

# The Freethinker

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## GOD'S GLEANINGS.

CHRISTIANITY teaches an exclusive salvation. Its divines have very rarely doubted that all non-Christians would be damned. The wisest and best of the "heathen" were all doomed to everlasting perdition, for no man could possibly be saved except by faith in Christ. It was in Hell, and not even in Purgatory, that Dante saw Brutus, and Saladin, and the great Aristotle, the "master of those who know." "Firmly believe, and doubt not at all," said Saint Augustine, "but that not only all pagans, but also all Jews, heretics, and schismatics, that end this present life without the Catholic Church, shall go into eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels." The Church of England articles declare that "they are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature." The Book of Homilies admits that "Jews, heretics, and pagans do good works; they clothe the naked, feed the poor, and do other good works of mercy." Yet, because these good works are not "done in the true faith," the doers of them are "lost." The whole doctrine is vigorously and logically summed up by Bishop Beveridge in his *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*. "Let a man," he says, "be never so strict a Jew, never so strict a Mahometan, never so strict in any other religion whatsoever, unless he be a Christian he can never be saved. So that, though many Christians may go to hell, yet none but Christians can ever go to heaven."

Every missionary society is founded upon this doctrine. It was not sensationalism, but plain charity, on the part of a famous American Mission to issue an appeal on behalf of the millions of Africans who rushed every year like a cataract over the precipice of hell. If that was indeed a fact, it was a case for urgent benevolence. And every missionary society presupposes it as a fact. Nothing else could excuse the diversion of such vast sums of money from Christian countries, where so many people need relief from destitution and misery. Just as you might leave a hungry man for a while in order to save a man who was in immediate peril of being burnt to death, so you might leave a suffering white man who had a chance of heaven in order to save a happy black man who was going straight to hell; for what is temporal suffering here compared with eternal suffering hereafter?

Besides, if you admit that anybody but a Christian can go to heaven, you destroy the necessity of Christianity altogether. If every honest man is entitled to a seat in paradise, what is the use of all those myriads of churches and chapels, all those armies of priests, and all those multitudes of sermons? Salvation by good works subverts the very foundations of priestcraft by making churches and preachers superfluous. This is clearly perceived by the professional men of God of every denomination. It is true that the Catholic Church allows a certain efficacy in good works, but it does not admit their sufficiency; while the Protestant Church denies the efficacy of good works altogether, and derives salvation entirely from the free grace of God. Both Churches, therefore, assert the necessity of faith; in other words, they affirm, by implication if not explicitly, that it is impossible to go to heaven without being a Christian.

Now, if only Christians go to heaven, and many Christians go to hell, the question arises, What is the real

number of those who are saved? Here again we are met by the general opinion of Christian divines in all ages that the saved are few in comparison with the lost. Many are called, few are chosen. The way to heaven is narrow, and few there be that find it. Jeremy Taylor, our English Chrysostom, declares in the plainest terms that the future lot will be "bad to the greatest part of mankind." He confesses it is "fearful consideration," but instead of seeking to soften it he presents it in all its rigorous horror. "The greatest part of men and women," he says, "shall dwell in the portion of devils to eternal ages." Thomas Watson, the Puritan preacher, whose writings were evidently studied by the late Mr. Spurgeon, says that "most go to hell," and that "to be of the number of those few who are delivered from it" is therefore "a matter of infinite thankfulness." Indeed, he makes the following quaint calculation:—

"Divide the world into thirty-one parts, nineteen parts of it as possessed by Jews and Turks, seven parts by Heathens; so that there are but five parts of Christians, and among these Christians so many seduced Papists on the one hand, and so many formal Protestants on the other, that we may conclude the major part of the world goes to hell."

The old Puritan proceeds to emphasise and illustrate this with a certain relish. There are few jewels and precious stones in the streets, but plenty of mire. The wicked are as common as dirt in the street. Surely this is bad enough; but the preacher meant to drive the truth home to his hearers, so he concentrated all his faculties for a soaring climax. "The Devil hath the harvest," he exclaims, "and God only a few gleanings."

Bravo, Thomas Watson! That cannot be beaten. You have said the last word on this wonderful doctrine. By the alchemy of genius you have transmuted a world of verbiage into "one entire and perfect chrysolite" of simile. We picture the Devil reaping the big field with glad triumph, and God humbly and painfully picking up the scanty leavings, like Lazarus feeding on the crumbs that fell from Dives' table; and we commiserate the poor deity who is doomed to such unprofitable labor in the field which he himself ploughed and sowed—nay, created!

What a pitiable being this Christian doctrine makes of God! It is a wonder that the believers in it do not have a lucid interval to laugh at their own absurdity. Many of them succeed but poorly in life, but none of them fail as ignominiously as their God. He who foresees everything is disappointed! He whose power is infinite is baffled! He whose wisdom is infinite is circumvented! He who made and sustains everything is almost a beggar in his own dominion! Could anything be more ridiculous?

What reason do these people assign for their belief? Nothing but a cock-and-bull story about Adam and Eve, who were tempted by the Devil in the Garden of Eden, who sinned by eating forbidden apples, and thus entailed what is called "original sin" on all their posterity. Every educated person knows that this story is false, and the doctrine founded upon it is equally so. It is not even true that man is in any sense fallen. According to evolution he has risen. His faults of sensuality and temper do not spring from the temptations of a devil. They spring from his strong passions, weak judgment, and lack of self-control. They are not an intrusion upon his primitive innocence; they are a legacy from his far-off animal origin, and they gradually disappear in the upward course of his development.

If there be a God, it is inconceivable that he is eternally baffled by one of his own creatures called the Devil. It is incredible that he should desire the happiness of all his children, and yet allow this Devil to lead off the vast majority of them to everlasting misery. Those who argue that this arrangement is part of an infinitely wise and good plan, and even that God has a right to do as he likes with his own, are guilty of intellectual absurdity and grovelling immorality. That cannot be wise and good in God which is foolish and wicked in man; and the real blasphemers are not those who denounce the puerilities of theology, but those who affirm that there is a God, and represent him as possessing the intelligence of an idiot and the character of a criminal.

G. W. FOOTE.

### AUTHORITY IN BELIEF.

IN this critical age it is more than ever desirable, not only to believe what is true, but also to know *why* we believe it to be so. We agree with the advice of Peter when he said: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Unfortunately, the great majority of orthodox believers seldom trouble themselves either as to the nature and value of the opinions they entertain, or the authority upon which such opinions are based. It is as Dr. Watts wrote: "For the most part, people are born to their opinions, and never question the truth of what their family, or their country, or their party profess. They clothe their minds as they do their bodies, after the fashion in vogue, nor one of a hundred ever examines his principles. And thus men, without any industry or acquisition of their own, inherit local truths—that is, the truths of that place where they live, and are induced to assent without evidence. This hath a long and unhappy influence; for, if a man can bring his mind once to be positive and fierce for propositions whose evidence he hath never examined, and that in matters of the greatest concernment, he will naturally follow this short and easy way of judging and believing in cases of less moment, and build all his opinions on insufficient grounds." Similar indifference is manifested as to authority in belief, or, in other words, the reasons for adopting certain views. People attend church or chapel, and are supposed to endorse what they hear there expounded; but they hardly ever inquire what are the grounds of the belief they are asked to accept. It is this failing that has given priestcraft the immense power it possesses over the human mind. Hence Freethought urges the necessity of each individual acquiring as far as possible a knowledge of the basis upon which his or her beliefs rest. Of course, this would not necessarily be a guarantee that these opinions would be correct, but probably in many cases it would lessen the risk of accepting erroneous views, and at the same time supply an intelligent reason for endorsing beliefs which commend themselves to the judgment of the individual.

In the *Church Gazette* of July 9 there appeared a very discriminating editorial article upon this subject, in which the various notions as to authority in belief are set forth. It is there said: "One disputant, for instance, will, perhaps, cite the authority of the Fathers as conclusive; another will state his own unsupported beliefs; and another will choose passages from the works of the various sacred writers, and will call them 'texts.' We protest against such summary treatment of open questions." The following four authorities are then dealt with—namely, the Pope, the Church, the Bible, and the Individual Mind. To the first three our Christian contemporary takes exception. And yet it is upon these very authorities that the various orthodox sects have based their respective beliefs. Surely Freethought has indeed been potent in destroying the reliance upon that which was for ages regarded as the only foundation for the Christian faith. This new departure is another illustration of the varying and doubtful nature of the religions of the churches, and also an additional proof of the efficacy of Secular propaganda.

We are assured that the Pope "offers no solution" which those who are outside of his Church can accept. Of course he does not, simply because his very training and associations disqualify him as an authority upon theological beliefs in general. With Roman Catholics reason is no prominent factor in deciding which is the true belief; that

is a function of absolute faith as interpreted by the Pope. The Church is admitted to be equally deceptive as an authority, for the question arises, *What Church?* As the *Gazette* put it: "The whole question as to the Church, and what that Church consists of, is itself far too much beset with difficulties on all hands to afford seekers any solid foundation or ground of belief. To point to 'the Church,' again, as the seat of authority is to assume that the Universal Church is at one, which is far from being the case; while to assign such authority to the Church of England is to occupy the weak and hopeless position of a half-way house between positions both separately tenable, but itself untenable. Being neither one thing nor the other, but an illogical compromise, such a position satisfies no one. Further, all claims on behalf of any particular Church are merely weak copies of similar, but stronger, claims on behalf of the Pope. Now, there is only one Pope, but there exist several different forms of Church orthodoxy to choose between. But such choice is an act of the mind itself. We are, therefore, thrown back on private judgment, after all, to decide between final arbiters, which amounts to a contradiction in terms." Thus two long-cherished authorities for Christian belief are discarded.

But thousands of earnest believers will exclaim: "Our authority is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." The *Church Gazette* agrees with the first two items in this exclamation, but not with the third. It grants that "a great deal besides the Bible" is wanted to meet modern requirements. The reasons given for the insufficiency of the Bible are thus pertinently stated: "We must firmly maintain that the various writers of different portions of the sacred writings are not always in absolute harmony with each other, and especially is such discrepancy obvious between writers who are separated by wide intervals of time. But there is nothing approaching finality in all this. More. Had the sacred authors been even in the most perfect harmony throughout, yet the advances and developments of some eighteen centuries would, in any case, have rendered fresh sources of light indispensable, as has been remarked by an able correspondent in a previous number. Thus, the Bible can neither provide an *entire* source of authority for us, because many questions of recent growth have difficulty in finding in it any parallel; nor even a *final* authority as to matters it does actually treat of, because in some of these its writers differ more or less among themselves." These are plain but accurate statements, and, coming from such a source, the admission is a significant corroboration of the Secular position; but here our agreement with the Christian editor ends, so far as this article is concerned. He contends for the "whole Bible," with "a great deal more besides." But is the *whole* Bible desirable, and, if so, is it of any practical value to us as an authority? We think not, for the very attempt to put into practice certain portions of Bible teachings would annul the advantages conferred by the "great deal more besides." Of what earthly use would be many of the biographies, the obscene teachings, and the brutal injunctions of the Old, or the impossible and out-of-date injunctions of the New, Testament? None whatever; and, fortunately for human progress, apart from the Peculiar People no one at the present time makes any serious attempt to obey the one or to heed the other. They belong to the past, and most intelligent persons have long ceased to regard them as having any ethical force. Besides, the Church editor admits that the "discrepancy" of the Bible is "obvious," and that "its writers differ more or less among themselves." How, then, can that which teaches such contradictions be an authority in matters of belief? That the "whole Bible" is not a real authority upon these questions is evident from the many conflicting views which are supposed to be based upon its teachings.

The final authority, according to the *Church Gazette*, is the "Individual Mind." It, however, adds: "It is true that the human mind is a very imperfect instrument, and very often fails to act rightly. Yet it appears to be all that has been given us by nature for our ultimate guidance." Undoubtedly this is correct, but we take a decided exception to the following bold allegation: "Thus, pure reason, based on facts, does not constitute a final arbiter of belief; for, after all, it is the mind which has to judge of facts, and of reasons founded upon them; and in that ultimate decision the mind is final and supreme." Here we come in

contact with the old theological statement, that the mind is an entity and something distinct from reason. But is this so? We regard the term "mind" as indicating the entire intellectuality of man, including his reason. Therefore, we cannot conceive of a higher and more trustworthy authority than "reason based on facts." This was the opinion held by such writers as Morell, as stated in his *Mental Philosophy*; by Hooker, as set forth in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*; by Chillingworth, as plainly alleged in his *Religion of Protestants*; and by Bishop Butler, who, in his *Analogy of Religion*, writes: "Reason is, indeed, the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself."

While, therefore, we admit that "Individual Mind" is the highest authority in belief, we include in that cultivated reason, when fortified by knowledge, guided by experience, and strengthened by discipline. Dr. Reid observes: "Reason is the principle by which our belief and opinions ought to be regulated"; and Dr. Watts, in his *Logic*, writes: "Reason, in its own nature, would always lead us to truth in matters within its compass, if it were used aright; but our sloth, precipitancy, sensuality, passion, and many other things, lead us astray." The truth is, Christians are always ready to appeal to reason when they think it supports their views; but when it renders them no aid, it is by them denounced as incompetent and misleading. As, we think, Charles Southwell once said: "Either reason is competent to fully, fairly, and finally decide on matters pertaining to religion, or it is not. If it is, then to depreciate it must be folly, and to neglect it insane. If it is not competent, all appeals to it are futile in the extreme."

CHARLES WATTS.

### "FORGETTING GOD."

TWENTY-ONE years ago an excellent old man (he was a Christian—that is of no account; he was a gentleman—that is everything) gave me a "Scripture Text-book," which I still preserve. One of its sections is entitled "Forgetting God." In this section are ranged threatening groups of texts, charged with thunderbolts of wrath and admonition against such as "forget God." To "forget God" is said to be a characteristic of the wicked; a mark of backsliders; the work of false teachers; a possible result of trials; an offence that will be punished; and a sin which implies forgetfulness of God's covenant, works, benefits, word, law, and power.

The years have passed, and, for all practical purposes, I have wiped the idea of God out of the book of my life. I look back upon my old theological creed as a man looks at the baby coat which he once wore, and which his mother fondly cherishes as a memorial. Once I prattled; once I prayed. To me—I know not how it might be with immortals—the world is changed, and the age of both prattle and prayer has slipped into the irrecoverable past. The vain babble of orthodox reproach—"the godless is a fool, the godless is a scamp, the godless is a failure, the godless will go to his prescribed niche in hell"—all this shower of Christian roses falls fragrant on my head, and leaves me unchanged. Except for critical and historical purposes, I have "forgotten God." The terrible list in the "Scripture Text-book" alarms me about as much as a viper steeped in a naturalist's bottle of spirits. Its bolts strike harmlessly. Quietly and steadily I reverse all its affirmations. To forget God, "a characteristic of the wicked"? Our best science forgets God; our best philosophy forgets God; our best poetry forgets God; our best education forgets God. Is it a mark of "backsliders"? All the great forward movements of the world borrow their weapons from the armoury of man, and their watchwords from the language of human lips. Is it the work of "false teachers"? False teachers do not usually stand in minorities; mistaken teachers may, but not false ones; false teachers do not give their day to toil, their nights to wrestling, and their life to a hope which orthodoxy calls forlorn. Is it a possible "result of trials"? Yes; but not in the sense intended by theologians. They mean that tried and suffering men may lose belief in God simply out of sheer disappointment. No; we lose faith in God through a sense of justice. The sorrows of the earth preach a natural atheism, and bid us reject every conception of an all-wise and all-kind God ever yet presented in book

or rhetoric. Is it an offence that will be "punished"? The suggestion is absurd. If, indeed, an Omnipotent existed, it seems to me he ought to reward the man who would not repeat a creed he did not believe, and that God would give sincere atheism his supreme benediction. A straw can flutter along with the orthodox wind. It needs a heretic's honest will-power to face the blast of fashion. As to God's covenant—behold the Jews; his works—observe the tape-worm; his benefits—think of the Black Death; his word—ask the Biblical critics to find it; his law—is the world under his law? If his law is effective, then the pain and battle and injustice of the world stamp his law as bad, and if his supposed law is ineffective, it is no law at all, and there is no divine "power" for us to "forget."

The babe's little coat once protected his body; the man casts it aside without contempt. Theology once warmed and aided the human soul; the hour has come when we ought to forget it except as a relic of our forefathers. Why do we attack it? Only because it is thrust upon us as a legislation for the rule of modern life. Let vested interests repeal this legislation, and we shall close the campaign. Who wastes time in abusing the spelling of Edward the Third's days? It did well enough for Chaucer. But if a government, smit with antiquarian fever, should seek to impose Chaucer's orthography upon the printing-press of 1898, we should burn the government and its spelling-books together.

Let childhood forget God. The child is happy in its wonder at things bright and strong. When he grows older he will ask how and why the evil and the good consort so strangely together in the affairs of the universe. But we need not force the arrival of this problem. Our theological teaching will only induce an artificial precocity. Has not human life riddles enough? Why do we thrust our confused doctrine upon the little mind, and set it racking with the question, Why does not God kill the Devil? Let the child go and play. Give him pictures, flowers, music, occupations meet for his years, and useful ideas of history and of daily duty; but do not give him a creed; do not bid him kneel; do not worry him with God's commandments. Treat him kindly; he will respond. Discipline his thought; he will grow in wisdom. Behave justly to him; he will be honest. Act as a good father to him; he will reckon little of a father in heaven. Bestow on him a mother's love, and your chamber shall be the shrine of his noblest Madonna.

Let youth forget God. What! passionate blood cross the threshold of love without the guiding hand of Heaven? And the wide world of marriage and parenthood open up its infinity of problems without any aid from the sphere beyond nature? Yes, exactly that. If we have laid the basis of good habits and character in childhood, and if we are wise enough to give all due respect to the claims of lovers (these claims are often neglected), the young man and the maid will work out their salvation by themselves. He leads her to new developments, and reveals noble capacities that slept till he kissed them into womanhood. She persuades him to new efforts; she checks him, when none else in heaven or earth can check; she teaches him the reality of life. I know perfectly well what incompetent theology wishes to say at this point—that youth without the ruling hand of the celestials will run riot, and go down to devilry and black night. Theology neither understands nor trusts human nature. It sees—what an imbecile can see—that sexual power brings with it the possibility of degradation. It does not see—what only the humanist and positivist can see—that sexual power, preceded by a sound moral education, has in itself the germs of social progress and regeneration. For the new-formed manhood and womanhood thrill with love, pity, and justice. The family is the creative centre where love thinks of its fellow, where pity cares for the babe and the ailing, and where justice renders to each his rightful share.

Let the prime of life forget God. Man shall learn to walk alone. Man is the creator, the providence, the judge, the savior. Man is the creator. He is light, for he reveals the secrets of the bowels of the earth. He is wisdom, for he has made all the sciences. They say in books of piety that nature displays the greatness of God. Nay, rather, it displays the greatness of man. The stars tell of the astronomy by which man has threaded the maze of the glittering host. Flowers and trees and mosses recite the triumphs of botany. The ground under our feet whispers

of the patient building-up of geology, mineralogy, agriculture. The whole round of this earthly dwelling repeats the tale of man's achievement. And when education is conducted on a saner method, it will delight to show the child the power and majesty of the Creator, Man, to whom all the arts and industries owe their origin. Man is the providence. He watches the seasons, and governs seed-time and harvest. He feeds and clothes and protects. He over-rides the elements of disorder and crime. His tender mercy cares for the blind and the dumb, and his shield guards even the beast of the field. Man is the judge. He detects sin, and weighs vice and virtue in the balances. He hates iniquity, and pours out his wrath upon the oppressor. He is a consuming fire. Slowly but surely he effects the doom of unrighteousness, and no lie shall avail against his anger. Man is the Savior. He reconciles man to man, and some day will reconcile class to class. He dies that man may live. He sheds his precious blood. He, for his brother's sake, is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He is persecuted by man, but he forgives. Martyrs and reformers have been buffeted and spat upon and slain, and yet their love is unabated. Their race continues. New redeemers come upon the stage, and offer their bodies as a sacrifice for truth and justice. And some day Man shall gather the nations in one fold, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Let old age forget God. Old age, as the Ancient of Days, shall be the monitor of young strength, giving good counsel, and deducing the lessons of history. Old age knows, better than youth, how the world marches, and how small hopes become mighty victories, and how the little group expands into a nation. The old man rejoices to see the fruit of his labors. By his example and activity he has stimulated another generation. He has created his successors. They will go on conquering because his hands have taught them the art of war.

Let us all forget God. We have knelt, we have scattered incense, we have paid our vows; but the temple is cold and silent. Self-help is better than divine help. Let us till the earth with our own plough. Come forth and close these gates, and let none but the ivy touch them evermore.

F. J. GOULD.

### MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

EVERY attempt at educational reform in England sooner or later finds itself blocked by the position the Bible holds in public opinion. This book is in possession; it is the bulwark of so many vested interests and inherited superstitions, that almost any reform is bound at some point to traverse the claims set up on its behalf. When, therefore, the Moral Instruction League was formed for the purpose of "substituting non-theological moral instruction for the theological instruction at present received in public schools," although the movement received the hearty support of the N. S. S., it was pointed out by its representatives that some definite public statement of the League's attitude towards the Bible would become more and more necessary as its work developed.

Partly, however, as the [result of a deliberate policy on the part of a number of its promoters, and partly, I am afraid, as the result of temperamental dislike to wounding the curiously sensitive feelings of the religious world by attacking the educational status of "that Blessed Book," this aspect of the matter was practically ignored in the earliest official utterances of the League.

To my mind this was a mistake for two reasons. To conduct an avowedly anti-supernaturalistic propaganda, while refraining from attacking the Bible, is to spend one's time threshing the air; for in England the Christian scriptures stand as the practical incarnation of supernaturalism, and all rationalistic propaganda resolves itself into an attack upon its pretensions. It is the Bible that is placed in the hands of children who attend public schools; it is the Bible that is made the foundation of the supernaturalism received by the child, and it is consequently the Bible we have to fight in our attempts to secure for the rising generation a more effective education.

And, secondly, if it was imagined that the cry of moral instruction would disarm the enmity of the religious classes—particularly the interested religious class—then the League woefully under-estimated the shrewdness of its opponents. When it comes to a question of personal

interest, the clergy are not less shrewd than any other class in the community, and it was only to be anticipated that they and their supporters would soon detect the old Adam of "secular education," in the new birth of "moral instruction," and act accordingly. A policy of ignoring the Bible will not do. It satisfies neither its friends nor its enemies; and, almost against its will, the League held a meeting on July 19 to determine what should be its policy in this matter in the future.

Practically, the meeting had two questions to consider. First, should the Bible be placed in the hands of children attending public schools; and, secondly, should it come under the head of general literature, and thus serve as a basis for the instruction given, provided such instruction be of a non-theological character.

The first question was summarily disposed of. To all classes of Rationalists the Bible, with its stories of revolting massacres, its unsound ethics, faulty notions of natural processes, and absolutely indecent language, is the last book of all to place unreservedly in the hands of the young. Years ago, Dr. Martineau, no prejudiced witness against the Bible, declared that "Parents who would guard the moral purity of their child—who would not wish him to find access anywhere to impressions and premature knowledge of wrong; who would dread his contracting a sympathy with ferocious and intolerant passions; who would maintain his estimate of duty wisely graduated, and not suffer him to confound secondary with primary obligations; who would mix no taint of selfishness with his morality, of ignoble despondency with his conceptions of life and death—will be cautious in their use of the ancient Scriptures, and permit no unregulated access to them within their home. Of course there will be a clamor; but their duty is not to their bigot neighbor, but to the child at home." The above statement, I take it, has only gained a sharper edge by recent experiences.

The second question was one that naturally gave rise to the greatest discussion, and, unfortunately, was decided in the affirmative. Personally, I am firmly convinced that to keep the Bible in the schools on any pretence is to play the game of the parsons, and undo with one hand whatever good we may be doing with the other. The Bible is so saturated with supernaturalism, and there are so many people interested in quickening whatever latent superstition there may be in a child's nature—and all have that tendency more or less developed—that the suggestion received at school is easily quickened into active operation by the numerous incidents of everyday life, thus retarding the development of the child and society at large.

It is useless saying that we would teach the Bible free from all supernatural implications. The thing is an utter impossibility under existing conditions, and must remain an impossibility for some considerable time to come. The position the Bible occupies in the world at large—nay, the mere necessity of the League's existence—precludes the possibility of dealing with the book upon the same level as ordinary literature. If that were possible, the League might dissolve to-morrow. As it is, to imagine that one can deal with the Bible as one would deal with an ordinary book in a country that supports a trained army forty thousand strong, and spends upwards of £25,000,000 annually for the express purpose of popularising it as a supernatural production, is as ridiculous as it would be to attempt to deal with the Koran in the same manner before a fanatical Mohammedan population. One might treat either the Koran in England or the Bible in Turkey as an ordinary piece of literature, because in these cases there is an absence of prejudice in their favor; but to imagine that a professedly Christian population would ever so regard the Old and New Testaments, is to come dangerously near the burlesque.

Nothing short of a complete transformation of the social and intellectual environment could ever secure this desirable result. As it is, the only way to secure the Bible being treated as ordinary literature is to destroy its position as an inspired volume; and the first step in this direction is to remove the fantastical idea that a knowledge of the records of a tribe of Asiatic semi-savages, to quote Archdeacon Farrar, "the most scientifically ignorant people of one of the most scientifically ignorant ages," is in any sense a necessary part of a child's intellectual outfit.

There are those who profess a fervent admiration for the Bible as literature, and would have it retained in the schools on that ground. I cannot rank myself as amongst

that number. To me it has always been apparent that by far the larger part of the charms attributed to the Bible are due to the accidental circumstance that our version was translated during what was, perhaps, the highest period of English literature. Its grace of style can be seen to an equal, if not greater, extent in the best Elizabethan writers, while as to subject matter, as Nordau says: "It has been excelled by every first-class piece of literature produced during the last three centuries." And I do not hesitate to say that if a truly literal translation of the Bible in contemporary English were forthcoming, it would charm but few, and would certainly bore a large number. Even as it is, if we discount the number that read it from a feeling of superstitious veneration, or a spirit of stupid imitation, and count only those that have, so to speak, discovered the Bible, where one reads it with pleasure and instruction, twenty read Shakespeare with greater pleasure and greater profit.

Candidly, I cannot but regard these protestations of affection and veneration for the Bible as due to the operation of the very feeling the League should aim at destroying. If the suggestion were made to introduce the Koran into the schools it would be received with either indignation or contempt by the larger number of those who spend their ingenuity in devising schemes for the retention of the Bible. Yet both these books belong to the same class of literature, their only difference being a difference of local color, not of substance.

I do not at all admit that it is necessary in public schools to teach the Bible to children in either an unenlightened or an enlightened manner. I believe the world to be large enough, varied enough, and human nature inventive enough, to produce cartloads of moral fables and maxims without introducing, in the remotest manner, the Bible, with its evil implications and associations; and I cannot but regard with a certain amount of distrust professing Rationalists who appear to regard the book as such a powerful educative force that it must be utilised in some shape, and at all costs.

The mere selection of the Bible for use in the schools in any form, even if it did nothing else, must inevitably breed the sectarian spirit in such as come under its influence, and turn them out blind partizans of a sect rather than well-trained mental athletes in the struggle for existence. But it does more than this. A fictitious reverence for the book is created, its selection is a practical admission that it stands on a higher level than other writings, and the clergy find it pretty easy to work in after years upon the suggestions revered by the mind in its more plastic condition of existence.

The game of the clergy is simple. They support the book because the book supports them. It is a case of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." The policy of the thorough-going Secularist is equally plain. We want the book out of the schools because, once admitted, on any pretext, no regulations under the sun can prevent supernatural beliefs being impressed upon the uncritical mind of childhood. Time will show which party will ultimately succeed. The party that is trying to keep the world swathed in the grave-clothes of a dead Jew, and to guide its aspirations by a literature which is chiefly remarkable for its evil influence upon the course of European history, or the party that is seeking to make education what it should really become—an instrument to train the child in the right use of brain and muscle, and thus secure a new and powerful factor in the progress of the world.

In this matter no compromise is possible or advisable. The matter was tinkered with in 1870, and we have had nearly thirty years' religious squabbling, with a consequent injury to education as the result; and it is to be hoped that the Moral Instruction League will neither mar the usefulness of its work, nor alienate the more robust of its supporters, by unwise concessions to a party which is the hereditary enemy of education, or to a set of feelings it should be our chief object to destroy.

C. COHEN.

Theodore F. Seward, the organiser of the "Don't Worry" clubs, tells a good story of a little boy who had reached the multiplication table in the course of his education. One night he was sitting anxiously over a paper of figures, when his mother came along and said: "Johnnie, do you find your arithmetic very hard?" "Yes, indeed, mamma, I do," was his reply. "It was so awful hard that I prayed to God to help me, but he's made three mistakes already."

## HELPS TO HAPPINESS.

*A Lecture delivered before the Paine Hall Society, Boston, March 13, 1898.*

*(Continued from page 475.)*

I HAVE never seen any divine opinion on the subject of food that I thought revealed much consideration for a hungry person. I believe that more happiness can be extracted out of life if men and women have plenty of good, wholesome food to eat than if they are obliged to live on bread alone, and not much of that. I should say to man:—Eat, drink, and wear the best that you can afford. There is nothing too good for man. Do not starve your body or mind. Fasting is a sin as much as feasting. I believe in everybody enjoying life that can, and in making conditions that will enable more to do so. Poverty is a curse, to be borne, if necessary, but to be removed, if possible. Life is a poor gift if it knows no fate but poverty. Poverty is the "great desert" of modern civilisation, whose burning, blinding sands overwhelm thousands every year. I will not deny the cruelty of nature. There is no use to tell a lie in the face of the truth. But nature is not alone cruel when winter's cold hand is laid upon the earth, when the very sunshine seems to have frozen in the sky; not alone cruel when the merciless heat dries up the land, when all the beauty and glory of earth is turned to premature death, and the golden promises of a harvest are dry and withered lies; not alone cruel in storms, in earthquakes, in lightning's fatal flash, in the pitiless teeth of wild beasts, and in serpents' fangs.

Nature is cruel in all this, but far more cruel when man is born weak, unable to fight successfully the battle of life. Thousands are born, not only with plenty beyond their reach, but with everything which makes life beautiful beyond their reach. It is true that they may breathe the air, walk the earth, and see the stars; but man cannot eat the earth, cannot clothe himself with air, or live on stars.

Nature is on the side of the strong, the fair, the sound, and healthy. There is no pity in nature for the poor in body or mind.

We have been taught to believe that "all men are created equal"; but the truth is, that men are not created at all. Men are born, and they are not born equal either. There is as much inequality in birth as in life. Some are born with music in their hearts, and others with sorrow and tears. Some are born with power to conquer, and others with that weakness that is easily enslaved.

I do not believe in denying facts. It is a hard, cruel fate to be born unable to turn life into joy, into victory; but thousands every year are thus born. These unfortunates help swell the ranks of poverty, help increase the vast army of the poor. I do not say that they ought not to be born, but I do say that they ought to be better born.

I do not say that a person who is poor may not enjoy life, but there can be no general happiness where there is general want and misery. I know that we have the Bible's assurance that we always have the poor with us, but that should not prevent us from trying to reduce their numbers. But nature is not alone cruel. Man is cruel also. The indifference of man to the suffering, the wretchedness of his brother-man is as cruel as frost, as drought, as famine.

Man's inhumanity to man  
Makes countless thousands mourn.

I am on the side of anti-poverty, but I do not believe that the way to abolish the poverty of some is to abolish the property of others. I want to see labor independent. I want to see the working man own the house he lives in. I want to see him well dressed and well fed, and his family well educated and with pleasant surroundings. There is no beauty in the face of poverty. You may sing of honest poverty, and, while we may applaud the singer, we do not like the song. Honest poverty is far better than dishonest poverty, but we do not want any. It has no business in a country like this, where the earth holds out its hands every year full of grain, full of fruit, full of riches of all kinds.

No problem of more gigantic proportions, or of more solemn import, confronts the nineteenth century than how to secure justice to those who toil. It is a most astounding condition of things when those who work must go hungry. The fruit of the world should not be withheld from the hands that gather it. To-day the good things of earth are

taken by the idlers, while the workers own not the soil under their feet or the roof over their heads.

I do not blame people for complaining of injustice. There are wrongs in this country which must be righted, or the bold notes of freedom will not be heard much longer in the land. The fact that one man can, in less than thirty years, obtain possession of one hundred million dollars shows that all stealing is not yet looked upon as a crime. Men are poor to-day because they are robbed, because they are oppressed, because there are men who will take advantage of the necessities of their fellow-beings. The dictionary may not define such an act as a crime, but the human heart does, and I believe that, if we condemn the acts of the rich which cause suffering to the hearts of the poor, we shall make no mistake.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not endorse the mad rush for wealth that is seen in nearly every avenue of business to-day as sensible or commendable; but money, in our present state of civilisation, is one of the best friends of man. A dollar is the symbol of labor, and should be the reward of labor alone.

I want to see every dollar in the world an honest dollar, honestly earned, honestly held, and honestly spent, a dollar that will not be ashamed to own how it comes or how it goes. I would like to see a desire among men to enforce this sentiment, to rescue money from avarice, from vice, from oppression, from speculation, from everything that dishonors, disgraces, and debauches man.

While I hold that happiness has a material basis, I do not assert that it comes only on the wings of wealth. I believe in all the comforts of life, and believe that money is wisely used when it adds to human enjoyment or human satisfaction; but there is one thing that riches cannot purchase, and that is—manhood. Money can buy the gems of earth and of the sea, but it cannot buy the gems of the soul. It cannot buy the brain of Shakespeare, the soul of Shelley, the heart of Burns. It cannot buy love, nor peace, nor happiness.

There must be a broader, a deeper, and a sounder idea of the worth of money than prevails throughout society to-day, and the common hypocrisy in dealing with this question must be condemned. Let us all frankly own that we enjoy what are called worldly things, that we like good homes, good clothes, good food, and good things generally, and let us manfully defend this taste as nowise contrary to what is right and just.

I do not like the ethics of poverty which are taught by the Christian Church. I do not like to hear a minister pronounce a blessing upon the poor. Let us be honest, and honestly confess that the patched-up morals of the New Testament are not fit for this century. We do not believe in them, we do not respect them, we do not care for them, we do not practise them. They were intended for men and women without moral independence, for a state of society which has mostly passed away, and the man who professes to honor the moral teachings of Jesus in this age is a hypocrite. Do not tell me that the Christian Church has any sympathy for the poor. The sufferings of men, women, and children in every land where Christianity has an altar or a pulpit prove that the professors of this religion love money more than they love man. In every Christian nation on this earth people are in want, while there are millions upon millions of dollars' worth of yellow gold piled up by the hands of Christian greed.

When anything becomes more sacred than man, more sacred than the life and happiness of human beings, it is time to break the idol that protects it. There is property enough on this globe, consecrated to God, to relieve all the want and poverty on this globe. Let the Church set the example of justice and stop taking the hard-earned wages from the aching hands of the poor. When Christians ask me to go to their church, I tell them that I want nothing to do with a God that takes money from a washerwoman.

I would rather see the priests in rags than working men. I would rather see the houses of God tumbling down than the homes of men. I would rather hear thanks to man than praises to God. If human beings have enough to eat, we need not worry if the gods all starve. One dollar spent for earthly happiness is better for mankind than a thousand dollars spent for heavenly joys.

I pity the sad army of the poor, and sometimes feel as though I wronged my race by being comfortable when so many have but little to cheer and enjoy. I would see the sunshine—that jewel of the universe—adorn every human

life. I would put a virtue where there is a vice, a good habit where there is a bad one, and happiness where there is misery. But to change human fate imposes the task of changing human conditions and human lives. The kingdom of poverty cannot be overthrown or conquered while men have habits that keep them poor.

Man needs every human help that he can have, every aid to a higher life, to a better home, to a more cheerful view of existence. Those persons who have the world at their feet should abdicate their advantage. Any person who possesses a noble power is under obligation to make a noble use of it. The man or woman who has the power to help a fellow being, to do what will make it easier for that fellow being to live, has a sceptre that he should wield with magnanimity. Must we go falling for ever over stones in our search for stars?

Nothing is more needed than a gospel of charity. We are human, and humanity means imperfection. Because men sometimes do wrong, sometimes yield to the fair persuasions of temptation, they are not to be denied sympathy and help. Failings ought to be treated with kindness. In all justice there is charity. If those who have always done right were the only ones to punish those who do wrong, not many would be punished. There are fictitious dangers that need to be stripped of their terrors, false ideas of things that need to be corrected. It is religion that has painted pleasure as an evil and enjoyment as a vice.

On general principles we may defend our humanity. Human nature is filled with good intentions. I say this with full appreciation of all the contemptible things that mankind have done. It is an up-hill job to be a man; but, at the same time, I believe that everyone makes the attempt. Every failure to reach a satisfactory life is a tragedy of suffering. We have to begin this life of ours without experience. No one is born wise. We may inherit the face, the form, the strength or weakness of our fathers and mothers, but we have each and all to acquire a wisdom of our own. I do not believe that any preceding generation possessed all the knowledge that this generation needs to have. If we were not to surpass our ancestors, we should not have been born. We are told that we are disrespectful to grey hairs when we assert opinions contrary to those held by age. Grey hairs do not know everything. All the fools are not young. A great many people die, after having lived eighty years, only a little way from where they were born. It depends upon what heads grey hairs grow whether they are to be revered. Age in itself is always to be treated with respectful consideration, but age alone does not represent wisdom. There is no authority in the grey hairs of history. There is no infallible age. We stand to-day nearer the light, and can see things as they are better than the men of any past time.

Most of the wisdom of life is learned by the few and repeated to the many. Tell the world a truth, and it is too dull to perceive it or too weak to comprehend it. Truth is like gold; a few find it, but everybody has the use and benefit of it.

L. K. WASIBURN.

—Boston Investigator.

(To be concluded.)

## Death: Christian and Pagan.

DEATH AN ENEMY.

For, since by man came death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.—*St. Paul.*

DEATH A FRIEND.

What is it to die? If we view it in itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature; but it is a childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay, it is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change. Do not despise death, but accept it willingly; look upon it as part of the product of Nature, and one of those things which Providence has been pleased to order. For such as are youth and age, growth and manhood, and all natural actions and incidents of life, so also is dying. He must look upon death as Nature's business, and wait her leisure, as he does for the progress and maturity of other things.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

## ACID DROPS.

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." Thus begins the will of the Right Reverend Edward Twells, formerly vicar of St. John's, Hammersmith, and latterly Bishop of Orange Free State. The personal estate of this minister of the gospel of blessed-be-ye-poor is valued at £25,478 16s. 8d. There may be destitute curates knocking about in England, but some of the black fraternity find it pays extremely well to preach the religion of poverty.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Bishop Twells knew it, but he took his chance; and, if some other Bishop will only die and leave us £25,000, we will take it and all the risks with the greatest cheerfulness.

The Yankee soldiers who gathered in the camp at Tampa, in preparation for fighting the Spaniards, appear to have "made things hum." "Never was Tampa so wicked as now," wrote a correspondent of the *New York Christian Herald*. That is one view. Now for the other. "But, at the same time," this correspondent wrote, "never was Tampa so good and virtuous and Christian as now." These two views appear contradictory, but a considerable acquaintance with the history of Christianity satisfies us that they are very likely both true.

Monday was the day of St. James the Great, the patron saint of Spain. At a famous battle, more than a thousand years ago, he fought on the side of the Spaniards, and slew 60,000 Moors with his own hand. He appears to have got out of practice since then, judging by the recent encounters between the Spaniards and the Americans.

The clergy of Ipswich are protesting against the establishment of a Sunday omnibus service in the town and vicinity. They say it "will injuriously affect the Christian observance of the Lord's Day." We hope it will. But is not this a sectarian and professional objection? Competition is a good thing for the majority, however it may threaten the antiquated business of a small minority.

Despite the abolition of Church Rates, the good old Church of England has all along been legally quartered on the parish of Marylebone; but so much objection has been raised of late years that the Church deems it prudent to beat a retreat. This strategic movement, however, is being covered by a special Bill, which will mulct Marylebone in something like £100,000. It costs a pailful of blood even to get rid of these blood-suckers.

The Darwinian theory, which teaches the kinship of man with all other forms of life, seems to be illustrated by the case of Henrietta Whitaker, of 41 Stanley-road, Wakefield. This lady had a stomach something like an ostrich's, minus its enormous powers of digestion. For three years she had suffered from pains in the stomach, and the post-mortem made for the inquest revealed the fact that she had swallowed hundreds of fruit stones, pins, and pieces of straw. She must have had a curious appetite.

Replying to a correspondent who asked him to allow the recitation of the Athanasian Creed to be henceforth optional, instead of obligatory, the Archbishop of Canterbury states that he "has no legal power to authorise the omission of the Athanasian Creed." Of course he hasn't. The matter is settled in the Prayer Book, and the Prayer Book was settled by Parliament. Until the legislature chooses to make an alteration, the Athanasian Creed will continue, like a tiger, to hold on by its damnation clause.

The Rev. Hon. J. G. Adderley, to whom we devoted a couple of paragraphs in our last issue, is "actively pursuing his crusade against the Secularist movement." So says the *Daily Mail*, which also states that he draws very large crowds in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoons, and that animated discussions follow his addresses. We hope this is all true. It always pleases us to see the clergy attacking Secularism. They advertise it to many people who might not otherwise learn that there was such a sensible system in existence.

"Father" Adderley states, through the *Mail*, that he began by answering the Secular lecturers; but, as he only got five minutes to the lecturer's hour, he decided to set up his "own tub," and now, he says, "I take my own time." He considers the apathy of the Church very reprehensible, and declares that Secularism should be fought with its own weapons—whatever that may mean. As far as we know, the weapons of Secularism are honest investigation and fair discussion. If these are the weapons referred to, we hope "Father" Adderley will continue to employ them against Secularism.

By the way, if "Father" Adderley is so fond of discussion,

it is a pity that he does not take steps to have enough of it. Should he be prepared for a set debate on Christianity and Secularism, we venture to say that he can soon be accommodated with a capable and representative opponent.

Russia is the land of strange Christian sects. The following is the official report of some of them: Several of these sects go to an extreme degree of fanaticism; such as the Skoptzy (self-mutilators), Khlysty (flagellants), Stefnovtsy, who abandon their children in forests to be devoured by wild animals; the Raziny (gapers), who, on Maundy Thursday, stand with open mouths in expectation that the sacrament will be administered to them by angels; the Stundists, who refuse to recognise the priesthood or the sacrament, and reject all outward forms of worship; the Molokany (milk drinkers) and the Dooobortay (wrestlers of the spirit), who deny the Holy Ghost.

The Stundists are the most persecuted of these Russian sects. They refuse to recognise the priesthood, and that touches the Church in a most vital spot. The worst heretics are always the practical ones—those who threaten the trade of priestcraft.

Five thousand pounds was wanted to restore Holy Trinity Church at Stratford-on-Avon. A strong appeal was made to the public for this amount, but the *Church Gazette* says that "the result has been very disappointing." "It looks," our contemporary says, "as if Shakespeare was more talked of than appreciated." This is bad grammar and bad logic. Shakespeare's admirers may not be particularly interested in the restoration of churches.

Père Didon made a speech the other day which has caused a great sensation. He advocated the subordination of the civil to the military power in France. Père Didon is a fashionable and popular Catholic orator, and author of the *Life of Christ*, which is a counterblast to Renan's famous book on the same subject. His speech, therefore, is significant of the aim of the Church, which, with all its fine, specious pretences, is always at heart the enemy of free thought and free government.

Athol Forbes, in the *Weekly Sun*, asks why a Bishop "cannot behave as a gentleman to those in the humbler positions in life." Another writer, signing himself "A Bishop's Chaplain," declares that the men who mount the episcopal benches "are transformed into veritable caricatures of humanity."

John Kensit, the Protestant champion, comes out with a half-page advertisement on the front of the *Rock*. He refers to John Wickliffe, who wanted to place England in such a position that other nations would "have to acknowledge that a God-fearing people should rule the universe." Surely this is a very large order. We always thought that ruling the universe was the business of God Almighty. John Kensit probably meant the "world," but his enthusiasm (or his want of education) ran away with him, and he wrote it "universe."

Honest John asks for the modest sum of £10,000 to carry on the work of the "Reformation" in England. He proposes to spend this sum, apparently, at his own sweet will. He doesn't know whether he will obtain it or not, but "we leave the matter in the Lord's hands," he says. Yes, but the money will never get there. Besides, if the matter is in the Lord's hands, why should John Kensit worry? Can't the Lord do what is wanted without John Kensit's puny assistance? A flea assisting an elephant is nothing to John Kensit helping God Almighty.

"The Protestant crusade" goes on merrily. There was very nearly "a shocking scene," as the *Westminster Gazette* puts it, at St. Michael's, Shoreditch, on Sunday. Mr. Upton, refusing to listen to an official, was assaulted, and this led to a general scrimmage. Miss Roberts joined in it to assist her young man, and she was turned out by the "stalwarts of the Guild of St. Michael." When the policemen came and the row got ended, the Rev. F. Weston preached a sermon on "What is Truth?" What is common-sense? or, What is decency? would have been a more appropriate question.

Mr. George Wise, at Liverpool, headed 4,000 Protestant lambs in a raid upon a High Church opposite the Bishop's palace. A row was prevented inside; but outside there was a wild scene of confusion, and the police were quite unable to deal with the crowd. The Rev. Cyril Wilkins was very roughly handled, and would have been seriously injured, if not killed, had it not been for the interference of two stalwart policemen, who carried him off into a mews. He was struck with sticks and stones, and bled profusely. Altogether it was a lovely spectacle, reminding one of the good old days when Christians were always fighting and murdering each other.

Another demonstration took place at St. Columba's Church, Sunderland. Mr. Herbert J. Jowett jumped up and formally denounced the vicar as "a perjured traitor," in the service of the devil. How these Christians do love each other, to be sure! And how urbane they are when they happen to differ!

Mr. Jack, a Congregational minister, rose and "protested" at St. Miriam's Church, Whitby, and his friends congratulated him on his "courage and fearlessness." It does not appear, though, that he ran any particular risk.

If this sort of thing goes on every High church will have to keep its organist in readiness to play up strongly when the "protestors" begin business. We look forward to great developments in this direction. There is a splendid opening for brass bands. One of Booth's bands would settle any protestor in a jiffy. We have seen a jackass bray like thunder at the crazy cornet and the offensive big drum. Even *he* couldn't stand them. But they played him down.

The *Christian World* welcomes the publication of the *Polychrome Bible*. Henceforth, it says, it will not be so easy to talk about the Pentateuch as the "five books of Moses." Children ought not to be told lies, and "to speak of the great Book as in itself the Word of God, or as written by the finger of God, or as an infallible revelation, is not an accommodation or an 'economy'; it is a lie."

Is the Church of Rome coming round on the question of cremation? "There is no need," says Professor Schell, "to attack cremation as a thing internally objectionable to the Church. Ecclesiastical custom and decrees ought to be respected, but they are not unalterable."

A Bombay magistrate has fined a well-known bookselling firm, Messrs. Thacker and Co., the sum of five hundred rupees for selling Zola's *Pot Bouille*, which he described as "a licentious novel written with no moral or decent object." The same worthy magistrate would not entertain the charge against the same firm of selling Casanova's *Memoirs*, because it was sold at the high price of three hundred rupees. Apparently, therefore, the "obscenity" of a book in the eye of the law depends upon what it costs. In other words, it is the poor, not the rich, whose morals must be protected against corruption.

The Watford Board of Guardians has had an application from the Rev. H. Goodwin, chaplain, for an increase of stipend. The reverend gentleman says he has striven to fulfil his "arduous and trying duties" for eighteen years, during which time he has had the pleasure of seeing everybody's salary raised except his own. Mr. Gilliat, one of the Guardians, pointed out that the man of God's salary was £150, which he described as "enormous," and so it is for a preacher of "Blessed be ye poor." The decision on this weighty matter was postponed for a fortnight.

John McNeill, the evangelist, has got married, and his sister Kate bursts out in verse over the event in the *Christian Budget*. The last four lines are remarkably rich:—

God's bounty will so far exceed  
The widest prayer I might repeat,  
If for a planet I should plead  
He'd roll a system to your feet.

We suggest one improvement in the second line. "Widest" should read "wildest." The verse reads all right then. Evidently the gushing poetess has an extravagant opinion of the merits of her new-married brother, or she looks upon "systems" as ridiculously cheap. After all, we guess the worthy John doesn't want a lot of worlds at his feet. He is probably satisfied with a tolerably good share of this one. It is more profitable to serve the Lord than to serve a Railway Company in the capacity of a porter.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has been elected President for one year of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. We shall have to bring out a new edition of our exposure of his "Atheist Shoemaker" story.

Mr. Hughes complains of four great dangers. One is the popular love of physical amusements. People like a football match better than a religious service. Another is the liquor trade—which the first Christians did not patronise because they had Jesus at hand to manufacture them good tipple out of cold water. Another danger is "daring and aggressive Romanism," which is not even afraid of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The fourth is the "constant attacks made upon the sacredness of the Lord's Day." Mr. Hughes casts an angry eye at the "increase of secular concerts" on Sunday. He declares that they are really for profit. And why not? What on earth do ministers preach for? Is nobody to earn a living on Sunday but themselves?

We have been told that Mr. Hughes is an eminent Wesleyan minister, who is entitled to be believed upon his

word. It would, therefore, be rash to question his statement, based, as he says, upon personal observation, that the visitors of museums, libraries, and art galleries on Sundays are eccentrics, foreigners, and hobbledehoys. Still, we cannot help saying that if *such* people, and such people *only*, visit the said institutions, it is rather difficult to see why Mr. Hughes is so eager to have them closed.

The late Rev. Dr. Binney published a series of discourses on *How to Make the Best of Both Worlds*. A copy of it, with five other books, was included in a recent sale lot, and advertised as follows: "Binney's how to make the best of this world and the next, and five others."

Heresy-hunts are not as popular as they used to be. The Presbyterian Church smothered the attempt to arraign Dr. Watson, of Liverpool; and now the Wesleyan Church has smoothed down the controversy over Dr. Beet's *Last Things*. The Churches know that they want all their forces to meet the common enemy.

There seems likely to be another split in the Liberal party. A number of Liberals, both clergy and laity, of the High Church party have sent Sir William Harcourt a strong protest against his utterances on Ritualism. They are Churchmen first, and Liberals afterwards, as he will probably find.

The Federal delegates out in Australia solemnly resolved to "recognise the Supreme Being in the Constitution," whereupon the *Sydney Bulletin* poetises as follows:—

The politicians, grave, who nod,  
Assembled in convention,  
Have voted to the Most High God—  
An honorable mention!  
The news was spread at night. Alone  
I lifted up my eager gaze,  
And saw the constellations blaze,  
And heard a cheering round the Throne.

The Catholic Church in America is not going to abate a jot of its spiritual claims. One of its organs, the *New World*, Chicago, while admitting that the outcome of Protestant principles is secular education, declares that Catholics will never submit to have this in their schools. Religious belief, it says, it is a matter of authority; and for each man to judge for himself is so obviously foolish, that "the wonder is how any rational being can accept it." Having renounced as folly the right to think for himself, the good Catholic is content to accept the teaching of the Church, and will fight to the death rather than not see it imparted to his children.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel C. Potter, of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, New York, has been found guilty of conduct "unbecoming a Christian minister," such as drunkenness, lying, dishonesty, and undue familiarity with the women of his congregation. The said women, however, do not appear to have satisfied the reverend gentleman's Old Testament proclivities. He was also charged with attending questionable resorts for immoral purposes.

The Edinburgh School Board is going to prepare an expurgated edition of the Ten Commandments for the use of its school children. The best course would be to banish this absurd document altogether, but if it must be used the seventh commandment should certainly be omitted. Why should little children be taught not to commit adultery?

### The Bedborough Case.

Application was made on Monday, before the Recorder at the Old Bailey for an adjournment of the trial of this case, in consequence of the delay in the production of the indictment. The Recorder granted an adjournment until the September sessions. An application will be made to remove the trial to the Court of Queen's Bench, where it would come before a special jury. We are desired to state that funds are urgently needed by the Free Press Defence Committee, who are watching this case and providing funds for Mr. Bedborough's defence. The honorary secretary's address is—Mr. H. Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, Islington, London, N.

Scene—A Schoolroom. Teacher—"Who was the first man?" Little Boy (at rear of class)—"George Washington, ma'am." "Why do you think George Washington was the first man?" "Because he was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Another boy raises his hand. "Well, Johnny, who do you think was the first man?" "Don't know what his name was, but I know George Washington wasn't the first." "What makes you so positive?" "Well, my history says that he married a widow, so there must have been a man ahead of him."

**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

AUGUST 7, Hyde Park; 14, Clerkenwell-green and Regent's Park; 21, Finsbury Park; 28, Victoria Park.  
September 4, Peckham Rye.

**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.
- W. H. DEAKEN, sending £1 for himself and wife as members of the Secular Society, Limited, says: "Freethinkers should rally round and take the opportunity of supporting this most excellent scheme, which seems to be so ably thought out for the benefit of their cause. Carping criticism is cheap. To stand by and wait to see what is going to happen will not help matters much."
- A. C. BROWN, becoming a member of the Secular Society, Limited, says: "I heartily congratulate you on the inauguration of this scheme, and hope it will prove an unqualified success. I hope the Freethinkers of the country will rally round you in a most significant manner."
- C. MASCALL, Wood Green Branch, joins the Incorporated Society.
- CHARLES A. WATTS, applying for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, writes: "Your far-reaching scheme should transform the outlook of Freethought, and I, as a modest worker in the Rationalist movement, desire to heartily thank you. Henceforth there should be no difficulty on the part of our more wealthy friends in leaving a portion of their estate for the sustenance of Freethought propaganda."
- J. F. QUIRKE.—We have not been able to see the Belfast paper you refer to.
- E. HART.—We have received no complaint, and there is no need of excuse in the absence of accusation. The lecturer you refer to, however, is not one of "our lecturers," to use your own expression—that is, he is not a member of the National Secular Society.
- FREDERICK MORGAN, becoming a member of the Secular Society, Limited, says: "I hope the scheme will be well supported, as I think it will place the Freethought party in a better position—on a solid basis."
- JOHN DAVIS.—See the *Freethinker* for May 22. The passage Mr. Holyoake cited as proving that Mr. Wheeler could "write with authority in thought" was this: "To me, it appears that the necessity man is under of interpreting things outside himself in terms of his own consciousness is a sufficient explanation of the origin of all theistic beliefs."
- MR. AND MRS. HAMPSON, of Bolton, send us their applications for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. No two members will be more welcome.
- J. E. EDGLEY.—Better let the discussion end than continue it with any loss of good temper.
- C. H. TURNER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."
- J. UMLBY (Blackburn), a veteran Freethinker, and one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, joins the Secular Society, Limited. If a number of friends cannot be got to give £50 each, he will be one of ten to give £10, and will be glad to forward his cheque.
- J. KEAST.—Better leave the fellow alone. Mr. Foote will certainly pay Bristol a visit before Christmas.
- R. FORDER, secretary *pro. tem.*, has received the following applications for membership in the Secular Society, Limited: R. Taylor, C. J. Whitwell, George Ward, Elizabeth Robins.
- JAS. G. FINLAY (Coolgardie), subscribing to the Wheeler Fund, says: "He was a valiant and efficient soldier in the small Freethought army, and did his duty manfully and well. May we all do likewise."
- MR. FOOTE'S annual holiday has to be mixed up with the active editing of the *Freethinker*. On both accounts he hopes his critical readers will not be too critical for a couple of weeks.
- A. W. MARKS sends £1, the entrance fee for himself and wife in the Secular Society, Limited. "We have great hopes," he says, "of the usefulness of the new movement, and shall give it all the help we can."
- R. P. EDWARDS, 2 Fernhead-road, Harrow-road, W., is the new secretary of the West London Branch. Members and friends please note.
- FRANCIS NEALE.—Thanks for the cuttings. Should be glad to receive something from your own pen more frequently.
- H. R. CLIFTON.—Thanks for the August number of the little *Secular News*.
- T. WILMOT, 9 Haydock-street, Cliftonville-street, S.E., is the new secretary of the Camberwell Branch.
- J. ROSS.—Date booked.
- A. H. KISBEE.—The hot weather seems to have got into your letter. Mr. Foote has closed the Athenæum Hall for a few Sundays only, and during that time he will be speaking at large open-air demonstrations in various parts of London, probably to thousands of people. How is that going backwards? Pray think the matter over again. With regard to the other point, this is not the time of year to make successful appeals, and we distinctly said that we should not *press* the appeal for the Secular Society's objects until a little later in the year.
- JOHN HUGHES.—Received. Certificate of membership in the Secular Society, Limited, will follow in due course.
- GEORGE POTTER.—Too late. This number of the *Freethinker* is not on sale till the day after your meeting.

E. LAWSON.—We answer here for the possible benefit of others. You have overlooked Article 25, which gives the Board power to suspend or expel any member. The other point does not need a special article. Any member can leave the Society, legally, by a written notice to the Board, or by not renewing his annual subscription. This is a matter of course.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—We have received the following:—Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, 10s.; P. Sabine, 2s. 6d.

H. G.—(1) You ask what we think of the pamphlet. Well, we think it contemptible. The Bible suffers most from its friends. (2) We have referred times out of number to the nonsense that Ingersoll is afraid to answer Father Lambert. He has crossed swords with Judge Black, Dr. Field, Gladstone, and Cardinal Manning. These, especially the last two, were champions. Father Lambert is an insignificant priest. He is also ill-tempered and scurrilous.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liberator—Lancashire Daily Express—Lucifer—Freidenker—Isle of Man Times—Referee—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Awakener of India—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Christian Budget—Progressive Thinker—Der Arme Teufel—Free Society—Crescent—Sydney Bulletin—Watford Observer.

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

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

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

**SPECIAL.**

In the *Freethinker* of May 15 I stated that I should have to open a Fund for the regular judicious advertising of the *Freethinker*, for promoting its circulation in other ways, and to aid in its competent maintenance until these agencies produced the desired effect. That appeal, however, was brushed aside for the time, because I wanted to give a fair opportunity to the appeal on behalf of the widow of my dead friend and colleague, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. It is now necessary to bring my appeal to the front again. This can be done without injury to the Wheeler Fund, which I propose to keep open until (say) the end of August. By that time everybody who means to subscribe to it may fairly be presumed to have done so.

Since my sub-editor's death I have been working like a galley-slave. I was not in a position to engage a new sub-editor, and another Wheeler will not turn up in a hurry. For the first month I paid his weekly salary in full to his widow; since then I have paid her one-half that amount regularly, as her affairs were not settled. The amount left for myself from the paper is the veriest trifle, and I am making arrangements for some paid assistance, as it is impossible to go on working at this rate much longer; in fact, nature is giving me plain warnings, which I dare not disregard.

I invite those who can spare a subscription, without injury to any other object, to send it to the "*Freethinker* Circulation Fund," and all I receive shall be duly acknowledged in these columns.

G. W. FOOTE.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

THE Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, being closed for a few weeks during the sultriest part of the summer, Mr. Foote is arranging a number of Freethought open-air demonstrations in various parts of the metropolis, in which important work he will be assisted by Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. C. Cohen, and other speakers. Mr. Wilson has kindly promised horses and brakes when necessary. The following places and dates have been already fixed by Miss Vance in concert with the local friends:—August 7, Hyde Park; August 14, Clerkenwell Green and Regent's Park; August 21, Finsbury Park; August 28, Victoria Park; September 4, Peckham Rye.

Mr. Foote proposes to finance these demonstrations in this way. Miss Vance and other ladies will take up collections where they are permitted, and out of the proceeds he will authorise the payment of an honorarium to the lecturers who assist in the work. He proposes to take nothing himself. Miss Vance will keep a record of the collections, and the debit and credit statement will ultimately be handed over to the N. S. S. Executive, and figure in the N. S. S. accounts. Any donation to supplement the collections, and to pay the part rent of the Athenæum Hall meanwhile, should be sent direct to Mr. Foote, who is personally responsible in this matter.

The last number to hand of Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* (Melbourne), dated June 18, contains a letter from R. Forder announcing the death of J. M. Wheeler. Mr. Symes adds the following himself:—"Excepting Mr. Bradlaugh's death, this is the saddest blow I have ever received. I first made Mr. Wheeler's acquaintance in Glasgow about twenty-one years ago. For a time we did not very warmly fraternise, as neither of us had had the opportunity of knowing and understanding each other. But all that soon passed away, and we became lasting friends. I valued him and his abilities and acquirements at a very high rate, as my readers must have judged from the number of most excellent articles from his pen which I copied into the *Liberator*. I am extremely sad to think nothing more is to come from his pen. Mrs. Wheeler and the friends in England have my deepest sympathy in this time of trouble and loss. It is a bit maddening that useless and mischievous quacks and things should live on to old age, and a man like Wheeler go under in the very prime of life."

The New York *Truthseeker* begins the publication of a new series of cartoons by Watson Heston. The first represents Uncle Sam giving thirteen dollars a month to a soldier who goes to fight the Spaniard, and a hundred and twenty-five dollars a month to a sky-pilot who stops at home to pray for the other fellow's success.

Secularists in West London are requested to attend the outdoor lecture at Hammersmith this evening (July 31) in order to protect the lecturer against the rowdism which has been rampant there of late.

We make this request as desired; at the same time we venture to remind lecturers that tact goes a long way with all sorts of public meetings. Intelligence, sympathy, and patience are admirable devices for keeping order. But, of course, organised ruffianism must be checked by organised protection.

The Bradford *Truthseeker* for August contains a portrait of Mr. Charles Watts, with a brief biographical sketch contributed by Mr. A. B. Moss. Mr. William Heaford, in the same journal, appeals to Freethinkers to avail themselves of the "unique chance" afforded by the incorporation of the Secular Society, Limited.

"Mr. Charles Watts," the *New Age* says, "has done us the honor to reply in the *Freethinker* to our recent article on the 'Divorce of Religion and Politics.' Mr. Watts is a courteous controversialist, and we have nothing to complain of in the tone of his article." Apparently the editor of the *New Age* (Mr. A. E. Fletcher) is going to reply to Mr. Watts's criticisms.

### WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

South Shields Admirer, 5s.; J. Fothergill, 2s. 6d.; A. C. Brown, 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, £1; J. G. Finlay, £2; A. T. Smith, 1s.; John Hughes, 10s.; P. G. Meek, 10s.

### Cut it Short.

A newly-appointed minister paid a visit to an elderly female of his flock. The good wife was in the midst of her spring cleaning, and the minister met with somewhat brusque attentions. Finding her quite the reverse from gossipy, the reverend gentleman, before taking his leave, mildly offered to pray, when, to his surprise, he was sharply told: "Very well, minister; but ye maun cut it short, as I ha'e ma whitin'-brush oot by the oor."

Elias Howe, the inventor of the sewing machine, proved his patriotism during the war by enlisting and by frequent heavy contributions from his private purse. In November, 1862, his regiment was in Virginia, suffering great discomfort. Not having been paid off, and the men needing money, Private Howe advanced \$13,000 due them. He sat at a table handing out the money, when a clergyman asked him for a subscription towards a new church. "Oh," said Howe, "this is war time." "Yes," the clergyman replied, "but we need churches, and hope you will give us something for St. Peter's." "Well, St. Peter will have to wait," said Howe. "Just now my money is being spent on saltpetre."

Minister—"I don't see how I am to get through my sermon to-day. It's almost church time." Fond Wife—"What is the text?" Minister—"It is about the wise and foolish virgins." F. W.—"But you were writing at that sermon last night. Why didn't you finish it?" Minister—"I couldn't; the lamp went out."

### DEATH OF DR. HUNTER.

DR. W. A. HUNTER, whose death has just been announced, was a man of great learning and greater ability. He represented Aberdeen in Parliament for many years, but he never filled a public office, although he was better qualified for it than most of the "successful" politicians. Two things kept him back—his lack of physical stamina and his well-known lack of religion. Dr. Hunter belonged to the philosophical school of Bentham, Mill, and Grote. He was a personal friend of another sterling Freethinker, Professor Alexander Bain. It was quite fitting that he should take charge of the motion which Charles Bradlaugh could not look to because he was dying—the motion that the unconstitutional resolutions which excluded him from his seat should be erased from the books of the House of Commons. Dr. Hunter interested himself in the attempted abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. Besides backing more than one Bill with that object, he published a valuable essay on the subject, and recommended that the laws against Blasphemy and Heresy should be absolutely and entirely repealed. At the time of my prosecution he wrote a vigorous letter against these odious laws in the *Daily News*. It was my good fortune to know him personally when he was editing the *Weekly Dispatch*. He did me the favor of allowing me to consult him whenever I pleased on any matter affecting the legal status of Freethought. I always found him most genial and full of that modesty which is so charming in men of great ability and high character. The last time I had the pleasure of seeing him was at Charles Bradlaugh's funeral. I rode down to Woking in the same carriage with him. A few other M.P.'s were in the company, including an Irish representative who spoke of him quite reverentially. I had a letter from him about a year ago, in which he regretted that he was quite incapacitated and could not advise me as to my scheme of a Secular Incorporation. I shall always remember him as in every way one of the best men I ever knew.

G. W. FOOTE.

### NOTES ON CHRISTIANITY, THE CHURCH, AND SLAVERY.

THE following pretends to be nothing but a few memoranda from my note book, which were jotted down during a study I had occasion recently to make concerning the relationship of the Church to the institution of slavery.

It is repeatedly asserted by Christian apologists that Christianity abolished slavery. It will, however, I think, be seen that those who make such an assertion do so in reckless disregard of facts. Slavery in America was first introduced by a Christian country. Christian England exported 300,000 slaves from Africa between 1680 and 1700, and between 1700 and 1786 England imported no fewer than 610,000 into Jamaica alone.\*

Slavery found its greatest support and justification in the Bible. The Christian Church not only supported it, but possessed slaves, and gave its whole influence almost against the abolitionist. The principal abolitionists in America were more or less heretics, and were denounced by the Christians as infidels.

Channing, Bryant, and Longfellow were Christians; Whittier a heretical Quaker, Emerson a Transcendentalist, Whitman a sceptic, Parker a Theist. Lloyd Garrison—who often had to deliver his lectures in the lecture halls of Secularists, because every church was closed to him—was a heretic; like Theodore Parker, he rejected every cardinal doctrine of the Christian creed. In his address at the sessions of the New England Anti-Slavery Society at Boston, May 31, 1860, after referring to Parker's religious belief, he said: "You may quarrel with that theology if you please. I shall not, I like it; I have great faith in it; I accept it."

Wendell Phillips said: "If there is anything of value in the work I am doing to-day, it may, in an important sense, be said to have had its root in Parker's heresy."†

\* See Chambers's *Encyclopaedia*, vol. ix., p. 500.

† Address delivered at the service to commemorate Parker's death, held in Music Hall, Boston, June, 1860.

The author of *Aspects of Religion in the United States of America*, a Christian and an abolitionist, attended one of the abolitionist meetings held in Boston, at which Wendell Phillips, Garrison, and Parker Pillsbury spoke. During the speech of Pillsbury, the writer says, "he declared himself an infidel, professed to be at war with all creeds, and wished to punish the slavery party in this world, as he had no terrors of orthodox perdition in the next to shake over their heads." Of Garrison the writer says: "He animadverted in very strong language on the attitude of the orthodox Churches. He said that they had been experimenting with orthodoxy for two centuries, and, though it was a failure, America was bound by it hand and foot. He was violent, though not profane, in his language; but it was too evident that his aimings were against true religion." Wendell Phillips was the next speaker. "He abused religion, hurled maledictions against the Churches, declared his soul was under no trammels.....He stigmatised Washington and Jesus Christ as traitors to humanity; the one as the author of the Constitution, the other of the New Testament, both of which encourage slavery."\*

The Bible was the slave-holder's text book, and from its sacred pages he forged his strongest weapons with which to fight the abolitionist. Instead of Christianity abolishing slavery, the Christian Church declared it to be a divine institution established by God himself. It upheld and aggravated slavery, and immeasurably delayed the day of freedom. More than this, slaves in Christian countries were subject to far greater cruelties than slaves were ever subjected to in Pagan countries. The authorities quoted in support of these statements, it must be remembered, are almost in every instance Christian.

It is anything but a difficult task to prove that the Bible was quoted time after time in support of slavery. When Theodore Parker published his pamphlet entitled *A Letter to the People of the United States Touching the Matter of Slavery*, he received among the many letters in reply one from a Christian slaveholder, who, addressing Parker as the representative of Beelzebub's heart, said: "You Negrophilists may write and publish for ever in your style, and with your matter, without striking the southern heart or enlisting its sympathies. Until, and only until, you prove by the Bible collectively—for it is a collection of theologic truths in its own stability unshismatic—that God did not allow slaves through Moses' prophetic writings to the Israelites, and that Jesus Christ, instead of being silent, and St. Paul coherent, had been of your own conclusion, that it was a sin without excuse. This is the great point you have evaded. Indeed, the whole controversy between slaveholders and anti-slavites hinges on the proofs from God's Word—God's Will—for either side! Till then, heaven forbid we should arrogate to condemn Moses, and to sneeze, as you, at the Creator!"†

In further proof that the Bible was the text-book of slavery, I quote the following from a defence of slavery by a Christian writer‡: "Ah! if the slave would only read his Bible, and drink its very spirit in, we should rejoice at the change, for he would then be a better and a happier man. He would know his duty, and the high ground on which his duty rests. He would then see, in the words of Dr. Wayland, that 'The duty of slaves is explicitly made known in the Bible. They are bound to obedience, fidelity, submission, and respect to their masters, not only to the good and the kind, but also to the unkind and forward; not, however, on the ground of duty to man, but on the ground of duty to God.'" The largest supporters of slavery were found among Bible-readers. In Bible-reading America there were four million slaves up to thirty-five years ago, while in "Infidel" France they were freed in 1815,§ and in 1848 slavery was abolished in every part of the French dominions.

It is noteworthy that the anti-Christian French convention, influenced by the teaching of Rousseau, decreed (February 4, 1794) that slavery should be abolished throughout the French colonies, and all slaves admitted to the rights of French citizens.¶

It is admitted by a Christian traveller in America¶ that

"The churches here, with one accord, maintain a general silence on the subject of slavery, unless provoked by some peculiar circumstances to a public declaration on the subject, and then it is in palliation of this 'domestic institution,' as it is called, and in denunciation of abolitionism." The following is taken from the *Southern Christian Advocate*, the Methodist journal of the South: "The Georgia Conference, a year ago, declared that slavery, as it exists in the Southern States, is not a moral evil."

The South Carolina Conference, at its sessions shortly afterwards, had the following proceedings on the subject:—

Resolved 1st: "That it is the sense of this Conference that slavery as it exists in these States is not a moral evil."

Resolved 2nd: "That we view slavery as a civil and domestic institution, with which, as ministers of Christ, we have nothing to do, further than to ameliorate the condition of the slave by endeavoring to bring him and his master under the benign influence of Christianity."

Bishop Hopkins of Vermont was asked: "What effect had the Bible in doing away with slavery?" He replied: "None whatever."

Missionary, Tract, and Bible Societies were all abettors of slavery. Frederick Douglas, the runaway slave, cried out in one of his eloquent speeches: "They have men stealers for ministers, women whippers for missionaries, and cradle plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus.....We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the poor heathen!.....The slave auctioneer's bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious master..... The dealer gives his bloodstained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit in return covers his infernal business with the garb of Christianity."\*

The Charleston Union Presbytery of April, 1836, resolved: "That, in the opinion of this Presbytery, the holding of slaves, so far from being a sin in the sight of God, is nowhere condemned in his holy word; that it is in accordance with the example and consistent with the precepts of patriarchs, apostles, and prophets."

The Holywell Presbytery, South Carolina, said: "Slavery has always existed in the Church of God, from the time of Abraham to this day."

The Presbyterian Synod of Virginia resolved, unanimously: "That we consider the dogma that slavery as it exists in the slave-holding states is necessarily sinful, and ought to be immediately abolished, and the conclusions which naturally follow from that dogma, as directly and palpably contrary to the plainest principles of common sense and common humanity, and the clearest authority of the word of God."

The Charleston Baptist Association, in 1835, resolved: "That the right of masters to dispose of their slaves had been distinctly recognised by the Creator."

Not only the orthodox churches, but the Unitarian Church at its meetings again and again fiercely attacked the anti-slavery movement. Even Dr. Channing's congregation would not allow an anti-slavery meeting to be held in their chapel, nor the announcement of one held elsewhere to be made from the pulpit.†

When Theodore Parker first began to preach against slavery, he had to use great circumspection, and his biographer tells us that "the very mention of slavery as wicked at first offended all hearers. Some said they could see no odds between claiming freedom for a negro slave and 'stealing one of our oxen'; the right to own cattle including the right to own men.....He seldom entered his pulpit without remembering that he did so in a land where churchgoers were not more numerous than slaves."‡

Time after time the abolitionists, wherever they went, were met with the reply: "Why endeavor to disturb an institution that Scripture sanctions?"

W. WITT LEAVIS.

(To be continued.)

\* Pp. 84, 85.

† Quoted in *Life and Teaching of Theodore Parker*, by Peter Bayne, p. 181.

‡ *Liberty and Slavery*, by Dr. Blodsoe, 1856; p. 124.

§ See article "Slavery," *National Encyclopedia*.

¶ *Chambers's Encyclopedia*, vol. ix., article "Slavery."

¶ J. S. Buckingham, in *Slave States of America*, vol. i., p. 88.

\* Quoted by G. W. Foote in his pamphlet, *Will Christ Save?* containing a mass of valuable information on this and other subjects.

† See *Life and Teaching of Theodore Parker*, by Peter Bayne, p. 180.

‡ *Ibid*, pp. 177, 178, 179.

## 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.

### It's in the Bible.

#### HOW CHRISTIANS KNOW THE SCRIPTURE.

One would have thought that all those right-thinking and artistic ladies and gentlemen who form the National Trust for the Preservation of Places of Natural Beauty and Historic Interest would know their "Keats," of all poets, and especially his best-known and most frequently-quoted line. The National Trust held its annual meeting at Grosvenor House recently. The Duke of Westminster was in the chair, and he was supported by the usual crowd of lords, ladies, bishops, and artistic folk. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was down to speak in support of a resolution. In the course of his address a happy thought struck him. It was appropriate, he said, on that occasion to quote a line "in some book—I don't know which, and which runs 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' No doubt the noble chairman knows who wrote it?" Sir Wilfrid paused and smiled as he turned to the Duke. The Duke also paused and smiled—and shook his head. So did a certain bishop who sat on his left. The audience looked at one another, and also smiled as much as to say, "Of course we know." But for a few seconds no one spoke. Then the silence of embarrassment was broken by somebody who said, in a voice perfectly audible throughout the famous Reubens Room: "It's in the Bible!" A lady who was sitting in the front row turned to her neighbor and said, with an air of surprise: "How funny! Do you know, I always had an idea that Mr. Keats wrote that!"—*Westminster Gazette.*

## GEMS FROM INGERSOLL.

CUSTOM meets us at the cradle, and leaves us only at the tomb.

Nothing is so egoistic as ignorance.

The infidels of one age have been the aureole saints of the next.

The altar and the throne have leaned against, and supported, each other.

Liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of life.

Credulity is not a virtue, and investigation is not a crime.

The idea of immortality is the rainbow—hope shining upon the tears of grief.

All progress in legislation for centuries consisted in repealing laws.

Education is the most radical thing in the world.

There are in nature neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences.

Our first questions are answered by ignorance, and our last by superstition.

Epithets are the argument of malice.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow men.

Arguments cannot be answered with insults.

### Safe Until Needed.

Here is a queer story from the wilds of Oklahoma about a Methodist preacher. While the latter was returning home one evening he had the misfortune to fall into an abandoned well. For some time his cries for assistance brought no response, but at length Alkali Ike chanced to pass by on his homeward way after an evening of pleasure at the Blue Ruin fortune parlors.

"Help! Help!" cried the clergyman in a hollow voice.

"Who's that?" demanded Ike in return.

"It is I, Rev. Jenks."

"That so? Wal, whur are you, anyhow, an' what's the trouble?"

"I am down in Bill Gaw's old well, and——"

"Any danger of drowning?"

"No; the well is almost dry, but I——"

"Huh!" broke in Ike, who entertained a grudge against the minister. "Stay thar, then. We don't particularly need you till next Sunday."—*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.*

### A Samaritan Missionary.

Sergt.-Major Fraser, of the Border Mounted Rifles, who arrived at the Richmond Camp in advance of his regiment, tells an extraordinary story of his treatment by a missionary on his way down from Polela. The Sergt.-Major, it appears, was caught in Monday night's downpour, and after a long ride in the darkness he gave up the idea of riding straight through. He therefore made for the nearest dwelling, which happened to be a mission station, where he not unreasonably hoped to be provided with shelter and refreshment. In this he was disappointed, the missionary turning him away into the storm, though he was drenched to the skin, and both he and his horse in need of rest and food. The story has been quickly circulated from tent to tent, and the feeling aroused, and the description of comment indulged in may be easily imagined.—*Mercury.*

One day a young man dropped in upon Walt Whitman at his humble home in Camden, N.J., introduced himself as a poet, and begged to be allowed permission to read selections from a bundle of manuscripts which he carried. "No, thank you," said Whitman, courteously, but firmly; "I have been paralysed twice."

Years ago, as a New England sea captain was signing a contract at a shipping-office, he was observed by the official in charge to be writing a string of names. "Only sign for yourself, Cap'en," cried the officer; "not for the whole crew!" The captain grimly pointed out the heading—"Name in full"—and went on writing his piece, which, when he had done, the officer, after some trouble in the deciphering, found to read thus: "Through Much-Tribulation-We-Enter-Into-the-Kingdom-of-Heaven Clapp." "Will you please to tell me, Captain Clapp," said he, with as demure a face as his violent inclination to indulge in a hearty laugh would allow him to put on, "what might your mother have called you in your infancy, to save herself the trouble of repeating a sermon whenever she had occasion to name her darling?" "Why, sir," replied Captain Clapp, with laughable simplicity, "when I was little they used to call me Tribby, for shortness."—*Household Words.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHILDREN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is the tenth day of our holiday; the heat almost unbearable, and we have come in to an early, leisurely tea. Our child May, aged four, is playing on the carpet, finding endless uses for the string, paper, labels, etc., of parcels just received. I look in her face. We think her pretty. She is delightfully happy. In the ten long, hot days she has never been disobedient one moment. As I look at her, bright, happy, and content, she pauses in her play, and with thrillingly affectionate look, asks: "Well now, dada?" I had been ailing, and was lying down. I said: "Yes, darling, thanks"; and then I thought of her future, and wished that she could always be happy. Suppose, when she is old enough to think and reason, she is unable to believe those dogmas which her parents have rejected? Is she then to be damned? Is that beautiful form and character to be but fuel for an eternal fire? Certainly such is the teaching of Christianity. For, after all the special pleading of Christians whose humanity is more noble than their religion, salvation is "by faith (belief), and not of works, lest any man should boast." And does not every one of the sects sincerely believe that each and all of the legion of other sects would become better in the eyes of God, and surer of salvation by believing their particular belief? Our darling knows nothing of beliefs, and she is happy and content; and, rightly or wrongly, I am persuaded that, if no one poisoned her mind with these superstitions, she would never need them, and would be more likely to remain bright, and good, and happy.

If I am wrong, I will thank any intelligent Christian to correct me.

HORACE DAWSON.

## "MR. KENWORTHY'S 'IMMEDIATE REASON.'"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you permit me to make some short comments on Mr. Gould's article headed "Mr. Kenworthy's 'Immediate Reason,'" in your issue of July 17?

Mr. Gould has dealt with one address only—and that the preliminary one—out of a series of five. Had he heard one or two of the others, or had he even adequately considered the short syllabus of the lectures given on the handbills he would not have written his article as he has done. And I feel also that he himself is so occupied with his particular view of the origins of the Gospels that he has by no means given due weight and place to certain things said in the one lecture he did hear.

My own view of the origins of the Gospels, the view I was at pains to state in the lecture, is very much in accord with the rational and lucidly-stated view given by Mr. Gould in his own first paragraph. I cannot well understand how Mr. Gould could have imagined that I am concerned with "Christian evidence" or "Christian apologists."

But, as to "historical criticism," I think he undervalues this. Since the Rationalists of last century began their first, very right in direction, but necessarily crude, attack on Bibliolatry, men of all kinds, in many countries, have spent their lives in honest attempt to discover the historical truth about the gospels. At the present moment a consensus of scholarship—the scholarship of men who are honest scholars, whether religious or anti-religious—exists as to what I have said—namely, that the Gospels were produced, much in their present form, between the years 60 and 100. I have been at some pains to obtain a general view of the subject, as it stands to-day in the minds of men qualified to judge, and, despite the author's regrettable attachment to his University and Church, I feel that Professor Sanday, in his 1894 Bampton Lectures has summed up the situation fairly, and given us a view of the Gospel origins which harmonises with discovered facts, and with the historical and psychological necessities of the case. The evidence, as I have followed it for many years past, points to much more, very much more, than Mr. Gould's "certain vague and thin legends" as having existed during the latter half of the first century.

But Mr. Gould is troubled that I concern myself with such matters. Well, I, who believe that the worst enemies of Christ are the "Christians," feel it to be my duty to know their own business better than the "Christians" themselves do. Not that a right view of the origins is necessary to an understanding of the Gospel teaching, but it is useful and proper to know what one is talking about, in every possible way. So, I am prepared to take the very position established by their own leaders and luminaries, and from those positions demonstrate (to put it very plainly) that the so-called "Christian Churches" are precisely anti-Christian. I put Christ against the Christian; the Gospel teaching against Theology.

Mr. Gould is dissatisfied with the conclusion of that day's lecture. "I wanted to get on," he says; "I

wanted to attack the great problem of poverty, commercialism, and ignorance." Well, why did he not come on the following days, when just that very attack was delivered, the ground having been prepared? Then I showed how the applied teaching of Jesus must absolutely overthrow the whole system of property and commerce, Church and State. I have yet to meet a man who goes a step further than I do in his conception of the overturn which must come to the present system, when, under our distresses, we again discover what Mr. Gould so well calls "the hopes and fears and pity and ideals of the poor people who created the Christian religion." Surely he does not call "the intellectual condition" of those first Christians "darkness of the first century"? Rather it is the light which we have had and lost, and to which we must return. The world must ever look backward through time to its Buddha, Lao-tze, Socrates, Jesus; because these lights of the ages, behind us in history, are yet our leaders in life.

There is in the teaching of Jesus that which I can understand by my reason, apply in my life, and prove and know by experience. But this teaching is so different from the mask of miracle and theology which passes for "Christianity" that it becomes heresy and rebellion to Church and State to-day, just as it was about A.D. 33, when Church and State murdered Jesus.

There is some probability of the Essex Hall lectures being printed. I should be glad if their reproduction serves the purpose of producing a better understanding between Mr. Gould (and, perhaps other "Freethinkers") and us, who are, we trust, "Christians" of a quite rational and serviceable kind.

JOHN C. KENWORTHY.

## CHRISTIAN LECTURERS AND MR. WHEELER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The other Sunday the lecturer of the Victoria Park Branch of the Christian Evidence Society informed his audience that the late sub-editor of the *Freethinker* suffered from melancholy, and that this caused his death. This alleged melancholy was advanced as a proof of the evil effect of Atheism. As his authority for this piece of Christian evidence, the lecturer referred to your own statement on the matter in the *Freethinker*. On turning to your statement (*Freethinker* for May 8, p. 297), I find the origin of this latest Christian myth. You spoke of the absence of Mr. Wheeler's article, and said that "the reason of this is melancholy." The level of the intelligence (or of the honesty) of the Christian lecturer may be gauged by the fact that he had converted the adjective melancholy into a substantive, and so represented a melancholy event as a personal state of melancholy. As this piece of Christian mendacity or stupidity (or both combined) may be repeated until it becomes a stereotyped story of sadness and death caused by the acceptance of Freethought principles, I may as well place on record my contradiction as well as explanation thereof. I have known Mr. Wheeler for a long time, and was intimately associated with him in the work of the *Freethinker* for some years. I never know him to be melancholy or despondent. On the contrary, he was always cheerful, kindly of heart, and companionable. He was too much interested in his work, and cared too much for his wife and friends and books to be troubled with melancholy. He was certainly anxious and depressed at one time when his wife was seriously ill, and we all know that his nervous organisation was not capable of sustaining severe strain. But this is not melancholia, and I have not even heard that his mental disorder ever took that form. That Mr. Wheeler's original breakdown was due to Christian bigotry and persecution was, of course, left carefully unmentioned by the lecturer. The beam in his own eye is the last thing in the world that a Christian Evidence advocate would ever notice.

On the previous Sunday another Christian lecturer, speaking from the same platform, triumphantly quoted your statement, or damning admission as he assumed it to be, that Mr. Wheeler was unable to bear his friend's misfortune like a Christian. This showed how inferior Atheism was to Christianity. Mr. Wheeler could not even bear his friend's misfortunes, much less, of course, could he bear his own. So the lecturer urged, and his audience heard him gladly. The sarcasm of your remark, obvious enough except to persons of the most limited intelligence, failed to penetrate the thick hides of these chuckling Christians. The lecturer jumped eagerly at your words, and quoted them just as Christian simpletons are occasionally asinine enough to quote some of Gibbon's deadliest sarcasms and ironies without any suspicion of their true meaning.

W. P. BALL.

## Orthodox Hypocrisy.

"It is time that there should be an end of the cant which lifts up its hands at the crimes of Republicans and Freethinkers, and shut its eyes to the crimes of kings and churches."—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Miscellanies," vol. i, p. 111.*

## 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.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Display of Animated Photographs.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, R. P. Edwards; 6.45, O. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Bible Heroes." Peckham Rye: A. B. Moss—3.15, "Darwin and Design"; 6.30, "The Christian Creed."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; 7, R. P. Edwards. August 3, at 8, A lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, E. Pack.

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 3.15, O. Cohen, "Secularism." HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7, Stanley Jones.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, Stanley Jones

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

KINGSLAND (Kidley-road): 11.30, O. Cohen.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, Stanley Jones. August 2, at 8, A lecture.

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

### COUNTRY.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "The Truth About Monastic Life."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Lecture-room, corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 8, Members' monthly meeting, excursion, and other business.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and friends' excursion to Strines *via* Bradford Reservoirs, and return *via* Hollow Meadows. Meet at 1.40, corner of Norfolk and Arundel-streets, conveyances start at 2 prompt.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—July 31, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park; e., Victoria Park. August 7, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—July 31, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

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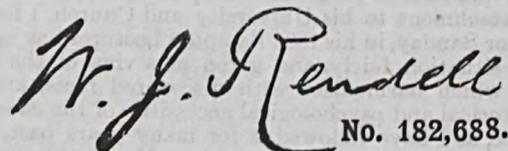
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