

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## BISMARCK.

GLADSTONE'S death has soon been followed by the death of Bismarck. The former was the greatest English statesman, the latter was the greatest statesman in Europe. Both played a large part in human affairs, both lived to a ripe old age, and both died in retirement from the busy scene of their political labors. Gladstone was the greater orator; Bismarck was the greater man of action. They disliked each other very cordially, and this was perfectly natural. Gladstone would regard a man like Bismarck as brutal, and Bismarck would regard a man like Gladstone as a mere word-spinner. No doubt the German colossus chuckled over Disraeli's famous *mot* about the sophisticated rhetorician inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity; and no doubt the English old parliamentary hand turned up his eyes in horror when he read the terribly frank things which the great Chancellor used to say from time to time in and out of the German parliament. And the cream of the joke was that each felt he was acting under the inspiration of God.

On the popular side Gladstone bore the bell. He belonged to a different stage of political growth, and moved amid a different environment. He addressed the vast public, triumphed in general elections, and formulated policies for the hour. Bismarck lived and worked under a real, not a sham, monarchy. When he could not get a parliamentary majority he did without it, and used the power of the crown. He was thus able, as long as he held the ear of the king, and afterwards of the emperor, to carry out a settled policy which could only be realised in the course of many years. His achievement was certainly far greater than Gladstone's. You may trace the one man's influence in recent English history, but the other was the supreme factor in the making of modern Germany. Whatever may be thought of the value of his work, there can be but one opinion as to its immensity. There has been no such potent, commanding figure in European politics since the fall of the first Napoleon. That he hated England, or that he was hated by France, is no part of *this* question. Nor need we be too pharisaic in our estimate of his methods. England is happily protected by that streak of silver sea. She has no foreign question, as the great European nations have. Were she situated as Germany is, between France on the one side and Russia on the other, with uncertain states to the south, and smaller uncertain states to the north, and only the imaginary line of a frontier as a barrier against them, she would have to pursue a different policy, and her strongest statesman would necessarily be of a different type from Gladstone.

Bismarck's work was really done when he was dismissed by the young Emperor. United Germany was in existence, strong, self-reliant, and full of ambition. Nothing short of a cataclysmic European war could ever undo that. It was perfectly safe, therefore, to drop the pilot, for the ship  
No. 889.

was in port. But there was something inexpressibly disgusting in the young Emperor's treatment of the veteran to whom he owed his imperial crown, and it will be remembered against him as long as he lives.

Those who thought—as many Socialists did—that a more liberal spirit would prevail in Germany when Bismarck went, were egregiously mistaken. A brave man is rarely cruel, and a strong man is seldom unnecessarily oppressive. But there is no end to the tyranny of a weak, vain man in power. Emperor William has had more people imprisoned than Prince Bismarck. Prosecutions for "blasphemy" have also multiplied, and there is less freedom in Germany to-day than there was ten years ago. Your really big man does not act in this way. Cromwell smote down his enemies remorselessly on the battlefield, but he did not erect scaffolds in the public squares—except for one man, Charles Stuart; nor did he fill prisons with people who did not like him or his government. He let them talk as long as they kept the peace. Frederick the Great did just the same. But the young German Emperor's only resemblance to Frederick the Great is that he is a Hohenzollern.

We are glad that Bismarck has left orders that he is to be buried beside his wife, and we hope the family will not give way to the Emperor's wishes. Gladstone ought to have been buried at Hawarden. It was cruel to drag his poor old wife to London; it was morbid for thousands of Cockneys to file past a coffin. Gladstone was not in it. Nothing was there but his rotting remains. And the people who filed past the coffin were Christians, who are always reviling the living body and celebrating the glory of its immortal soul!

We desire to say a few words on another point before concluding. Gladstone and Bismarck were both Christians; that is to say, they both called themselves by that name, believed in the deity of Jesus Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, and a future life such as the New Testament promises. Gladstone has been praised as the ideal Christian statesman. But what about Bismarck? He was as good a Christian as Gladstone, but how different were his principles, his objects, and his methods! The truth is, the very phrase "a Christian statesman" is absurd. It can only mean that the statesman in question was a professed Christian. There never was, and there never can be, such a thing as Christian statesmanship. The case is one in which the adjective is the natural enemy of the noun. Statesmanship means doing the best for a nation in given circumstances. Its objects and methods are purely secular. But what does "Christian" mean? The question is answered in scores of different ways. To say a man is a Christian is to tell us nothing about him except that he wears a particular label. He may be Liberal, Conservative, or Radical—Individualist or Socialist—Reactionary or Progressive—anything or nothing. It is time to have done with such nonsense.

G. W. FOOTE.

### ETHICAL SANCTIONS.

THEORETICALLY, if not practically, the present is pre-eminently an ethical age. Most persons are anxious to be thought to act morally, even if they fail to be consistent with their avowed desire. In the various phases of public life there is more than ever a manifest wish to have an ethical basis for human conduct. In the House of Commons the principle of utility finds more favor than the old theological standards, although it must be confessed that in too many instances our legislators are still actuated more by the law of expediency than by any high code of morals. It is also gratifying to note that in Christian controversy the ethical value of religion is deemed of greater importance than its historical accuracy. Take, for instance, the genuineness and authenticity of the various books of the Bible. Twenty or thirty years ago these questions were frequently discussed, but now they seldom form the theme of debate. With the majority of thinkers to-day the important point is not where or by whom the Bible was written, but rather what is the service of that which is written in the formation of upright character and in elevating human conduct. Herein is a proof of the existence in our midst of a decidedly improved ethical tone.

It is interesting to inquire into the cause or causes of this beneficial change. The impartial investigator will no doubt discover that the modern breaking up of old creeds, and the marked cessation that has taken place in relying upon their teachings, are the result of the increased Secular tendencies which, for some time, have manifested themselves. The once cherished sanctions for right doing are practically ignored, and, instead of accepting the notion that morality finds its basis in supernatural religion, it is recognised more and more that ethical standards are in human nature, and that what is termed morality is independent of the Christian or any other religion. There is no lack of evidence that this is the conclusion at which some of our greatest thinkers have arrived. Lecky remarks: "One of the first facts which must strike a student who examines the ethical teachings of ancient civilisations is how imperfectly that teaching was represented, and how feebly it was influenced by the popular creed. The moral ideas had at no time been sought in the action of the gods; and long before the triumph of Christianity polytheism had ceased to have any great influence on the more cultivated intellects of mankind." Baron D'Holbach asserts: "Religion enslaves without rendering better. It makes a herd of ignorant slaves, whom their panic terrors keep under the yoke of tyrants and of priests. It forms stupid beings, who know no other virtue than a blind submission to futile customs to which they attach a much greater value than to real virtues, or to the duties of morality which have never been made known to them." George Forster asks: "When will the time come when men will learn that the spring of the noblest and the most sublime actions has nothing to do with our notions of God and of a life after death?" Fichte observes: "The moral man obeys the duty in his breast absolutely because it is law unto him, and he does whatever reveals itself unto him as his duty simply because it is duty. Let not the impudent assertion be repeated that such an obedience, without regard to consequences, is in itself impossible and opposed to human nature." And Faraday remarked: "Morality, philosophy, commerce, and the various institutions and habits of society are independent of religion, and may exist without it." Professor Knight, Professor Tyndall, Dr. Martineau, Herbert Spencer, and even eminent orthodox Christian writers, may be quoted to the same effect. We therefore allege that the ethical principle was established, not by religion or by priestly sanctions, but by reason and experience, and that it has been transmitted by heredity and perpetuated by natural selection.

According to George Eliot, persons possessing the strongest moral character act, as it were, intuitively, and it is only when the moral nature is weak that we look to a moral guide or rule. There is, no doubt, some truth in this, although we cannot accept it as stated. Our intuitions are the result of our organisation, training, and general environment, and where those factors are of a superior order they prompt ethical conduct apart from any other sanctions, but where such agencies are of an inferior kind moral actions will be proportionately defective. To

say that morality is intuitional without the above qualification is, in our opinion, misleading, for, if it were intuitional, it would commend itself alike to all, and no nation or race would be without it. We therefore consider that, while the ethical sanction is in human nature, it requires, in order to give it proper force, education and experience. Secularism commends itself to our judgment as being the best philosophy to afford a moral basis, inasmuch as it does not confine the ethical sanctions to any one factor. The great mistake of orthodox Christians upon this subject has been that they have based their morality entirely upon the emotional side of humanity, and the consequence has been that their efforts to raise society to a high moral state have been a decided failure. Ethics, as we understand them, should be based upon both the emotional and the sterner faculties of humanity. Theologians well know that, once the emotions are aroused into full play without due intellectual surveillance, a proper mental discrimination is absent, and mere assumption is often treated as if it were a demonstrated fact.

Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in his work on *Social Evolution*, places before his readers the proposition that "there is no rational sanction for social conduct in the individual," and he further states that "there is no rational sanction for the moral conduct of the individual in the social organism." This may be ingenious upon Mr. Kidd's part, but it appears to us to be exceedingly fallacious. Apart from the individual and the social organism, where are ethical sanctions to be found? True, he asserts that religion alone provides a restraint, and regulates the conduct of individuals for the welfare of society; but the question arises, What religion? Is it that of humanity apart from, and independent of, theology? If so, the sanctions are in the individual and the social organism. If, on the other hand, supernatural religion is meant, then history is against Mr. Kidd's assumption. He admits that all such religions have assumed that actions are good or bad according to Divine will; that Divine powers have decided what is good and what is bad, and perhaps revealed their conclusions to human beings; that good actions please the divinities, and are rewarded; that bad actions arouse their fury and displeasure, and are punished. Thus morality to religionists, after all, no matter how much they try to conceal the fact, is simply a question of policy, a blind observance of such conduct as will be rewarded, and a departure from which means punishment, after death, in a life about which, as yet, very little is known. Supposing it were admitted that "a divine revelation" had been made to men, even then the nature of the sanctions would depend upon the organisation, etc., of the individual, and the conditions of the social organism. For, be it remembered, the character given to all supposed "divine revelations" has depended upon man's interpretation of them, and not upon the revelations themselves.

As to the idea that the sanctions of so-called supernatural religions have been of an ethical nature, their histories prove the very opposite. The eminent Theist, Professor Newman, says: "Devotion to duty is to mankind in all stages a uniting and spiritual force. But can we say the same thing concerning a belief in God? Alas! the appeal to history will elicit a most painful reply, that religion often perverts fatally the sense of duty. Enmity, violence, intense cruelty, bigotry, have in past ages so often issued to mankind from theology, as such, that the argument with the Atheist on this head becomes extremely difficult. He is able to assert, and it is hard to confute him, that, when good appears to come from a theology, it really comes solely from the moral truths that happen to be taught along with the theology" (*Theological Review*, 1879). Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, also writes that "during more than three centuries the decadence of theological influence has been one of the most invariable signs and measures of our progress. In medicine, physical science, commercial interests, politics, and even ethics, the reformer has been confronted with theological affirmations that have barred his way, which were all defended as of vital importance, and were all compelled to yield before the secularising influence of civilisation" (vol. ii., p. 18).

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

Blind is that sight that's with another's eye.—M. Drayton.

## SOME REAL AND ALLEGED ATHEISTS.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

IN days when Christianity was triumphant no charge was attended with more opprobrium than that of Atheism. To be even suspected of the "crime" was to be condemned and suppressed with horror and indignation. Atheism was thought the *ne plus ultra* of Satanic wickedness, and its supposed apostles were execrated as monsters doomed to eternal torments. The world branded and banished and the Church burnt them. Of the heretics who were burnt as Atheists it is not easy to say how many were really deserving the name.

The Manicheans, Bogomiles, and other heretics, who were relentlessly pursued to death during the Middle Ages, were commonly charged with Atheism. The disciples of Amaury de Chartres, who were burnt for Atheism at Paris in 1209, were probably only early philosophic reformers. Sagarel, who was burnt alive in 1300, held the heresy of the Everlasting Gospel, and probably, in holding that the Father and Son would give place to the Holy Ghost, meant that the reign of spiritual love would supersede dogmatism. Francis of Poitou, a Franciscan, who was also burnt for this heresy, was rather a mystic than an Atheist. Marguerite Porrete, burnt at Paris in 1300, was an Antinomian mystic. Lollard Walter, or Gauthier, burnt at Cologne in 1322, was apparently an Epicurean Deist. He asserted that God did not know of the evil done on earth, and denied all the distinctive dogmas of the Church. Many of his followers were also burnt. Herman de Ryswick, burnt at Hague in 1512, was a Deist and disbeliever in hell. The Anabaptists were commonly charged with Atheism, even while they were most religiously striving to emulate the primitive simplicity and community of the first Christians. Louis Berquin, the friend of Erasmus, who was burnt in 1530, was only a monk-hater. Quintin of Picardy, the chief of the Libertines, who was burnt at Tournay in the same year, probably gave color to the charge of Atheism by declaring the falsity of the Gospel. Gruet was burnt in 1549, more probably for his enmity to Calvin than for any distinct opinions. Etienne Dolet, who was burnt at Paris in 1546, was probably a sceptic of the type of his friend Rabelais. As a friend of heretics he was suspected, as a printer he was hated, as a satirist he was feared, and he was burnt for having wrongly translated Plato, whom he had made to say: "After death *tu ne seras plus rein du tout*—you will be nothing at all." The last three words were declared a damnable addition to the text, and cost him his life. Geoffroy Vallée, who was put to death in 1574, was not an Atheist, but an Epicurean Deist. He wished men to believe in God without fearing him. Had the dialogues for which he was condemned appeared in our own time, they would have been considered but mildly heretical.

Giordano Bruno, burnt at Rome, February 17, 1600, has been placed in all catalogues of Atheists down to modern times, and there are still many who hold with the Church and Lord Beaconsfield that Pantheism is only Atheism in domino. Lucilio Vanini, burnt at Toulouse, February 19, 1619, wrote in favor of the existence of God; but then Atheism has had no more powerful auxiliary than certain demonstrations of the existence of God. Father Mersenne, who shared in the *rabies* common to Atheographers, declared that Vanini set out with twelve apostles to convert the world to Atheism, and that in 1623 there were fifty thousand Atheist followers of Vanini in Paris alone!

Manzoli, a marquis of Florence, was burnt for Atheism in 1637. But the real cause was probably his having spoken and written against the Pope. Renault de Poitou and Jacques Dupain, of Sens, also burnt at Paris, 1646, may have only blasphemed the Trinity, the Virgin, or the saints. Kuhlmann, burnt at Moscow in 1689, was, according to the Christian accounts, rather a fanatic than an Atheist.

One of the last cases of capital punishment for Atheism is also one of the most dubious. In 1688 a Polish knight named Casimir Liszinski was cited for Atheism by the Bishops of Wilna and Posnovia. He was excommunicated and condemned to be burnt alive. According to his defence, his only crime was having made a compilation of arguments for Atheism in order to refute them, and having written

in the margin of a theological work that the arguments were inconclusive. Unfortunately for Liszinski, he had not commenced the second part of his work. By grace of the king, he was decapitated before being burnt (at Grodno, March 30, 1689). His ashes were placed into a cannon and scattered to the winds.

When so many suffered the extremest penalty of the law for alleged Atheism, it cannot be wondered if many real Atheists carefully concealed their opinions. It is not entirely without reason that the charge has been made at least against five popes—viz., Sylvester (999-1003), Boniface VIII. (1294-1308), John XXII. (1410-1416), Alexander VI. (1492-1503), and Leo X. (1513-1522). Sylvester probably incurred the charge for his patronage of learning. Against Boniface and Leo X. there is some evidence, while John and Alexander were denounced for their crimes.

Atheism is by no means the abnormal state of mind that some theologians would have us believe, and there can be little doubt that thinking men in all ages have often been troubled with doubts as to the religious opinions of those around them. Practical Atheism, or living without God in the world, has indeed been the unacknowledged creed of most of those who, concerning themselves with the things of the world, have helped forward its progress. The name, however, can only philosophically be applied to those who deny a personal intelligent first cause, and it is best restricted to those only who willingly accept it.

With many zealous Christians the charge of Atheism has been used in a most indiscriminate manner. Of course, there is a certain sense in which every man is an Atheist to every other, since no two men's gods are exactly alike. To the Swedenborgian, who believes not only that Jesus Christ was God, but that he was Jehovah, the one only God, every Jew, every rejecter of Christ, must be strictly an Atheist. Unitarians may be said to be Atheists to the Trinitarian God; nor have the orthodox hesitated to press the charge even against fervent believers in Theism. Berkeley and Bentley both called Anthony Collins an Atheist, and even at the present day we occasionally find Paine and Voltaire termed Atheists in the religious press.

Christians should, however, bear in mind that the charge of Atheism was one of the commonest that was brought against the early Christians by the Pagans. The Emperor Julian charged the "Galileans" with borrowing their Atheism from the absurd religion of the Jews. Father Arnobius complains to the Gentiles: "You call us impious, irreligious, and Atheists." The same charge of Atheism against the Christians is put into the mouth of Cæcilius in Minucius Felix; and in Eusebius's *Evangelical Preparation* a Pagan is introduced, speaking as follows:—

"Ought not those men to be considered altogether irreligious and Atheistical who desert the customs of their forefathers, by which every nation and every city hath been preserved? What good can reasonably be expected from those who oppose our saviors and reject our benefactors, and thus make themselves enemies of our gods? And can they deserve pardon who adopt whatever is impious and Atheistical among men, having turned away from the worship of beings honored everywhere, from time immemorial, both by Greeks and barbarians, with all sorts of sacrifices, rites, and mysteries, by all kings, legislators, and philosophers?"

Clement of Alexandria even claims many of the so-called Atheists of Paganism as being rather Christians in advance of their times. Yet there is little reason to doubt that Diagoras, Theodoros, Bion, Nicagoras, and Hippo, and even Pliny the Elder, rejected all idea of God. Euhemerus was called an Atheist for assigning a human origin to the gods. The opinions of Leucippus and Democritus were Materialistic rather than strictly Atheistic. There are Materialistic Theists like Priestley, just as there are deniers of a personal God who yet believe in a future life, like Hudson Tuttle, G. Barlow, A. P. Sinnett, and G. St. Clair. Epicurus and his followers relegated the gods to a remote sphere without influence on the conduct of men. Yet the Atheistic poem of Lucretius opens with an invocation to Venus. The real gods of Horace were Mæcæus and Augustus. The Atheistic character of Buddhism has often been contested, yet Max Müller says: "The fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely Atheistic." The Southern Buddhists have most closely kept the teachings of Gautama, and they neither worship any god nor seek for a personal continued existence. Gautama, how-

ever, does not seem from his discourses to have challenged the existence of the Vedic gods, but simply to have contended that they must be subject to the universal law of *Karma*.

Confucius spoke of Heaven (*Tien*), but did not use the name of the personal God (*Shang-te*). When asked about serving the spirits of the dead, he answered: "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?" Ke-Loo added: "I venture to ask about death." He was answered: "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"

Julius Cæsar was almost certainly an Atheist. He questioned a future life even before the Senate. Augustus and Tiberius were sceptics. Pyrrho was so complete a sceptic that he would have doubted the truth of Atheism had he known he would be classed as an Atheist.

Among moderns, the Atheism of the sceptics Hobbes, Bayle, and Hume may be questioned. Hobbes' principles may lead to Atheism. His questioning the existence of Satan may be applied to Satan's antagonist; but Hobbes himself professed to be of the religion of the State, whatever that religion might be. Bayle's articles tend to scepticism and Manicheism. Hume refutes the theistic positions only in dialogue. The fact that his posthumous essays are more decidedly sceptical than those published within his own lifetime confirms the view that Professor Blackie is right in classing him with real Atheists. It must not be forgotten that in Hume's time Woolston, Ilive, and Annet were imprisoned for milder heresies than Atheism.

Spinoza, the God-intoxicated, as Novalis calls him, was generally termed an Atheist in his own time, and nothing could more strikingly illustrate the progress made in thought than the invariable respect with which this great thinker is now everywhere mentioned, and the pains which are taken to distinguish his opinions from absolute Atheism. Toland, like Spinoza, though sometimes classed with the English Deists and sometimes with the Atheists, is rather to be classed among the Pantheists. N. Saint Glain, the translator of Spinoza into French, must also be acquitted of the charge of Atheism along with his master.

It may be contested how far Averroes, Pomponatus, Cæsalpinus, and Telesio, with their various shades of Pantheism and Materialism, come strictly within the category. The same may be said of Claudius Berigardus, Nicolaus Taurellus, the first German philosopher, and John Gerard Rom. Campanella's *Atheismus Triumphatus* might be better entitled *Atheismus Triumphans*. But no doubt his twenty-seven years of imprisonment had not induced any desire for further martyrdom. Though termed Atheists by their adversaries, all these, no doubt, would have denied the hard impeachment.

Matthias Knutzen, of Holstein, it is said, openly professed Atheism, and had upwards of a thousand disciples in Germany about 1674. He travelled to make proselytes, and his followers were called Conscientiaries (*Gewissener*), because they held there is no other deity than conscience. Whether Knutzen escaped the penalty of his opinions is uncertain, and his sect, if indeed he formed one, does not appear to have lasted. His contemporaries, Friedrich Wilhelm Stosch and Theodore Ludwig Lau, are also accused of Atheism.

It is not until the dawn of the age of reason in the eighteenth century that Atheism appears openly and undisguised in scientific garb. Lamettrie, La Grange, Holbach, Nageon, and Diderot wrote as Atheists, yet their pronounced writings were published under assumed names. They had no desire for martyrdom. The *System of Nature*, which appeared in 1770, attributed to Mirabaud,\* who died in 1760, helped to rear a school of acknowledged and unacknowledged Atheists. Its real author was Holbach, one of the most militant Atheists that ever lived, and he was assisted by the friends whom I have named. The influence of the work was profound. Priestley said that all the philosophers and men of letters he met with during a visit to France were Atheists. Rousseau declared he had only met three priests who believed in God.

The great French Revolution has often been called an Atheistic movement, yet some of the most noted actors were Deists rather than Atheists. Dr. James Buchanan, indeed, in his *Faith in God and Modern Atheism*, describes the first

French Revolution as actuated by anti-Christian Deism, and the second French Revolution by Atheism! Robespierre was a militant Deist, and paved the way for his own fall by pompously acting the Pontiff at the feast of the Supreme Being. Billaud-Varenes said: "*Avec ton Être Supreme tu commences m'embêter.*" Marat, Couthon, Sain-Just, Fouquier-Tinville, and the Jacobins generally knew how to conjure with the name of God. Mirabeau, Danton, Brissot, Vergniaud, Guadet, Clootz, and Chumette were Atheists. Miss Blind calls Madame Roland an Agnostic, yet she frequently spoke of God, the soul, and a future state, at a time when Mongez, a member of the Institute, could say he "had the honor to be an Atheist."

At the suggestion of his friend and fellow-Atheist, Lelande, Pierre Sylvain Maréchal compiled a Dictionary of Atheists, to which Lelande added a supplement, in which he states that he is prouder of his Atheism than of his scientific attainments, and that, although at the age of nineteen he thought, with the rest of the world, that the heavens prove the existence of God, he now sees in them nothing beyond matter and motion. The *Dictionnaire des Athées* has often been ridiculed for its debaptising so many Christians to insert them in its catalogue. Thus we find in it most of the Fathers—Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Sts. Chrysostom and Augustine! Luther, Melancthon, Pascal, Bossuet, Jurieu and Fenelon! our own Locke, Newton, Berkeley, Clarke, Cudworth, Hall, and Sherlocke!—nay, even Paul of Tarsus, John the Evangelist, and Jesus Christ! The name of God the Father ought to have been added to complete the list of notorious Atheists!

It is only fair to Maréchal to note that one of the purposes of his collection was to point out how many even of the supporters of theology had rendered themselves liable to the charge, and allowed some glimpse of philosophy to stand out in contradiction to their superstition. Pascal is included for saying that we neither know the nature nor the existence of God, and that reason is unable to demonstrate the being of a God. Jesus Christ is included, apparently in joke, for saying: "Take eat; this is my body." The remark is appended that to make bread into God is going further in materialism than Spinoza. In short, the *Dictionnaire des Athées* is not to be taken too seriously. We find the word OR (*gold*) included for the purpose of introducing some lines declaring that most of the world treats gold as God.

Many of the names most unjustly entitled Atheists in Maréchal's work are copied from previous Atheographers. Father Hardouin, the Jesuit, had stigmatised Jansenius, Malebranche, Quesnal, Pascal, Nicole, and others, as Atheists. The Protestant Reimann, in his *History of Atheism*, had enlarged his list with the names of many Catholics, as Bembo, Bellarmine, Malebranche, Leo X., Father Sanchez, etc. Buddeus enumerates a number whose Atheism is doubtful. Indeed, it may be said there is hardly a single philosopher of ancient or modern times, who has shown any originality of thought, who has not been accused of Atheism by one of the Atheographers Garasse, Mersenne, Voetius, Kortholt, Calver, Parker, Struve, and Jenkin Philipps.

In England, Shelley was one of the first to openly accept the name of Atheist. The Atheism of James Mill, of Bentham and Grote, though often suspected, was scarcely known in their own lifetime. A proof of how slowly the *odium theologicum* passes away in England may be found in the fact that many of the most astute Atheistic productions have been published anonymously or under pseudonyms. I may mention the *Inquiry into the Influence of Natural Religion*, by Bentham and Grote; the examinations of Mr. Gillespie's argument *à priori* by "Antitheos," "Aliquis," and "T. S. B.;" the astute examination of the Rev. B. Godwin's lectures on Atheism, published at Bradford; and the examination of Theism, by "Physicus." A hundred years after the death of Hume an able lady writer thinks it necessary, in criticising the design argument, to call herself by the pseudonym of "H. Lawrenny." Of those who have followed Shelley in proclaiming their Atheism, several have come to prefer some other designation. This was the case with Richard Carlile. Charles Southwell argued that it was absurd for anyone to call himself an Atheist, since it meant but the negation of nothing. Atheism was impossible, because Theism was unthinkable. Mr. Holyoake, who has refuted Paley and written *The Trial of Theism*, prefers the designation of Secularist. Professor Huxley has coined for himself the name Agnostic, a term accepted by Leslie Stephen, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and other followers

\* Mirabaud may have been an Atheist, but he is not to be confounded with Gabriel Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau, who certainly was one.

of Spencer and Darwin. John Stuart Mill, despite the dubious character of his posthumous essay on Theism, would probably have accepted the designation of Agnostic; and the same may be said of Lord Amberley and Professor Clifford, though we think the last would not have refused the more definite appellation of Atheist. The position expressed in the lines, "I say not that there is no God, but that I know not," is the one adopted by almost all who profess and call themselves Atheists. Some there are who, looking upon the idea of God as the foundation of all superstition and slavery, say, with Proudhon, "*Dieu c'est le mal.*" Men like Bakounine may rather be called anti-Theists than Atheists. They do not so much question the existence as the authority of God.

Many of the French Freethinkers frankly call themselves Atheists; nor is the term refused by scientists such as Hovelacque, Letourneau, and Lefevre. Caro considers Renan, Taine, and Vacherot as representing three types of opposition to Theism. Comte declared that the heavens declared only the glory of Kepler and of Newton, and it is not easy to see how the confinement of attention to phenomena can be reconciled with Theism. None the less, his Atheism has been questioned, and his followers—Littre, Lafitte, Bourdet, Wybouroff, Bliignieres, Bridges, Beesley, Kaines, Congreve, and Harrison—prefer the designation of Positivists.

In Italy many are ready to recite their creed in the words of the poet Guerini: "*Primo di tutto, dico, che non credo in Dio*"—"First of all, I say I do not believe in God." In Germany, Büchner, Schlaeger, Specht, Vogt, Moleschott, and Czolbe, though properly called Materialists, do not object to a name which has been applied not only to Feuerbach, Strauss, and Schopenhauer, but to Fichte, Schelling, Krause, and Hegel.

As the odium attached to the term Atheist slowly dwindles, we may expect to find less heed given to its repudiation. A very large number who refuse the appellation only do so because they so cordially agree with M. Buzot when he refused an article on the existence of God, sent to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, on the ground that "the question lacked actuality."

## HELPS TO HAPPINESS.

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

(Concluded from page 486.)

I THINK we make a mistake by loading the minds of the young with the rubbish of the past. The young are taught dead languages, dead religions, dead morals, and taught to venerate dead gods. I want to see this generation alive with its own thoughts and purposes, with an ear for the living truth, with lips that will speak what its own brain inspires, and with a heart that will yield to the impulse of charity. I sometimes think that it would be an advantage to the world to destroy everything on earth that is more than two hundred years old. Let us forget what Moses said, and say something ourselves. Let us forget what Jesus did, and do something ourselves.

The mind to-day is mostly a chamber for ghosts. Knowledge is regarded as familiarity with tombstones. Out upon a church that would make science apologise to fable. We have paraded the bones of our ancestors through the streets long enough. Let us stop the march of dead men. I admit all the greatness of the past, but I do not want it used to belittle the present. I do not want a coffin placed in the path of every undertaking, nor have every endeavor opposed by an order to keep off the grass. Every great man of the past is looked upon as a policeman to forbid human freedom. Does the commonwealth of mind need to be patrolled by the authority of opinion? Liberty will afford this world more opportunities for happiness than all the straight and narrow paths of dogma and creed. The intellect of man should be respected more by our teachers. Any instruction that is calculated to enslave the mind or degrade the majesty of reason is to be denounced. Knowledge tends to promote the happiness of the individual and of the race. Philosophers make a better use of life than do monks. Learning opens more doors of pleasure than does ignorance.

I want to see everyone anxious to know something and

willing to trust their own reason. It comes to this:—We must be our own masters or others' slaves. There is no authority in the world but that of the human mind. We cannot exaggerate the mischief of human credulity. A too-ready belief has fastened upon mankind a load of superstition that will take centuries to throw off. Fear has been the cause of as much unhappiness and sorrow as have wars, and it has been excited in the name of God. Let us be guided by what is kind and just, not by what is cruel and base. The best thing for all men is to be honest, and to take the fate of honesty here and hereafter—honest intellectually, honest morally, honest in every way, and then nobly to bear whatever comes.

Every man ought to solve the problems of life for himself, or try to do so. He should not whip his reason into obedience of another's command, or too easily surrender his right of independence. Let us not adopt anyone's opinion unless it satisfies our own mind.

I hate the Church for a good many reasons, but I hate it for one reason in particular, and that is, for putting fear of God and fear of the future in the human heart. That is the blackest of a thousand black things which this black power has done. No one will know how much happiness has been strangled by the cruel hands of fear. A Church that can live only by murdering joy in the human heart is the offspring of a fiend.

I consider it my duty to deny the teachings of the Christian Church as long as I live; to tell men and women to have nothing to do with priests and ministers. The Christian Church has taught that, if man enjoyed himself here, he would have to suffer hereafter; that, if he sowed the seeds of gladness in this life, he would reap the fruit of sorrow in another life; but, if he would deny himself while living, go hungry, ragged, and ignorant, and give what he earned to the Church, he would enter into bliss eternal when he died.

I am willing to confess that I do not know what lies one inch beyond the borders of the grave, that I am in the dark in regard to the future; but I believe that, if man is to live again, the best way to be happy hereafter is by being happy, and making others happy, here. I do not believe that we can lie down in heaven and wake up in hell. My doctrine is this:—The best preparation for a good time to-morrow is to have a good time to-day. If the Devil goes to the theatre, and God to the prayer-meeting, the Devil shows the better taste of the two. I do not think much of a God who is afraid of a laugh on Sunday. The good men do not all go to church, nor do the bad ones all stay away.

I want to say that the old notion of religion, that a bright, sunny, happy life is opposed to what is highest and truest and best, is false. I would trust the dog that wags his tail at my approach sooner than the one that scowls and growls. I believe the Church is the enemy of the poor man, the honest man, the happy man, and, for this reason, I want to see the poor, the honest, and the happy ones of earth stop giving to the Church.

I go upon the ground that men wish to know what is right, that they wish to be told what is true, and that they are willing to be corrected. This is not a corrupt world, although the history of vice and crime is in more than one volume. Instead of regretting that men are no better, let us rejoice that they are no worse. In a life where so many things take the shape of temptation it should be no surprise that man makes mistakes. It is only surprising that he does not learn from his mistakes. Happy is the man who does not learn the right by doing the wrong. There is a wisdom which the schools do not teach, but which life recommends, and which all good influences help to conserve. It is the wisdom of innocence that plants itself upon the right without question, without argument, and says No! without debate.

To have the fewest faults possible is the utmost that man can do; not to have any is not to be human. One of the most cruel things in this life is the unkindness of the fortunate to those who are less so. Kindness is the best preacher, the best instructor. It is an education. Kindness is more than a kind speech. We are to share what we get, not as an offering, but as a pleasure. We want no altars in this age, whether they be called churches or charities. The victim has always been man, and selfishness the god to whom he has been sacrificed. Whatever tends to make man better, and life better for him, I would see preserved; but what adds nothing good to humanity we do not want. There are but two duties that are supreme—duty to ourselves and to our

race. We owe God nothing. Let the world stop giving in that direction. There is a better way to invest its money. The more the Church gets, the more the world has to go without. If there were none who wanted bread, who wanted clothes, who wanted the comforts of life, if there were no sick without medicine, no poor without homes, I could see the rich, proud temples of worship with less indignation.

I find that worship of the cross makes victims for it. I believe in art, in beauty, in fair things for the eye, and grand things for the soul. I admire the marble thoughts that genius shapes for man's delight, the structured grandeur that adorns our cities, and the magnificent homes that are built for human beings to live their various lives in. But I do not admire poverty, ignorance, and vice; I do not believe in women and children going hungry; I do not believe in men, women, and children suffering and starving; I do not like the hovel, the den, and the brothel, the wretched surroundings where other human beings live their various lives.

If anyone must wait in this world, let it be God instead of man. I wish that there could not be another church built in this country until every man was able to own a home of his own. I wish that Christian ministers would stop trying to save men's souls, and endeavor to improve their earthly estate. Religious problems can wait for a solution, but material ones cannot. It would benefit mankind far more to discover a remedy for scarlet fever or pneumonia than to find out who wrote the Pentateuch. Men and women are helping the Church more than the Church is helping them. Man works for the Church in this world, and the Church promises to pay him in another world. I would not accept a draft drawn on the hereafter. A person who deposits his money on earth and expects to draw interest in heaven has more faith than the man who invests in the gold mines of a frog pond. Tell the priest that you will give your notes for the salvation he offers, payable when you receive the goods. Do not postpone your happiness. When the Church promises joy hereafter for faith and cash here, it promises more than it can perform. The only vital point of time is the present. Our hopes and desires may extend beyond the hour, but our hand can do no work to-morrow until to-morrow comes. It is what is hard to bear now that demands courage, not what will be hard by-and-by. We cannot weep over future pains. What we have not done, or what we are going to do, requires no strength. Our forces should all be brought to bear upon present duties. It is difficult for men to divest themselves of the past, or to ward off the shadows of the future. It is the fear or hope that to-morrow will bring some great blessing or some great sorrow that invests it with its peculiar attraction; but the future is distorted by either hope or fear. Nature gives us only opportunity, and time is occasion simply. The whole universe is composed of the same material, and we can be just as happy on earth as anywhere else.

What a blessing it is that all men die. The only way that the world has advanced is by one man dying and another being born. Think what a world this would be if all the brutes that have lived in the past, and written their deeds in the blood of their fellow-men, were living now! Those fiends that burned Bruno, those fiends that lighted the fires of Smithfield, those fiends that led the massacre of St. Bartholomew, were stopped in their fiendish work by death. Death is the missionary of progress. He took away Calvin, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards. He removed that pious wretch—Pius IV.—who ordered every Protestant in Italy to be butchered. He removed that infamous Catholic, the Duke of Savoy, by whose command men, women, and children were tortured and killed in every brutal fashion imaginable. He removed every one of those heartless fiends who, in the name of God, for ten centuries wronged, persecuted, maimed, and killed in the most terrible manner everybody who was honest enough and brave enough to think and live outside of the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. Nothing could have saved the world from these brutal wretches but death. *Let us drink to the health of death.*

The value of everything on earth must be determined by its value to man—by its worth to human life. When this valuation prevails, homes will be more sacred than churches, mothers holier than nuns, science worth more than fable, and the splendor of a moral life will outshine the false glory of pious performances. L. K. WASHBURN.

—*Boston Investigator.*

## HE WASN'T BAD ENOUGH; OR, THE UNCONVERTED COSTER.

THERE was a chap named Muggleton, a costermonger bloke,  
A reg'lar scorcher, 'cording to report;  
'E used to frequent pubs., and cuss and swear, and drink and  
smoke,  
And do a lot o' fings 'e didn't ort.

One Sunday morn 'e sat at 'ome a sufferin' from the blues,  
And a broodin' o'er the error of 'is wyes;  
The night before 'e'd been and 'ad a hextry-spesbul booze,  
As 'e always used to do on Saturdyes.

So there 'e sat a broodin'—for 'e'd nuffink else to do—  
Till suddingly outside 'is 'ouse there comes  
A squeakin', squallin', caterwaulin', rahdy dahdy crew,  
With concerteeners, tamborines, and drums.

They sang an 'ymn, which sed as 'ow they'd been an 'ad a  
wash  
In the sanguinerry flood of a lamb;  
But, judgin' from their pussonal appearance, by gosh!  
For cleanin' fices 't isn't wuth a damn.

Now Muggleton—a sittin' with 'is winder open wide,  
Just a coolin' of 'is beery, muddled 'ed—  
Was spotted by Salvation Sal, a brizen-lookin' jide,  
And she spoke to 'im, and this is what she sed:—

"Oh, come and be a soldier in the Army of the Lawd,  
Of the livin' waters come and 'ave yer fill."  
Said Muggleton: "I'm bally dry, I am, so 'elp me Gawd;  
As the pubs. ain't open yut, I fink I will."

'E was dahn the stairs and with 'em in the twinklin' of a  
heye,  
"Praise the Lawd," and "'Alleluyer" they did bawl;  
Then the concerteeners sahnded, and they marched 'im right  
awye,  
And they brought 'im to their 'Alleluyer 'All.

An 'ymn or two was sung, and then upstarted "'Appy Jack,"  
And a list of all 'is sins 'o did recite;  
The chaps in Newgit Calendar are painted rather black,  
But, compared with 'im, they all were snowy white.

Some other "soldiers" got upon the pennytenshul stool,  
And they tawked abaht their life of sin and crime;  
'Twas enough to make a coster "scorcher" feel a trifle cool,  
And enough to make a stachoo blush with shime.

"Oh, 'ang it all," sed Muggleton, "you ain't the sort for me;  
Wot! join yer Army?—Demmy if I do;  
I thought that I was jist abaht as bad as I could be,  
But I'm bothered if I'm bad enough for *you!*"

ESS JAY BEE.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Legion of Honor Committee in France has disgraced itself by striking Zola's name off the list on account of his action in the Dreyfus case. The pretence is that he has been "convicted" by a legal tribunal. Well, most members of the Legion of Honor actually worship as god a dead Jew who was "convicted" by a legal tribunal at Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago. After all, the man who is so bravely calling upon France to recollect justice and honor can do without these social distinctions. He is ennobling his name, and the word "Zola" needs no decoration in the eyes of the civilised world.

M. Jules Barbier, the well-known dramatist, has done a brave thing by protesting so practically against the expulsion of Zola from the Legion of Honor. He has forwarded his own resignation to the President of the Council with a letter of pointed though dignified rebuke. "There are some men," he says, "whom the Cross honors—such as your humble servant—and there are some who honor the Cross, such as that great man, Zola, who is ready to wash France from the mud which covers her, and which is thrown by the bad shepherds who pretend to guard her." M. Barbier adds that he must retire from an Order from which Zola is excluded, and ends with the fine statement: "I feel as much pleasure in giving up my officer's rosette as I did in receiving it." A good many public men who are not politicians might do France a real service at this crisis by following M. Barbier's example.

M. Pressensé, the foreign editor of the *Temps*, has followed M. Barbier's example and resigned his riband of the Legion of Honor. This is good news indeed.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the great Norwegian novelist (and Freethinker), in a long letter published in the *Paris Temps*, declares that the behavior of France in the Dreyfus affair

is condemned by the unanimous opinion of the world outside. "It would be criminal," he says, "to leave France in ignorance of this state of things, for it is an incalculable injury to the world at large to see France at the beck and call of reaction. And why? To screen the general staff." Björnson says that the general staff of the French Army is already so compromised in the eyes of Europe and America that there could be nothing to lose or risk in a revision of the Dreyfus case.

The way in which the screw is applied in France by the Government, in the interest of the Army, is well illustrated by the case of M. Paul Stapfer. This gentleman is a great scholar and the author of many valuable historical works. He is also senior professor at Bordeaux University, and in this capacity he had to deliver the funeral oration at the grave of his old friend, M. Couat, the Rector of the University, who died recently. M. Couat often said during his last illness that his death was hastened by seeing his country depart so flagrantly from the paths of truth and justice. This referred to the Dreyfus affair, and when Professor Stapfer spoke of his old friend's love for truth and justice it was taken as a covert insult to the Army, and the result was a storm of abuse. Nor was this all, or even the worst. Professor Stapfer has actually been "suspended" for six months. And this under a Republic! At this rate, we may soon look to find the words "Truth" and "Justice" proscribed in France as treasonable.

The Rev. Archibald Fullarton, of Greenock, died suddenly on Sunday evening while conducting a service in the chapel of the infirmary. The event was perfectly natural, as the reverend gentleman suffered from heart disease. But just imagine the rumpus there would be in the religious world if a Freethought lecturer were to drop dead upon the platform. No amount of heart disease would prevent its being regarded as a "judgment."

There was an unemployed Baptist minister knocking about in the Eastern States of the great Republic of the Stars and Stripes, and his name was P. Jernegan. Now the pious but out-of-work Jernegan did not like this state of things, so he resolved to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. With this object he devised a scheme which was worthy of the scientists in *Gulliver's Travels* who occupied themselves in extracting sunshine from cucumbers. He proposed to extract gold from sea water, and to carry out this magnificent scheme he started a Company with a capital of ten million dollars. Offices were opened at Boston and works established at Lubec, Maine, where it was claimed that the sea was richest in auriferous elements. Shareholders were invited down to Lubec to witness the gold fishing. Alleged accumulators were let down into the sea at high tide, and a diver, appropriately named Fisher, who was stationed below, removed the mercury they contained and substituted other mercury highly charged with gold. All sorts of people, including bank directors, were bamboozled, and a million dollars' worth of shares were taken. But about a fortnight ago the Rev. P. Jernegan and his brother drew over \$200,000 from the Boston banks, purchased negotiable Government bonds with the money, and then set sail for Europe in the *Navarre*. Probably he will be extradited by the French authorities and dealt with in the land where he perpetrated his swindle. At this point, however, our interest in the matter ceases. The swindle was a remarkably "thin" one, and we can only account for its immense success amongst the wide-awake Yankees by the fact that the swindler was a minister of the gospel, who could "bless it and approve it with a text."

The Pope has addressed a long letter to his bishops in Scotland, and a precious rigmarole it is, although couched in the pretentious language which the Vatican affects. He longs for the return of the Scottish people to the religion of their forefathers. They are "naturally inclined to embrace the truth," but they have somehow been deluded ever since the Reformation. However, there are "signs" which afford him "hope," and Papa Pecci calls upon all good Catholics to "constantly offer prayers and supplications to God" for the speedy conversion of the land of kilts and thistles. But the case seems really a hopeless one, and old John Knox must be smiling grimly in his grave at the Pope's hallucination.

Dr. Sinclair, Archdeacon of London, has been repeating Bishop Moorhouse's oft-explored nonsense about the immoral results of "godless education"—that is to say, secular education—in Australia. Were it not for the Church schools, he said, this awful experiment might be tried in England. One would think, to hear this man, that there was no such thing as religious instruction in the Board schools; whereas Sir John Gorst has only recently declared, in the House of Commons, that the religious instruction in the Board schools is infinitely superior to that given in the Church schools. The fact is that in the vast majority of Board schools in England the first and brightest hour of the children's day is wasted in teaching them the super-

naturalism—in religion, ethics, and history—of semi-barbarians, who lived from two to three thousand years ago.

"They could not have morality without religion," said Archdeacon Sinclair. This is the great falsehood on which the Churches live amidst the decline of dogma. Every man of sense is fully aware of its absurdity. We might even remind Dr. Sinclair that there is often precious little morality with religion. Men of God, and pious laymen, figure in the police-courts quite as frequently as other people, in proportion to their numbers. Even when they don't figure in police-courts they sometimes achieve an unenviable notoriety in other ways. Dr. Sinclair and his colleagues are face to face, for instance, with the problem of Mr. Hooley's communion plate at St. Paul's Cathedral. That little matter ought, in common decency, to be settled before a dignitary of St. Paul's gasses any more about religion being the parent or even the guardian of morality.

We daresay the religious teaching is fairly well looked after in the parish of St. Laurence, Birmingham, but, from the secular point of view, this parish is a disgrace to civilisation. Out of 1,225 families 700 are often in receipt of Poor Law relief. The death-rate is double that of the more respectable parts of the town. Hardly any of the people eat their meals at a table. They take their food on the doorsteps. Most of the women are ignorant of cooking; one actually threw away some tapioca which was given her because she did not know what to do with it. Archdeacon Sinclair should give the parish of St. Laurence his attention when he has settled the problem of Hooley's communion plate. Indeed, it seems to us that St. Laurence and the Hooley communion plate, taken together, form a splendid illustration of the doctrine of "no morality without religion."

We regret to see that Frederick Murray Browne, of Ashington, is in trouble again. He has been once more arrested and committed for trial on the charge of writing offensive postcards. It is certainly disgraceful to Christianity that the worst of the words complained of are quoted from the Bible. It is positively damnable that a book containing such obscene language should be forced into the hands of little children. No expressions could be too strong to characterise the hypocrisy of Christians who themselves brand certain parts of their Bible as obscene and at the same time compel children to read it without the slightest expurgation. But this does not justify Browne in playing the dirty fool, and if he will do so he must take the consequences. Indeed, he is not a man whom it is possible to help. He professes himself an Anarchist, and his theory is that he has a right to do whatever he pleases without regard to other people, but that other people are bound to come to his assistance whenever he gets into trouble. He had to be placed in the asylum during his previous term of imprisonment, and it is probable that his mind is seriously unhinged. The letters he sent to Mr. Foote and Mr. Forder were never quite sane. His wife should try to get him away from that part of the country, and keep him quiet for a while; otherwise it is to be feared that he will go from bad to worse.

It is most amusing to watch the professional and amateur exhorters at the seaside offering up "a few words of prayer." With what a confidential air they tell Omniscience of a lot of things with which, of course, it must be perfectly conversant! One of these gentlemen, last Sunday afternoon, outdid in this line all we had ever witnessed before. He actually told the Lord, with the accurate expression of a profound arithmetician, that there were some thousands of people on the sands; and added—for the Lord's more precise information—that they consisted of men, women, and children. "O Lord, save them!" he exclaimed, in a somewhat perfunctory manner. At that very moment he raised his hand to scratch the side of his face, which was either troubled by an insect or itching on its own accord; and the scratching was obviously a great deal more sincere and vigorous than the praying. Another screw-eyed prayer-monger worked away with both hands at the brim of his straw hat—a thing he could not possibly have done if his mind, as well as his tongue, had been thoroughly occupied with what he was saying.

We regret to see that Mr. George Henry Baker, who is a worthy man, though somewhat excitable, has been fined forty shillings, with the alternative of twenty-one days' imprisonment, for using indiscreet language "calculated to provoke a breach of the peace" in Hyde Park. Mr. Baker is a Freethinker, and he appears to have been put in a passion by Mr. A. J. Waldron, a Christian Evidence Society's lecturer. Some day or other, perhaps, we shall have even-handed justice dealt out, and then a goodly number of Christian Evidence lecturers will come under the magistrate's animadversion.

It is only fair to say that Mr. Baker, whom we have seen since the above paragraph was written, absolutely denies

having used the language which the police and the Christian Evidence people swore that he *had* used. His denial was supported in court by two witnesses, both of whom were Christians, but the magistrate took no stock of any testimony but that of the prosecution.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor standing up in the House of Commons for compulsory vaccination is a spectacle for gods, men, and little fishes. "Tay Pay" has a rather graceful knack of writing without saying anything, and on this little achievement he has built up a large and profitable reputation. But he is as shallow as a saucer, and his opinion on any subject is really worthless. There is no need, therefore, to waste any denunciation upon his attitude towards the dirty practice of inoculating human beings with filthy matter from diseased cows.

The Saint Marylebone Churches Bill has passed the House of Commons by a majority of 152 to 81. Mr. Carvell Williams called it "an act of ecclesiastical brigandage." And so it is. The Church Rate was doomed, and the Tory-Church party has got it commuted for £80,000. Poor Marylebone! And poor England! where such clerical blood-sucking is so easy.

Crawley Church was struck by lightning while the congregation was at worship, and the clergyman had all his work to prevent a serious panic. Christians don't like going to glory even from a church.

The London School Board applied to the Education Department for leave to build a school in Cuthill-road, Camberwell, in order to provide accommodation for a number of children for whom there was no room elsewhere. A provisional order was issued approving of the site and purchase. But the Vice-President of the Council, instigated by Lord Hugh Cecil, Lord Salisbury's son, struck out the Camberwell site, without even giving notice to the Board. "Meanwhile," the *Daily News* says, "the children of the district are deprived of education by a rank clerical job."

One of the persons mixed up in the Hooley scandal is the Church-and-State junior member for Northampton. Charles Bradlaugh, who occupied that seat before Mr. Duncker, was free from all financial suspicion. But then he was an Atheist.

New Testaments are used as swearing-blocks at the Old Bailey, as in other courts in Christian England, and more lies have been told over them than over any other volume on this planet. They have been so long in use that nobody knows who bought them, or whose business it is to keep them in decent repair. The result is that they are now in a state of indecent dilapidation; so much so that Mr. Justice Grantham has drawn attention to the matter, and suggested that "for the future new books should be provided once a year." This ought to be accompanied with a rider that each copy should be fumigated once a week.

Bailie Mathers, in the Dundee Police Court, had to try Thomas Myers, who was charged with selling lottery envelopes to boys in the Greenmarket. The culprit was sentenced to pay a fine of half-a-guinea. "It is just the same as the lotteries at church bazaars," said the Bailie, "and I wish I had some of the ministers before me; I would give them the benefit of the full penalty—£10 or forty days."

The Mullingar Guardians resolved to punish Mr. J. P. Hayden, M.P., for his "vile anti-clerical speech" by withdrawing its advertisements from his paper, but the matter was made one of "privilege" in the House of Commons, and the Mullingar Guardians climbed down. They have rescinded their resolution.

Events march so rapidly that many Englishmen probably forget M. Casimir Perier, the late President of the French Republic, who took office when Carnot was assassinated, and resigned it a few months afterwards. He went straight to his country estate, where he enjoys the respect and admiration, and even the affection, of his fellow-citizens of the whole district. He is a man of fine presence, great abilities, and incorruptible honor. It is commonly reported that he was sickened by what he saw going on around him, and what the Constitution gave him no power to check. The Dreyfus affair is said to have disgusted him. He retired with dignity from a position which he found intolerable.

The egregious and obstinate blunder of the medical profession with regard to vaccination, and especially with regard to *compulsory* vaccination, causes a good many thoughtful people to look suspiciously upon their other nostrums. There is a tendency amongst doctors to rely upon the efficacy of "something in a bottle," and now that sensible people have grown doubtful as to the value of drugs, the doctors are puffing the merits of "anti" this and

"anti" that, in the form of some mysterious, but always filthy, concoction. A few years ago the "great" Professor Koch, of Germany, was reported to have found a cure for consumption. It was some dirty stuff—*serum* they called it—once more in a bottle, though, instead of being swallowed, it had to be injected. By-and-bye, however, this nostrum died a natural death, and the "great" Professor Koch went off to South Africa to find an equally scientific cure for the rinderpest amongst the cattle. What has become of him since we don't know, and are not very anxious to learn!

Recollecting these things, we were rather amused to see the announcement of a new Association for the Prevention of Consumption and other forms of Tuberculosis, signed by the Presidents of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons. These gentlemen point out that consumption is not an inherent, but a communicated, disease; which, we suspect, is only half the truth, after all. They also state—and this is a matter of great importance—that the "open-air treatment" of this disease is highly necessary. Exactly so; in other words, nature must be given a chance. That is what should be done in the case of all maladies. Not so many years ago the doctors murdered small-pox patients wholesale by closing the doors and windows of their rooms, keeping them as hot as Hades, and dosing them with stimulants. But all that is changed now, thanks to the general spread of a knowledge of the elementary laws of hygiene.

Doctors naturally like to keep up the "mystery" of their craft, but the most knowing amongst them are well aware that the only real good a doctor can do for a patient is to see that he eats appropriate food, and lives amidst cleanliness and fresh air. That is giving nature a chance. Whatever vitality the patient has finds an opportunity of asserting itself. And nearly everything else is only superstition or imposture. Of course an exception must be made in surgical cases, but even there the medical profession, especially in hospitals, seems to have a perfect craze for using the knife.

The truth is that the medical profession, like every other, is bound to go wrong unless the general air of the intellectual and moral world passes through its lungs. A close corporation of doctors play the devil with the community, just like a close corporation of priests. Freedom and common sense are always necessary to the world's welfare.

The Wesleyan Methodist Conference has resolved to raise (of course, if possible) a Twentieth Century Fund to the tune of a million guineas. It has also resolved that Sunday freedom—if it means anything but liberty to go to church—should be put down. The National Sunday League came in for special condemnation, but it will doubtless go on as before with its summer excursions and winter concerts on the Lord's Day. These sour and gloomy Methodists, who hate every form of amusement but prayer-meetings, tea-fights, and muffin-struggles, would like to revive the old Puritanism which made the English people solemn and drunken. Fancy a genial gentleman like Hugh Price Hughes regulating the recreations of this nation! What a time we should all have! Why even hell would be a change for the better—especially in the matter of company.

Both the Government and the London County Council are formally called upon by these Methodist bigots to put a stop to the use of the Alhambra Theatre by the Sunday League for Sunday concerts. Price Hughes himself uses licensed premises on Sundays at St. James's Hall. He calls his performance a religious service, but he has a large choir and a big band, which draw the public far more than his own exhorting. True, he doesn't charge at the door, but he makes a collection; and what on earth is the difference, in principle, between taking the audience's money before the show begins and taking it half-way through or at the finish?

Theatres and music-halls may be used for evangelistic meetings and revival services. That is *all* right. But they mustn't be used for any *secular* purpose on Sunday. Nothing but religion on that blessed day. Oh dear no! And what is religion? Why, the *trade* of these gentlemen, who call upon the Government and the County Council to stop the awful doings of the Sunday League. There never was a greater piece of humbug and hypocrisy.

### The Ethics of Christianity.

There is no counting with certainty on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshipping an unjust divinity, nor on their humanity so long as they incorporate inhuman motives in their most sacred dogma, nor on their reasonableness while they rigorously decline to accept reason as a test of truth.—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Voltaire," p. 241.*



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 7, Hyde Park; 14, Clerkenwell Green and Regent's Park; 21, Finsbury Park; 28, Victoria Park.  
September 4, Peckham Rye.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 7, Hyde Park; 14, Clerkenwell Green; 21, Finsbury Park; e., Secular Hall, Camberwell; 28, Victoria Park. September 4, Victoria Park.—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.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Victoria Park Friend, 2s. 6d.; W. Steward, 5s.

CONSTANT READER.—Why should we comment upon it? The writer is in agreement with most of what is propounded in our own columns.

W. W. LEAVIS writes: "Allow me to point out a mistake in the article on 'Church and Slavery.' The writer says that the principal Abolitionists in America were heretics, but adds that Channing, Bryant, and Longfellow were Christians. Instead of *Christians*, I should have said *Unitarians*."

C. E. HALL (Huddersfield) joins the Secular Society, Limited, sending 10s., the entrance fee.

F. S. EDWARDS.—Marriage at a Registrar's office is legally the same as marriage in a licensed church or chapel. You need have no doubt whatever on this point.

W. K. LEWIS.—Mr. Foote has written you by post. Some correspondence stands over in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Lancashire Friend, 10s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Ethical World—Liberator—Sydney Bulletin—University Magazine—Boston Investigator—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Freidenker—Public Opinion—Zoophilist—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought—Islamic World—Crescent—People's Newspaper—Truthseeker.

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.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

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

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

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

### SUGAR PLUMS.

LONDON Freethinkers within reasonable distance of Hyde Park should wend their way there this afternoon (August 7), when a Freethought Demonstration will be held, the speakers including Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Heaford. Proceedings will open at 3.30, and the meeting will take place near the Marble Arch, as far as possible from the West London Mission lot, who go in for unlimited singing, and thus do their best to destroy the value of the spot for open-air addresses.

These open-air Freethought Demonstrations will be continued throughout August, and full details will appear from week to week in the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Joseph Symes continues to make a gallant fight at Melbourne. "Let it be known to all our friends," he says in the *Liberator*, "that we are sadly in want of money. How to get money for current expenses is the problem." We should be very glad to hear that some wealthy Freethinker had come along and provided Mr. Symes with the sinews of war. He is not so young as he was, and it is a pity that the remainder of his life should be, to any extent, rendered unfruitful by financial worries.

The *People's Journal* (Rockhampton, Queensland) writes as follows on the death of our late sub-editor:—"I learn with profound grief that Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, sub-editor of the *Freethinker* (England), is dead. Mr. Wheeler has been for many years a worthy soldier in the great army of progress. He was one of the many men whose worth is

greater than their fame. Many a man's name sounds throughout England and Australia to-day who never served the world half as much as Joseph Mazzini Wheeler served it. He believed in freedom, and laboured for its realisation. He hated cant and cruelty, and his pen was ever wielded on the side of toleration, liberty, and humanity. He was a man of wide reading and marvellous culture, and it was his joy to give his fellows the fruits of his untiring industry. I never knew so much learning combined with so much modesty. On the subject of comparative religion and mythology he simply knew all that there was to know—if not a little more. No man ever did more to popularise learning and scholarship than Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. I have read his writings for years, and I speak the unexaggerated truth when I say that they have ever tended to make me a wiser and a better man."

The Oregon State Secular Union recently held its tenth annual convention, and, according to the *Torch of Reason*, it was "a decided success in every particular." We are glad to note from this journal that progress is being made with the Liberal University Scheme.

Mr. A. B. Moss has gone to the seaside for his annual holiday, and we hope he will have a good time there. On Sunday last he delivered three open-air lectures in London under a broiling sun—which is worse than the work of a galley slave, not to mention the risk of sunstroke, apoplexy, and other dangers. In the afternoon Mr. Moss had a good audience on Peckham Rye. His lecture was frequently interrupted, and at the end the Christian rowdies made a rush for the platform. One old Secularist was badly knocked about by the mob, and Mr. Moss had to fight his way outside. It is to be hoped that this platform will be well supported by the local Secularists.

It has been pointed out to us that, as August is a very poor month for subscriptions, so many people being holiday-making, it would be better to keep the Wheeler Memorial Fund open until the end of September. No doubt there is a good deal in this suggestion, and we shall adopt it; but, as the Fund cannot be kept open indefinitely, we beg so say that it must be closed by the end of September. All who have not yet subscribed, but mean to—and there should be many—will please note this date.

### NEGRO HUMOR.

IN Mr. Henry Kirke's just published *Twenty-five Years in British Guiana*—the author was formerly Sheriff of Demerara—are some very good descriptions of the manners, customs, and humours of social life in that tropical British Colony, of which the following is a specimen:—

"Sometimes they can find reasons for their eccentricity in the choice of names. A country parson was once taken aback when the happy father, presenting his tenth son for baptism, announced that he had selected for the unfortunate infant the name of Judas Iscariot. Said he: 'Dat's the boy's name. Judas hez been slighted. Nobody hez eber had de immortal courage to name a chile from dat man. But dat ain't de main reason why I named him Judas; I'se got de Bible ter 'stain me in gibben de chile dat name.' 'How does the Bible sustain you in desiring to perpetuate that name?' asked the astonished parson. 'It's dis fact; Christ, in remarking ob Judas, said it would hab been better for dat man ef he hadn't been born.' 'Well?' 'An' considering how many mouths is opened at de do' when I goes home wid a side of meat, it would be better fur dat boy of mine ef he had nebber seen daylight. I takes de Scripture fer de references. In de facher, ef I finds dat de boy hez made improvements on hissself, den I change his name ter Jim.'"

Henry Smith, Professor of Geometry, the wittiest, most learned, and most genial of Irishmen, said of a well-known man of science: "His only fault is that he sometimes mistakes the Editor of Nature for the Author of Nature." A great lawyer, who is now a great judge, and has, with good reason, the highest opinion of himself, stood as a Liberal at the general election of 1880. His Tory opponents set on foot a rumor that he was an Atheist, and when Henry Smith heard it he said: "Now that's really too bad, for — is a man who reluctantly acknowledges the existence of a Superior Being." At dinner at Balliol Dr. Jowett's guests were discussing the careers of two Balliol men, the one of whom had just been made a judge and the other a bishop. "Oh," said Henry Smith, "I think the bishop is the greater man. A judge, at the most, can only say, 'You be hanged,' but a bishop can say, 'You be d—d.'" "Yes," characteristically twittered the Master, "but if the judge says, 'you be hanged,' you are hanged."

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

(Continued from page 491.)

IN an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Dr. Ingram admits that "Even the Christian Churches in the slave States used their influence in favor of the maintenance of slavery."\*

In America, says Theodore Parker,† the many held down the few; the twenty million chain the three, and the priest says nothing against it. What does he care? He goes on appeasing the wrath of God, administering salvation, explaining and communicating scripture, and turns round and says: "This is all just as it should be, a part of the revelation." "There are in Boston a hundred ministers; you could hardly know it except by the calendar. .... But how little do they bring to pass. The kidnapper seizes his prey, and they have excuses for the stealer of men, but cannot put up a prayer for his victim; nay, would drive the fugitive from their own door." This is how Christianity was abolishing slavery! Says an English writer, and a Christian, who was, in 1858, making a study of the religious life of the United States: "The pulpit exercises a most powerful influence in America; I doubt whether any practice could stand for many years before its denunciation, if pronounced unanimously. And here the great crime and plague spot of the American Churches is seen. The great progress made by the slave power during the last thirty years is mainly to be attributed to them. Formerly the Southern planters whined over slavery as a weakness and as a disgrace, as an unavoidable evil, which they would willingly be rid of. If the Churches had then taken a decided line, as they were bound to do, I believe slavery would be either now in process of abolition, or that the whole public sentiment of America would be arrayed against it. But under their influence, and with the sanction of the clergy, the South has come to regard slavery as a patriarchal institution, an ordinance of God, an equal advantage to the master and the slave. .... The Churches are bound up with the system; they are rich in human property; the bishops and clergy of the different denominations, the office-bearers, and communicants are slaveholders, and buy and sell their fellow-men, whom they profess to recognize as 'temples of the Holy Ghost.' I have heard slavery extolled in Southern pulpits as the 'only successful missionary institution which the world has ever seen.' I have heard these words used in prayer in a Presbyterian church by a minister of whose personal piety I entertain no doubt: 'We thank thee, O Lord, that from a barbarous land, where idols are worshipped in blood and flame, thou hast brought a great multitude to our shores to sit at our feet and learn thy gospel.' .... I believe the Southern Churches deserve all the accusations which the eloquent tongue of Cheever has brought against them. They are the mainstay and backbone of slavery; they have led the South to review the subject, and, by declaring slavery to be an ordinance of God, fostered by the New Testament, and a noble missionary institution, they have turned the tide of popular feeling, and have done more to perpetuate the system than the whole mass of Southern politicians. .... The ministers of the Churches which profess to expound the will of God have aided, with all their might, to rivet the curse upon Him and His posterity for evermore."

And yet we hear repeated again and again from that cowards' castle, the pulpit, that Christianity abolished slavery. Verily, the ignorance of the ordinary parson is only excelled by his unblushing cheek and impudence.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe gives page after page, in her key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, of resolutions passed at different Church conferences in favor of slavery. At the end of chapter i., part iv., she thus reviews the declarations made by the Southern Church:—

1. That slavery is an innocent and lawful relation, as much as that of parent and child, husband and wife, or any other lawful relation of society (Harmony Pres. S.C.).
2. That it is consistent with the most fraternal regard for the good of the slave (Charleston Union Pres. S.C.).
3. That masters ought not to be disciplined for selling

slaves without their consent (New School Pres. Church, Petersburg, Va.).

4. That the right to buy, sell, and hold men for purposes of gain was given by express permission of God (James Smylie and his Presbyteries).

5. That the laws which forbid the education of slaves are right, and meet the approbation of the reflecting part of the Christian community (*ibid*).

6. That the fact of slavery is not of morals at all, but is purely a question of political economy (Charleston Baptist Association).

7. That the right of masters to dispose of the time of their slaves has been distinctly recognised by the Creator of all things (*ibid*).

8. That slavery, as it exists in these states, is not a moral evil (Georgia Methodist Conference).

9. That, without a new revelation from heaven, no man is entitled to pronounce slavery wrong.

10. That the separation of slaves by sale should be regarded as separation by death, and the parties allowed to marry again (Shiloh Baptist Association and Savannah River Association).

11. That the testimony of colored members of the churches shall not be taken against a white person (Methodist Church).

In addition to this, it has been plainly avowed by the expressed principles and practice of Christians of various denominations that they regard it as right and proper to put down by lynch law all inquiry upon this subject.\*

In regard to the slavery of ancient times, Christianity did not abolish it. It was upheld by many of the great leaders of the Christian Church. Chrysostom thought that slavery was advisable, so that men should see how truly a slave could enjoy liberty of soul. Constantine allowed poor parents to sell their children as slaves. St. Basil taught that slavery was a divine institution. In all ancient Christian literature, says Renan, "there is not one word that tells the slave to revolt, or that tells the master to liberate the slave, or even that touches the problem of public right which arises out of slavery."

It is true that during the Middle Ages there were those in the Church who did something to liberate Christian slaves, but they never seemed to recognise the *right* of the slave to liberty. They were bought and freed as acts of charity, and often were liberated to fill the monasteries. Right along, from the time of primitive Christianity until quite recent times, divines have taught that slavery was no sin. In England the Quakers were the only religious body who, as such, petitioned the House of Commons on the subject.

Now let us compare the manner in which slaves were treated by Christian and Pagan countries, and see whether it is not true that the slaves in Christian America and other Christian countries were treated with far greater cruelty than they were ever subjected to in Pagan countries.

In Greece, and especially in Athens, slaves were treated mildly, and enjoyed a large share of legal protection; according to Demosthenes, a slave at Athens was better off than a free citizen in many other countries.†

The same is true of Roman slavery; Christianity did not abolish it. A. W. Benn points out‡: "Slavery was first condemned as a violation of natural right by certain Greek philosophers, long prior to the Christian era, and legislation favorable to emancipation was initiated by Roman jurists before Rome was Christianised. Under the peaceful sovereignty of Rome personal slavery had been almost suppressed."§

Virgil made a slave of his poet; Horace was the son of a slave. The slaves were often educated persons holding high and responsible positions; oftentimes they were physicians and surveyors, clerks and preceptors, architects and singers.¶ "You cannot name an occupation connected with agriculture, manufacture, industry, or public amusement, but it was the patrimony of slaves."¶¶

The slavery of the Mohammedan East is usually not the slavery of the field, but the slavery of the household. The slave is a member of the family, and is treated with tenderness and affection. The Koran breathes a consider-

\* Key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, p. 470.

† See Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, "Slavery," vol. ix.

‡ In *Academy*.

§ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. vi., p. 351.

¶ See Rome, "Story of Nation" series.

¶¶ *Curiosities of History*, by John Timbs, F.S.A.

\* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, p. 142, vol. ix.

† *Theism, Atheism, and Popular Theology*, pp. 291 and 294.

ate and kindly spirit towards the class, and encourage<sup>s</sup> manumission.\* The child of a slave girl by her master is born free, and the mother is usually raised to be a free wife.†

Speaking of domestic slavery in Turkey, a well-informed writer‡ says: "Domestic slavery, however, as practised in Moslem Turkey, differs widely from the same institution as it existed until recently in Christian America. In Islam slaves are protected by many humane laws, and are, on the whole, treated quite paternally. Their condition has nothing specially humiliating about it; they form, as I have just said, no class apart, and speedily become merged in the free and native population. Whatever may be the faults, shortcomings, and infirmities of a domestic slave, she cannot be turned adrift, as her owner is responsible for her maintenance. Nor can she be supplied with food of an inferior quality, and insufficient in quantity, for the Prophet has commanded that a slave shall fare as well as her owner. At the end of seven years' servitude she may claim her freedom, and generally obtain with it a *trousseau* and a husband. It is considered by Moslems a pious and meritorious act—one of their 'good works,' in fact—to free a slave, and Turks on their death-beds frequently bequeath their liberty to the slaves of their household."

W. WITT LEAVIS.

(To be concluded.)

### TAMING A PHILISTINE.

Characters:—

MR. JEREMIAH FOGG (from the Country).  
MR. LUKE SHARPE (from London).

Scene: A Country Road.  
Time: Sunday Afternoon.

MR. LUKE SHARPE (discovered sitting on a bench. He is busily engaged drawing all sorts of fantastical figures on the ground with the end of his stick. Suddenly he looks up and pulls out his repeater): Here I have been waiting ten weary minutes, and that girl has not turned up yet. There are two things a woman can never keep—a secret and an appointment. (Heaves a sigh.) I suppose I must wait. Everything comes to him who knows how to wait, except the thing he is waiting for. (Draws more hieroglyphics on the ground, and looks up again after a while.) I'm blowed; if it isn't that old stick-in-the-mud making tracks in this direction! If he begins with any of his religious nonsense, I'll give him what ho!

MR. FOGG (approaching, and wiping his forehead with a red handkerchief): Good afternoon, sir.

MR. SHARPE (indifferently): Good afternoon.

MR. FOGG: Isn't it a lovely day?

MR. SHARPE: Yes, it is so lovely that you do not require any bore to tell you so.

MR. FOGG: But is it not hot?

MR. SHARPE: It is not hot, it is warm. You see I call a warm day one on which you can move about and do a little work and consume plenty of refreshments! I call it hot when you feel inclined to remain all day long up to your neck in an ice-cold bath with a big cask of ale at your side!

MR. FOGG: H'm! You Londoners are an awful thirsty people.

MR. SHARPE: Yes; and we never really begin to drink till we are nearly half seas over.

MR. FOGG: You should become a teetotaller like me, and drink water.

MR. SHARPE: Men drink beer, women tea, children lemonade, fools water. Shall I define you a teetotaller?

MR. FOGG: Yes, do.

MR. SHARPE: A teetotaller is a man who would change our public-houses into cattle-troughs if he only had the chance.

MR. FOGG: I am afraid you are a bit of a cynic.

MR. SHARPE: A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and values nothing. No; I am only sarcastic at times.

MR. FOGG: Sarcasm is a dangerous weapon.

MR. SHARPE: Except in the hands of those who know how to use it properly. (A pause.)

MR. FOGG: I did not have the pleasure of seeing you this morning at church.

MR. SHARPE (aside): He is at it again. (Aloud) Where did you say, at church?

MR. FOGG: Yes.

MR. SHARPE: Why should I go to church?

MR. FOGG: To pray.

MR. SHARPE: To whom?

MR. FOGG: To God, to be sure.

MR. SHARPE: God? I have not the pleasure of the gentleman's acquaintance. Who is he?

MR. FOGG: Good gracious me, what a question to ask! Why, the Creator of heaven and earth.

MR. SHARPE: What do you mean by creator or creating? Making something out of nothing?

MR. FOGG: Precisely.

MR. SHARPE: And do you believe it?

MR. FOGG: Of course I do.

MR. SHARPE: I forgot. There are people insane enough to believe anything.

MR. FOGG: Have you ever heard of a little word called "faith"?

MR. SHARPE: Oh yes; faith is to pretend to believe that which you cannot understand.

MR. FOGG: I am afraid you are getting frivolous.

MR. SHARPE: I am never so much in earnest as when I am frivolous.

MR. FOGG: Do you know what you are? You are a wicked sinner.

MR. SHARPE: And I suppose you are a saint?

MR. FOGG: A saint is a sinner with a past.

MR. SHARPE: And a sinner is a saint with a future.

MR. FOGG: Where do you expect to go to when you die?

MR. SHARPE: That is more than you can tell me.

MR. FOGG: Yes I can. You will go straight to hell.

MR. SHARPE: How nice! At any rate, I shall be amongst splendid company!

MR. FOGG: And you will have lost paradise.

MR. SHARPE: I don't want to go there at all! Can you give me any idea of paradise? Do you know what the beautiful cuckoo-land above is like?

MR. FOGG (stammering): Well, you see—you know—we can't—we don't—

MR. SHARPE: I understand. It is such a beautiful place that no human tongue can describe it. Shall I give you my idea of paradise?

MR. FOGG: Yes, I should like to hear it.

MR. SHARPE: To sit comfortably with one's wife near one's fireside, smoking a full Havana, without worries of any kind, and without the fear of being molested either by clamorous creditors, the undertaker, the broker's man, or a German band.

MR. FOGG: You are a gross materialist. Your maxim is: Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

MR. SHARPE: Bosh! Now, suppose your paradise were all an illusion, eh?

MR. FOGG: I should lose nothing by the deception.

MR. SHARPE: Except that you will have made yourself miserable in this world by torturing your flesh. You believers are too ambitious. To us Freethinkers this world is good enough; we do not trouble about the next.

MR. FOGG: But perhaps the next does not trouble itself about you.

MR. SHARPE: In that case, neither of us has to complain.

MR. FOGG: You are a thoughtless lot, you sceptics.

MR. SHARPE: It is you who do not think; you are looking in the clouds for what you have at your feet.

MR. FOGG: It is of no use arguing with you.

MR. SHARPE: You are afraid I might convert you.

MR. FOGG: I like your impudence.

MR. SHARPE: I prefer yours.

MR. FOGG: Enough! (Dips into his pocket.) In conclusion, permit me to present you with this pamphlet, *The Way to Heaven*. (Mr. Sharpe takes it.)

MR. SHARPE (producing a pamphlet from his pocket): And since exchange is no robbery, allow me, likewise, to present you with Ingersoll's *Faith and Fact*.

MR. FOGG (stepping back): No, thank you. I'll not read any trash written by that arch-infidel Ingersoll!

\* See Koran, chaps. iv. -xxiv.

† *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Slavery," vol. ix.

‡ Miss Lucy Garnet, "Women under Islam," *Nineteenth Century*, 1895.

MR. SHARPE (*replacing the pamphlet in his pocket*): You are right. You would not understand. It requires brains.

MR. FOGG (*highly indignant*): Sir!

MR. SHARPE: All right, old chappie! don't put yourself in a passion; it's so hot to-day, you know! (*Just then a sweet damsel, dressed in white, and wearing a huge hat, is seen coming up the hill. Mr. Sharpe recognises his sweetheart at once, and turns to Mr. Fogg.*) Here comes my girl; we must postpone our discussion until some future date—let us say in a hundred years from to-day! Good-bye, so long! (*Disappears in the distance.*)

MR. FOGG (*sitting down, and fanning himself with his hat*): If that young man is a specimen of the modern Londoner, God have mercy on his soul! Now I understand why it rains almost every day in the metropolis; the rain-drops are simply the tears of the angels weeping over the wickedness of London!

F. MALIBRAN.

CURTAIN.

### THE CHRISTIAN HELL.

UNTIL recently all were under the shadow of a vast superstition, in which death was regarded as the most dreaded of all evils. Men were taught that they were born to die, and over that all the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the gloom. The notion of hell, to which the sky-pilots still cling so fondly, worked on the terror and superstition of the human mind. Even little children were frightened with hell-fire, and often spent years of misery in consequence. Who can forget Colonel Ingersoll's reference to the little child who, out in the brilliant sunshine, and surrounded by the whispering trees, could think of nothing but the "worm that never dies"?

Let us turn for a moment from the horrible conceptions of the priests of the Most High to the ideas of the poets. Remembering even Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais," no poet peers with such longing and audacity as Walt Whitman into the "superb vistas of death." Whatever else may be said of Whitman's poetry, it must be conceded that he has treated this eternal theme of death with a new power and significance. The awful dreams that may come in that sleep of death have no terror for this poet, nor does he trouble himself with the fond breast on which the parting soul relies. Death to Whitman is "lovely and soothing"; it is the "dark mother always gliding near with soft feet," and the body, weary with life, turns, like a tired child, "gratefully nestling close" in the bosom of this soothing motherhood. The dead are made one with nature. In all this death-poetry of Whitman what St. Paul calls the "last enemy" is presented as no enemy at all, but a friend. Whitman has left the priests far behind. Beyond the hells, the purgatories, and the paradises, the death-songs of Whitman flood the night and pour their serene melody over the world.

It was the Christian conception of hell which drove John Bunyan to frenzy and William Cowper to insanity.

### The Reason.

Two old women, on their way home from church, in a country district of Scotland, were speaking of Napoleon's overthrow by the allied troops at Waterloo. The minister had been pointing a moral by aid of the Corsican hero's defeat.

"Hoo is it," said one in her narrow way, "the Scotch aye win their battles?"

"Weel, ye ken, it's because they aye pray afore they go in the fecht," replied the other.

"Ay! But mercy, wuman, canna the French pray as weel?"

"Nae doobt they dae; but wha could understan' they jabberin' bodies?" snapped the interrogated one in peremptory answer.

A writer in the *New Century Review* tells the following story concerning Jack Russell, the famous rector of Swinbridge. Being called to the bedside of an old parishioner, the Rev. Jack started cheerily: "What ails the, old chap?" "Ah, passen, awm afeard awm dyin'!" "Well! all o' us 'a got to die, and thou's had a fair look in!" "That's right, passen! but awm afeard." "What's the' afeard o'?" "Hasn't murdered anybody hast the'?" "Naw." "Robbed anybody?" "Naw." "Allus paid th' tithe?" "Iss." "Hasn't meddled with any other man's wife!" "Naw." "Then tell the devil to go to hell." The patient, apparently impressed with the suitability of the remark, subsided, and shortly after passed away peacefully.

### 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.

### A Question of Locality.

Several clergymen got in a street-car in Boston one day, and one of them, hearing that Wendell Phillips, the great opponent of slavery, was in the car, got up and asked the conductor to point him out. The conductor did so, and the minister, going up to the orator, said:

"You are Mr. Phillips, I am told?"

"Yes, sir."

"I should like to speak to you about something, and I trust, sir, you will not be offended?"

"There is no fear of it," was the sturdy answer.

And then the minister began to ask Mr. Phillips earnestly why he persisted in stirring up such an unfriendly agitation in one part of the country about an evil that existed in another part.

"Why," said the clergyman, "do you not go South and kick up this fuss, and leave the North in peace?"

Mr. Phillips was not in the least ruffled, and answered smilingly:

"You, sir, I presume, are a minister of the Gospel?"

"I am, sir," said the clergyman.

"And your calling is to save souls from hell?"

"Exactly, sir."

"Well, then, why don't you go there?"

### Atheism.

The deepest controversy that lies before modern society is, Can the social union subsist without a belief in God?—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Miscellanies," vol. i., p. 72.*

## BOOK CHAT.

THE *Literary Guide* (Watts and Co.) for August is an excellent number. The opening article is from the pen of our friend Charles Watts, and it quite took our breath away. We always thought he was an Atheist himself, but in this article he speaks of "the dogmatism of the Theist and the Atheist," and declares that many Atheists "deny the existence of a God." What Atheists does he refer to? Not Bradlaugh, Holyoake, or Ingersoll. What is said in this article of Agnosticism is precisely what has been urged by every philosophical Atheist. And, as a matter of fact, Agnosticism is as much as Atheism an attitude of practical dissent from Theism. The really *middle* course, so to speak, is Positivism, which sweeps aside all transcendentalism and metaphysics. Mr. Watts writes lucidly enough, but in this case his thought does not seem to us precisely clear. Mr. Gould contributes an interesting "Chat" with Mr. J. A. Hobson, who is one of George Meredith's admirers. There are other good articles and a number of well-written paragraphs on various topics.

*Humanity*, organ of the Humanitarian League, for August, is bright and practical. It ought to be in the hands of reformers, who should also try to circulate it amongst their friends and acquaintances. We are glad to note that amongst the literary men who have recently responded to a circular, and sent donations and expressed sympathy with the objects of the League, are George Meredith and W. M. Rossetti.

The August number of the *Adult* contains a good portrait of Mr. George Bedborough. There is an interesting letter from M. Maeterlinck, who has been called the Belgian Shakespeare, to Mr. William Platt, one of whose stories in the *Adult* has been included in the "obscenity" indictment. M. Maeterlinck says he "cannot understand the accusation." "Nothing in the details," he adds, "and particularly nothing in the lofty spirit which animates it, could justify the least suspicion." The other contents of this magazine are of the usual character. Mr. Henry Seymour acts as editor during the prosecution of Mr. Bedborough.

The religious novel has mostly proceeded from the pens of tenth-rate writers. *The Sorrows of Satan*, a schoolgirl's paraphrase of Goethe's *Faust*; *The Sign of the Cross*, worse even than the play of that name; *John Ward Preacher*, who was true to his title, for he did nothing else but preach; and the rest of the clotted bosh, should have surfeited even the subscribers of Mudie the Magnificent, or Smith the Sanctimonious.

But now Mrs. Humphry Ward has come along. Remembering the immense success of *Robert Elsmere*, she tries once more a religious theme, and *Helbeck of Bannisdale* is the result. It is true the Grand Old Man has gone and not left his address behind him, but Mrs. Humphry Ward no longer needs booming. She has now earned a position from which no hostile criticism could shift her. She is, without doubt, the best woman writer among her contemporaries. She is a head and shoulders above the Corellis, the Braddons, and others of that ilk. She commands attention.

In this, her latest volume, she gives a most powerful study of the terrible mental conflict 'twixt love and faith. In *Robert Elsmere* it was the man who was the sceptic, the woman who was firm to her faith. Here the positions are reversed. Alan Helbeck is a sincere Catholic, of the most unbending order imaginable; in some respects, more religious than the priests themselves. This man succumbs to the passion of love. The subject of his passion is an Agnostic—heretic. Helbeck struggles manfully, but the onlooker perceives from the first that there can be but one ending. True, he remains firm to the faith of his fathers, but his surrender in other respects is all the more complete. Laura Fountain, the girl who had unwittingly altered his whole view of life, was herself commencing to feel a new passion she feared, though scarcely understanding, and quite unsuspecting where it would lead her. Alan Helbeck and Laura Fountain become engaged. What follows, which goes over to the other, and how matters end, the reader must seek himself. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Humphry Ward sacrifices nothing to a conventional conclusion.

The *University Magazine* for August opens with an article by "Democritus" on the Bedborough prosecution, which is very much behind date as to details, and repeats the inaccurate statement that Mr. Bedborough's bail was fixed at £2,000. Dr. Park concludes his essay on "The Science of the Emotions." Mr. Ussher's book against Malthusianism is answered by "Macrobius," and amongst the other contents may be noted an interesting article by "T. H. W." on "The Moral Indifference of Nature."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

IN REPLY TO MR. KENWORTHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have looked through Professor Sanday's Bampton Lectures on "The Gospels and the Acts" (Lecture vi. in the 1893 series). The Professor considers that "the great mass of the narrative in the first three gospels took its shape before the destruction of Jerusalem." His proofs are of the thinnest and most ghost-like character. The most brilliant appears to be this: that, as various texts in the gospels make mention of the altar, etc., the temple must still have been standing when they were composed. Now, I do not see any reason against the origin of a number of maxims and reflections before the capture of Jerusalem in the year 70; but I do not see that this concession leads us on to admitting the existence of the larger portion of the gospel narrative before the date named. The fact is, the whole question as to when the gospels assumed their present shape is in the cloudiest possible condition. I have spent many hours in the valley of the shadow called New Testament criticism, and when I emerged I felt like a man dazed. The world seemed to be made up of "possibly," "probably," "perhaps," "it may be," "perchance," "peradventure," "in all likelihood," "conceivably," "with considerable hesitation," "it is not irrational to suppose," and similar phrases suggestive of puzzledom and fog.

However, I am glad to find that Mr. Kenworthy does not lay any special stress upon these literary conundrums. I confess I thought he was in danger of wasting time when he entered upon a discussion of the dates of the gospels. I thought him too honest and valiant a man to go sailing on such a Dead Sea. And I note that he says: "A right view of the origins is not necessary to an understanding of the gospel teaching." I quite agree; I believe Mr. Kenworthy's interpretation of the early Christian doctrine is quite correct. I believe the first Christians meant all classes—rich, middle-class, lower middle-class, or proletariat—to become absolutely money-less.

I cannot sympathise with Mr. Kenworthy's respect for the first Christians as "our leaders in life." I do, indeed, honor these first Christians for their sincerity and courage; and so do I honor Buddha, Lao-tze, or Socrates. But why should I be bound to do a thing just because the first Christians tell me to? The fact that they lived in the first century gives them no claim upon my obedience. They tell me to turn my cheek to the smiter. My compliments to the first century, but I shall do no such thing. I would do it if I thought it a likely way to bring about a general disarmament, for I am an anti-militarist. But I expect no good to come of submission to the insults of ill-bred people. I concede the value of a measure of forbearance, and the power of self-restraint and cool judgment; but that is the gospel of Marcus Aurelius, not of Jesus. Mr. Kenworthy will say I am wrong; he can show me a more excellent way. Very well; but let us leave these Christians out of the debate. Let us talk out our moral and social difficulties without constantly running to the Bible. If a rule of conduct is right, it is made no better by its insertion in the New Testament; and if it is not right, the New Testament will not make it just. Let us use our "immediate reasons." Let 1898 legislate for 1898. I have a great reverence for the past; in that sentiment I follow Auguste Comte. But reverence, while it leads me to admit the self-devotion of my forefathers, will not induce me to bow to their obsolete maxims. The little boat that carried the twelve apostles across the Sea of Galilee may have been a useful craft in its way; but it will not bear the modern life and intellect. I think it too frail to serve so brave a soul as Mr. Kenworthy.

F. J. GOULD.

## A Revised Version.

Two little tots were to be put to bed, and were kneeling at their mother's knee saying the Lord's prayer. The eldest one was repeating it after his mother, and when he reached the passage, "Give us this day our daily bread," what was the mother's surprise when the other little chap said: "Hit him for pie, brother; hit him for pie!"

"Well, Uncle Rasbury, how did you like the sermon?" "It war a powful sermon, Marse John." "What was it about?" "It war 'bout de mir'cle ob seven thousand loaves and five thousand fishes bein' fed to the twelve 'postles." "Seven thousand loaves and five thousand fishes being fed to the twelve apostles. But where does the miracle come in?" Uncle Rasbury scratched his head a few moments meditatively. Then he replied: "Well, Marse John, de mir'cle, 'cordin' to my peyception of de circumstances, is dey all didn't bust."

## 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.

#### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen. Peckham Rye: 3.15 and 6.30, C. Cohen.  
 EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. Heaford; 7, A. lecture. August 10, at 8, A. lecture.  
 EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr. Ramsey.  
 FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, E. White.  
 HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7, R. P. Edwards.  
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A. demonstration.  
 KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A. lecture.  
 LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, A. B. Moss; August 9, at 8, A. lecture.  
 WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Religions of the World."

### COUNTRY.

DERBY (Central Hall, Market-place): Afternoon's picnic to Duffield, 2.50 train.  
 OX-HILL AND STANLEY SECULAR SOCIETY (Board-schools): August 18, at 7, J. Reid, "Christian Ethics versus Secular Ethics"; 6, Business meeting to make final arrangements for trip.  
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Atheism and the French Revolution."  
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—August 7, m., Chamberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—August 14, m., Finsbury; 21, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Wood Green. September 4, m., Mile End; 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

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Consett, Co. Durham,

July 21, 1898.

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