

# The Free Thinker

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## BLESSED BE YE POOR!

CANON GORE is a leading High Churchman. He is also one of the "fashionable" preachers and a fairly voluminous author. He edited the volume of Church essays called *Lux Mundi*, and contributed himself the essay on Inspiration, which clerics like Father Ignatius regard as terribly and even damnably heretical. We have read most of what he has written, or at least of what he has published, and we cannot say that we have a tremendous idea of his abilities. There is one great God Almighty, and there are a lot of little God Almighties, who talk from pulpits to sinners, and give themselves extraordinary airs of superiority over the multitude of the "unanoointed." They seem to be always sniffing the perfume of the holy oil of consecration. An ordinary observer might almost imagine that they belonged to a special variety of human nature, but what we read of them in the newspapers from time to time is ample proof that they are like unto other men—and sometimes more so. Canon Gore is one of these little God Almighties. Nobody beats him at putting rather commonplace reflections into serious and solemn language which suggests the voice of inspiration. And this quality is sufficiently conspicuous in his new volume on *The Sermon on the Mount*. His very Preface reveals the quite unconscious egotism which is so generally developed by the clerical profession. He expresses "much gratitude" to a brother clergyman for "help in the correction of proofs." One would think that proof-reading was the most terrible business on earth, or that this particular volume was a perfect monument of laborious and painful scholarship, whereas it is nothing but plain exhortation from beginning to end. What on earth can it really matter to anybody but himself *who* corrected his proofs? Why not put in a word for the printer, and the printer's reader, or even the printer's devil?

First of all, Canon Gore tells us how much superior the Sermon on the Mount is to the teachings of Gautama, Confucius, Socrates, Plato, and all the rest of the moral philosophers. Nothing is advanced to support this contention, except some vague talk about "depth" and "completeness." We are indeed told that the Sermon on the Mount "differs from other codes by the authoritative sanction which is given to the words by the person of the speaker." But this is simply an appeal to Christian faith—or Christian prejudice, and has no force when addressed to an outsider. On the contrary, it is liable to provoke the retort that the personal note in the teaching of Jesus Christ is a mark of unpleasant and sometimes undignified self-assertiveness. Whatever truth and value there is in an ethical maxim is necessarily independent of the personality of the speaker. It has always to be tested by reason and experience.

We do not propose to follow Canon Gore, at least at present, through his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. We intend to take a sample from the bulk. The first "beatitude" will serve our purpose admirably.

No. 894.

According to Matthew, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." According to Luke, he said, "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich." Now which of these sayings, if either, is the one that came from the lips of the Prophet of Nazareth? Canon Gore seems to settle it in this way: the beatitude in Matthew was meant for all the world, and the beatitude in Luke only for his personal disciples, in view of the "actual poverty in which they lived." But is this anything but gratuitous nonsense? Sincere followers of Jesus Christ, like William Law or Count Tolstoi, see clearly enough that he taught the duty of renouncing property. It may be hard or even impossible, but there it is, and we shirk it at our peril. And really, when we look at other parts of the New Testament, it is clear enough to all but those who do not want to see. The poor are to be rewarded in heaven, the rich are to be punished in hell. Lazarus, whose only virtue was his poverty, went into Abraham's bosom; while Dives, whose only crime was his wealth, went to be tormented in Hades. Then we have the case of the good young man who asked what he should do to be perfect. Jesus told him that one thing was lacking; he was to sell all he had and give to the poor. Further, we read that the very first Christians at Jerusalem sold their possessions, and laid the price at Peter's feet—where it didn't stay long. That is what the first Christians did, and if they failed to understand Jesus, being so near to him, how shall Canon Gore understand him nearly two thousand years afterwards?

We have not the slightest doubt that "Blessed be ye poor" was the original text. How, otherwise, can you account for the antithesis of "Woe unto you rich"? It was a splendid text to start with amongst slaves and beggars. But when the first Salvation Army, like the latest one, became important enough to attract the support (for whatever reasons) of men of wealth and position, an alteration had to be made to suit their case. "Blessed be ye poor" was not abolished, for it was still useful; but a balancing text was inserted elsewhere, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The rich were told that they need not renounce their wealth, that they could get to heaven without becoming paupers. All they had to do was to be humble, to confess themselves miserable sinners, to be obedient sons of the Church, and to make her their almoner to the needy and destitute.

Substantially this is what Canon Gore says. He only uses a different form of words. Christians, he declares, are not bound to be poor in order to be blessed. Christ's kingdom is based "not upon actual poverty, but upon detachment." What he really meant was this—"Blessed are those who at least in heart and will have nothing." You may be as rich as Rothschild—if you can, as long as you are prepared (when necessary) to lose your wealth and do without it. Meanwhile you may be a millionaire in a mansion or an Archbishop in a palace. You are all right and have a through ticket for heaven; while poor people, who were proud in their poverty, will fry for ever and ever in hell.—Let us pray!

G. W. FOOTE.



## BIBLE FAITHS AND THEIR DEFENDERS.

THE two principal faiths—Jewish and Christian—based upon the Bible are curious exhibitions of folly, inconsistency, and inutility, while many of their defenders have been, and still are, equally striking specimens of perverted humanity. From the time of Noah, who distinguished himself at the celebrated Flood, down to the present, these faiths have been most unfortunate in their champions. The Rev. George Warrington, in a paper read some years ago at the Victoria Institute, wrote: "The defenders of Scripture are numerous and zealous, but they are a motley and discordant set, at war among themselves, as fiercely as with the enemy—to a great extent mutually destructive, a large proportion of them, therefore, certainly in the wrong in the defence they make, and so a source of weakness rather than strength." Certainly our reading of history and our personal experience would justify the accuracy of this statement. It may be urged that the nature of the faiths renders a dignified, intelligent, and logical defence impossible. Probably this is so, and this very fact tends to show not only the defective features of the religions of the Bible, but also the deteriorating influence they have had upon the characters of those who set themselves up as their defenders. Nothing is more damaging to any religion than to discover that its effect upon the minds of its expounders has been morally disastrous. If it be true that "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," then the Bible tree, root and branches, must be corrupt indeed.

Let us glance briefly at the foolish and inconsistent nature of these faiths. They teach that God made man perfect, and yet he was organised so badly that, at the first test to which he was subjected, he proved thoroughly imperfect. The result was that he became "a fallen creature," and, although it is said God was omnipotent, he did not *improve* his work, but, by a cold-water process, actually destroyed the whole human race, with the exception of one family. By-and-bye mankind again multiplied; but, unfortunately, wickedness and crime still marred their careers. God then decided to send his son, who was alleged to be of the same age as himself, to correct the errors of his Almighty Father. It was then decreed that those who did not believe that Christ could raise them from their fallen condition should be punished everlastingly in fire under the superintendence of a devil whom God made for the purpose of producing the ruin of the sons and daughters of earth. Notwithstanding that belief in the Son was made necessary to this supposed salvation, God made no provision that it should be universally known. Hence, despite the fact that it is alleged two thousand years have passed since the "plan of redemption" was consummated, only about one-third of the inhabitants of the globe have heard anything concerning the scheme; and amongst those few to whom the "glad tidings" have been proclaimed many do not understand the plan, others find its application impracticable, while a large section reject it altogether. Such is the foolish inconsistency of the religions of the Bible.

The Christian defender of his faith contends that God's revelation was a high, moral, continuous development; first revelation to Adam and Eve, then to Abraham, next to Moses, and, finally, through Jesus to the world in general. The fallacy of this contention ought to be apparent to all dispassionate minds. How many of the earth's population were the better for the revelations to Adam and Eve? The answer is given in the story of the destruction of nearly the whole of the human race by the Noachian flood. How many were improved through the call to Abraham? But few, indeed, outside his own family, and even within that circle the revelation failed to inspire the members with truth, justice, fidelity, and decency, as the history of Hagar, Isaac, and Jacob amply proves. What moral excellence did the people receive from the dispensation of Moses? The Jews were led by him under God's special guidance, and yet we find them manifesting the lowest moral qualities—an utter forgetfulness of virtue, a lack of self-reliance, and entire disregard for the rights of others. They resorted to falsehood, theft, and murder, and ultimately many of them forsook their God and worshipped a golden calf. And, lastly, what have been the advantages derived from the revelation made through Jesus? Let the history of the Christian Church and the present deplorable condition of society in general furnish

the answer. It is this very Church that for centuries was active in destroying secular literature, opposing the extension of knowledge, persecuting men of science, and doing its best to extinguish the light of reason. From the reign of the first Christian Emperor to the partial renunciation of the faith in the sixteenth century, the Church produced a period rightly named the "Dark Ages."

But what of the Church at the present time? True, in consequence of the advancement of secular thought and the cultivation of a higher-toned humanity than formerly existed, the Church is not allowed to be guilty of such black crimes, which it practised during the Middle Ages, when the vilest deeds were considered justifiable, so long as they tended to advance the faith and uphold the Church, and when murder was deemed a virtue, and lying a creditable accomplishment. The defenders of the faith may say such conduct formed no part of the religion of the Bible. To this we answer that those actions were at that time the general characteristics of the professed religion; and, moreover, for most of the crimes committed by the defenders of the faith at that period a sanction can be found in the Bible. Let this be denied by Christian expounders, and we undertake to cite passages from the "Holy Scriptures" that will fully justify our statement. The very fact that the faith is now clothed in a new garb to make it more acceptable to modern requirements is evidence of its changeable and indefinite nature; and also that the kind of conduct it inspires depends not upon any inspiration from a god, but rather upon the moral sense and humane proclivities of its professors. It is both amusing and pitiable to note the subterfuge resorted to by Christian defenders when they are confronted with the incongruities of their faith. If we show the absurdity of supposing that a few drops of water sprinkled on a child's face can purify its heart, we are told by the Evangelists that this is no part of Christianity. Point out the ridiculous character of immersing an adult female in a bath as an initiation into the Church, and the Independents, Wesleyans, and Churchmen state, That is not Christianity. Attack the horrible doctrines of eternal torments, and the Universalists exclaim, That is not Christianity. Demonstrate the irrational nature of the Trinity, and the Unitarians answer at once, That is not Christianity. Portray the horrors of war, the Quaker asserts that Christianity is peace, and that all war is anti-Christian. Avow that sometimes war has a high and noble mission, that of destroying despotism, breaking up long-standing tyrannies, and freeing down-trodden peoples; intimate that any religion which would stand in the way of a battle fought for truth and freedom cannot be good, and we shall instantly be told that Christianity does nothing of the kind, but that, on the contrary, it sends its disciples to fight, appoints chaplains to the army, and consecrates the weapons of destruction. An interesting story is told of a dilemma in which a clergyman found himself when trying to defend, in a conversation with Robert Cooper, the absurdities of free-will and the utter depravity of human nature as taught by the orthodox faith. Mr. Cooper said to the reverend gentleman: "You consider man to be naturally depraved, do you, sir?" "I do, sir," answered his opponent. "You also maintain that he is a free agent?" "Undoubtedly," replied the clergyman. "Then allow me to ask you if you consider man free to be good?" "Free to be good, certainly. If a man is a free agent, he can just please himself whether he is good or bad; and if he is good, he will be rewarded by the Almighty with everlasting bliss; but if he is bad, he will be condemned to eternal damnation." "Indeed," replied Mr. Cooper, "a very charitable condemnation truly; but, sir, if that is the case, why is it that man does not always select that which is good?" "Oh! because he is naturally bad." "Then," replied Mr. Cooper, clinching the entire argument, "man is free to be good, and yet he is *obliged* to be bad!" The clergyman retired, and we hope he became a wiser man.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

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#### Arguing with Bigots.

If you argue with a bigot,  
At the finish, as a rule,  
You agree with him in thinking  
You are nothing but a fool.



### PROGRESS AND RELIGION.

THAT religion represents, in a civilised community, a force hostile to all-round mental development is one of the commonplaces of the Freethought platform; and, although there are ample and innumerable facts by which to prove the truth of the statement, it always comes as more or less of a shock to the religious listener. "How," it is asked, "can religion be hostile to mental development when it can point to numbers of eminent men in art, science, and literature who live and die in the faith of their ancestors?" Upon those who put forward this plea, and their name is legion, it seldom dawns that in every one of the cases that may be named the man was religious before he grew eminent, and, therefore, the utmost that can be deduced from such a condition of things is that their religious opinions have not hindered them becoming great in special departments of knowledge, while to my mind there is here only evidence of the power of hereditary tendencies, accentuated by early education, to resist, frequently throughout a whole lifetime, the acquisition of positive knowledge concerning the world at large.

I have never yet heard it urged that Dr. Dallinger's Methodism had any favorable influence upon his microscopical studies, that Faraday's connection with the Sandemanians helped him in his chemical experiments, or that Lord Kelvin's researches in physics were at all dependent upon his vague belief in Christianity. And, on the other hand, it were easy to show that during the last three centuries the number of scientific men who have definitely surrendered all religious beliefs has become greater with every generation. And even in the case of many prominent men who remain believers, in spite of their learning, it might well be argued that, as the mind of man is organically related in all its aspects, even they suffer in their general mental culture by encouraging a frame of mind utterly unwarrantable by the knowledge in their possession.

But the most prominent effect of religious beliefs is not that they prevent people from thinking—that were next door to an impossibility—but that all religions induce inaccurate methods of thought, while at the same time sharply circumscribing the area of the mind's operations. During the days when the Roman Church was most powerful people still thought, only the mind's working was very much like the motions of a tethered horse: it went round and round in a circle without making any advance.

Every religion hedges round a number of subjects as being beyond or above criticism. These tabooed subjects may be few or many, but they are there, with the result that, while the mental faculties may work with comparative freedom on some subjects, they halt abruptly at others. It is upon this principle that we find the Protestant criticising freely enough the infallibility of the Pope, but halting suddenly if asked to apply the same principles to his own Bible. He will point out as well as others the incredibility of Catholic miracles, the ignorance of the times, the credulity of the witnesses, and their opposition to all experience, and yet cannot see that every argument applies with equal strength to the Biblical miracles which he greedily swallows. A Christian can quite realise how Mohammed's visions may have been the result of a distempered imagination, but cannot see that the argument is equally strong in the case of Jesus. A virgin birth is an absurdity in India, or Egypt, or Greece, but is eminently reasonable in Judea. The most vigorous demonstration is demanded for every statement made against religion, and the wildest and entirely unsupported ones accepted when urged in its defence. It is thus that we find in every creed men of considerable acquirements, each with his own pet superstition which he refuses to give up, and yet denouncing in unmeasured terms the superstitions of others. It is thus that we find the great chemist Faraday, when asked how he could believe the astounding propositions current in the sect to which he belonged, replying: "I prostrate my reason in this matter; for, if I applied the same process of reasoning which I use in matters of science, I should be an unbeliever."\* And a still more powerful intellect than Faraday, Paschal, gave utterance to substantially the same sentiment upon the same subject.

One of the evil effects of religious beliefs is, therefore,

that the holder of them can never be safely reckoned on as a permanent force in the direction of progress. The very man who is fighting with the army of Rationalism one moment may be fighting in the enemy's ranks the next. He is not fighting on behalf of reason, he is only fighting against one form of unreason, which he is anxious to supplant by another form quite as bad, or even worse. His being on the right side is a pure matter of accident, and a very slight circumstance will convert him into an active opponent.

But religious beliefs inflict a still greater injury upon the human mind than any I have indicated, and this is seen in the clearest manner in the history of Christianity. If the evil influence of religion died away with the generation that witnessed it and suffered it, although that were bad enough, the evil would be of a comparatively mild character. But this is not the case. Each generation, while it hands on some proportion of its virtues to the generations that follow, bequeath also some proportion of its sins. And it may safely be affirmed that the setting up of a bad quality is easier than the creation of a good one; for in the latter case we have to call a new aptitude into existence, while in the former we have either to release certain uncivilised qualities or to degrade civilised ones. The chief injury religion has inflicted upon the human mind has been its systematic suppression generation after generation, until its vices and weaknesses have assumed an almost chronic character.

To consecrate a set of opinions is bad enough, it discourages criticism; but to make happiness here and hereafter dependent upon their acceptance is, for the average man, to damn inquiry altogether. What man can think impartially with a rope round his neck, and with the knowledge that failure to reach a particular conclusion means instant execution? Like the man at a stormy political meeting who, when asked his opinions, looked round at the threatening faces, and declared himself to be of "the same opinion as the man with the big stick," religious threats and penalties have paralysed reason and secured an outward conformity at the expense of honesty and sincerity. And when one further reflects how this process was carried on generation after generation it can hardly be questioned that, great as have been the injuries inflicted upon the world by Christianity, none have been greater than this. As Buckle says:—

"We hear much of martyrs and confessors—of those who were slain by the sword or consumed in the fire; but we know little or nothing of that still larger number who, by the mere threat of persecution, have been driven into an outward abandonment of their real opinions; and who, thus forced into an apostasy the heart abhors, have passed the remainder of their life in the practice of a constant and humiliating hypocrisy. It is this which is the real curse of religious persecution. For in this way, men being constrained to mask their thoughts, there arises a habit of securing safety by falsehood, and of purchasing impunity with deceit. In this way fraud becomes a necessary of life, insincerity is made a daily custom, the whole tone of public feeling is vitiated, and the gross amount of vice and of error fearfully increased."\*

To the same effect, Francis Galton, in one of the most important books of the century, says:—

"The Church, having first captured all the gentle natures and compelled them to celibacy, made another sweep of her huge nets, this time fishing in stirring waters, to catch those who were the most fearless, truth-seeking, and intelligent in their modes of thought, and therefore the most suitable parents of a high civilisation, and put a strong check, if not a direct stop, to their progeny. Those she reserved on these occasions to breed the generations of the future were the servile, the indifferent, and, again, the stupid. Thus, as she brutalised human nature by her system of celibacy applied to the gentle, she demoralised it by her system of persecution of the intelligent, the sincere, and the free. It is enough to make the blood boil to think of the blind folly that has caused the foremost nations of struggling humanity to be the heirs of such hateful ancestry, and that has so bred our interests as to keep them in an unnecessarily long-continued antagonism with the essential requirements of a steadily advancing civilisation. In consequence of this inbred imperfection of our natures, in respect to the conditions under which we have to live, we are, even now, almost as much harassed by the sense of moral incapacity and sin as

\* Quoted by G. H. Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, vol. I., p. 11.

\* *History of Civilisation*, Lib. Ed., vol. i., p. 172.



were the early converts from barbarism, and we steep ourselves in half-unconscious self-deception and hypocrisy as a partial refuge from its insistence."\*

Severe as this indictment is, I do not think that it can be reasonably said to be overdrawn. One has only to reflect that in Spain alone, from 1471 to 1781, an annual average of 100 people were put to death, and 900 imprisoned for offences against religion, and that the policy of Spain was only an example of what was happening, more or less, over the whole of Europe, to realise the demoralising effect upon successive generations. A nation cannot go on draining itself of its best blood without feeling the effects sooner or later; and in the very nature of the case the people who feel the weight of persecution are the very people who are most upright, most honorable, and most useful to the nation, if properly appreciated.

All religious persecution has this one result: it manufactures hypocrites and breeds cowards. For, while it lasts, they are the only classes who are safe. Persecution affects only the man who makes up his mind to be honest and straightforward, to speak the truth that is in him, and dare the consequences. The man who is content to play the hypocrite does not dread persecution. It has no existence for him. Public praise may be lavished upon him; the highest offices of the State are open to him; he has stifled his thoughts and bridled his tongue, and that is all that is required of him. It is the fearless investigator, the searcher after truth, the man who would sacrifice all the comforts the world has to offer, who suffers; and with him the race suffers also.

It is in these two directions that religion has inflicted an irreparable injury upon the human mind. By limiting the number of subjects upon which man might exercise his reason, it has induced inaccurate methods of thinking; for the mind does not consist of a number of isolated and independent faculties, but is an organic whole, necessarily suffering by an injury or want of development of any of its parts. And, secondly, by the long centuries of mental terrorism in which it has kept the race, by selecting the strong, reliant, heretical goats from the credulous, timid, and ignorant sheep, by killing the former and leaving the perpetuation of the species principally to the latter, it has inflicted such injuries upon the mental and moral stamina of the race as can only be rectified by many generations of careful scientific training.

C. COHEN.

### ASSIZE SERVICES.

“Judge not that ye be not judged.”—Matt. vii. 1.

WITH dismay we learn from the *Sunday Magazine* that there is an agitation on foot for the abolition of what are known as “Assize Services”—i.e., the Church services usually attended by the judges in state prior to the opening of Assize.

It is very terrible to contemplate the lengths to which the iconoclastic spirit of the age seems inclined to go. Something should be done to check it. We are a Christian nation with a deep and abiding reverence for traditions and antiquities. And it is not to be supposed that we can part with our cherished institutions and customs one after another without even an expostulatory word. True, the present proposal emanates, as the *Sunday Magazine* says, from certain “thoughtless” persons. They may, however—“thoughtless” as they are—succeed in carrying it out, and then, we ask, what will become of the administration of the law in our county towns?

Let us consider this matter in detail, as so high an authority in the religious world as the *Sunday Magazine* deems it one of special importance. First of all, we must describe the present procedure. The judge of Assize is met at his “lodgings” by the High Sheriff, the Under Sheriff, the chaplain, and others, who are ushered into his lordship’s drawing-room, where he and his marshal and clerk await the arrival of the high officials of the county. Afterwards the whole party make their way to the sheriff’s state and other carriages outside, the county trumpeters sounding a *fanfare* while the seats are being taken. The procession, which generally includes the Mayor and other civic authorities, then moves off to the cathedral or church,

where the officers of state are met at the entrance by the dignitaries of the church—the Dean and Chapter attending if it is a cathedral town. A service is held, and then the High Sheriff’s chaplain preaches a sermon, except at Cambridge, where the University preacher always officiates.

From this it will be perceived that the chief and special thing of which it is proposed to deprive Her Majesty’s judges is the sermon. A more cold-blooded, cruel proposal could hardly be conceived. Of course, it never enters into the minds of the iconoclasts that *the* one thing of all others which the judges look forward to with pleasant emotions—when they pack up their traps and leave town on circuit—is the sermon that awaits them in the one, two, or three centres they are marked down to visit.

Their attendant clerks carry with them a few law books—mostly records of Crown cases reserved—and there are the circuit libraries always available. But what, after all, are they? Useful for reference, no doubt; but for general guidance—what better than to sit at the Assize services, and snap up hints as they fall, like precious pearls, from the lips of the Solons of the pulpit?

The “thoughtless” proposal means that the Sheriff’s chaplain is no longer to be afforded the opportunity—sanctioned by immemorial custom—of delivering to the judges such a discourse as he thinks will best fit them for the discharge of their duties. Why should he be deprived of this chance, which only comes to him at long and rare intervals? Why begrudge him the little “look in”? Think of the many dreary occasions during the year when he has absolutely no one to address but pious spinsters, common tradespeople, and Hodge!

With no proper admonition and guidance from the sheriff’s chaplain, the business of Assize might certainly go on. But would God’s blessing rest upon it?

Jurors are not specially called upon to attend the service and hear the sermon. They may, however, be relied upon to make every effort in court to fulfil their oath, and “a true verdict give according to the evidence.” But is the judge to be trusted to direct the jury, and accurately and impartially sum up? And would he be able to reconcile to his conscience the sentences he passes when that conscience is lacking the sanctifying stimulus, the quickening and strengthening and purifying influence of the chaplain’s sermon? These are serious questions for the “thoughtless” to weigh and consider.

What we say is—as well propose to abolish the trumpeters’ *fanfare* as the service and sermon, and then see what will happen.

There are, however, other considerations involved. It seems that the proposal of the “thoughtless” is grounded on the fact that, apart from the officials concerned, scarcely anybody thinks it worth while to attend the services. Should that be so—and we do not deny it—it surely affords no reason for depriving the judges of an improving discourse. The *Sunday Magazine* observes with regret that some of the sermons are “dull and perfunctory.” It is conceivable that some of them are. Let us frankly admit even that. It is possible, too, that, being “dull and perfunctory,” they do not tend to the pleasantest frame of mind on the part of the judges, some of whom are notoriously testy old gentlemen. The judges, as men skilled in analysis, may occupy themselves in mercilessly dissecting the discourses during their delivery, and be tempted to feelings of mockery and scorn. Such a spirit, we need hardly say, is very unfitted to the temple of God. The most, therefore, that we can hope for is that, in these instances of “dull and perfunctory” sermons, the administrators of the law may, with Christian fortitude and in a spirit of Christian charity, make an effort to bear patiently with their weaker brethren in the pulpit. Far be it from us to imagine any of the judges—even the most irascible—leaving the sacred edifice soured and disgusted, or in a railing and profane mood. Far rather would we think of the sermon as having the ordinary soporific effect, if only for the sake of the poor prisoners afterwards to be tried.

The “thoughtless” further allege that the custom of holding these services is effete and obsolete, and that the regularity of its observance is broken by the fact that several of the judges are Roman Catholics, and do not, therefore, attend. We know that, a few years ago, Sir Henry Hawkins, with what we always considered a somewhat low taste, generally preferred, instead of attending any service, to take out his “little dawg”—the late famous fox terrier—for a walk, even though it were on the Lord’s

\* *Hereditary Genius*, pp. 353-9.



Day. Such an example, it is hardly necessary to say, is not one that can be commended. To see, as we have seen, that venerable ornament of the judicial bench wandering in the vicinity of Warwick Castle during church hours on a hunt for rats—thus not only desecrating the Sabbath himself, but leading his little dog into a like offence—is not, it must be admitted, the most edifying spectacle that could be imagined.

The *Sunday Magazine* enlarges on the peculiarly favorable opportunity that the Assize sermons afford for impressing on the judges the sovereign virtue of mercy. There are, of course, numerous texts available for that purpose, such as the cheerful promise that the Son of Man will send forth his angels to gather up offenders, and will "cast them into a furnace of fire," where there "shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"; or that mercy-breathing verse: "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). Suitable discourses based on these texts would infuse a proper spirit of humility in the judges by showing them how insignificant, after all, are their sentences of hanging, penal servitude, and the cat.

Nevertheless, for an eloquent incentive to mercy, more particularly addressed to believers, the judges might be satisfied with a certain speech put into the mouth of Portia by one William Shakespeare, which many people, whose opinion is worthy of attention, regard as vastly finer than anything that can be found on the same subject in Holy Writ, from Genesis to Revelation.

Failing other appropriate texts, the Sheriff's chaplain might select that which heads this article, or Jesus Christ's denunciation:—

"Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke xi. 46).

Or he might dilate on the incident of the woman taken in adultery, and explain how any punitive measures would be possible in society if only they, who are without sin, be permitted to cast stones. Or he might submit to them, as experts in the sifting and weighing of evidence, the exact grounds on which we are asked to believe in Bible miracles—in Jonah's whale, Balaam's ass, and other sacred marvels. Or he might explain how "legal swearing" is to be reconciled with the following plain declaration by Christ, which does *not* merely apply to oaths in ordinary conversation:—

"Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne. Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. v. 33-37).

Or he might, as a delicate compliment, select some passage from Judges, such, for instance, as the rather "tall" story of Samson slaying a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, which he might rationalise by explaining that, in reality, the weapon used was oratory—though not, of course, of the pulpit order.

However, not to pursue the matter any further, we may conclude with the reflection that it is just possible these Assize services are regarded by the judges as less useful to them than to the officiating clerics who derive from them a transitory and factitious importance.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### How to Help Us.

- (1) Got your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Got your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

### CAPITAL LETTERS.

WORDS, said Hobbes, are the counters of wise men and the money of fools. The saying is profoundly true, as anyone may discover who takes the trouble to examine and reflect. Just as a bit of bunting will gather men together, inspire them with a common sentiment, and make them face death rather than budge an inch, so a word or a phrase will often act as a mighty spell, though the people who employ it have never given its meaning five minutes' real thought in the whole course of their lives. A bigoted Protestant, say an Orangeman, who has been trained to detest the Roman Catholic Church without having imbibed the least knowledge of its history, flies into a rabid passion at the word "Pope." On the other hand, a strict Catholic, who has been taught to regard every form of dissent as a damnable heresy, no sooner hears the word "Protestant" than he conjures up the idea of a monster. To mention "Tory" at a Liberal meeting, or "Liberal" at a Tory meeting, is to excite the strongest feelings of derision or abhorrence; while to mention "Sceptic" or "Freethinker," or "Infidel," among orthodox Christians is to make them feel positively unclean. During the French Revolution, it is said, there were fanatical Republicans who cried "Fraternity or Death"; that is, not death to themselves, but death to other people. "Be my brother or die!" they shouted to their opponents, while pointing weapons at their breasts. Clearly, in this case, Fraternity was not an intelligible idea, but a shibboleth, a party cry, a cant phrase, meaning as little as Abracadabra.

There are also many words that pass current without any definite signification being attached to them by the multitude; but when once they are adopted by a party, though their meaning becomes no more defined, they are taken as badges, and become rallying cries in political and social struggles. Take a very striking illustration. Free Trade, whether right or wrong, is perfectly intelligible. The phrase is neither dubious nor obscure. The simplest mind comprehends it at once. Free Trade is unlimited trade with every part of the globe. But the opponents of Free Trade, in a country like England, where naked Protection has no chance, raise the flag of Fair Trade; and under cover of that word *Fair*, which is so highly respectable, and even venerable, they manage to cheat thousands of simple-minded persons, who never get behind such words, but are imposed upon by their plausible faces. With the most perfect sincerity and composure, they ask you how you can oppose Fair Trade? What can be fairer than *Fair Trade*? And so on. Their poor minds are hopelessly befogged, and their condition is pitiable; but it is only an extreme instance of what is, after all, exceedingly common.

People can be cheated, however, not only by words, but by spelling; and there is no more effective device in this line than the skilful use of capital letters. When every substantive was printed with a capital there was no opportunity for this trick; but now capitals are generally dropped, except for proper names, the cunning rhetorician can eke out his argument or his metaphor by a species of literary atavism. Probably no writer knew the secret of this method better than Carlyle, who was one of the greatest masters of rhetoric that ever lived; or, as some might prefer to say, one of the greatest artists in words. When Carlyle is writing straightforward history, as in the *Frederick*, he uses few more capitals than an ordinary author; but when he assumes the preacher or the poet, as in his wayside disquisitions or in the perpetual transcendentalism of *Sartor Resartus*, his pages show a perfect eruption of capitals. Eternities, Verities, and so on, spring up head and shoulders above modester words of equal merit; and naturally they strike the attention of the ordinary reader, who is too apt to judge by first appearances, and takes these capital-lettered substantives at their own estimate—if we may be allowed to charge them with the author's doings. The object, of course, is to give these special words, not simply a distinction, but a personality. They are nothing but abstractions; but when they are printed like proper names they look like real existences; nay, like living beings, that may be loved and hated for themselves. When Carlyle says "the Eternities cry" this, that, or the other, he imposes on the ordinary reader by means of the capital. Eternities suggest God; in fact, it seems a sonorous euphemism for the ineffable name. Yet,



if God were substituted for Eternities, the reader would shrink back. "How do you know," he might exclaim, "that God says so? Is it in the Bible, or is it a private revelation to yourself?" The fact is, Carlyle, like the tremendous and unscrupulous artist he was, expressed nothing but his own opinion; but this trick of spelling enabled him to father it, as it were, upon the universe.

Professor Huxley, many years ago, uttered a strenuous protest against this jugglery. Speaking of the metaphysical idea of compulsion, he said: "Matter I know and force I know, but what is this Necessity but a mental figment of my own creation?" And later on he said, with his peculiar blending of humor and scientific precision, that words like Necessity are printed with capital letters to make them imposing, just as you put a bearskin hat upon a grenadier to make him look more formidable than he is by nature. Metaphysical discussion would not cease if such words were printed like ordinary nouns, yet it would probably lose much interest to common readers, who might begin to see the truth of Berkeley's remark, that metaphysicians first raise a dust, and then complain that they cannot see.

Deity is another word usually printed with a capital, though quite wrongly. God is, in a sense, a personal name, for the word is supposed to denote a personal being. Mr. John Morley, therefore, was a little *outré* in printing it with a small g when he edited the *Fortnightly Review*; and the *Spectator* was only dishing him with his own sauce when it retorted by printing Mr. Morley's name with a small m.

Christian journals frequently print Atheist or Free-thinker without a capital, while uniformly bestowing one on Christian, Protestant, or Catholic. This practice seems to justify their readers' opinion that Atheists and Free-thinkers are an inferior species. We have even seen Unitarian printed in such journals with a small u.

During the first Jubilee craze we all witnessed a new development of spelling. Loyalty had grown so hectic as to appropriate for the Queen a usage formerly devoted to God. Every personal pronoun relating to her in the Jubilee service at Westminster Abbey was printed in capitals, so that she and the Almighty claimed an equal dignity. Since then Mr. Alfred Austin has dedicated a new volume of poems to the Queen, and, like a complete courtier, he follows the example set by the Archbishop of Canterbury. But worse remains. It is actually reported in the newspapers, without contradiction, that in the Prayer-Book used at Windsor the royal pronouns all take capitals, while the divine pronouns are reduced to the ignominy of small type. Surely it is impossible to conceive a loftier (we beg the word's pardon) flattery of royalty, or a more blasphemous snub to the heavenly majesty. Who will dare to pretend, after this, that the religion of the upper circles is anything but a branch of statecraft, or that their Christianity is anything more than "an organised hypocrisy"?

G. W. FOOTE.

## TWO PICTURES.

DARK is the night, and bitter blows the wind;  
Quietly the sullen river flows along;  
The lights of London shining just behind,  
And gleaming on the water deep and strong.  
Hark! what was that? see in the sluggish water  
A female figure; ah! it's gone from sight.  
The same sad story—someone's fallen daughter  
Homeless and maddened, driven to hell to-night.

Lights from the basement to the upper story,  
Music and warmth and beauty in galore;  
The heiress reigns to-night in all her glory,  
Her swift feet glancing o'er the polished floor;  
Bewild'ring scene of satins, silks, and laces,  
Of waving palms, and choice exotic flowers;  
Stout dowagers, with false teeth and painted faces,  
Trifling with pleasure till the morning hours.

Where is the God, the all-creating Spirit?  
Where is the God whose word and law is just?  
One creature flourishes not on her own merit,  
Another "falls" because she lacks a crust!

T. PLATTEN.

## THE BURIAL OF BYRON.

It has been said of Westminster Abbey that, instead of being a national Valhalla, it is but an imperfect and irregular commemorator of greatness. Look round the building, and notice that it is crowded with monuments, which have no right to be there, whilst admission is refused to a poet like Byron. It may be on account of his scepticism, but what claims to orthodoxy had Ephraim Chambers, Courayer, Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, or even Charles Darwin? Byron's life had not been without errors, but surely he had as much right to be buried there as John Broughton, "the prince of prize-fighters," or Mrs. Aphra Behu, a novelist we beg leave to introduce to the attention of Detective Sweeney. The tombs of several (by no means immaculate) actresses would not be profaned by the admission of Byron's ashes.

The poet, it will be remembered, was buried in the church at Hucknall-Torkard, Nottinghamshire. If he had no claim to lay in the "consecrated" precincts of the Abbey, he has no right to lay in "consecrated" ground at all.

The Greeks desired that Byron might be buried in the Temple of Theseus at Athens, but it was decided that the body should be conveyed to London for sepulture in the Abbey. Permission, however, was refused by the Dean, who thus earned an immortality of infamy; and, after lying in state for some days in London, Byron was buried with his mother and his ancestors in the little church at Hucknall, such being the desire of his beloved sister, Augusta.

It appears that not one of the "respectable" and conservative little gentry about Nottingham responded to the invitation to attend the funeral procession, so strong was their instinctive feeling that he was the enemy of their pretensions; but the great-hearted common people attended in masses the burial of one of England's greatest poets. To quote the fine lines of Alexander Smith:—

".....he was as far above common men  
As a sun-steed, wild-eyed, and meteor-maned,  
Neighing the reeling stars, is 'bove a hack  
With sluggish veins of mud."

MIMNERMUS.

## ACID DROPS.

"I AM sincerely glad," Emperor William telegraphed, "to be able to congratulate you for the splendid victory of Omdurman, which at last avenges poor Gordon's death." We suppose this is a Christian expression. Thousands of men slaughtered to avenge the death of one! In what scale are the respective values of different human lives weighed? It may be a subject for congratulation that the detestable tyranny of the Khalifa is ended, and that a large portion of the earth may once more become populous and cultivated; but to justify the Soudan campaign on the ground that it avenges the death of Gordon seems to us positively wicked. But, after all, who looks for common sense in Emperor William's telegrams!

The Khalifa was a wily impostor. He said prayers daily at the Mahdi's tomb, and affected great austerity in public, but in private he wallowed in drunkenness and debauchery. He and his immediate friends had a fine old time while it lasted. Now the inspired Khalifa is a fugitive, if he is not already slain by his own followers for not destroying his enemies, as he promised, by his miraculous powers.

The Bishop of Salisbury, preaching to troops in the Cathedral, asked the prayers of the congregation for the success of the Khartoum expedition, because "victory would mean the abolition of a tyranny practised in the name of religion." Perhaps so; but is that the *only* tyranny practised in the name of religion? Tyranny is practised in the name of Christianity all over the world. It is even practised in England. The Bishop of Salisbury's faith is protected against free criticism by law, and his Church is compulsorily supported by myriads of people who despise and detest it.

The Bishop of Carlisle has managed to be really funny. In one and the same pastoral letter to his clergy he advised them to pray that God would enable our troops to smash the Dervishes, and also that God would bless the Czar's proposals for a general peace. How the Almighty must smile when he listens to that double-barrelled supplication!



How curious it is that during Zola's holiday—which the hostile Paris journals called his "flight"—his enemies should have so signally vindicated him. Colonel Henry's confession and suicide fell upon France like a bolt from the blue. He concocted a certain document to make the guilt of Dreyfus absolutely certain. That document was cited at Zola's trial with triumphant effect, and M. Cavaignac, the War Minister, quoted it in the Chamber as conclusive against the prisoner of the Devil's Island. Zola all along declared it a rank and clumsy forgery, and Colonel Picquart insisted that it was forged by Colonel Henry himself. Everybody now knows that they were right, and he must be a very prejudiced man who believes in the authenticity of the other documents that went along with this precious concoction.

Everybody knows that Zola is a Freethinker. Yet the dear *Daily News* hopes that he is not "a sufficiently bad Christian to desire the humiliation of his enemies." Our contemporary is well aware that Zola is not a bad Christian, nor a good Christian—no, nor even an indifferent Christian. One has to write in a certain way for a Nonconformist public, but it is a pity to make oneself ridiculous to no purpose.

The editor of the *National Review* has done excellent service by translating some early letters of Captain Dreyfus to his wife and his counsel, Maitre Demange. Some were written during his prosecution and trial, and one after his sentence and degradation. If there is any truth in psychology, those are the letters of an innocent man. A guilty man would have struck a false note somewhere in his protestations of innocence; but these letters have every mark of absolute sincerity. The man who could read them without tears is to be envied—or pitied.

President Faure comes rather badly out of this Dreyfus scandal. He is a showy sort of man, but not at all deep in mind or strong in character. It seems to us that France really wants a President with greater powers than are conferred by the present constitution, in order to give some stability to the management of her affairs. She might do much worse than call back M. Casimir-Perier and make a bold constitutional revision at the same time.

Rev. Thomas W. S. Jones, Wesleyan Missionary Society's agent at Naples, attributes most of the blame of the late troubles in Italy to the Roman Catholic Church, which has a Forward Movement there, whose object is to overthrow the Kingdom, and to reduce the country to a cluster of states under the headship of the Pope. "Every priest of Rome," Mr. Jones says, "every association and congress, every associate of this aggressive movement, has been, knowingly or unknowingly, a centre of discontent. All economic and administrative mistakes, all the ills that nations are heir to, have been used to fan the fire of socialistic dissatisfaction and anarchist passion, and clerical policy has suggested, semi-officially, a Federal Italy, with the Pope as the temporal head. And yet all over, certainly in the south, the attempt at insurrection has been an utter failure. No leading mind directed it, save from behind the scenes. The wire-pulling was in the hands of those shadowed by the mystery of the Vatican itself."

We have no doubt that what Mr. Jones says is quite correct. At the same time, we venture to add that the Italian government has itself to thank, in large part, for the success of such tactics. If it only cared more for the condition of the people, and less for "glory," based upon merciless taxation of industry, it would have little to fear from the machinations of the Papacy.

Doctor Talbot has been fined ten shillings, or seven days' imprisonment, for riding on the London and South Western Railway without paying his fare. By trade he is a weaver, and it appears that "Doctor" is really his first name. Being the seventh son of a seventh son, he is supposed to possess healing powers, according to a superstition which is said to be more or less prevalent in Lancashire. This is a new development of the sacredness of the number seven.

During the proceedings at Bow-street Police-court, in the case of the two *Britannic* officers who are charged with robbing the mail, Mr. George Page was called as a witness to testify as to the contents of one of the stolen letters, and the following is the *Daily News* report of what occurred:—

"The Chief Usher was proceeding to swear him in the usual way, when he raised an objection. Holding up his hand, he said he wished to be sworn in the Scotch style. The usher was about to administer the oath in the way requested, when witness said in an excited tone: 'No, no; I can repeat the oath myself.'

"The Chief Clerk (Mr. Cavendish)—Do you object on religious grounds?

"Witness—I can affirm on my own ground and in my own

strength. I was born with power to speak the truth, and that strength has not been impaired.

"On what ground do you object to be sworn?—I object to being sworn on that book.

"Do you object on religious grounds?—I don't care what you call it. I hold that a Bible in a court-room is humbug.

"Mr. Osborn—I think we can dispense with this witness altogether.

"Witness—Of course, you can do without me if you like, but if you let Bradlaugh go into Parliament without swearing, why not let me give evidence without taking an oath? There's a great deal of humbug in this world. Witness then left the witness-box."

Sir John Bridge, the Bow-street magistrate, is a bit (some say a good deal) of a bigot, or he would have interposed on behalf of Mr. George Page, who had a perfect right at law to affirm instead of making oath. It is a great pity that magistrates are so small-minded, and so impertinent, as to carry their religious prejudices into court, and to connive at a palpable defiance of the law of the land, which they are paid to administer.

Rev. A. Bowen, Roman Catholic priest, has been fined 40s. at Shifnal, Shropshire, for behaving indecently to a girl on the public highway. Shocking! shocking! It is really a shame that men of God should be persecuted in this infamous way.

According to the *St. John's Wood Advertiser*, a clergyman has given the following reasons for the decreasing attendance at church services:—"Railways and bicycles, week-end outings, services too long, sermons not practical enough, parsons not manly enough, many hymns too effeminate and sentimental." Very well, and what is the remedy? Alas, it is not indicated. Indeed, the case seems hopeless. Railways and bicycles cannot be annihilated, week-end outings won't be dropped, and how on earth are parsons to be made manly?

Mr. Kensit, the noble and self-denying Protestant crusader, stated that "only a few days ago, at Canterbury, a Roman priest had offered to take souls out of purgatory at £14 each, and the priest had boasted that by that means he had secured a sum of £323." This statement was indignantly challenged by several Catholics in the columns of the *Daily Chronicle*, and the editor of that journal sent Mr. Kensit a private letter, asking him to be good enough to mention his authority. This letter, in spite of the word "private," was read out by Mr. Kensit before a meeting at Cardiff. Under the circumstances, therefore, the *Chronicle* declined to treat his reply as private. "Little John's" letter was printed in full, and a pretty epistle it was. Mr. Kensit wanted £10 before he would show his authority for a public statement. "I am far too busy," he added, "to work for your paper for nothing." Exactly so. Everybody who knows John Kensit is well aware of what he is working for.

Rev. Robert Middleton, vicar of St. Miles's, Norwich, has a ritualistic disagreement with his Bishop, and on Sunday evening he "went for" the right reverend father-in-God like a true militant Christian. He was severe on "proud, pompous prelates," with (for instance) £4,500 a year and "all the enormous fees for faculties and things." Mr. Middleton does not appear to agree with the Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, who rebukes Mr. Foote for referring sarcastically to the £15,000 a year of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dr. Woodward, Keeper of the Department of Geology at South Kensington, is censured by a religious journal for "taking upon himself" to open that department the other Sunday evening, and to hold a reception of those attending the Zoological Congress. Our pious contemporary adds that if this sort of thing is allowed "there will be an end of Sunday rest." How terrible, to be sure! This and the hot weather are enough to make one's blood boil.

The *New Age*, after ascribing a quotation from Darwin to Haeckel, says it is not a very important question, Whence came we? Well, it may not appear very important to superficial sentimentalists, who fancy that the millennium will be achieved by means of a handful of selected maxims from the New Testament. But it looks vastly important to those who believe in the power of ideas and the sovereignty of principles. Those who hold that man is a fallen angel, and those who hold that man is a risen animal, have necessarily very different views of man's position and destiny. The choice of these two theories is really the parting of the ways.

According to the Rev. E. B. Ottley, who preached at Marylebone on Sunday, the late Mr. Gladstone once said to him: "It will be time enough to discuss the question (of eternal punishment) when we have a glimmering of the



meaning of the words Eternal and Eternity." How characteristic that is of the Grand Old Man! As a theologian he was always mystifying and quibbling about words. Why, the very man in the street has a competent idea of the meaning of Eternity—quite as competent, we may add, as that of the greatest "thinker." He will tell you it is "for ever and ever," or something like; or he may even say it is "a hell of a time"; and that's as near to it as finite beings will ever get. The practical question, therefore, is really this—Are the damned tortured in Hell by their all-merciful Father for such a period? It is no use juggling. Answer, yes or no. But the Grand Old Man never could answer categorically. He always had plenty of alternatives and qualifications. No doubt he felt that the theologian who was foolish enough to be precise simply gave himself away to his opponents.

The Czar will do well to look after his people at home, instead of carrying on further enterprises in China. The districts affected by the bad harvests are in a dreadful condition. Cattle are being fed on fodder taken from the thatches of cottages, horses and oxen are being sold at half price, and the prospect for the winter is positively alarming. Famine is pretty certain to desolate the province of Kazan.

Thunderstorms are accounted "acts of God." During one near Carlantino, recently, twenty peasants sought shelter in an old house, but the building collapsed, and eighteen of them were killed in the ruins. If it was an act of God, what should be said of his Almightyness?

The plague is increasing in Bombay. No less than 27,800 victims have succumbed to it already. Yet the text is true, "He doeth all things well."

A pretended cripple, on being refused a drink, stood up erect, moved about with wonderful agility, and offered to fight two gentlemen on the spot. On appearing at the Marylebone Police-court, he said that he was trying to sell "Scripture books"—apparently in public-houses.

A. J. Waldron has issued "An Appeal." He claims to have rescued hundreds from unbelief, and particularly to have converted one "Mr. L—," who was "one of the most aggressive Secularists of New Brompton." As this gentleman was "subsequently baptised as a confession of faith before more than 600 people," it is difficult to see why his name should be concealed. Was it Mr. Liar? Perhaps our New Brompton friends can throw a little light upon the subject. Meanwhile we cannot help a feeling of sadness at the thought that such a successful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ should be "worried with financial difficulties." "Some generous person" is asked to "come forward to the rescue." Only "£500 per annum is required." Surely that beggarly sum will not need to be asked for twice.

Arthur Coy, a young married man, employed as a fitter at Kirkstall Forge, Leeds, committed suicide by throwing himself in the canal. In a letter to his wife he said: "Meet me in heaven." It is rather a distant and uncertain place for an appointment. The foolish man had better have gone home and looked after his own family, instead of leaving them to the Lord. His poor wife isn't likely to get much assistance from that quarter.

Any good Christian can tell why the Colston Hall was burnt down. The conflagration occurred during the night, and was evidently a "judgment" on the Trade Union Congress for something that happened during the day. Mr. Harris, a Bradford delegate, moved a resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Wardley, of Sheffield, and unanimously agreed to, requesting the Government to require from all firms that had been granted, or that might hereafter be granted, the Government's licence to print and publish the Holy Bible, an assurance that they paid trade-union wages for their printing and bookbinding work. Mr. Harris is reported to have spoken as follows in support of his resolution: "He said that at Glasgow women were employed to bind the Bible at wages amounting to only four or five shillings a week. One firm there employed 200 women, and paid them from 4s. to 6s. per week for the same class of work that men in London got 23s. per week for doing.—Mr. Rogers (London), in seconding the resolution, said they had no quarrel with the Queen's Printers or the University Press, but they had a quarrel with the Scotch houses. It was a quaint humor that their brothers across the Tweed, who claimed to be a Bible-loving people (and that he did not dispute), should be guilty of the evil practice of sweating, for undoubtedly it was a fact that it was in the production of Bibles that the cloven hoof of the sweater was most apparent."

These wretched sneers at holy people, who only starve the mortal bodies of insignificant work-girls in order that they may supply cheap Bibles for the salvation of immortal souls, must have reached the ears of "one above," who signi-

fied his displeasure in the usual way. Those unanimous Trade Unionists forgot that the Bible God is "a consuming fire."

Rev. A. Bird, preaching a funeral sermon on a deceased lady in the Baptist chapel, Penzance, spoke as follows, according to a report in the *Cornishman*: "One of the marked features of the Bible is the position it everywhere assigns to woman. From the first to the last it assumes the moral equality of the sexes, and again and again gives beautiful and suggestive pictures of woman's life, crown, and honor, examples of which were found in the stories of Sarah, Hannah, Ruth, and Mary."

We hope the lady whose funeral sermon the reverend gentleman was preaching was at least superior to the first of the Bible ladies in this list. Sarah was what the man in the street calls—well, by the curt designation of a female dog. She agreed to pass herself off as her husband's sister on two occasions, and, as rich and powerful personages took a fancy to her, the old man she left waiting for her made a fine profit on the transaction. Having no children of her own, she told her husband to get some by one of her maids, which the accommodating old fellow cheerfully consented to. But by-and-bye when she did get a child of her own—it occurred when she was ninety, and it was a considerable miracle—she bullied her husband into turning Hagar and her boy out into the desert to die of hunger and thirst. A nice baggage indeed! though perhaps she just fits the taste of the Rev. A. Bird.

"Providence" has been giving it hot to the poor New Yorkers. Fancy a temperature of 107 degrees in the shade. If that sort of thing lasted, the smart Yankee would become like the indolent Spaniard, so great is the influence of climate on human nature.

## JEHOVAH JUNIOR; OR, THE MAKER'S BOY.

(Tune—"The Minstrel Boy.")

THE Maker's boy to the World is gone,  
In the ranks of men you'll find him;  
Their "mortal coil" he has girded on,  
And his God-head left behind him.  
"Sons of men," said the Son of Man,  
"With peaceful aspirations!  
The sword I bring will spoil your plan,  
And sunder homes and nations."

"I represent the Creator's House,  
'In which is many a mansion.'  
(N.B.—You'll see, if you've rhythmic nous,  
A defect in last line's scansion.)  
Trust in me, and in water douse,  
And, verily, I'll book you  
For 'mansions in my Father's House';  
If not, my Pa will cook you!"

"But bear in mind, if with me you come,  
That your bed will not be roses,  
Because I mean to make matters 'hum,'  
As they 'hummed' in days of Moses!"  
Thus Jehovah the younger spoke—  
'At least, we're told he did so,  
By solemn folk who shirk his "yoke";  
But solemn people "kid" so.

The wastrel fell in a mortal fright  
At the hands of Pontius Pilate,  
But rose again on the second night,  
Being anxious not to lie late.  
Two-and-seventy hours, said he,  
Within the grave he'd slumber;  
But stayed not more than thirty-three;  
Not half the promised number.

The mongrel boy back to heav'n is gone,  
On a great white throne you'll find him,  
With hybrid beasts, as described by John,  
And a pigeon perched behind him.  
Loudly roars the celestial "zoo":  
"Tis well that Caesar *slew* Jah!  
So, Cock-a-blessed-doodle-do!  
And likewise Hallelujah!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, whose Freethought verses are well known to readers of the *Freethinker*, proposes to bring out a collection of his best pieces in volume form. The price would be half-a-crown, and all who would like to have a copy should intimate so at once to Mr. R. Forder 28 Stone-cutter-street, London, E.C.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 11, 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, Hyde Park; 7.30, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, "Good Without God: or the Morality of Nature."  
September 18, Birmingham; 25, Liverpool.  
October 2, Glasgow; 9, Leicester; 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall.  
November 6, Manchester.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 18 and 25, Athenæum Hall, London. October 2, New Brompton. November 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

R. KILLICK.—Miss Vance has conveyed to us your kind message. We are sorry to hear that "Providence" has been so hard upon you in the matter of health, but hope you will soon be better. When you are so, call and shake hands.

MAJOR-GENERAL FORLONG, sending a subscription to the Wheeler Memorial Fund, says: "I was sorry to hear of poor Mr. Wheeler's death. He is a great loss to the cause, and seemed a most estimable man, with a well-balanced mind."

W. COX.—Please let your lecture notices be written on separate slips of paper for our compositors.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—We missed Coulson Kernahan's letter, to which you refer. It is not surprising that he did not answer your communication. Glad to hear you regarded Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening as "a very great treat." The difficulty about publishing some of the Athenæum lectures is that they are all extemporaneous utterances, and accurate reporting is rather expensive. It affords us much satisfaction to know that a man like yourself derives "enjoyment and profit" from reading the *Freethinker*. Bishop Magee did not answer our Open Letter. How could he?

A. B. MOSS.—Yes, we got home all right, but it was stiff work sitting so long and speaking too, in that broiling sun, to the chorus of the *Mail's* Hooligans. Pleased to hear you had a fine audience at Mile-end.

CHARLES LONG, in reference to Mr. Gould's article, "Ought we to be Neutral?" says: "I don't think he would practise what he preaches if he had to earn his living in a village or cathedral town." Perhaps not. But a great many people live outside such places, and they might give heed to Mr. Gould's admonitions.

S. J. B.—Received with thanks.

A. BUTTON hopes all friends of the movement will join the Secular Society, Limited—which he does himself, and make it the success that it deserves to be.

T. OLLERENSHAW, joining the Secular Incorporation, writes: "I have every confidence in you as leader, and hope you will be spared to us till a ripe old age."

T. PERKINS.—Yes, it was indeed amusing to see the Bishop of Llandaff, after all those long months of the strike, calling for special prayers to Almighty God to end it just as the men were practically forced into accepting the masters' terms.

M. E. PEGG.—We conformed to the instructions in your letter, unless we are very much mistaken. However, we note now that it is on September 11 and 18 that Mr. Percy Ward lectures at Manchester. Mr. Foote has booked the date in November.

R. EDWARDS.—Thanks. See paragraph. It is sad to think that a gentleman who is so fond of referring, in season and out of season, to the appeals made in our columns on behalf of Secular objects, should himself require to be "rescued" from "financial worries."

G. L. ALWARD.—Inserted as desired. We reciprocate your good wishes. When are the Grimsby friends going to make a fresh move in Freethought propaganda?

R. STIRTON (Transvaal).—Thanks for your sympathy and good wishes. The Secular Incorporation ought to be a great success, and will be if the Freethought party does its duty.

G. DIXON.—Thanks. See acknowledgments. We wish you all happiness.

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Per Mrs. Henderson, 15s.; Nellie, Florrie, and Dorothy Foote, 5s.; C. Bowman, 2s. 6d. Collected at Mr. Foote's Lecture, £1 3s. Per Mr. Cohen, 9s.; J. Barry, 2s.; G. W. Foote, 5s.

THE following are fresh applicants for membership in the Secular Society, Limited: C. Bowman, Mrs. Mensbier, R. Killick, Robert Stirton (S. Africa), A. Button, T. Ollerenshaw, G. B. H. McCluskey.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Mrs. Mensbier, 5s.; T.A., 1s.; A. E. Elderkin, 2s. 6d.; G. Dixon, 10s.; F. W. Donaldson, 5s.; T. Ollerenshaw, 2s.; F. F. (per C. Cohen), 5s.; F. Morgan, 2s.

J. MUNTON.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. L. MARTIN.—Thanks for the cuttings and letter. If you apply direct to Miss Vance, N. S. S. office, 377 Strand, London, W.C., she will forward you a parcel of tracts for distribution amongst the South Wales miners.

J. FARMER.—The Humanitarian League's office is at No. 53 Chancery-lane, W.C. Its monthly organ, *Humanity*, is published at one penny. It is admirably conducted by Mr. H. S. Salt.

G. B. H. McCLUSKEY, joining the Secular Society, Limited, says: "If Freethinkers only take up this scheme with the enthusiasm of the old fighting days, I believe it will effect a revolution."

F. MORGAN wishes that every reader of the *Freethinker* would send at once a subscription, however small, to the Circulation Fund. We wish so too.

A. ANDREW.—Received with thanks.

E. J. B.—Will appear as written.

NEWCASTLE AND EAST LONDON BRANCHES.—Your lecture notices arrive as we are going to press, too late. We must receive them by first post on Tuesday at latest.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Ethical World—Cornishman—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Liberator—Workers' Republic—Isle of Man Times—Freidenker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Crescent—Two Worlds—Truthseeker (Bradford)—St. John's Wood Advertiser—South London Mail—Lloyd's Newspaper—Daily Chronicle—South London Press—Freedom—New Century Review.

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.

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

### SPECIAL.

FRIENDS of the *Freethinker* are earnestly invited to subscribe towards its Circulation Fund. This is a way of helping us and at the same time promoting the spread of Freethought. We want to make this journal better known to the liberal-minded public throughout the country, to make it more accessible to purchasers, and to overcome the obstacles raised by the bigotry or timidity of news-agents. The best pens in the party are engaged upon the *Freethinker*, and it must be of the highest service to the movement to have their writings extensively read. Besides, this journal is the vital centre of our propaganda and organisation. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, could easily contribute some assistance, and we ask them to do so if possible during the present month.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

IN spite of the sultry weather, a capital audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Czar's Appeal to Europe." The lecture was followed with profound attention, the interest never flagging to the end. Mr. Thurlow, who occupied the chair, said that such lectures proved the absurdity of the allegation that Secular advocates were only vulgar Bible-bangers. The President of the N. S. S., at any rate, generally managed to deal with a live topic; and, whatever it was, he seemed always able to treat it informally even on the shortest notice. A little courteous criticism was offered by a member of the audience, and was suitably answered.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (September 11), taking for his subject "Good Without God: or the Morality of Nature." Freethinkers are earnestly invited to give publicity to this lecture amongst their more orthodox friends, to whom it should prove interesting and perhaps instructive.

There was an immense concourse of people on Peckham Rye last Sunday afternoon, partly owing to the malignant but effective advertisement in the *South London Mail*, which continues to demand a prosecution of the Secularists for "blasphemy" by means of public subscription; the cream of the joke being that the editor warmly resents the imputation that he is a bigot, and claims to be guided by the noblest spirit of impartiality. He stigmatises the Christian Evidence Society as "mealy mouthed" because Mr. Engström objects to violence and personalities. The proper way of opposing the Secularists, he contends, is to imitate the tactics of Mr. Teapot Taylor. His colleague, who writes under the pseudonym of "John Justice," ventured to say that "Sunday bids fair to supply proofs that the indignation of the people is very real"—which meant, if it meant anything, that the Secularists would be mobbed. Well, they were not mobbed. They had a tremendous meeting around their brake—kindly supplied by Mr. Wilson as usual—and nine-tenths of the crowd were decidedly sympathetic. The other tenth consisted of a knot of Hooligans who were there to display the taste and temper which the *South London Mail* regards as truly Christian. They booed and howled and hooted to their hearts' content. They also



sang "Rule Britannia," and other idiotic songs. But, while they made the work of the speakers harder than it should have been, they were quite unable to do more, and they judiciously kept at the rear of the meeting. For two hours the crowd stood in the broiling sun, listening to the various speeches, and warmly applauding every strong point.

Mr. Heaford acted as chairman and spoke very effectively. Mr. Moss followed, and hotly denounced the policy of the *Mail*, a paper, he said, which had been flinging gratuitous mud at him for years. Mr. Cohen was pointed and humorous, and his speech was much cheered. Mr. Watts spoke calmly and philosophically, and for a few minutes the Hooligans seemed to be ashamed of themselves; but, under obvious direction, they soon burst forth again with renewed vigor. Fortunately they got tired before the end of Mr. Watts's address. He finished amidst comparative quiet, and the applause was loud and general. Naturally the Hooligans went it blind during Mr. Foote's speech; never once did they cease howling like all the menagerie of the apocalypse. But they did not stop the speech; Mr. Foote made himself heard to the end, and we hope the cheers at the finish were thoroughly satisfactory to "John Justice." The Secular brake drove away amidst general signs of goodwill. A humorous diversion, however, was created by one fanatical Christian, who looked more like a Soudanese dervish than a civilised Englishman. He shook a dirty fist, and screamed maledictions through an opening in his Judas beard, which could not have seen the barber for many a long year. No doubt he is a regular reader of the *South London Mail*.

Miss Vance and other friends went through the crowd and took up a good collection, which the truthful editor of the *Mail* told his readers was to be for the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. Our readers do not want to be told that it was for nothing of the kind.

The first of these Freethought Demonstrations was to have been held in Hyde Park, but the rains descended and the floods came and rendered it impossible. Hyde Park, however, is too important a place to be neglected, and an extra Demonstration will be held there this afternoon (Sept. 11) at 3.30, near the Marble Arch entrance. Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Snell, Heaford, and Moss will address the gathering. Local Freethinkers should, of course, rally round the platform.

A well-attended meeting in connection with the defence of Mr. George Bedborough was held on Monday evening, under the auspices of the Free Press Defence Committee, at St. Martin's Town Hall. Mr. J. M. Robertson occupied the chair and delivered an able and interesting address, which was evidently much appreciated. Mr. Seymour, the honorary and hard-working secretary to the Committee, read a few letters from absent well-wishers. Mr. William Platt moved the resolution of protest against the prosecution in an entertaining speech which bristled with good points. Miss Amy Morant followed in a gentle but effective vein. Then came Mr. Foote, who was greatly cheered, his speech rousing the meeting to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Mrs. Despard, Mr. Peddie, and Mr. Heaford followed with force and earnestness, and the resolution, on being put, was carried unanimously. Mr. Robertson closed the meeting with a few appropriate words.

Mr. Bedborough's trial will come on very shortly at the Old Bailey. Mr. Avory has been retained for the defence, and it is to be hoped that the jury will at least disagree. Unfortunately, the heavy expenses of the defence are not yet covered by subscriptions. More money is urgently needed. Sympathisers should forward their donations at once to Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N.

Mr. Bedborough's indictment is at last delivered. It completely justifies the view we have taken all along, in spite of the dissent of others who perhaps watched the case less closely. We felt sure that Dr. Havelock Ellis's book was the pretext for more comprehensive action. By arresting Mr. Bedborough under the "obscenity" laws the police were able to raid his premises. They did so, and carried off all the books, periodicals, and papers they found there. Their object, under some unknown prompting, was evidently to destroy the Legitimation League—in which they have practically succeeded, to suppress the *Adult*, and to stop the discussion of sexual problems. Dr. Ellis's book fills but one count in the indictment. There are many other counts referring to articles and poems in the *Adult*, and to pamphlets published under the auspices of the Legitimation League. From the opinions and sentiments expressed in some of those articles we very strongly dissent, but that should not, and shall not, blind us to the real principle which is at stake—namely, the right of free publication for all opinions. Liberty is higher than any special conclusion, and must always be defended when it is attacked.

It has long been a scandal that there is no crematorium in London. The nearest to the metropolis is at Woking, forty miles distant. Fortunately there is a prospect of this scandal being removed. The London burial boards have been consulted by the parliamentary committee of the County Council, and declared themselves favorable to the provision of crematoria. Accordingly the committee will promote a Bill in the next session of Parliament to admit of this provision being amply made.

The Trade Union Congress passed a resolution in favor of secular education. Of course this is only a pious opinion as yet, but the time cannot be very far distant when it will become a practical policy. England is losing immensely by the squabble of sects over the education of her children, and she will be obliged to end it in mere self-preservation.

The Brighton Town Council has decided by a large majority to open the Booth Bird Museum on Sunday afternoons. The collection of British birds in this Museum is the finest in the country.

The Glasgow Branch sends us a copy of its annual report and balance-sheet. "At no time," it says, "during the past ten years has the average attendance been so good, or the work of the Society more effective." We note that a Visiting Committee has been appointed to look after lapsed or sick members, which is an excellent feature. The balance-sheet shows an improved income and a substantial sum in hand. We wish the Glasgow Branch all the success it deserves, and that is much.

The Liverpool Branch commenced the new lecture session on Sunday evening. There was a good attendance, and several names were taken of intending members of the Secular Society, Limited. Mr. Foote visits Liverpool on September 25.

Mr. Charles Watts has, by request, reprinted his article on "Secular and Theological Forces" from the *Freethinker* in the form of a large two-page tract for general distribution. Copies can be obtained at the rate of one shilling per hundred, or post-free one-and-two. Orders should be sent to Charles Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, London, E.C. This tract should have a wide circulation.

Subscriptions are still wanted towards the expenses of the Children's Excursion. It is to be hoped that Miss Vance will be able to tell us next week that she has received sufficient for all purposes. The excursion takes place on Saturday, September 10. Full details of the various starting-places of the brakes appeared in our last issue. Tickets for children are still obtainable by applying to Miss Vance at 377 Strand, W.C. Those who wish to secure seats should apply at once. Mr. Foote intends to join the party as a mark of respect to the little ones—bless 'em! Mr. Watts and Mr. Cohen will probably go too.

A good report of Mr. A. B. Moss's recent lecture in the Camberwell Secular Hall appeared in the *South London Observer*.

There is an appreciative article by W. B. Wallace on the Emperor Julian in the September number of the *New Century Review*. Julian has been called "the Apostate" by Christians. He was the last great Pagan opponent of their faith, a great soldier, a wise ruler, and no despicable philosopher.

## Obituary.

DIED at Grimsby, on Wednesday, August 31, on her birthday, Mrs. Mary Ann Brown, at the ripe old age of eighty-five years. She was well known, and admired by all her friends as an intelligent and worthy woman. She had been a Freethinker for forty years, a close reader of Freethought literature, and a most ardent admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh. Her illness was a short one, and she was conscious to the last. She desired a silent funeral, which could not be carried out, as she had expressed a wish to be buried in the churchyard of Holton, to lay amongst her departed family. The parson claimed the right to perform the Church of England Funeral Service over her. She was attended within a few hours of her death by a Freethought lady friend, to whom she expressed her perfect happiness. It was not thought her end was so near. Her last moments were watched over by two ladies, both most devout Christians, who expressed themselves satisfied that it is possible, without a hope of a future life, to die a peaceful and happy death. Mrs. Brown's last words were to bid them good night, and then, in a peaceful slumber, she passed away from life to death without a sigh. She desired no flowers, only the Northampton colors, on her grave.—G. L. A.



## BELIEF MADE EASY.

*Helps Towards Belief in the Christian Faith.* By C. G. Griffin-hoofe, M.A. (London: Ward & Downey.)

HALTING Christians and hesitating inquirers need no longer flounder about in the Slough of Doubt and Despond. Mr. Griffinhoofe has come to the rescue. He has written a book, with a preface by the Archbishop of Armagh, intended to help them out of all their difficulties, and to land them—by hook or by crook—on the “terra firma of faith.” That some such book is very badly needed seems to be felt by all who are interested in the maintenance of orthodox belief. And that is why we should hasten to condole with the professors of the old creeds; for, of many attempts to help the lame dog, Faith, over the Christian stile, Mr. Griffinhoofe’s book seems to enjoy the distinction of being quite the weakest and the worst.

Nevertheless, the *Record* accords it a column of eulogistic notice, and adds some unique observations of its own on Christian evidence, which observations have about the same argumentative force as Mr. Griffinhoofe’s efforts. The Archbishop of Armagh, in the preface, retails an old piece of imbecility, which the *Record* rejoices over as the motive and keynote of the book. It is the story of someone—this time a young musician of genius—who piteously whines: “If I could only be *sure* about the truth of the religion of Christ!” The implication, of course, being that there is something so very precious in Christianity that people *want* to believe it to be true, whether it is so or not—a cool assumption that begs the question. The individual who begins by wanting to believe something to be true will probably—if he only goes on wanting long enough—end in the belief, or what serves him for belief, that it *is* true. The Archbishop of Armagh may regard such a spirit as fitting for the entry upon an impartial investigation of religion. Other people would probably say that the first effort of a judicially-constituted mind, with the least training in scientific methods, would be to carefully divest itself of everything that bore even the semblance of bias, and that, until that was done, no useful inquiry could proceed.

But we know that picture of the tearful, heart-broken waverer—the sad-eyed sceptic who, in bitter anguish of soul, prays to the Lord or appeals to the parson for strength to swallow what, in saner moments—it is implied—his gorge has risen at in instinctive rebellion. “O Lord, give me faith!” is the plaintive cry, half choked with sobs and terrible heavings of the diaphragm. And then the Lord throws in a new light—to which X rays are as dull and impenetrative as the old farthing dip—and all becomes clear. Or the sympathetic cleric—with the smug satisfaction that *he*, at any rate, is equal to believing as much, or even more, than is asked of him—says: “My poor dear friend, I feel for you; read this tract, and doubt no more.” The picture is a favorite one from the gallery of Christian Evidence, and has been lithographed and reproduced in every form of cheap parsonic art. Yet we may be permitted to testify that no sceptic we ever knew could, or would, descend to such snivolling, drivelling idiocy.

The *Record*, dropping Mr. Griffinhoofe’s book, tells us in a confidential way how to deal with the “difficulties which some feel from the presence of miracles in the gospels.” We are to get these weak-kneed mortals first to admit the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the most stupendous miracle of all. Then, having secured that admission, we come down on the cripples with this poser: “If you believe that, you can believe anything.” Or, as the *Record* more elegantly puts it: “Grant the resurrection, and all follows easily.” Quite so; and a great deal more than the *Record* appears for the moment to be thinking of.

Once having swallowed the resurrection, where are we to stop? We cannot, as Cardinal Newman long ago urged, permit ourselves to be stayed by antecedent improbability from believing either the other miracles recorded in the Gospels, or those which have—according to equally good, or, as we should say, equally insufficient testimony—occurred in later times, such as St. Francis Xavier turning salt water into fresh for five hundred travellers; St. Raymond transporting himself over the sea in his cloak; St. Andrew shining brightly in the dark; crucifixes bowing the head to the supplicant; Madonnas bending their eyes on assembled crowds; St. Januarius’s blood liquefying

periodically; St. Winifred’s well effecting miraculous cures. “No miracle can be so great as that which took place in the Holy House of Nazareth; it is indefinitely more difficult to believe than all the miracles of the Breviary, of the Martyrology, of saints’ lives, of legends, of local traditions put together, and there is the grossest inconsistency on the very face of the matter for anyone to strain at a gnat and to swallow the camel” (*Position of Catholics in England*). This, it will be perceived, is exactly the argument of the *Record*, much as that journal may be horrified to find itself proceeding on the same lines as the great Romish controversialist. If we believe in the resurrection, there is no reason—at any rate, on the ground of antecedent improbability—for refusing belief in all the other Bible miracles; and, accepting these, it is absurd to strain at those which are presented to us on certainly not less evidence in ecclesiastical history.

After all, neither Mr. Griffinhoofe nor the *Record* affords such a “help to belief” as that which is attributed to Christ. His was a short and easy method. He simply said: “Believe—or be damned.” If that does not stir the mind into a state of capacious receptivity, it is to be feared that nothing else will. X.

## TWELVE REASONS FOR JOINING THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

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

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

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

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

*Fifth Advantage.*—No member, as a member, can derive any profit, direct or indirect, from the Society. The funds of the Society could not, therefore, be voted in any way to its members. Further, there is no danger of the highest interests of the Society being injured by a desire on the part of its members for a commercial dividend. There is no room for that desire to operate.

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

*Seventh Advantage.*—No temporarily successful faction of discontented members could have the slightest chance of wrecking the Society, for it cannot be voluntarily wound



up except by the consent of at least nine-tenths of its members, which involves practical unanimity. The continuity of the Society is thus guaranteed.

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

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

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

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

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

## 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.

## BOOK CHAT.

MR. RICHARD LE GALLIENNE has proved himself a dainty writer of prose by the publication of his *Prose Fancies* and *The Book Bills of Narcissus*. His last book, *The Romance of Zion Chapel* (John Lane), raised our expectations once more. We hoped that he was about to atone for the puerility and vulgarity of *The Quest of the Golden Girl*, but long before reaching the end of the book, although we had come across many passages of sweetness and charm, the sickly sentimentality which threatens to become a mannerism with Mr. Le Gallienne sprang up and spoiled the daintiness of the remainder.

Le Gallienne, too, is getting morbid. He twaddled about "spiritual" petticoats in *The Quest of the Golden Girl*, but here he positively gloats over sick-chambers and death-beds. Listen to the following :—

"Sorrow, too, is an aristocracy, and when Theophil came to realise that, as Jenny had been found worthy to die, he had been found worthy to suffer, it seemed to him almost only to have been happy. Happiness is such a materialist, a creature of coarse taste and literal pleasure, a bourgeoisie who has not yet attained the rank of a soul."

And later he adds :—

"The influence of sorrow on the individual is much what the influence of Christianity has been upon the world. Christianity, no doubt, has robbed us of much—but then it has given us sorrow; it has taken away the sun, but it has given us the stars."

No, no, Richard; it is of the "aristocracy" of happiness you must write, and the sooner you give up writing such morbid stuff the better for yourself and your readers.

Le Gallienne has some fearful and wonderful ideas about love, with his stupid jargon about the *Egoisme à trois* being finer than the *Egoisme à deux* on account of its "additional inclusiveness." Why stop at three? Why not go on to five, to seven, to a dozen? Or even to the good round number of Solomon's harem? Of course, Le Gallienne puts these ideas very daintily, but submit them to the *acqua fortis* of criticism, and the result is lamentable. Most readers will close this book at the death of Jenny. The remainder is very poor stuff, and quite unworthy of the author of *The Book Bills of Narcissus*.

Although Dr. Havelock Ellis is getting his books advertised by Detective Sweeney and his colleagues free of charge, we have no compunction in calling attention to the new edition of *The New Spirit* (Walter Scott), which has just been added to the "Scott Library." (1s. 6d.)

*The Daily Twaddlegraph* has surpassed itself in its fulsome adulation of the Disarmament Scheme of the Czar. It calls it "The Czar's Millennium." It is curious to note how the very ideas which were considered certain evidences of insanity in social reformers are now proofs that the Czar is a second Solomon.

We may mention that Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*, deals with this question at considerable length. It would be a useful publication to press on the attention of the outside public at the present moment, as being evidence of the attitude of a Freethinker on a current question.

The *Adult* for September is a good number, the strongest item being a letter on the Bedford prosecution from the



pen] of Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. Mr. Seymour, the interim editor, is to be congratulated on the way in which he fills the breach.

\* \* \*  
The *University Magazine* for September opens with a "Swan's Song" by the editor, giving his reasons for dropping the publication. Mr. J. M. Robertson follows with an interesting and careful article on "The Originality of Shakespeare," and Mr. John Vickers concludes his suggestive essay on "Christian Origins."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### MILTON AND TOLERATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I desire to make a few remarks on your interesting article on Milton in the *Freethinker* of August 21. You observe that Milton stopped short of unbounded liberty, as he inculcated the non-toleration of Popery. But why? Because, as he avowed, the holders of Popish doctrines were idolaters. In my opinion, a sufficient reason. In his work on *Christian Doctrine* (vol. iv., pp. 420-1; Bohn's edition) he enumerates seven reasons against the blasphemous Doctrine of the Mass, ending with the words, that the body of Christ "is again exposed to be broken, and crushed, and bruised by the teeth, not only of men, but of beasts; till, having passed through the whole process of digestion, it is cast out at length into the draught—a profanation too horrible to be even alluded to without shuddering."

Now, I ask, was not Milton right in declaring that this damnable blasphemy should not receive toleration? The Papal Church speaks of an Infinite Being as an object of worship; one who creates works by His own volition; one who said: "Let there be light, and there was light!" And yet they blasphemously assert that the priests of that Church have the power to create Him afresh; that he may be eaten, received into the intestines, and ultimately cast into the sewer. Before God, I aver that I write this with tears in my eyes, and my whole frame affected by its awfulness! I aver such blasphemy should not be tolerated. No Church should be allowed to so debase the human mind and profane heaven.

How deeply this feeling affected the God-like mind of Milton is evinced by the despatch addressed, as Latin secretary under Cromwell in 1665, "to the Evangelic Cities of Switzerland" anent the persecution of the Waldenses. Milton writes: "For, as for those of the Canton of Schwitz, who account it a capital crime for any person to embrace our religion, what they are might and main designing, and whose instigations have incensed them to resolutions of hostility against the orthodox religion, nobody can be ignorant who has not yet forgot that most detestable slaughter of our brethren in Piedmont. Wherefore, most beloved friends, what you were always wont to be, with God's assistance still continue magnanimous and resolute; suffer not your privileges, your confederacies, the liberty of your consciences, your religion itself, to be trampled under foot by the worshippers of idols.....do, for our part, be assured that we are no less anxious and solicitous for your welfare and prosperity than if this conflagration had broken forth in our Republic, or as if the axes of the Schwitz Canton had been sharpened for our necks, or that their swords had been drawn against our breasts, as indeed they were against the bosoms of all the reformed.....In the meantime, we cease not to implore the blessing of the Almighty upon all your counsels, and the protection of your most just cause, as well in war as in peace.—Your Lordships' and Worship's most affectionate, OLIVER, Protector of the Commonwealth of England."

OMICRON.

### THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—1. In your latest issue—nominally of September 4, really of to-day—you quote the absolutely false statement of the leading article of the *South London Mail*, of August 27—viz., that Mr. James John Taylor is "an active and eloquent champion of the Christian Evidence Society."

So far is this from the truth that, to the best of our remembrance, (1) Mr. Taylor has never had any connection with this Society. (2) We abhor his methods. (3) We consider them to be, "if anything, more truly injurious to Christian truth than the worst assaults of our opponents."

I quote from my letters, which ought to appear next Saturday, to the editors of the *South London Mail* and the *South London Observer and Camberwell and Peckham Times*. Further—and the editor is perfectly cognisant of my opinion—I consider the leading articles in the *South London Mail* of August 20 and 27 as distinct incitements to violence, and as reprehensible in other ways.

I must, however, add that, from all accounts, the language

of one lecturer, at any rate, of the Secular party at Peckham Rye has been frequently disgusting, and I hope that you are as ready to denounce such language used in defence of Secularism as my colleague and I are in severely reprehending any personalities uttered by any of our lecturers defending Christianity.

2. You are greatly in error—doubtless through misapprehension—as to what took place last Sunday afternoon at the Christian Evidence Society's platform in Victoria Park. Unless Mr. Cohen, who was speaking when our meeting broke up, greatly exceeded your other speakers in length, and was followed by another speaker, our meeting occupied as long a time as yours, for it commenced much earlier. We had five speakers, one of whom, Mr. Waldron, spoke twice.

Further, my own most careful and repeated observation of the audiences at the two meetings enables me to state, as a certain fact, that they were equal in size, except that towards the close of ours a very trifling number left our audience to join yours. Of course, after we concluded, very many more may have augmented yours; but, as I left immediately, I do not know.

As I have already twice written to one of our speakers condemning one of his utterances, I may add that I deeply regretted that you, with your knowledge, position, and ability, should have condescended to use the illustrations drawn from Cornish wrecking and the Archbishop's £15,000 a year.

C. LLOYD ENGSTRÖM

(Secretary, Christian Evidence Society).

September 1, 1898.

[Mr. Engström's letter calls for a few words in reply. We are glad that he disavows all connection with the noble Taylor; though, after all, that is his affair, not ours. The Secular speaker to whom Mr. Engström probably alludes has no connection with the National Secular Society. We do not propose to discuss the relative proportions of the Christian and Secular meetings in Victoria Park. With regard to the Cornish wrecking story, it was simply told as a story; and we cannot help it if Mr. Engström is no humorist—at any rate where religion is concerned. With regard to the Archbishop's £15,000 a year, we have to say that we shall refer to it as often as we please as an illustration of the beautiful consistency of many who preach "Blessed be ye poor." We do not expect Mr. Engström to like it, or to approve it; but, in the conduct of our own case, he can hardly expect us to take advice from the other side. All the Christian can expect from the *Freethinker*, and vice versa, is that he shall keep his temper and refrain from personalities.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

### CIRCULATING OUR JOURNAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have, for some little time, noticed your appeal in the *Freethinker* for money to enable you to advertise the *Freethinker*, and so help to increase its circulation. Now to me this does seem a very important matter, and well worthy the consideration of those Freethinkers who have the cause at heart, for I am sure there are thousands of men and women who have never yet heard that there is another side to this beautiful religion of Christ. At the same time the thought occurs: What do the poorer class of Freethinkers do in this matter? Some, I fear, do nothing, and care less. Many have been saved who take no thought of saving others. This class are not worth the saving. Others there are who still keep touch with the movement, who no doubt read their *Freethinker*, and then gently put it on one side without considering what may be done with it. To such I would point out my own plan, which is as follows: Generally I save up some half-dozen numbers in case some lost friend drops in to whom they may partly be the means of pointing out the light. Failing this, I take them out with me on to some bus, or train, or other public place, and give them away, and many laughs this has caused me, for it is no uncommon sight to see a man gaze at the title and drop the paper like a hot potato. Others, more liberal-minded, will thank you; and, more than once, I have been shaken by the hand, for one never can tell where he may meet a saved man or woman. To my mind, sir, this is a good way to spread the light, for well do I remember some twenty years ago seeing the *Freethinker* displayed in a shop window in Tunbridge Wells, a copy of which I bought, and which was the means towards my own saving. This method of giving away copies of the *Freethinker* may, at first sight, seem a trivial thing, but these small and trivial things do a great deal of good. We cannot all give money, for it is notorious that Freethinkers are mostly cursed by poverty. But we can all do something. Being saved ourselves, we should try to save others.

THOMAS DUNBAR.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

### LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (78 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Good Without God: or the Morality of Nature."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Rome, Dissent, and Reason."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): September 13, at 9, Monthly meeting.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen. Peckham Rye: 3.15, C. Cohen.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, E. White.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7, A lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, addressed by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Snell, Heaford, and Moss.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7.15, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Bidley-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Ethics of Christianity."

### COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, L. Bergmann, B.Sc., "Miracles."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. P. Ward—11, "The Law of Population"; 3 (Alexandra Park, near flagpole), "What will you Give in Place of Christianity? A Secularist's Answer"; 6.30, "Why Christianity Lasts."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Dyson, "Puzzles for Christians, by One of Them"; 8, Particulars as to excursion to Hipperholme on September 18.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—September 11, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—September 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 11 and 18, Manchester. October 2, Sheffield; 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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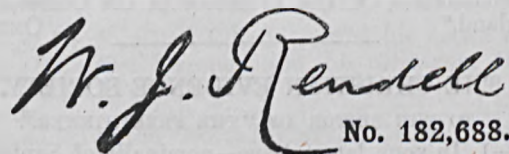
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