago a Catholic professor startled the world—or rather the silly part of it, which is a very big one—with the announcement that he had discovered an original sketch of the Crucifixion on an old Roman wall. Eventually it turned out to be a comic, and even an obscene, sketch of something else. Now we have another wonder—namely, a photograph taken from the Holy Shroud, which, of course, is itself a Popish imposture. "The noble figure," we are told, "has come forth anatomically elegant, perfect, and divinely beautiful." Even the marks of the scourging are all there, and the mark of the rope that bound "the Savior" to the pillar. Reproductions of this disgraceful fraud—easily intelligible to anyone who understands photography—will be placed upon the market, and Jesus Christ will once more be "good business" for the greedy tricksters of the Holy Catholic Church.

On Wednesday, June 18, a fresh Spanish fleet set sail from Cadiz for God knows where. One Spanish fleet was annihilated at Manila, and another is bottled up at Santiago. This third one, however, ought to give a good account of itself—that is to say, if it only succeeds in meeting an American fleet, which, it must be admitted, is rather problematical. For this last fleet, the only one that Spain has got left, was solemnly blessed by the bishop on its departure from Cadiz. The admiral's flag had been embroidered by the ladies of the city, and this was also blessed by the man of God. A hymn was sung by the crew to Mary, Star of the Sea, and every sailor received the apostolical benediction. There you are. We sha'n't be long now. The Yankees had better look out. They can't expect to fight the Mother of God.

The American clergy, as usual, are going it blind over the poor little war with Spain. They are talking of America's "Christian mission," of which the liberation of Cuba is only a beginning. Apparently they mean that Uncle Sam shall go all over the world as the Don Quixote of Christianity. If he does, he will come to grief. We hope he will be proof against the hypocritical eloquence of the men of God, who would send him out to fight while they stop at home and take up the collection.

Admiral Dewey, the commander of the United States navy at Manila, was stated to be a Catholic by the *Universe* of Cleveland, Ohio. It appears, however, that he is an Episcopalian. But it doesn't much matter what his religious denomination is when it comes to fighting the Spaniard. Admiral Dewey's battle creed had very little sectarianism in it. This is what it was: "Keep cool and obey orders," and "Damn the torpedoes."

War is not an unmixed benefit, even to the United States. The publishers over there complain that very little money is now spent on the purchase of books. Newspapers are almost the only reading. One of the chief booksellers in New York says he could save money by shutting up his shop till the war is over.

On reading the *Pilgrim's Progress* the other day we met with the following passage: "I espied a little before me a cave where two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old time—I have learnt since that Pagan has been dead many a year; and, as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is by reason of age grown so crazy and stiff in his joints that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them." At the time when the "Established" Church is staggering towards Rome and the mummeries of the dark ages, and Secularism is permeating everywhere, it is curious to note the contempt with which Bunyan treated the two most potent forces with which he came in contact—Superstition and Rationalism.

Wanted: A new definition of irony. According to the dictionaries, it is "a mode of speech expressing a sense contrary to that which the speaker intends to convey." That is at once the classic and the popular usage—simple, elementary irony. The street arab uses it when he shouts "Hullo, Trilby!" after a lady cyclist with large feet. According to Pascal, there is the highest authority for this rhetorical figure, for the Almighty was the first jokist when He said, upon giving Adam a week's notice in Eden: "Behold, the man is become as one of us."

"A Spiritualist," writing in *Light*, says that Secularists "see the world through smoked glasses," and this is why Secularism "dwindles rather than grows, and is, for all purposes of social usefulness and human service, but a spent force in our midst." Perhaps this writer will send us a sample of the "smoked glasses," with a pair of the sort through which he contemplates the universe. What he says about "poetry" is simply ridiculous. We venture to say that there are more lovers of poetry, as poetry, amongst Secularists than amongst Spiritualists. We have looked into some so-called poetry affected by the latter, and found it to be mostly nonsense of the sentimental variety.

Drunken women get on well before the magistrate of Essex Market Police-court, New York City. This gentleman recently had Catherine Benson and Mary Mullen before him. They were arrested in the Bowery in a state of intoxication. "Are you churchwomen?" he asked. "Yes, your Honor," they replied. "Will you go to the father [the Catholic priest, we presume] and tell him what you were doing last night?" "We will, your Honor." "Well, you can go then." And they went.

The methods adopted by the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus to further their creed are often startling, but the following example of pious fraud in a well-known school book is worthy of special note. In Mackenzie's *Nineteenth Century*, page 14, occurs this foot-note: "The primary object of Voltaire's attack was Christianity as represented by the Roman Catholic Church of his day," etc. On the next page Voltaire is politely referred to as "the withered unbeliever."

In another book by the same unbiassed author, *America: A History*, page 104, another great Freethinker is thus sneered at: "Conspicuous amongst those whose writings aided in convincing the public mind stands the unhonored name of Thomas Paine, the infidel." It is well to mention that both these volumes are published by Messrs. T. Nelson and Sons, Paternoster-row.

By the way, it is well to remind Freethinkers that Paine, as a writer, is not wanting in the more finished graces of imagery and metaphor. Even Burke himself might have envied the illustration of his own too exclusive compassion for the sufferings of the *noblesse* in the French Revolution. "Mr. Burke pities the plumage, but he forgets the dying bird." Shelley thought this so excellent that he used it as the title of one of his own pamphlets.

A recent traveller in the Holy Land, it is said, has discovered Jacob's well, and it is painful to reflect that, as it is not an oil well, the discovery has created very little excitement.

Evangelist John McNeill has emigrated from the Agricultural Hall and found a new Lord's vineyard at the Albert Hall, which is being used the first time in its history for a "mission." The rent has been reduced for a fortnight to £760. Of course there is John to pay and other expenses, so a good many souls will have to be saved to yield a profit. The congregation was not large at the opening service. The Prince of Wales was holding a levee, and that (said John) has "kept a lot of our friends away."

There were a lot of little cupids on the Fine Arts building in Omaha, U. S. A., but they are there no longer. A Salvation Army lass was so offended at their nudity that she climbed the building at dead of night and threw them all down, reducing them to "several bushels of arms, legs, and

other parts." As they were perched up fifty feet high, the young lady's notions of propriety were very elevated. She reminds us of two American spinsters who lodged a complaint against boys bathing in the river about half a mile from their house. "Wasn't it too far off for you to see?" asked the lawyer. "No," they said, "we had a spy glass in the house."

John Frederick Irwin had to appear before "the beak" at Torquay on a charge of bigamy, which was really trigamy. He had two wives living when he married the third. "Religion," say the newspaper reports, "formed a prominent feature" of his letters to the young lady he had just deceived.

There is a constant increase in the number of books produced annually, but there is one department of literature which is rapidly falling off. Writing in the *Sunday Magazine*, Mr. Shaylor points out that a very great decline has taken place in the production of religious books. As a matter of fact, even the sky-pilots have taken to writing fiction.

Once the writings of Dean Goulburn, the Rev. Newman Hall, Bishop Oxenden, the Rev. J. R. Macduff, and other authors of religious books, sold like the most popular novels. Now most of these have a very flickering existence; soon there will be no market whatever for them. This is certainly very significant, and illustrates with startling clearness the changed attitude of the general public towards religious literature.

According to Mr. W. T. Stead, the thing that most cheered Gladstone on his death-bed was the news that "his granddaughter, a bright, *spirituelle* young maiden of twenty, had decided to dedicate herself to the work of a Christian missionary to the heathen who sit in darkness." "The dying statesman," Mr. Stead says, "thrilled with joy at the thought that his grandchild had chosen the better part."

"The heathen who sit in darkness" are, we presume, the heathen who have not heard of Christ. Well, if there is anything you don't know, you are in darkness to that extent; but as far as real, practical darkness—*moral* darkness—is concerned, there is plenty of it within a very measurable distance of Hewarden Castle. The young lady need not go to India, or China, or even Central Africa. She would find large quantities of such heathen at Liverpool, for instance, or at Manchester, which has a Protestant bishop, or Salford, which has a Roman Catholic one. Drunkenness and brutality exist in our great cities which cannot be paralleled amongst the technical heathen of far-off lands.

No wonder the clergy don't object to lawn tennis. It is seldom played on Sunday; it costs too much to wall-in the back garden.

One of the resolutions on the agenda of the Trade Unions' Congress at Bristol is down in the name of the Bookbinders and Machine Rulers' Consolidated Union. It requests the Government to refuse a licence to print the Bible unless the firms concerned pay Trade Union wages. What a satire on the "Holy Bible" business that such a resolution should be necessary!

The *Church Gazette* publishes a story which looks like one of Mr. Ben Trovato's. A woman who attended one of the Protestant meetings at Clermont Ferrand, a French town of fifty thousand inhabitants, went to a bookseller's and asked for a New Testament. The bookseller had never heard of it. "A New Testament?" he said; "I have not heard of the book. I suppose it is not out yet. If you like, I will write to Paris and get you a copy as soon as it is out." We guess this is a Protestant dig at the Roman Catholics.

The clergy are always telling us that "stories first heard at a mother's knee are never wholly forgotten." Quite so; but rules of conduct first enforced at the same place leave a far more vivid impression.

Nonconformists used to call the theatre "the Devil's house," and music-halls were the cesspools of hell. At the Lyceum Theatre recently, however, Dr. and Mrs. Parker were in the front row of the dress circle, while in the stalls below were the Rev. W. J. Dawson and the Rev. Joseph Hocking, enjoying the performances of Cissy Loftus and Dan Leno. Mr. Horace B. Marshall (Price Hughes's publisher) was also present. It is not reported what his pastor thought of it.

Wood Green is a flourishing London suburb, but it seems to contain a good many vulgar people, who were probably reinforced by a large contingent of the same quality from other parts of the Metropolis. There were three thousand of them in all, and they assembled on the cycle track, having

paid so much per head to see a contest for £200 between two butchers, one hailing from America and the other from Deptford. Each champion had to skin, clean, and chop two beasts ready for the market in the shortest possible time. The crowd were delighted with the dirty spectacle. Some of them regretted that they were not also allowed to watch the killing. No doubt Wood Green does its share in subscribing for Missions to the Heathen.

The word "God" cannot be found in the American constitution, because it was thought best to put it in a more conspicuous place—on the almighty dollar.

Monsignor Vaughan, brother of Cardinal Vaughan, was a witness in the Sykes case—with which, by the way, the public is getting quite nauseated. Sir Tatton Sykes is a very rich man, and it is natural that the Romish prelate should pay him great attention. He is not yet a member of the only true Church, but there are hopes of him, for he appears to be growing very soft in the upper storey. "He seemed to me," said Father Vaughan, "to act in a state of semi-consciousness"—and again, "he was a man of very defective memory." Still, he had his lucid intervals, for on one occasion he said to the Father, "Don't you think we are all descended from the monkeys?"

"You are still hoping," the judge said to Father Vaughan, "that he may be a distinguished member of your Church?" "He once," said Father Vaughan, "expressed his intention of joining us. That was when he promised to build a new cathedral." Now we understand why the Romish prelate was "cultivating" the millionaire. However, the cathedral isn't built yet. Sir Tatton Sykes is not even yet a "distinguished member" of the Catholic Church.

A condemned man, who was not sure he was going to be "jerked to Jesus," has been hanged. He should have had a new trial, for the probability is that he was innocent. People who actually commit murder never seem to have any doubts about their salvation.

A year ago there was a hailstorm in Essex. A relief fund was started, and the accounts are now published. £45,147 has been spent on relieving the worst cases of distress, and a great deal of general damage remains uncompensated. The number of relief cases dealt with was 3,188. All that damage was done in the small space of seven minutes, and it was what the law calls "the act of God."

"General" Booth addressed four hundred ministers at Philadelphia. Perhaps they wanted to get a few wrinkles from the grand old showman. What he said to them, however, was not precisely exhilarating. "You won't let a man drown himself," he said, "and why let him damn himself? Are you satisfied to amuse people on their way to hell? You say you believe that their souls are in danger, and yet your service is to tickle them with entertainments, to preach milk-and-water twaddle over their heads. The fact is, you don't believe your belief." At that point the four hundred ministers all laughed. Very likely they thought that Booth was an old fool to believe it himself.

Booth doesn't give the people entertainments. Oh dear no! You couldn't honestly give that name to the Salvation Army *al fresco* performances. They rather remind a good many of us of what Heine called the howlings of the menagerie of the Apocalypse. Mr. D'Eyncourt, the North London police magistrate, has just granted a lady applicant a summons against a Salvation Army captain who "goes on" outside her house and won't move on, like an organ grinder, because he's doing the work of the Lord. We hope not to miss this case when it comes on for hearing.

More blessing of arms! The Montenegrin army has a regiment of Princely Guards, who have just been presented with Russian repeating rifles. Every weapon has been solemnly blessed. No doubt it will shoot straight, especially at an infidel Mohammedan.

Emperor William has just told his army, for, perhaps, the thousandth time, that its great duty is "absolute iron blind obedience." The army is to believe in him, as he believes in God. He will tell the soldiers who are God's enemies, and all they have to do is to shoot where he points his finger. His finger and God's are the same. It isn't even "God and me" with William—it is "me and God." Billy first.

A boy named T. Bainbridge met a horrible death by falling into a burning coke oven at East Heaton Colliery. Of course he was completely cremated. It was thought advisable to hold a burial service at the oven, and Canon Burnet, a local clergyman, officiated. Probably he meant well, but according to his creed it is on the whole rather probable that

the poor boy's cremation is being continued in another establishment.

Sir John Gorst played the part of candid friend to his own (the Tory) party in his speech on the Education Vote in the House of Commons. They are very fond of the so-called Voluntary schools, which they have recently subventioned afresh to the tune of £600,000 a year. Most of those schools belong to the Church of England, and are maintained in its interest; in fact, the Archbishop of Canterbury has recently said that those schools must be looked to as recruiting grounds for the future defenders and maintainers of the Establishment. But those schools give a very poor education, and Sir John Gorst plainly said so. In London, for instance, there are 513,000 children in Board schools, and 224,000 in Voluntary schools; yet the Board school children carry off 299, and the Voluntary school children only 26, of the junior county scholarships given by the Technical Instruction Committee. In Manchester the Board school children, numbering 42,000, carry off 40 scholarships, and the Voluntary school children, numbering 52,000, carry off only 2. In Liverpool the Board school children, numbering 37,000, carry off 16 scholarships, and the Voluntary school children, numbering 74,000, carry off only 2. The cream of the teachers, trained in Church colleges, go into the Board school service, where they are better paid and treated with greater respect.

On the whole, Sir John Gorst's speech was a melancholy one. It showed that education is being ruined in England in the interest of religious sectarianism. We are a long way behind other nations which we are in the habit of regarding as inferior to ourselves, and unless we soon put a stop to the squabbling of sects in the schoolroom, and insist on having the very best secular education available—leaving religion to be looked after by the Churches themselves—we shall be hopelessly outstripped in the race of civilization, and beaten out of the commercial markets of the world.

The Welsh Independents held a meeting recently in the Memorial Hall, London, and resolved to stand together in the coming war with sacerdotalism. A resolution was also passed urging the churches to train the young thoroughly in the Scriptures. We hope that resolution will not be carried out. The Bible is, in many parts, a dirty, corrupting book for "the young." Jehovah, for instance, selects the Jews as his chosen people, and sets a mark upon them—at least upon all the males. That mark was circumcision. Well, the youngsters are to be taught that, are they? And is it likely they won't ask what circumcision is? And how are you going to explain it—especially to the little girls? The fact is, Jehovah must have been a dirty-minded old god to take circumcision as his trade mark.

We protest against "the young" being thoroughly trained in the Bible laws against fornication, adultery, and bestiality. Why should their tender minds be poisoned with such stuff as this? We also protest against their being thoroughly trained in narratives like that of Lot and his daughters, Judah and Tamar, and the Levite and his concubine. The man who thrusts such reading into a child's hand is far worse than a burglar, and he is no cleaner for being dressed in black.

Poor Albert Edward has been hauled over the coals by the Council of the Church Association. Not having a proper fear of true blue Protestantism before his eyes, he has allowed the Imperial Institute to be used for a bazaar on behalf of a Roman Catholic institution. The Church Association reminds him that it is his duty to "keep aloof from the Pope of Rome and his agents." If the Protestants go on like this, they will drive poor Albert Edward into taking a long holiday at Paris.

The Devil to Pay.

The Rev. Mr. Atkin, pastor of the flock of Bethel Church, on Sunday night took for his theme, "His Satanic Majesty." He is an eloquent man, and he painted the arch-fiend in vivid colors. At the culmination of the description a being, dressed to represent the Devil, with large head and switching tail, ambled up the aisle, blowing smoke from its nostrils and bellowing: "I am the Devil, and I want all of you!" The audience became panic-stricken. Men, women, and children were hurled to the floor and trampled upon in the mad rush for the door. In the confusion the stove was upset, and the building caught fire. Before the horrified members had regained their senses, the fire had made such headway that all attempts to save the church were in vain. Now George Atkin, son of the parson, confesses that he, in company with other boys, rigged up a devil suit, and, knowing the subject of his father's sermon, concealed himself behind a chair and waited the arrival of the audience.—*Chicago Times Herald.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 26, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. : 7.30, "The Ladies of the Bible."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

R. FARQUHARSON.—George Bernard Shaw is a very clever man, with the defects of his qualities. Most of his criticism on Shakespeare consists of flippant impertinences, which we fancy he must laugh at himself in seclusion. The many editions of Shakespeare that are published—and the number increases yearly—prove that there is nothing forced and artificial in the public appreciation of his writings. A contemporary author may have a popularity out of all proportion to his merits, but this can hardly be the case with an author who has been dead nearly three hundred years.

BRITON.—You are quite mistaken. There are more good philosophical books now published in French than there are in English. A glance at the lists of Alcan and Hachette—to go no further—is sufficiently convincing.

W. P. BALL, whose name will be very familiar to a good many of our readers, writes: "Please put me down as a member of the new Incorporation, the Secular Society, Limited. I enclose ten shillings herewith for that purpose." We are much pleased to have Mr. Ball's early adhesion, as we know him to be a man of high character and strong judgment.

MISS WARREN.—Mr. Forder has handed us your note, and we thank you for your good wishes. It is pleasant to know that we have appreciative lady readers.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—S. Hartmann, £50, as promised for the first year.

W. D. ROLLEY.—Thanks for the copy of Rev. W. Earle's appeal to the Clerkenwell electors to vote for him as their new vicar. It is indeed amusing to find him appealing "to Atheists" as well as others. He leaves the result "in the hands of Him," etc., etc. All the five candidates, as you remark, do the same thing; so we presume that God will settle it over the heads of the voters, which is unconstitutional.

E. T. B.—Thanks. But could you not send us your name and address, not of course for publication?

JAMES NEATE (Bethnal Green Branch) suggests that subscription cards should be sent to Branch secretaries to collect for the Wheeler Fund. We will try to have some printed.

NON DER.—Pleased to hear from you. We are not able to send you books to read. You might begin by reading some of Colonel Ingersoll's lectures, which can be obtained through Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. He will also send you a catalogue of Freethought publications if you ask him. We shall be pleased to see the correspondence you refer to.

A. B. MOSS.—You do not say so, but we presume it is for the Wheeler Fund. It is so acknowledged elsewhere.

W. T. PITT.—The Birmingham Branch has done handsomely for the Wheeler Fund. We hope other Branches will follow its example.

P. SABINE.—See paragraph.

J. G. BARTRAM.—It is no good announcing meetings to be held before we publish. For the rest see paragraph.

A. H. B.—It was Jesus himself who spoke of Jonah's being in the whale's belly. See Matthew ix. 40.

LOUIS LEVINE.—Many thanks.

J. NORTHCOTT.—Thanks. We are always glad to receive useful papers or cuttings.

HARRY ORGAN writes: "I notice a different feature in 'Acid Drops.' Whoever assists you in their composition is deserving of praise." We beg to assure this correspondent that Mr. Foote has written all the paragraphs himself since Mr. Wheeler's pen left the paper, with the exception of about half-a-dozen in all the numbers together. There were fifteen columns from the editor's pen in last week's *Freethinker*. Of course he doesn't intend to go on at this rate, but he is bound to for the present.

W. E. COLEMAN (San Francisco).—Pleased to have your sympathetic note, although we do not share your spiritualist philosophy. If there is a future life, which Mr. Wheeler did not believe, our dear old friend and colleague certainly deserved a good place in it. He was "a good man and true," as you say.

REDHILL.—Hardly permissible, we fancy; yet the change would be striking, as well as in agreement with Pilate's whole attitude. CHARLES WATTS has shifted his residence to 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. Friends and correspondents will please note.

W. H. SPIVEY (Huddersfield) sends ten shillings to become a member of the Secular Society, Limited. He heartily congratulates Mr. Foote on having "accomplished the Charter," and asks, "What will the croakers have to say now, I wonder?"

FRANK BUTT.—Acknowledged as desired.

E. G. JAMES.—The matter has already been referred to in "Acid Drops." You must have overlooked it. Thanks all the same. With regard to your unstamped letter being returned, it was not returned by us personally. Mr. Forder takes in our letters at 28 Stonecutter-street, and if it were known that he took in and paid twopence on unstamped letters, a lot of malicious Christians would send us a large quantity. How could he tell what was inside your envelope?

R. CARROLL.—Glad to see your handwriting again. What are the "saints" doing in Belfast now?

ALFRED HALLAM.—Thanks. Sorry to hear you have been ill, but hope you are now quite recovered.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Public Opinion—Truthseeker—People's Newspaper—Progressive Thinker—Light—Free Society—Pantheon—New York Herald—Sydney Bulletin—Open Court—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Fashion—New Century—Daily Chronicle—Daily Mail—Secular Thought—Crescent—Lucifer—Daylight—Torch of Reason.

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.

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

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

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

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

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 on Sunday evening at the Athenæum Hall. There was a good audience, considering the sudden advent of the long-delayed summer. Mr. Thurlow made a capital chairman. Mr. Foote occupies the same platform again this evening (June 26), taking for his subject "The Ladies of the Bible," with special reference to the recently-published book by the Rev. Dr. Horton.

The last number to hand of our valued contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*, contains a portrait of the late J. M. Wheeler, and a long extract from Mr. Foote's address at his graveside.

Mr. A. B. Moss had a crowded audience on Sunday morning in Hyde Park, and another in the evening at Hammer-smith. In the afternoon in Hyde Park he did not get on so well. He was crushed in between the West London Mission (Price Hughes's lot) on the one side, and a raving Christian lunatic on the other. It was impossible for one man to hold his own against a near body of hymn-singers. The inspector of police said that Mr. Moss was badly treated, and that a letter would be sent to Mr. Hughes on the subject. We hope it has been sent.

The Camberwell Branch has been and is doing good work in the way of open-air propaganda during the summer. Large meetings are held on Peckham Rye, and the local Freethinkers should rally to the support of the platform. There is a fellow called Taylor on the Christian side, who appears to imagine that his fame as the Autolycus of teapots gives him a right to disturb Freethought meetings, and he is supported by the baser sort of Christians, although the better sort regard him with contemptuous disdain. Being allowed to oppose (that was a mistake) last Sunday, he refused to descend from the platform after finishing his speech, and the chairman (Mr. Sabine) had to pull him off. The police came to the protection of the Secularists, who were threatened by the Taylor gang. What is wanted is the presence of a dozen robust Freethinkers around the platform to sustain the chairman in keeping order. A dozen would be quite enough to cow a horde of bullies, who are always cowards when it comes to the test.

Mr. C. Cohen had two capital open-air meetings at Newcastle on Sunday, in spite of the threatening weather, which diminished the number of holiday-makers on the Moor. His lectures gave great satisfaction, and the audiences much enjoyed his replies to opponents. Mr. Cohen lectures at Newcastle again to-day (June 26), in the morning on the Quayside, and in the evening on the Moor edge. It is to be hoped the platform will be well supported by the Freethinkers.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway has been talking freely before the Brooklyn Philosophical Association. "Hawaii," he said, "was happy before the missionaries colonised it. I've been through missionary estates there that were like an earl's in magnificence. You're liable now to imprisonment if you

sell a glass of soda on Sunday in Honolulu." "There was far less liberty after the Declaration," Mr. Conway said, "than under the old monarchy." Americans won't like this, but if it is true they had better hear it. Mr. Conway declares that "The absolutism of a majority is the liberty of America," and he contrasts this with the true republicanism that was taught by Thomas Paine.

Mr. John C. Kenworthy is a very estimable man, whatever we may think of the new brand of Christianity which he offers to the public. He is announced to give a series of addresses at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on the evenings of July 4-8 inclusive, designed to "apply the teachings of Jesus to modern life." The meetings are timed from one to two o'clock, and questions and discussions "will be welcomed."

The *Glasgow Weekly Citizen* contains two "advanced" articles, one on "Culture and Religion," pointing out the backward state of the churches, and the other on "The Protoplasmic Jelly Bag," with some interesting remarks on human evolution. The writer refers to the "useless jelly-bags of modern society," whose "intellectual and moral apathy" renders them more hopeless and dangerous than even the positively bad.

IN THE CONFESSIONAL.

STRANGE STORY OF A FALLEN EASTBOURNE GIRL.

THE *Morning* gives publicity to an extraordinary revelation made at a meeting of the Eastbourne Guardians. It concerns a girl, aged 17, who had been confined in the maternity ward, and who, on the recommendation of a number of ladies, was transferred to the Cliff Vale Home at Hastings, which is, it is said, under the patronage of the Bishop of Winchester.

Before the girl left the workhouse it was explained to her and to her parents that she must first be christened; and the workhouse chaplain (the Rev. G. P. Syree) did, it seems, christen her and the baby also. When they got to the home at Hastings she and the baby were christened again.

CONFESSION QUESTIONS.

The oddest part of the story is still to come. After being at Hastings three or four months the girl returned to Eastbourne, and brought with her some books, her confirmation card, a card which was 100 days' "indulgence," and a book given to her by Sister Emily in which were prayers to the Virgin Mary. Another book gave full particulars as to how this girl and others had to make their private confessions to the father in charge. There were 110 questions to which she had to give answers. One question was, "Have I committed adultery?" and another was, "Have I committed—" (an act of immorality). After this came another question—"How often?"

"DANGEROUS AND CRUEL."

One of the guardians said it seemed to him a most abominable thing that girls who had been in such a position, and whom it was sought to rescue, should be placed in the hands of men who would put these questions. He did think it was a very dangerous and cruel thing. He thought it was nothing but Romanism pure and simple.

THE BISHOP TO ANSWER.

After some discussion, the clerk was directed to inquire into the matter, and communicate with the Bishop of Chichester and the chaplain.

—*Star*.

Some Use for the Bible.

It seems that gold leaf for decorative purposes is, as a matter of business, packed in little books made up of the unbound pages of Holy Writ cut to the requisite size for the purpose and stitched together. The practice of packing the material in this way is a well-established one, and the Bible is selected for this purpose because, as a rule, the type is more evenly set, and the printing generally finer and better executed. On the other hand, I hear from other sources that the use of the Bible is looked upon as a sort of guarantee that the leaf is of the best possible quality. It appears that the Book of Common Prayer is also employed for the same purpose. Gold-leaf books are made up and supplied to the trade by an enterprising firm in Birmingham. An enterprising gentleman in London also supplied them. It is evident that the books are made up from the sheets in the condition in which they leave the press, and before they are folded. What do the printers say?—*Ceylon Standard*.

THE BLESSED BREWER; OR, "THE BREAD OF LIFE" AND "EAU DE VIE."

"Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."—PROVERBS xxxi. 5, 6.
"Wine which cheereth God and man."—JUDGES ix. 13.

EXCUSE me, Christ, but don't you think
You made a foolish blunder
In filling drunken folk with drink?
No wonder people wonder!

The good teetotal folk are riled
To think you could have done it;
The story makes them all so wild,
They do their best to shun it.

To turn good water into wine,
Instead of wine to water,
Out-Herods mesmerising swine,
And makes the saved teetot'ler whine:
"O Blessed Jesus, Savior mine!
You really didn't oughter!"

Perhaps you didn't think it wrong,
Because you always stated:
"Prepare! for now we sha'n't be long!
Earth soon will be cremated!"

Your Dad, in days of "Auld Lang Syne,"
When gods ne'er thought of thinking,
Was very fond of blood and wine,
And praised the joys of drinking.

Your Pa's to be excused—although
He's worse than any other—
Because he lived so long ago,
And never had a mother.

But you had one, and lived in days
When Pagan Thought had made you
Ashamed of half your Father's ways;
I therefore must upbraid you.

I doubt—though those that bear your name
May rave, protest, and gibber—
If Jews were very much to blame
For calling you a "bibber."

You brewed for feasting, *fuddled* folk
An "extra special" stingo;
Now, *sober* folk in vain invoke
Your help, in ev'ry lingo.

You know that pious people say
Your "tippie" wasn't heady;
Like those of old, your friends to-day
To lie are always ready.

Your life began and closed with wine;
A "bibber" you went through it;
You told your friends, for "Auld Lang Syne,"
To drink to you; *they do it*.

To drink to you for "Auld Lang Syne"
You now can see is risky,
Since many blame your cup of wine
For luring them to whisky.

We live and learn; so, Christ, your wit—
Though little you possess of it—
Must show you now you ne'er were fit
To teach the world; so just admit
You've made an awful mess of it.

Envoy.

The Christian Godists all make game
Of *all the gods* but *their* one;
Of *all—and theirs*—I do the same,
My game's an all-round *fair* one.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

E. T. B., 10s.; collection at A. B. Moss's lecture, 5s.; J. F. and H. Organ, 3s.; Frank Butt, 3s. 6d.; J. Williams, 2s.; T. Carwardine, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. E. Beard, 2s.; Richard Carroll, 11s.; Alfred Hallam, 7s. 6d.

Birmingham Branch:—Proceeds of Percy Ward's lecture and concert, £3 3s. 5d.; E. Taylor, 3s.; W. T. Pitt, 2s.; J. H. E., 2s.

Per S. Hartmann:—G. F. Wenborn, £5 5s.; S. Hartmann, £2 2s.

Per Miss Vance:—W. S. M., 5s.; W. Fowler, 1s.

Per T. J. Thurlow:—Jewish Friend, 1s. 6d.; Two Friends, 1s.
Per R. Forder:—M. A. M., £1; W. Muller, 2s.; Johnny, 2s. 6d.; E. Calvert, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Pearce, 4s.

IT IS TIME TO BURN PARADISE.

THE old Sieur de Joinville tells the following story: "Yves, a preaching friar, one day met an old woman who carried in the right hand a brazier containing fire, and in the left hand a flask of water. Yves said to her, 'What are you going to do?' She answered that with the fire she meant to burn paradise, and with the water to extinguish hell. And he asked, 'Why should you do that?' 'Because,' she replied, 'I do not wish any man to do right for the sake of heaven or from fear of hell, but simply for the love of God.'"

The spirit of this parable is excellent. It shows that even in the Middle Ages some minds were acute enough to see that heaven and hell were not natural necessities. They recognised the baseness of motive which led a man to be honest for the sake of New Jerusalem coin, and to shun fraud out of dread of the ovens of Satan. But these minds did not dare to go a step further. They did not dare to send God to eternal exile. But this step must also be taken. With God's machinery must vanish God himself. If we give a cup of cold water to the thirsty, it must be neither out of desire of heaven, or alarm at hell, or love of God.

These three things all belong to the same class, and that is why, if one must be abolished, the three must be abolished. They are all ropes and pulleys to drag a man up to morality, instead of leaving him to walk up himself. If I offer a child a bag of sweets in order to induce him to tell the truth, and if he takes the sweets and tells the truth, he is not a truthful child; he is a child who likes sweets; he will grow up a good Christian; he will tell the truth as a means of securing a place in heaven; in other words, he will not be a moral man. If I threaten a child with a flogging in case he ill-uses the cat, and if he pets the creature in order to avoid my whip, he is not a kind-hearted child; he is a child who fears a flogging; he will grow up a good Christian; he will do good to animals lest he should go into the oven; in other words, he will not be a moral man. If I rouse in a man a sense of affection for an unseen God in order to train him into habits of justice to his fellow-citizens, and if he builds hospitals and founds scholarships, and erects free libraries as means of winning God's smile and friendship, he is not a humane man; he is a man who loves a metaphysical authority; in other words, he is not a moral man.

What then? Were the men and women who did noble deeds, and who also believed in heaven, hell, and God, not moral? Let us distinguish. When St. Vincent de Paul set a galley-slave free and took his place and bore his punishment, he would have said, if asked, that he did this for the love of God and for the love of man. But if the thought of God had suddenly been blotted out of his mind, would St. Vincent de Paul have thrown off the convict's coat and said: "Confound it! What am I doing here? Am I making a fool of myself for the sake of a fellow-man?" No. I will wager that he would have stayed in the galleys. Then was all the profession of belief in God a mere pretence? No. It was an imperfect intellectual expression of a real human sentiment. From the beginning of our race men have dwelt in a land of shadows, of spirits, of metaphysical essences. All life and love and hate and splendor and sin they referred to the shadow-land, to the spirit-land, the land of metaphysics. Little by little this environment of shadows has disappeared. The mist has been clearing. And in the same proportion man has become aware of his own capacities. He is discovering the wonderful contents of his own breast. He is commencing to know himself. The spring of goodness he finds in his own heart. The seed of malice he traces to his own nature. The majesty of God he unveils in his own manhood. He becomes aware of himself, of his own motives. The shadows may depart, heaven may be burned, hell may be quenched, God may disappear as the morning dew. Man discovers that the apparatus of theology is no longer necessary. The world of good and evil is in himself. He commits crimes and judges them; and, having fallen into the mire, extricates himself and rises to better things; he is the sinner and the savior; he is the devil, and he is also the victorious prince of righteousness.

I can readily believe that, in years gone by, the theo-

logical apparatus had its uses. The Ptolemaic astronomy was mistaken, but it kept the thoughts of astronomers more clear and agile than if they had held no theory at all. The old alchemy was clogged with a thousand superstitious notions concerning substances and their magical properties, but it was the best possible method of experimentation and research. The Christian theology was an elaborate misconception of the cosmos and man, but it was more useful than a mere gaping astonishment at the facts of life. But the day of Ptolemy is past. Alchemy died long ago. And the Christian theology has served its turn, and it must be erased from the journals of our newer life. But how do we know that the time for revolution has come? We know it because the bulk of the educated classes privately put aside all theological creeds. We know it because many men and women have suffered persecution and boycott sooner than confess themselves believers in Christianity. We know it because on all sides we see good actions done without any conscious connection with a world beyond nature.

This, in reality, is the question which many well-meaning people entertain such serious doubts upon. They quite easily see that the Christian gospel is no longer credible by disciplined and instructed minds. They perceive that we no longer live under the conditions which made Christianity believable by Wiclif, or Lord Bacon, or John Milton. But, they urge, it would be fatal to tell the people that the myth is explained. No. As soon as a truth can be thought, it is time to utter it. A man—a nation—may keep back a declaration of opinion while the brain is confused and the mind fluctuates here and there and waits for stronger proof. The man should keep silence. The nation may retain its Established Church. But the moment the man is convinced, he must speak. The moment the intelligent classes of a community have abandoned a creed, they should state the new position. Truth has always a right to announce itself. Truth need never wait until the lacqueys of expediency open the door. Truth may tear off a mask without asking leave of fashion. Truth may speak face to face with the English people without going, cap in hand, to the politicians. And the hour is now ripe for letting the proclamation of truth be heard by gentleman and proletariat, and old men and children, that the Bible must give place to a higher literature; that Christ must recede before a grander ideal; that Christianity must surrender its claim to a more capable religion; that heaven, hell, and God may henceforward be dispensed with, and the world can work out its own salvation.

F. J. GOULD.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

(Company Limited by Guarantee).

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

- 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.

4.—Every Member of the Company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Company in the event of the same being wound up during the time that he is a Member, or within one year afterwards, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the Company contracted before the time at which he ceased to be a Member, and the costs, charges, and expenses of winding up the same, and for adjustment of the rights of the Contributories among themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding £1.

WE, the several persons whose names and addresses are subscribed, are desirous of being formed into a Company in pursuance of this Memorandum of Association.

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The Society, for the purpose of registration, is declared to consist of five hundred Members.

2.—The Board hereinafter mentioned may, whenever the affairs of the Society require it, register an increase of Members.

DEFINITION OF MEMBERS.

3.—Every person shall be deemed to be a Member of this Society who shall have paid to the Society his entrance fee; and the payment of such entrance fee shall be held to bind the said Member to the observance of all the rules of this Society.

OFFICE.

4.—The Registered Office of the Society shall be at such place in London as the Board shall from time to time appoint.

INTERPRETATION.

5.—In these Articles, unless there be something in the subject or context inconsistent therewith, in writing means written or printed, or partly written and partly printed. Words importing the singular only include the plural, and *vice versa*. Words importing the masculine gender only include the feminine gender.

THE BOARD.

6.—The Board shall consist of not more than twelve or less than five Members of the Society, to be chosen at the first General Meeting.

7.—The first Members of the Board shall be the Subscribers of the Memorandum of Association, who shall hold office only until the first General Meeting.

8.—One-third of the Members of the Board, to be selected by ballot, shall retire annually, but may be re-elected.

9.—The Members of the Board shall elect from their own body a Chairman.

10.—Any casual vacancy occurring in the Board may be filled up by the continuing Members of the Board.

11.—The continuing Members of the Board may act, notwithstanding any vacancy in their body.

12.—The Members of the Society may, in General Meeting, by a resolution of two-thirds of the Members voting, call upon any Member of the Board to resign, and in case his resignation in writing be not tendered within one month the Board shall remove his name from their list, and he shall then cease to be a Member of such Board.

13.—The Board may meet together for the dispatch of business, adjourn, and otherwise regulate their meetings as they think fit, and determine the quorum necessary for the transaction of business, such quorum not to be less than five.

14.—Questions arising at any meeting of the Board shall be decided by a majority of votes. In case of an equality of votes the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

POWERS OF BOARD.

15.—The Board shall have power to make and carry into effect rules for the effectual carrying out of any or all of the

objects of the Society, and to make all business arrangements for the effectual performance of such objects.

16.—The Board shall have power to appoint and remove the Secretary and other officers or servants of the Society, and to fix their remuneration respectively, subject always to confirmation at the next General Meeting.

17.—The Board may invest and employ any funds of the Society, from whatever source the same shall have been derived, and which shall not, for the time being, be required for the usual business thereof, in such securities as they shall think fit, and they may, at their discretion, leave the funds at their bankers unemployed.

18.—The Board shall have power to bring, carry on, or discontinue, or refer to arbitration, or compromise, any actions, suits, claims, and demands for or against the Society.

19.—The Board shall have power, from time to time, to confer, in writing, upon a Committee of their own body, or upon any officer or servant of the Society, such power of arranging, settling, and transacting business, performing such duties, and of entering into contracts on behalf of the Society, as the Board shall think fit.

DISQUALIFICATION OF MEMBERS OF BOARD.

20.—The office of Member of Board shall be vacated:—

(a) If he gives one month's notice in writing to the Secretary of resignation.

(b) If he become of unsound mind.

(c) If he should cease to be a member of the Society.

21.—No Member of the Board shall be disqualified by his office from contracting with the Society; but such Member of the Board shall not vote in respect of any contract or agreement in which he is interested.

CHAIRMAN.

22.—The Chairman shall (if present) take the chair at all meetings; but, in case of his absence, the Board shall appoint a Chairman for that meeting.

MEMBERS.

23.—No person shall be permitted to become a Member until he has been proposed and seconded in writing, and formally admitted by resolution of the Board.

24.—Every Member on joining the Society shall pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and after the first year an entrance fee of five shillings.

25.—Every Member shall attend any meetings of the Board to which he shall be called, to support or answer any complaints which may be made by or against him in connection with the Society, and the Board shall have power to suspend or expel any Member.

VOTES OF MEMBERS.

26.—Every Member shall be entitled to be present at all Annual, General, or Extraordinary General Meetings, and to speak and vote at the same provided his subscription for the current year shall have been paid.

27.—Every Member competent to vote as above shall have one vote. In case of equality the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

28.—Votes may be given personally or by proxy.

29.—No person shall be appointed proxy unless he is himself a Member entitled to vote.

30.—A proxy shall be appointed by some instrument in writing under the hand of the Member desiring to vote, which must be lodged at the office of the Society forty-eight hours before the meeting at which the same is intended to be used.

MEETINGS.

31.—A General Meeting of the Society shall be held annually at such time and place as the Board may appoint.

32.—Extraordinary General Meetings may be convened by the Board whenever they think fit, and may also be convened on a requisition in writing signed by not less than fifty Members, and expressing the purpose for which the said Extraordinary General Meeting is required.

33.—Upon the receipt of such requisition the Board shall forthwith proceed to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting. If they do not proceed to convene the same within fourteen days from the date of the requisition, the requisitionists may themselves convene an Extraordinary General Meeting.

34.—If the objects for which the Extraordinary General Meeting has been called are not adopted at such Meeting, all expenses attendant on the calling and holding of such Meeting shall be borne and paid by the requisitionists.

35.—Seven days' written notice at the least, specifying the place, the day, and the hour of any meeting, and the business to be transacted, shall be given to the Members.

36.—Twenty members shall constitute a quorum, and no business shall be transacted at any Meeting unless such a quorum is present at the time the Meeting proceed to business.

37.—At any Meeting, unless a poll is demanded by at least five Members, a declaration by the Chairman that a resolution has been carried, and an entry to that effect in the book of proceedings of the Society, shall be sufficient

evidence of the fact, without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favor of or against such resolution.

38.—If a poll is demanded by five or more members, it shall be taken in such manner as the Chairman directs, and the result of such poll shall be deemed to be the resolution of the Society in any Meeting.

39.—All resolutions at any Meeting shall be binding on every Member of the Society, whether he be present at such Meeting or not.

ACCOUNTS OF YEARLY REPORTS.

40.—The Board shall cause to be kept full and true accounts of the receipts and expenditure of all monies received and expended by the Society, and generally of all its affairs, transactions, and engagements, and of all such things as shall be requisite to exhibit the true financial condition of the Society.

41.—Once in every year the accounts of the Society shall be examined and audited, and a balance-sheet signed by the auditors shall be issued to every Member seven days previous to the annual General Meeting.

42.—Once in every year the Board shall issue a Report of the proceedings of the Society for the past year, which shall accompany the Balance-sheet above referred to.

AUDITOR.

43.—The auditor or auditors shall be appointed by the Members in General Meeting, who shall also fix his or their remuneration.

44.—No Member of the Board, Officer, or Servant of the Society shall be eligible as an auditor.

45.—The auditor shall retire at every annual General Meeting, but shall be eligible for re-election, and shall in all cases continue to act until his successor shall be appointed.

46.—If any casual vacancy occur in the office of auditor, the Board shall forthwith nominate another auditor or auditors, who shall serve until the next annual General Meeting.

47.—The auditors shall be entitled at all reasonable times to see and call for all books or matters relating to the finances of the Society; all proper information they may require, and inquiries they may make, shall be at once supplied and answered.

48.—Should the auditors neglect or delay to perform their duties, after reasonable notice given them by the Board, the Board shall have power to call in another auditor or auditors to perform the work, and shall charge the expenses of the same to the auditor or auditors, and may deduct such expenses from any fees due or accruing to such auditor or auditors.

NOTICES.

49.—Notices requiring to be served by the Society upon Members may be served personally, or by leaving the same at, or sending through post to, the registered address of the Members.

50.—Any notice, if served by post, shall be deemed to have been served at the time when the letter containing the same would be delivered in the ordinary course of the post, and in proving such service it shall be sufficient to prove that the letter containing the notice was properly addressed and put in the Post-office.

BORROWING POWERS.

51.—The Board may from time to time borrow any sum or sums of money from any of its Members or otherwise, upon any mortgage of any property of the Society, or upon any other security, at such rate of interest and upon such terms as they think fit.

52.—The Board may from time to time set apart and appropriate out of the income of the Society such sum or sums of money as they think fit for the repayment of any sum or sums of money so borrowed.

INDEMNITY.

53.—If any prosecution, action, or proceeding at law be commenced or carried on against the Board, or any of its Members (past or present), or against any Officer or Servant of the Society, for proceedings or acts lawfully done by him or them in the proper discharge of his or their duty towards the Society, such persons shall be defended in, and indemnified from, and against all expenses of, or in any way incident to, such prosecution, action, or proceeding at law, out of the funds of the Society.

APPLICATIONS OF FUNDS.

54.—All monies received on account of entrance fees, subscriptions, donations, bequests, or otherwise, shall be applied solely in carrying out the objects of the Society, and in payment of just debts and expenses of management.

55.—No portion of the income of the Society, from whatever source derived, shall be paid, or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend or bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to the persons who at any time are, or have been, Members of the Society, or to any of them, provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment or remuneration to any officers or servants of the

Society or other person in return for any services actually rendered to the Society.

DISSOLUTION OR WINDING-UP.

56.—The Society shall not be wound up or dissolved except with the consent of at least nine-tenths of its Members, to be expressed by a resolution at a General Meeting specially called for that purpose.

57.—If upon the winding-up or dissolution of the Society there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property, the same shall not be paid to, or distributed amongst, the Members, but shall be given or transferred to or between such other kindred Society or Societies, or to or between such other non-sectarian charity as may be designated by the resolution for winding-up, or, in the absence of such designation, as the Liquidators may select.

58.—Immediately on a resolution to dissolve or wind-up being carried, the Members present shall proceed to elect two or more Liquidators, who may or may not be Members of the Society, and such Liquidators shall give such security and render such account of the liquidation as the Meeting shall determine.

BOOK CHAT.

ONE frequently wonders at the tremendous prejudice against Freethinkers. This prejudice is fostered by the publishers, and even Messrs. Chambers's world-renowned *Encyclopædia* is used as a vehicle for insulting Rationalists. The latest edition quotes a diatribe against Paine from Leslie Stephen, which the writer has apologised for; but, of course, there is no mention of *this* fact. Ingersoll is said to attract more attention than he deserves, and readers are referred for information about Bradlaugh to the libellous *Life* by Mackay (and a clique of other rascals)—a work which Bradlaugh proceeded against and had destroyed. "Ouida" is accused of "muscular heathenry" and "encyclopaedic ignorance." There seems to be a good deal of Christian charity, or worse, about Chambers's *Encyclopædia*.

* * *

The *Open Court* (Chicago) for June contains an interesting article by Moncure D. Conway on "Solomonic Literature." There is a good list of other contents, including an article on "University Reform in France," by Theodore Stanton. The frontispiece is a curious picture of "The Western Paradise" by a Japanese artist. We believe this publication can be obtained in England through Watts & Co.

* * *

Among the papers that reach us monthly is a smart, well-got-up publication called *Fashion*, edited by "Beau Brummel, Junior," and published at 4 Argyll-street, Regent-street, London, W. The subject it deals with is not one in which we are able to take a deep interest, but those who are interested in it will find *Fashion* an entertaining sixpenny-work.

BIBLE EVIDENCE.

SOME months ago Mr. Wheeler was engaged in making notes on the history and production of the Septuagint version of the Bible. Should these be found among his MSS., they would be of considerable interest to those interested in this matter. He had read Aristeas, and had collated all references to this author to be found in the early Christian writers. Only a short time before his lamented death he called at my house to make a note or two from Hayes's *Vindication of the Chronology of the Septuagint*. These lines are prompted by a remarkable discovery I made only on Sunday last. Taking a stroll over Wood Green, I listened for a few minutes to one of the Christian Evidence lecturers—Mr. Youil—I hope I spell his name correctly. His statement was that Alexander the Great, desirous of possessing the Hebrew scriptures, "ordered," "caused," or "procured" their translation into Greek for his library at Alexandria. I timidly asked him for evidence of this statement, to which he replied it was ample. Pressed for one reference, he gave *Lloyd's Dictionary*, "which cost £13." I then mildly suggested that Alexander died in the fourth century B.C., and the *LXX.* was not translated until the third by one of the Ptolemies; he yet unblushingly stood to his statement. The most sorry part of the matter that struck me was that in that large audience of Christians not one seemed to know the facts. What does Mr. Engström think or believe of this?

R. FORDER.

Truth needs no veil, and you would not hesitate to expose the delusions of your unfortunate fellow men if you did not desire their welfare less than you fear their prejudices.—*Felix L. Oswald.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

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

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Musset & Keen's Co.'s performance of "Julia." June 30, at 8.30, E. Calvert, "History of the Shakespearean Drama."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Bow): 7.30, Members' quarterly and social meeting.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Stanton Coit, "The Sacrament of the Last Supper." Peckham Rye: 8, Mr. Newland.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Sacrament of the Last Supper."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Wind-or Castle" Coffee Tavern, Harrow-road, near Westbourne Park): Tuesday, at 9, Half-yearly general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, E. Pack, "Holy Liars."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A lecture. Peckham Rye: 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Paine and Voltaire"; 6.30, Stanley Jones.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Ramsey, "God's Favorites."

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Bible Heroes."

FINSBURY PARK (near handstand): 3.15, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery, and is it Woman's Friend?"

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30 E. Pack; 7, T. Thurlow. June 29, at 8, S. Jones.

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

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 8.30, Stanley Jones

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Bidley-road): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is there Design in Nature?"

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. Heaford. June 28, at 8, S. Jones.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): O. Cohen—11; 7, Moor Edge, near the Bull Park Recreation Ground.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "A Stroll through the British Museum."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A lecture; Committee meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Melton, "Was Jesus a Socialist?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

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

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—June 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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JULY NUMBER READY ON 23RD JUNE.

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.

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