

# The Freethinker

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## HOLY RUSSIA.

INDEFATIGABLE, if not profound, Mr. W. T. Stead has projected a "Russian Library" for English readers, and the first volume was published as he left London for a tour of the capitals of Europe, in order to gather impressions as to the reception of the Czar's manifesto. This volume is entitled *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*, the said statesman being K. P. Pobyedonostseff, whose terrible name we cannot venture to repeat, partly for our own sake, and partly for that of the printer. He is Procurator of the Holy Synod of Russia, and is thus a representative person. His views and opinions are naturally interesting to thoughtful people in these Western islands, who will be glad to learn what is in the minds of those who sway the destinies of the vast, dim populations of the great Eastern autocracy. We have read something of what the more advanced Russians are thinking, and now we have an opportunity of hearing something from the conservative side. We are therefore thankful to Mr. Stead for issuing this volume. Nor must we omit a word of thanks to the translator, Mr. Robert Crozier Long, who seems to have done his work admirably. His pure and strong English is everywhere adapted to the peculiar tone—if we may so express it—of the original; a fact which is obvious to a discriminating reader, even if he happens to know not a single word of the Russian language.

Madame Olga Novikoff ("O. K.") contributes a Preface to this book. She tells us that her friend, the late Mr. Kinglake, the voluminous historian of the Crimean War, and author of that most charming book of travels called *Eothen*, once asked her to write on "The Fall of Parliamentary Government." Mr. Froude also urged her to do it, but the task was beyond her power. "But that difficult task," she says, "was undertaken by a Russian, who possesses all the scientific qualifications for such an examination." His work has been translated into German, French, and Italian, and is now translated into English. This gentleman was tutor to the late Czar, Alexander III., on whose death he was called to the high position he now occupies, which is "tantamount to that of Cabinet Minister." His name, according to Madame Novikoff, is familiar throughout Europe.

"It stands for Religion as opposed to Atheism, for Orthodoxy as opposed to Romanism on one hand and Protestantism on the other, and for Authority as opposed to Anarchy. In him all the irreligious forces of modern Nihilism, as well as the theological quacks, with their sham remedies for the ills of the soul, have long recognised the supreme embodiment of all the principles against which they wage unceasing war."

We have read this book through attentively, and we confess to a prepossession in the author's favor. He appears to be a high-minded man, who has thought out his own intellectual position; and he writes with a noticeable gravity, as though he always felt the weight of the issues at stake. Moreover, he is not a Conservative of the ultra-repressive school. We should say that he is a distinguished

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representative of the better side of the old-fashioned life of Russia. His criticism of Democracy is shrewd and sagacious. He hits many of its weak places with force and precision. He also points out that it has had a very short life as yet, that it is really on its trial, and that it need not shout too loudly until time and experience have demonstrated its value and durability. Madame Novikoff expects that English readers will be scandalised by his arguments and declarations. But we do not see why they should be. Russia is a very large and powerful nation; it is better to try to understand her than to indulge in mere hatred and denunciation; and the most diverse opinions on human life stand a better chance of coming to a final agreement under the ægis of truth, if they face each other in a spirit of intellectual hospitality.

Certainly this eminent Russian goes to the root of the matter. He sees very clearly that a sapping of the old religious principles is at the basis of the Western revolt against class privilege and unrepresentative authority. His opening chapter is therefore on Church and State. "However powerful the State may be," he says, "its power is based alone upon identity of religious profession with the people; the faith of the people sustains it; when discord once appears to weaken this identity, its foundations are sapped, its power dissolves away." Freethinkers everywhere demand the absolute separation of Church and State. But this writer holds that "the moral principle is never steadfast, and it loses its fundamental base, when it is bereft of the sanction of religion." And this cohesive force is lost to every State that cuts itself loose from all religious belief. The demand for a "Free Church in a Free State" embodies the principle of religious indifferentism, and really involves a contempt for religion as effete; whereas religion, and, above all, Christianity, is "the source of every right in political and social life, and of all true culture." Of course we need not pause to refute this; our readers are well aware of its fallacy. We proceed to the author's observation that, even when the State remains neutral, some particular Church will gain ascendancy by being more suitable to the general character of the people. The Church of England has gained, rather than lost, since religious freedom was granted to Catholics and Nonconformists, and "the Roman Catholic is rapidly becoming the dominant Church in America." Our author argues, therefore, that unless the State allies itself with the predominant Church, and uses it for political and social purposes, the predominant Church will endeavor to use the State for its purposes; and the result will be either a clerical tyranny or a revolution. Now, that there is something in this we do not deny. There is a real danger, but we think this writer exaggerates it. Relatively to each of the rest, one Church might be tremendously powerful; but a combination of all the rest against it might well suffice to keep it in check; and it must be remembered that religious equality always leads to the multiplication of sects.

Our author denies that freedom and equality are identical,

or even dependent upon each other; and this is the prelude to a smart attack on the New Democracy. Freedom, in the democratic sense of the word, he says, is the right to participate in the government of the State. You give every man a vote, and you imagine that all men are equal. But they are not. Each vote represents an insignificant fragment of power; by itself it is utterly useless; but "he who controls a number of these fragmentary forces is master of all power, and directs all decisions and dispositions." The real rulers in Democracy are the skilful manipulators of votes with their placemen. Their instruments are organisation, bribery, and what is called eloquence, which is often associated with ignorance and superficiality. Unlimited flattery of the crowd is universal. Parliaments are elected to represent the people, but they really represent a majority, and sometimes a bare majority. Votes in Parliament are not affected by speeches, which are part of the show intended to amuse the masses; the votes are absolutely commanded by the party managers. As for the press, our author holds it in utter contempt. Journalists are not even elected, they serve private proprietors of newspapers, individuals or syndicates; they may be ever so ignorant, ever so shallow, and ever so disreputable; it is enough if they can write in a taking way, and flatter the prejudices and passions of their readers. They are also irresponsible, and after they have fomented enmities, paved the way for revolutions, and brought about desolating wars, no one can bring them to book. A minister may be impeached, disgraced, and punished, but a journalist is as free as air, and has no fear of consequences. Often he is personally unknown, being merged in the identity of a journal, which is nothing to the world by a name.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## CHRISTIANITY AND FEAR.

THAT fear is a prominent feature in New Testament Christianity, and that it played an important part in its introduction and development, every impartial student of the Bible and of general history must admit. Both the Old and New Testaments contain many such passages as: "Fear God and keep his commandments," "It shall be well with them that fear God," "His mercy is on them that fear him." The dread of punishment is the predominating power in orthodoxy. If the Christian faith gives its believers the hope of heaven to buoy them up, it also gives them the fear of hell to cast them down. The one is quite as certain as the other. As soon as the child of a professed orthodox Christian begins to lisp at its mother's knee its young mind is impressed with the notion that there is a "Heaven to gain and a Hell to avoid," and frequently its happiness is marred by gloomy imaginings of a being who is represented as sowing the seeds of discord and unhappiness among society, who has frowns for those who smile through life, and whose chief business is to crush and awe the human mind with fear. In the case of the more intelligent and "advanced" professors of Christianity the fear of the devil and hell has ceased to trouble them. Still, the New Testament teaches these figments as realities. Popular preachers of the Spurgeon and Talmage type recognise this fact, hence their favorite topics are "hell fire," "the wrath of God," "everlasting torments," etc. These are the subjects selected by the leaders of the Salvation Army to frighten their victims into mental slavery. Fear is the Christians' "trump card," and by them it is played at almost every opportunity.

Dr. Schwartz remarks: "A religion without mystery and legend, which does not appeal to the sense of awe and wonder, would not long survive its birth, supposing it had by some accident sprung into existence" (*Church Gazette*, Sept. 24, 1898). The writer of the Acts (11-43) tells us that at the first batch of converts to Christianity "fear came upon every soul." Lecky says, in his *History of European*

*Morals*, that "Christianity floated into the Roman Empire on the wave of credulity that brought with it a long train of superstitions and legends." Further, he alleges Christianity "proclaimed with a thrilling power the immediate destruction of the globe—the glory of all its friends and the damnation of all its foes" (vol. i., pp. 397, 412). Mosheim, in writing of the fourth century, observes: "There is no doubt but that the victories of Constantine the Great, the fear of punishment, and the desire of pleasing this mighty conqueror and his imperial successors were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular persons, to embrace Christianity..... Multitudes were drawn to the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain and the fear of punishment" (*Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 91, 102). This is equally true of thousands of the adherents to the religion of the Cross to-day. Reason has little or no part in their decision to "embrace Christianity." They are rather influenced with fear inspired by reading in the New Testament that the time will arrive when "the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," etc. As if this were not enough to "harrow up thy soul," they are told in the "nightmare" of "St. John the divine" that at some future period, amidst the eruptions of mountains, the flashing of lightning, and the roar of thunder, while the stars are descending, the sun darkening, and the moon being converted into blood, the majority of mankind are to be exposed to the severest torture it is possible for the most barbarous nature to conceive.

We have been induced to deal with this subject through reading an article under the heading of "Fear in Religion" which appeared in the *Christian World*, dated Sept. 22, from the well-known pen of that able writer who signs himself "J. B." He is the principal contributor to our religious contemporary, and is, we believe, a retired clergyman. He would regard himself as one of the most "advanced Christians" of our time. In his article he admits that fear has predominated in the religions of the past. For instance, he writes: "Man's earliest impressions of religion carried with them undoubtedly a large element of terror. *Timor fecit Deos*, 'fear made the Gods,' says Statius, and the statement has its truth. The sense that he was in the hands of vast unknown powers, which might at any time become fatally hostile to him, was the impression on the savage which first drove him to prayer and sacrifice. The gleam of the lightning, the roar of the thunder, were to him certain indications of supernal wrath. In religion terror came first and love last. Everywhere in the early world, as in the primitive races which represent it to-day, the feeling seems to have been that man's fate was, in the hands of hostile rather than benevolent powers, and that his pressing business was to placate them, or protect himself from them. The Dyaks of to-day, after an illness, change their names so that the demon who sent it may not recognise them and continue his persecutions. Modern anthropology is full of similar illustrations. The later Pagan philosophy, both of Greece and Rome, reached what it conceived to be its highest achievement in ridding the mind of these fears. Lucian turns them into a jest; while perhaps the best-quoted line in all Roman literature describes 'the happy man' as 'he who could put all fears and inexorable fate under his feet.' But the element of fear which classic philosophy sought to eliminate came back into the world through Christianity." Just so; this is what we contend—namely, that Christianity is a religion of fear. But "J. B." will not admit that it is so—that is, as he understands the Christian faith. Yet he asks: "But what of the New Testament appeal to fear? Is not the book full of warning; is not hell in its list of contents; and have not those preachers and those Churches been most successful who have most insisted on this side of its teaching? If we answer these questions in the affirmative, as we find ourselves compelled to do, where is the reconciliation between such a position and those others we have just been urging?" The position that he had been urging is this: That the "supreme Gospel," offered to man in the New Testament, "is that God is Love. But if God is Love anywhere He is Love everywhere, as much in the place called hell as in the place called heaven; as much the moment after a man's death as the moment before it. To imagine it possible that because the breath is out of a man's

body the Providence which hitherto has cherished him should suddenly become his torturer, with mocking fiends for executioners, is as reasonable as to suppose that a mother, because her child has fallen asleep, should straightway cease to be a mother, and change into a murderess. The heart, which Schleiermacher says is the true theologian, will not permit such conclusions as these."

Now, if there be a God, we quite agree with what is here said about him, with one exception; but the opinion of "J. B." of what God should be is based upon the promptings of humanity, not the teachings of theology. The exception which we take is, that "God is love in the place called hell." No loving father, if he had the power to prevent it, would permit a hell to exist; yet "J. B." admits that the New Testament teaches that there is such a "place." According to this "supreme Gospel," its God is not simply a "loving Father," but in many instances a partial and cruel tyrant, who resorts to the demon fear to enforce his decrees. He has so arranged his plans that the few are saved and the many damned. "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii. 14). At the "last judgment" all nations are to be separated "one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," and those who are on the left hand will receive the "glad tidings," "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Matt. xxv. 41; viii. 12; Mark xvi. 16). Surely these heartless declarations do not prove that the New Testament portrays a "God of love."

The fact is, "J. B.," like many other "advanced Christians," retains the name, but puts an entirely new interpretation upon its meaning. This may be laudable as a human effort, but it is not logical upon the part of those who profess to accept the New Testament as the basis of their religious belief. That book is their authority, and to its teachings they must bow, or give up their profession and endorse a faith which is the outcome of intellectual development and cultivated humanity. One of the great advantages of Secularism is, that it has no angry God to fear, no hell to appal, and no devil to inflict torture. Its incentive to right conduct is unalloyed with the fear of everlasting misery. Its inducement to virtue rests upon the desire to alleviate human woe, to lessen the evils of society, and to aid the progress of the human family.

CHARLES WATTS.

### AFFIRMING GOD.

AN anonymous friend, interested, no doubt, in my spiritual welfare, sent me recently a small volume of lectures on *Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity*, accompanied by a courteous request that I would read the book at the earliest opportunity. The present article will be ample evidence that I have carried out the wish of the sender in this respect, although I am afraid the result of the reading has hardly produced the effect anticipated. The perusal of an opponent's argument seldom leaves a man in the same mental condition that it found him. If it does not modify his convictions, it usually confirms them, and in the present case the only result I can perceive is in the latter direction.

There is no need for me to dwell upon the many points Unitarians hold in common with Secularists, such as the rejection of revelation, of the divinity of Jesus, or of the belief in eternal damnation; the main bone of contention is contained in the opening essay by Mr. R. A. Armstrong, B.A., a Liverpool clergyman, of whom the local Secularists speak with the highest respect. Moreover, as this essay has been pencil-marked by the sender, I assume that it is this portion of the volume that I am specially desired to pay attention to.

Mr. Armstrong's essay bears the title, "The Affirmation of God," and its position is laid down in the following confession of faith:—

"I hold that by three distinct faculties, if only we will trust them, we may know God with the most unequivocal certainty of knowledge. First, by that law of our minds which compels us to postulate Will as the fundamental cause of phenomena; secondly, and more clearly, by His unmistakable voice in the declaration to us of the moral law; thirdly, and this most intimately of all, by His revelation of His love to us either through the

beautiful or sublime that meets our eye or ear, or immediately by the sheer speech of the Holy Spirit."

These assertions certainly lack nothing on the score of emphasis. It remains to be seen by what evidence they are supported.

Before taking these arguments in their order, however, there is one general observation called for, and one that has important bearings on the whole subject of Theism. Like most Theists, Mr. Armstrong lays stress upon the supposed universality of the belief in God, oblivious of the fact that what is universal is not the belief in deity, few or many, but the existence of a mental disposition which attributes to the phenomena around it inclinations and passions similar to its own. And this is a perfectly natural occurrence. Given the constitution of the human mind, and the development of religious beliefs at one stage of its development is an absolute necessity. One has only to note in the case of children how naturally and spontaneously they transfer their own feelings to the inanimate objects around them, petting them when pleased, chiding them when angry, to see how deeply engrained this fetishistic impulse is. Imagine the child grown to a man, but with the same mental outfit, and it requires but little reflection to understand how the savage came to read will and intelligence into the phenomena around him by the operation of the same causes that lead the child to give life and intelligence to its playthings.

Again, place a dozen savages in front of a phonograph, and each of them, destitute of any idea as to its real nature, will at once picture the machine as animated by a being similar to himself. Conceive the whole of the people in the same mental condition, face to face with the larger and more complex machinery of the universe, and again the same substantial conclusion is reached. The idea of God, therefore, like the belief in miracles or fairies, simply represents to the student stages in the long line of human development. It is not even the idea of God that is universal; all that is universal is the existence of a type of mind which inevitably reads itself into nature. The human mind, fundamentally the same under all conditions, placed in contact with the same general class of facts, naturally arrives at the same conclusions concerning them, without this substantial agreement being any proof of its accuracy.

Mr. Armstrong sees quite clearly that these primitive conclusions were inaccurate, and in addition points out that there has been a constant shrinkage in the area of the God idea (so to speak), side by side with the development of knowledge; but, instead of coming to any rational conclusion on the matter, contends that, while the form in which the idea was clothed was wrong, "the essence of the idea was right." But, to my mind, the "essence" of primitive theology was quite accurately expressed in the formulas that modern thought sees reason to reject. The conception of a spiritual power, as modern believers understand the term, was quite deficient in primitive man; it may even be contended that the idea of creation is a comparatively late growth. To him the world appears to have been just a bundle of forces similar to himself, only of a much larger pattern; and it is simply absurd of Theists to talk of what was "contained in primitive religious ideas" as though our savage ancestors were Hegelian metaphysicians, planning a universe, as the nigger made his wooden idol, out of his own head. All that we are justified in saying was contained in the early religious ideas is all that those who framed them saw there. But it is downright dishonest to take a formula, and, because it admits of having a wider meaning attached to it than its creators conceived, to say that *therefore* the larger thought was contained in it. It is nearly always possible to give a generalisation a much wider application than it originally bore; but this was not contained in it, it is something that we put in it, or find capable of expressing by the old order of words.

Apart from this criticism, Mr. Armstrong's first line of evidence is, it will be observed, the identity of all force with the will power of man. The tendency of science, he points out, is towards the recognition of but one force in the universe, with infinite combinations. But we are told: "I find a law quite unmistakable in my mind, that.....as I know that it is Will that causes my own personal deeds, the only phenomena behind which I can get to see the cause, so also can I conceive no other but that Will also causes all other motion, whatsoever be it.....the motion of the daisy petal, of the attracted steel, of the marshalled molecules of gas, of.....the meteor that shoots athwart the

sky, or the giant sun revolving in the remotest chambers of the heavens."

Now, as a matter of fact, we do not know that it is will that causes human actions. Will as an entity causing actions is a pure assumption, and an unjustifiable one to boot. All that we actually know on the subject is that certain actions occur; one or more motives prompt that action, and it is the motives that emerge in action that we characterise as will, not an entity dominating action like a Grand Pasha ordering his slaves. Will, apart from action or motives to action, Mr. Armstrong knows nothing at all about—whatever pious opinions he may entertain on the subject.

And still less justifiable is it to assume that two sets of phenomena so widely dissimilar as human conduct and the phenomena of external nature are produced by the same causes. It is justifiable to assume that Smith, Brown, and Robertson are animated by the same feelings that animate myself, because their conduct agrees in its general characteristics with my own; but "the marshalled molecules of gas," etc., etc., cannot possibly be ranked in the same class of facts as human actions, and, therefore, cannot reasonably be referred to the same causes for their production. Mr. Armstrong's logic on the subject is as defective as his psychology.

The second line of defence is that derived from the supposed authority of conscience. "We need not trace its history," he says, thus closing the only line of inquiry likely to be of any real value; "the command, the prohibition, the approval, the rebuke, so clearly bear the mark of communication from some other than ourself that all ages have so interpreted them. They have ever been felt to be the utterance of a law and its sanctions, not of the man's own making. Whence then?.....Irresistible impulse replies, 'From God.'" Well, if Mr. Armstrong's impulses lead him to that conclusion, I can only regret that they are not of a more governable character. For my part I have no such "irresistible impulse," and can only marvel that a man of education can, after the research of the last half-century, continue to speak of conscience in such a strain. It appears to me to be almost in the nature of a commonplace that what we call conscience is the result partly of hereditary tendencies, partly of the individual education and general environment. Far from conscience representing the voice of an infallible authority, it is one of the tasks of all educationalists to school and tutor the conscience of man to act in a proper manner. Conscience will lead one man to die for the establishment of a belief that another man will sacrifice himself to destroy; and both, if Mr. Armstrong is correct, will be obeying the "voice of God speaking through the human conscience." Besides, conscience for conscience, that of one man's is as good as that of another's, and my conscience, which does not convey to me any impression of God, is quite as valuable in evidence as the opposite testimony of a Unitarian preacher.

But all this, says Mr. Armstrong, is insufficient to prove God; there is required in addition the perception of the presence of love in the universe. "The voices of the rosebud in the hedge, of the stream that gurgles down the shadowy vale, the mountain peak that throws back from its snowy crest the roseate light of the declining sun,.....of the little birds that make air tremulous with their song,.....the voices of all these carry knowledge that love is the law by which all things move." And again: "God sends the sunlight glancing about your hair, He moves the energising blood through the channels of your body, He ripens each individual grain that goes to make the food you eat.....All this we know by strictest science."

Now the absurdity of this style of argument is best shown by reversing the terms, thus: The voice of such vegetable poisons that madden and destroy human life, the roar of the swollen torrent, which, coming like a thief in the night, sweeps away hundreds of families in the twinkling of an eye; the frowning mountain ready to hurl from its side the mighty avalanche which sweeps all before it, or the volcanic outburst that buries cities in its awful grip; the howls of wild beasts eager to devour, or the groans of human agony that make the air vibrate with its throbs of pain—the voices of all these carry knowledge that malignity is the law by which all things move. God sends the flames of fever dancing through your blood, He moves the deadly poison with lightning speed through the channels of your body, He destroys the harvest with his storms and

blights it with his heat, and thus robs men, women, and children of the wherewithal to live. All this we know by strictest science.

Of course it will be said that this is a one-sided picture, but is it more so than Mr. Armstrong's? Can anyone tell me why we should not credit God—if God there be—with the bad in the world as well as praise him for the good? Even Professor Knight, in that curiously contradictory volume of his, *Aspects of Theism*, is cute enough to admit that "If the constructor of the universe designed anything by the agency he has established, he must have designed all the results that actually emerge.....If, therefore, the inference of benevolence is valid, the inference of malevolence is at least equally valid; and, as equal and opposite, the one notion destroys the other." Mr. Armstrong does not even attempt to deal with the question of evil in the world; he passes it by altogether, as though it had no bearing upon the point at issue, or was not important enough to merit serious discussion.

In brief, Mr. Armstrong's "Affirmation of God" is an affirmation pure and simple. Anything in the nature of a really serious argument upon the subject is conspicuous by its absence. His idea of God is just upon all fours with that of the orthodox believer, and is not even stated with the force present in many orthodox treatises. And the crowning absurdity of his whole position is this: he sees clearly enough the primitive mental condition in which this idea originated; he sees also that there has been a constant weakening of it in the face of advancing knowledge; he rejects, as we all reject, the conception of the world entertained by early man, and upon which religions were founded; the premises are rejected as untenable, the conclusions are retained as genuine; and thus we are brought face to face with the spectacle of an educated man championing a belief which, in its essence, represents a set of conclusions derived from data that are confessedly erroneous.

C. COHEN.

#### JEREMY TAYLOR'S "LIBERTY OF PROPHECYING."

WHILE Milton's *Areopagitica* was stirring the public mind, Jeremy Taylor was meditating his *Liberty of Prophecying*. This eloquent theologian was a clergyman of the Church of England. Of all her really great preachers (we except Butler as not specially claiming that title) he was the only one who attained to the dignity of a Bishop, and it is noteworthy that his bishopric was one of the poorest in the kingdom. Thus has our State Church rewarded its noblest sons, whose genius is now the only thing that reflects any glory upon her history! Taylor's mind was certainly not as strong as Milton's, nor do we ever, in all his multitudinous pages, meet with one of those spirit-stirring passages that move us like the high, clear notes of a clarion. He was more impetuous and diffuse; he lacked the poet's sense of form and logic; and without a controlling logic the finest style is impossible. Perhaps the best comparison between Milton and Taylor has been furnished by Coleridge, than whom there is, on the whole, no saner and surer critic:—

"Milton, austere, condensed, imaginative, supporting his truth by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and by distinct visual representations, and in the same spirit overwhelming what he deemed falsehood by moral denunciation and a succession of pictures appalling or repulsive. In his prose, so many metaphors, so many allegorical miniatures. Taylor, eminently discursive, accumulative, and (to use one of his own words) agglomerative; still more rich in images than Milton himself, but images of fancy, and presented to the common and passive eye, rather than to the eye of the imagination. Whether supporting or assailing, he makes his way either by argument or by appeals to the affections, unsurpassed even by the schoolmen in subtlety, agility, and logic wit, and unrivalled by the most rhetorical of the fathers in the copiousness and vividness of his expressions and illustrations. Here words that convey feelings, and words that flash images, and words of abstract notion, flow together, and whirl and rush onward like a stream, at once rapid and full of eddies; and yet still interfused here and there, we see a tongue or islet of smooth water, with some picture in it of earth or sky, landscape or living group of quiet beauty."\*

\* S. T. Coleridge, Preface to *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*.

After this superb criticism, which will be best appreciated by those who are best acquainted with the writers who are its subject, it only remains to say that Taylor was a living encyclopædia of book-learning. His quotations, references, and allusions are fetched from all points of the compass.

Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying* was published in 1647, nearly three years after Milton's *Areopagitica*. It was evidently written during the early troubles of the Civil War. In his dedication to Lord Hatton, Taylor says: "In the great storm, which hath dashed the vessel of the Church all in pieces, I have been cast upon the coast of Wales." He goes on to say that there also he "broke cable and lost anchor." This has been taken to mean that he suffered imprisonment, and from other remarks it has been inferred that his life was endangered; but these suppositions may be regarded as groundless, for there is not a scrap of positive evidence to support them. It is not likely that Taylor would have left the fact of his imprisonment, if it were a fact, to remain in uncertainty of obscurity after the Restoration, when it would have spoken in his favor to the spiritual and temporal powers. This matter is not so unimportant as it seems, for to some extent it affects the question of Taylor's sincerity. His enemies have said that his plea for toleration was prompted partly by his own sense of peril, and if the fact is denied there is no need to confute the inference. His other motive is, by the same parties, alleged to have been a desire to gain breathing-room for episcopacy. Orme, in his *Life of Owen*, says Taylor "was then pleading for toleration to episcopacy. With the return of monarchy, Taylor emerged from obscurity, wrote no more on the 'Liberty of Prophesying,' and was made a member of the Privy Council of Charles II., from which all the persecuting edicts against the poor Non-conformists proceeded." But Bishop Heber points out that Taylor was a member of the *Irish Privy Council*, that "there is no reason to suppose that he took part in the measures of any administration," and that the administration of Ireland did not persecute the Dissenters. Milton has said of himself that "in his whole life he never spoke against a man even that his skin might be grazed," and we have no doubt that Taylor could have said the same with equal truth.

The *Liberty of Prophesying* was, according to Taylor, written with a scanty supply of books at hands for reference; but either the treatise does not bear him out, or his memory was prodigious. Hallam says that the work was "the first famous plea, in this country, for tolerance in religion, on a comprehensive basis and on deep-seated foundations."\* It was certainly a remarkable composition from the pen of one who had been a friend of Laud, the arch-persecutor of the Puritans. We must also remember that Protestants believed in persecution as heartily as Catholics, only differing from them as to who should be its victims. So late as 1632 the Council of Geneva was so little ashamed of the murder of Servetus that it actually condemned Nicholas Antoine to be strangled and burnt for denying the Trinity. Even our good-natured Church historian, Thomas Fuller, still later in 1650, speaks disapprovingly of the popular sympathy with Legate and Wightman, who were burned by James I. in 1612. Still later than that, Cromwell's puritan parliament busied itself day after day with the question whether James Nayler should be branded and mutilated or burnt, until the great Protector, impatient at their silly bigotry, sent them packing.

To understand Taylor's position we should first glance at his limitations. Milton would not shield from civil penalties what was clearly "against the faith," nor would Taylor. "Whatsoever," he says, "is against the foundation of faith, or contrary to good life and the laws of obedience, or destructive to human society and the public and just interests of bodies politic, is out of the limits of my question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration; so that I allow no indifferency, nor any countenance to those religions whose principles destroy government, nor to those religions, if there be any such, that teach ill life." Briefly, then, it may be said that Taylor's liberty of prophesying meant the liberty of a private interpretation of Scripture within the lines of the Apostles' Creed. He stands up for "fundamental articles," but in everything else he demands freedom.

Taylor's reasonings, however, carry him a good deal further. He is a signal proof that when a man slips from

Popery he is on a declining plane to the bottomless pit of individual liberty. He laughs at those "empirics, that would cut off a man's head if they see but a wart upon his cheek, or a dimple upon his chin, or any lines in his face to distinguish him from another man." Like Milton, he points out that behind all persecution is the assumption of infallibility. Of a victim of bigotry he shrewdly observes: "If he be killed, he is certainly killed; but if he be called a heretic, it is not so certain that he is a heretic." He urges likewise the important truth, which all bigots lose sight of, that "there are, and ever were, and ever will be, variety of opinions, because there is variety of human understandings, and uncertainty in things." Elsewhere he says: "If you bid me follow your doctrine, you must tell me why; and perhaps when you have, I am not able to judge; or if I be as able as other people are, yet, when I have judged, I may be deceived too, and so may you, or any man else you bid me follow."

*Uncertainty* plays a large part in Taylor's reasoning, and he recurs to it with great frequency. Scripture contains "mysteries," there are "so many copies with infinite varieties of reading," and "a various interpunction, a parenthesis, a letter, an accent, may much alter the sense." Then there are literal senses and spiritual senses, tropes, metonymies, ironies, hyperboles, and so much depends on circumstances! Here Taylor was on slippery ground, for the reply was obvious: "If Scripture is so dark and perplexing, how can it be a guide for plain men, and how can they collect from it the true articles of faith?" Taylor asserts that "the articles of the creed are clearly and plainly set down." But those articles were drawn up by the Church, and every one of them has been denied on the authority of Scripture. Coleridge saw Taylor's dilemma clearly. "*The Liberty of Prophesying*," he says, "is a work of wonderful eloquence and skill; but if we believe the argument, what do we come to? Why to nothing more or less than this, that—so much can be said for every opinion and sect,—so impossible is it to settle anything by reasoning or authority of Scripture,—we must appeal to some positive jurisdiction on earth."\* In other words, Taylor's argument leads either to popery or freedom. That he inclined to the latter speaks well for his natural tendency.

In his sixteenth section Taylor holds that "to tolerate is not to persecute," and when the matter is stated so simply he thinks it clear that princes (that is, governments) may "tolerate divers persuasions." He reduces the question, in fact, to one of politics, and insists that before heretics are molested it should be clear that "either themselves or their doctrines do really, and without color or feigned pretext, disturb the public peace." He even extends this toleration to Anabaptists on the one side and Roman Catholics on the other. In so doing, he really gives up the whole principle of persecution, which is entirely theological. Suppressing an association, not for its opinions, but because its policy endangers the public peace, may be wrong or foolish in the particular case, but it has nothing to do with the spirit of religious bigotry, the essence of which is compelling others to believe, or profess, what you believe yourself, and making their obstinacy a sin against God.

Curiously, while the *Liberty of Prophesying* came from a Churchman, the answer to it came from a Presbyterian. Samuel Rutherford—Milton's "Scotch what-d'-ye-call"—Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrew's, replied with *A Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience*. He argued that ecclesiastical authorities have a divine commission to punish heretics, even with death. To give a man liberty of conscience is to say that conscience is his guide, which is to put conscience in the place of God and the Bible. God's ministers declare truth, and the magistrates must help them to enforce it; and as heretics are murderers of souls, the Church must denounce them, and the magistrates must not suffer them to escape. Rutherford urges that toleration is without authority in the Old or the New Testament. As for the uncertainty of Scripture, he says that God has watched over his word, and suffered no error in copying or translating to affect its infallibility. Rutherford was a typical Scotch Presbyterian. That body wanted no bishops, but every minister was to be a pope. They took to fighting, and Cromwell took the conceit out of them. Since then Time has arbitrated in the controversy, and given a verdict against Samuel Rutherford and all his tribe.

G. W. FOOTE.

\* *Literature of Europe*, vol. ii., p. 344.

\* *Table Talk* (Murray ed.), p. 92.

## ADDRESS TO THE MAKER.

*(With apologies to Burns.)*

Oh God, the universal beak,  
Who doth command us all to seek  
The laws of a creative freak  
With Gospel crammed,  
And on whose carpet I shall speak,  
And p'rhaps be damned.

This faithful missive I indite  
To learn who did that Bible write ;  
Also, I must confess, to spite  
The gospel crew.  
I half suspect that they are quite  
Unknown to you.

Oh sole purveyor of genuine grace,  
And boss of every blessed race ;  
For years a judge without a case ;  
Celestial Winger,  
Is everything we see the trace  
O' your fat finger ?

I many a day and night did search  
To find where such a chap could perch,  
And often took the risk of birch  
Because I found  
The reasons why I went to church  
Were far from sound.

Say, did you once yourself betray  
In a disgusting human way,  
Upon a mountain top one day,  
To Holy Moses,  
And caused a race to fast and pray,  
And wear big noses ?

And did you mean good folk to rave  
From early manhood to the grave,  
About a thing which you could save  
With someone's gore ;  
And pinched your poor created slave  
With priestly lore ?

And did old charming Nicky sleek,  
At Eve and Adam have a peep ?  
The Book says how it made you weep  
To see the ruin.  
Good God ! you must have been asleep  
While it was brewin'.

When I was young and chicken-hearted,  
They told me how all things had started,  
And where the dead would all be quartered.  
With stiffened hairs,  
I often meet with souls departed,  
Upon our stairs.

I feared that varmint Nicholas,  
And all the gentry of his class.  
One night I dreamt that they would pass,  
All crying death ;  
And almost smelt the hellish gas  
Of Nicky's breath.

Is it a fact, most holy joker,  
That you retain that sturdy stoker,  
Whose combination fork and poker  
Makes savory food  
Of every infidel invoker  
Of heaven's brood ?

But there, I thought you were a tender,  
Good, kind old love-and-mercy blender.  
Is it because you have no gender,  
And in that oven  
Cook souls that will not homage render  
To things unproven ?

Old man, say is it all a cram  
'Bout Adam, Eve, and Abraham ?  
And Noah, Moses, David, Sam—  
Do they speak true ?  
They've spread such thick, suspicious jam  
All over you.

A. S. V.

## A Lonesome Place.

Mamma—"It is very naughty to tell lies, Eva. People who do so don't go to heaven."  
Eva—"Did you ever tell a lie, mamma ?"  
Mamma—"No, dear, never."  
Eva—"Won't you be fearful lonely in heaven, mamma, with only George Washington ?"—*Osweyo Daily Palladium.*

## THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held at the Society's offices on Thursday, September 29 (the President in the chair). Present :—Messrs. E. Bater, C. Cohen, R. Forder, T. Gorniot, S. Hartmann, C. Watts, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. W. Quay, C. Quinton, M. Loafer, W. Leate, B. Munton, H. Brown (Auditor), and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting and those of the sub-committee were read and confirmed, and the cash statement was received.

The Secretary, on behalf of the Committee, reported a highly successful Children's Excursion, and hoped to be in a position by next meeting to announce that the donations had covered the expenditure.

The President reported upon the demonstrations he had recently arranged in Victoria, Finsbury, Regent's, and Hyde Parks, Clerkenwell Green, and Peckham Rye. Notwithstanding the fact that counter demonstrations had been got up by our opponents, who conducted their meetings after the fashion of showmen, and the impossibility of making collections (in consequence of park regulations) at two of the best meeting places, it was gratifying to learn that the collections amounted to £6 8s. In addition to giving his own services at each meeting, the President made up the amount required to pay the lecturers their usual fees.

On the motion of Mr. Bater, seconded by Mr. Gorniot, it was resolved to issue a Secular Almanack for 1899 ; and at the request of the meeting Mr. Foote kindly undertook the editorial responsibility.

Mr. Forder reported a large out-door meeting, addressed by himself and local friends, in Yarmouth recently. Much interest had been evoked, and it was suggested that Mr. Forder should be asked to revisit that town, on behalf of the Propaganda Committee, at an early date.

Mr. Heaford called attention to the disorderly behavior of a certain section of Christian opponents on Peckham Rye. The general opinion, after discussion, was that the matter was one to be dealt with by the Camberwell Branch, unless application be made to the Executive for assistance.

The meeting then adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

## ACID DROPS.

"FATHER" Black, at the Church Congress, protested against Bishop Barry being allowed to speak. His protest ran as follows : " My Lord Bishop Barry has recently, by the hands of his curate, married in the church of St. James, Piccadilly, a person whose canonical spouse is living. Publicly called upon to explain or apologise, he has done neither. As a Churchman, I therefore protest against his being heard here, because he has set aside the morality of the Church of which he is an officer. As an Englishman, I protest, in spite of the widespread dishonor of the times which lends countenance to these things, against his speaking here, because he has betrayed the trust he was pledged to fulfil. It is, I maintain, indecent that Bishop Barry should come forward to tell the Churchmen of England their duty, and your lordship will, I trust, refuse him a hearing."

This is a protest against a clergyman of the Church of England for obeying the law of England, and it shows what arrogance prevails in High Church circles. However, it came to nothing. The president took no notice of it, and Bishop Barry went on with his address. The more level heads in the Church know very well what must be the result of a revolt of the parsons against the laws enacted by Parliament.

Mr. George Hawkins, a working-man speaker at one of the Bradford meetings in connection with the Church Congress, denounced the immoral practices of manufacturers, and even complained that "Bibles and Prayer Books were manufactured under unfair conditions." This is a well-known fact, and the clergy should get it altered before they lecture the world at large on the "evils of commercialism."

What awful idiocy often passes in the name of religion ! We notice in the *Cork Constitution* a report of the opening meeting of the Cork Convention for the Deepening of Spiritual Life. One of the speakers was the Rev. George Saltau. This gentleman ought to take the first prize for imbecility in any free and open competition. By way of illustrating the necessity of belief and obedience, he told a story of a young lady in Australia who was fastening a silver buckle to her waistband on Sunday morning, when she distinctly heard the voice of the Lord say : " Don't wear that buckle." Still she wore it, and "all the former brightness of her life left her." Fancy this sort of thing being supposed to tend towards the deepening of spiritual life !

After all, though, it is worthy of the creed which damns most of the human race because Eve ate that apple.

Colonel Picquart is a prisoner in the hands of the French military party, and their notion of justice is that he shall be subjected, before trial, to the most infamous mental torture, and even be refused access to his legal adviser. He is kept *au secret*—in other words, only his enemies and persecutors are permitted to approach him. That is the penalty he has to pay for his sympathy with the unfortunate Dreyfus.

Now look on another picture. Madame Paulmier, who is an Anti-Dreyfusard deputy's wife, feels aggrieved at something that appeared in the *Lanterne*, which is in favor of justice to the prisoner on the Devil's Island. Her husband being away, she resolves to act in his stead; so she goes to the *Lanterne* office and asks to see the editor, M. Millerand. He not being in, she waits for a while, and then to save time shoots M. Ollivier, on the principle that she was bound to put bullets into somebody. Her victim had absolutely nothing to do with the obnoxious article; neither, for that matter, had M. Millerand. The writer was another person altogether, M. Henri Turot. Nothing could well be more recklessly wicked than this woman's conduct. M. Ollivier, however, although he has suffered terrible agony, has not died, and Madame Paulmier is liberated from custody. She is a woman, and that covers a multitude of sins—in Paris. Moreover, she is an Anti-Dreyfusard, and that covers anything.

The *New York Observer* declares that Admiral Cervera was beaten, and his fleet annihilated, because he dashed out of Santiago harbor on a Sunday. This pious journal should explain how Admiral Dewey was allowed to smash the Spanish fleet at Manila. That happened on Sunday.

It is not now necessary to go to France to get the benefit of the Lourdes miracles. The pope has set up a Lourdes church in Brooklyn, and states that all who go there will get as much good out of their pilgrimage as though they were to visit the original shrine; which is probably true.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

Mr. Plowden, one of the London magistrates, quite distinguished himself the other day in connection with the case of a "conscientious objector" under the New Vaccination Act. The applicant confessed, under magisterial cross-examination, that he had been vaccinated himself, and it had done him no harm. Thereupon he was told that his objection was not "a sincere and conscientious one," because his opinion was "formed from pamphlets and what he had been told." According to this grave and reverend decision, we have no right to trust to any knowledge but what we have gathered personally. It would be neither sincere nor conscientious to object to prussic acid, for instance, unless we had tried it and found it injurious. This is the sort of thing that makes one echo the exclamation that "the law's a hass."

Who wrote the Bible? This question was put recently by the headmaster in a Birmingham Board school, the boys being provided with slips of paper on which to write their replies. One boy answered "David," another "Shakespeare," and another "Mr. Jowett." A fourth answer was positively sublime. The boy who gave it wrote down "Mr. Cadbury." This gentleman is the famous cocoa manufacturer, whose works are in the locality. He is a well-advertised Christian philanthropist, and we imagine he has now reached the height of his ambition.

Those schoolboys didn't know who wrote the Bible. But then who does? Their elders only make guesses after all. They laugh at the boys, but hav'n't the sense to laugh at themselves.

Mr. Cadbury had quite as much to do as Moses with the authorship of the Pentateuch. Mr. Jowett had as much to do as David with the authorship of the Psalms. Shakespeare had as much to do as Solomon with the authorship of the Song of Songs. Those schoolboys at Birmingham are not a bit more mixed than the orthodox divines of the whole Christian world.

"Commandant" Booth has been gaining a reputation for wit at Melbourne. By way of settling his critics he told a story of a tailor and a clergyman. Mr. Snip criticised Mr. Parson, and the latter turned the tables on his opponent. "Do you consider yourself a skilled tailor?" he asked. "Certainly," was the reply. "Then can you tell me," the parson asked, "how much cloth it would take to make a suit for the angel Gabriel, when he stands with one foot on the sea and the other on the dry land and proclaims that Time shall be no more?" Of course the tailor gave it up, and the man of God said: "Be master of your own trade before you criticise mine."

This is about the silliest "witticism" we ever heard of. The parson's conundrum was a ridiculous one. Any tailor at large could deal with it easily. If this is "Commandant" Booth's best effort, we shudder to think of his inferior performances.

Mrs. Scott, the wife of a local preacher, at Knockin, near Oswestry, went crazy, and cut the throats of all her four children. Of course there is nothing miraculous in this sad occurrence. We merely wish to remark that thousands of good Christians would have shaken their heads if it had happened in a Secularist household. Had the wife of a Secular lecturer killed her four children, and then tried to take her own life, it would have been looked upon as a "judgment," or as a sign of the unhappiness induced by Freethought principles.

Rev. William Backhouse Gowan, vicar of Ruyton of the Eleven Towns, and his wife, Isabella Gowan, were charged at Baschurch Petty Sessions with ill-treating and neglecting their orphan nieces aged twelve and nine. Evidence was given that the children were clothed in filthy rags covered with vermin, and frequently kept without food. Two girls stated that the defendants thrashed the poor things with hunting crops and brooms, and that Mrs. Gowan had stripped them naked after beating them, while the vicar had kicked them. Defendants' coachman said the children were always screaming "Murder," and as they complained that they were starving he often supplied them with food. The vicar and his wife were both committed for trial, bail being allowed.

This prosecution is being conducted by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Mr. Waugh, the Society's secretary, once said that Secularist parents were the worst ill-users of children, an odious and ridiculous falsehood which he afterwards corrected in a speech at Leeds. As a matter of fact—indeed he admitted it—some of the very worst culprits the Society had to deal with were persons of well-known piety.

Dr. Parker says that if he were rich enough he would employ a band of men to thrash wife-beaters. We do not know that this would improve matters, but if castigation were administered it might better be left to the women.

A correspondent of *Modern Society*, replying to Mr. Joseph Collinson, of the Humanitarian League, defends flogging as the best form of punishment for boys, and of course for certain criminals. "Why," he exclaims, "even Christ himself had to resort to corporal punishment." Yes, and he got a dose of it himself before his crucifixion. We always thought this a cruelty, but we live and learn, and now we see it was only a mistaken kindness.

Joseph Wilman appeared at the Watford Police-court to answer a charge of indecently assaulting certain little girls, and was committed for trial. His counsel dwelt at great length on his religious principles, his connection with a Baptist chapel in Mare-street, Hackney, and his work for Sunday schools. The magistrates, however, wanted substantial bail.

A few years ago an article of Mr. Foote's in the *Freethinker* was entitled "Fried Souls." Something nearly as wicked appeared, through the carelessness or devilry of the printers, in the program of the Baptist Missionary Society. The book used at the recent conferences gave a line of a well-known hymn as follows:—"Let our whole sole an offering be." There was no footnote to say whether it was to be fried or boiled.

The *Congregationalist* is responsible for the story that a Church clergyman got up an elaborate program for a special service, and that one line of a hymn, "Jesus reigns and heaven rejoices," got printed as "Jesus resigns and heaven rejoices"—which, to our mind, is a decided improvement.

The editor of the *South London Mail* is a curious person. Without the slightest provocation he wrote an article against Secularism and Secularists, stuffed with the most abusive epithets, and inciting the orthodox ruffianism of South London to mob the Freethought speakers on Peckham Rye; and because we replied to him he complains of "acrimonious personal attacks." This gentleman—if he is entitled to that designation, which some who know him regard as rather doubtful—crows over the "defeat" of the Secularists, whom he imagines to have been driven forever from the Rye. Poor, deluded mortal! The Secularists held their meeting on the Rye as usual last Sunday, in spite of all the efforts of the *Mail's* Hooligans.

It would serve this skulking scoundrel right if some South London Freethinker were to give him a sound thrashing. He openly incites fanatical Christians and sensation-seeking Hooligans to go and break up the Secular meetings

on Peckham Rye, but he takes care to keep out of the rumpus himself. Why, however, should he escape? Why should he not have a taste of the forcible argument which he recommends for the Secularists? Perhaps it has not occurred to him that physical energy can be used on both sides. If he felt it he might be more careful.

Bishop Moorhouse, of Manchester, demolished Materialism to the satisfaction of his Church Congress audience. He said it was "a desolating theory," which dethrones God and depopulates heaven. But that is only his little joke. What his lordship means is that it dethrones the parson and depopulates the churches.

The vicar of Aston, in Shropshire, the Rev. G. B. Brown, is learning, or should be learning, a much-wanted lesson. Owing to his arbitrary treatment of the local schoolmaster, Mr. J. Plant, the villagers are in revolt against their parson, whose school and church are both half deserted, while ample support is given to the new school opened by Mr. Plant with the sanction of the Inspectors. It is high time that some of these rural God Almightyies were taught that they are living in a democratic age, to which they will have to adjust themselves or fare worse.

Major Stuart Wortley, who was at Omdurman, is back in England, and has been speaking at a cricket club dinner. He speaks highly, in a general way, of the native troops under his command, but he says that they "thought the perfection of the fighting was to execute a war dance and then fire in the air, their creed being that God would direct the bullets." Unfortunately some of the bullets got directed too near to their commander, who had to tell them that, while he did not mind being shot by the enemy, he decidedly objected to being shot by his own men. That view of the case appears to have damped their piety and made them more practical.

There is a wicked legend (the *Outlook* says) that while at Peterborough Mrs. Creighton once wrote to a clergyman regretting that the Bishop could not come for a confirmation, but promising that she would come instead! More authentic is the story, already related in the *Outlook*, that, after addressing a meeting of working-class mothers on their home duties, Mrs. Creighton overheard one of them thus commenting to her gossip: "Yes, 'twas all very fine; she's a nice lady and a first-class speaker. But I should like to ask her this: What does she do when old Creighton comes home drunk?" It is also authentic that this tale was told to a very serious clergyman of the London diocese. His face grew very long, and he asked in sepulchral tones, "But does the Bishop ever come home —?"

It is said that the late Emperor of China, who has disappeared from this earthly scene in true oriental fashion, had been worked upon by Christian missionaries, and was so far gone that he put the works of Confucius upon the fire. If this be true, it is a pity that he did not know that this Christian method of dealing with heathen writings has fallen out of use in Europe. It was common enough two hundred years ago, but the triumph of liberal ideas has made a wonderful difference. The clergy are now obliged to wait till the next life for the fire-cure of heresy.

The cremated remains of Mrs. Lynn Linton, novelist and Freethinker, were buried in Crosthwaite Churchyard. Canon Rawnsley, the vicar—the gentleman who is always writing sonnets—admitted that she had not a very "firm" belief in a future life, but he said that she had now acquired the "larger knowledge," and so he left her "with a sure and certain hope of the resurrection." How good of him! The dead lady's friends ought to be very grateful.

When we saw the headline in the newspapers of "A Salvationist in Flames" we thought of the story told of Talleyrand. When that old diplomatist and sinner was dying amidst great suffering, a friend called and asked him how he was getting on. "Oh," he exclaimed, "I am in hell," and his friend quietly said, "Deja?" which may be translated as "Already?" But when we read the paragraph we found it was not so bad as that. It was only the case of a Salvationist at Seaham Harbor who was carrying a paraffin lamp on a pole, and the lamp exploded and set fire to his hair. Now he knows what burning feels like he may be inclined to doubt the doctrine of everlasting fire.

The latest Zionist crank hails from a most unexpected quarter. Former adherents have been found in the army, in the ranks of literature, and among men of science; but this one is a "policeman." Who would have thought it?—suspected it is perhaps the more appropriate word! Mr. Robert Anderson, of Scotland Yard, regards the return of the "Ebrew Jews" to Palestine as a dead certainty, and the partition of the "Roman" (*sic*) Empire as one of the most prominent political events of the future.

Detective Sweeney's superior "orficer" is not a raw recruit to the study of prophecy, which we all know finds a man mad or leaves him so. It has been his hobby for years. In fact, he has recently published an exegesis on the Book of Daniel, and his *Coming Prince: the Last Great Monarch of Christendom*, produced ten years since, was on the same silly subject. From a careful perusal of these two fascinating volumes we can arrive at no other conclusion than that the "coming prince" will be our old friend Detective Sweeney. Hallelujah!

A contributor to our columns recently contended that the Bible was a work of humor. There must be something funny about it, otherwise we should not have a burlesque with the title of "The Land of Nod."

*Appropos* of the Emperor's visit to Jerusalem, there has been trouble about the rival Gardens of Gethsemane. The proprietors both want the imperial patronage, so the man who owns the more recent *real* Garden, knowing that the trees look rather young, has gone to great expense to outstrip his rival. He has had some *genuine old* trees transplanted, and had the aged leaves stitched on to prevent them falling off, and the branches carefully nailed together. The leaves have also been painted an appropriate green, and the trunks made to correspond. Real fruit would have been introduced, but the natives have unconventional ideas about private property. Wooden fruit has therefore been made in Germany. Hoch! Hoch!

Dr. Theodor Herzl, of Vienna, the Zionist leader, addressed a big crowd of East-end Jews on Monday evening. He laughed to scorn the idea that the children of Israel were scattered amongst the nations for religious reasons, and prophesied that the exodus to Palestine would soon begin in earnest. It appears, however, that it is only the poorer Jews who are allured by the prospect of settling down in the Holy Land. The rich and well-to-do seem more inclined to tarry amongst the flesh-pots of Egypt. They prefer London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna to a one-horse city like Jerusalem.

The true blue Protestants have had quite a festival at a Ritualist church in Ballymacarrett, Belfast. They broke the windows with stones, burst open the vestry door, and trampled the vestments under foot. How they love one another!

Mr. Charles Cook, who directs the Sunday evening services at the Metropolitan Theatre, Edgware-road, illustrated the phrase "Christ in me" in this way. A boy put a poker in the fire, and when it was red-hot he exclaimed: "See, the poker in the fire; the fire in the poker." This is called bringing it down to the general intelligence, and it shows what the general intelligence comes to under the influence of Christian superstition. It is a pity that Mr. Cook is not preaching to the Soudanese, who would probably laugh at his illustration, and set him thinking—perhaps for the first time in his life.

## TALMAGE.

A VOLLEY voluminous constantly pours  
From the mighty expanse of his jaw;  
At all elevations his oracle soars,  
And unto himself he's a law.  
The weather's no bar to his cherished pursuits,  
He is at it in rain and in drought.  
The aim doesn't count when he's ready to shoot—  
The man with the seven-inch mouth.

A confident gleam always brightens his eye  
As he ruthlessly blazes away,  
Nor reckons on who, 'midst projectiles that fly,  
May be hit by a wild ricochet.  
The thirteen-inch cannon is silent at last  
In the Orient isle and the south;  
But the era reverberant never is past  
For the man with the seven-inch mouth.

—New York "Truthseeker."

## Science and Faith.

An agitated mother made her way to the Headmaster of a Board school in one of our large Northern towns. "My James must leave your school at once," said she. "Why, madam?" "Why, that new-fangled science stuff yer teachin' 'im of is makin' a hinfiddle of 'im." "Indeed!" "Well, it was only last night he was saying as that it wasn't God who made the Coral Islands—it was insects!"



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 9, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester; at 11, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 6.30, "The Meaning of Death."

October 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 9, Athenæum Hall, London. November 20, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carnia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. H. KOHN.—No doubt the advertisement in the *Mail* will do good. Pleased to hear that one result is a fresh accession of members to the nearest N. S. S. Branches.

C. E. S.—Thanks.

G. CRUDDAS.—The matter shall be looked into. Pleased to know you so highly value your weekly *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote expects to visit the Tyneside in November.

C. WATKINSON.—The trade have always had the *Freethinker* on sale or return. We will try to make this more widely known. Thanks for your judicious efforts to improve our circulation in your district.

V. PAGE hopes thousands of subscriptions will come in for Shilling Week. We give the opportunity at any rate by extending the Week to a Month.

C. H. CATELL.—There are no shares in the Secular Society, Limited, and therefore the Birmingham Branch cannot join in the name of one of its officers. Membership is personal. Of course we appreciate the generous desire to induce other Branches to take an interest in the Incorporation.

J. STANWAY.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. Shall be pleased to see you at Manchester.

J. D. LEGGETT sincerely hopes our Shilling Week appeal will be liberally responded to this year.

F. WILMOT.—Mr. Edwards had already sent us a report of the meeting. Thanks for the cuttings.

"POLICEMAN," who has suffered much through leaving Methodism for Freethought, says that a thousand readers ought to respond to our appeal, as he has done himself. "The *Freethinker*," he writes, "is not only the right arm of your work for Secularism; it is the right arm of the English Freethought party."

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—E. Lawson, 10s.; collected by F. Schaller, West London Branch, 13s. 9d. The deficit now is only about 16s. Some one please send it.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—G. L. Lupton, £1; H. A. Lupton, 10s.

G. WHITE.—Miss Vance has handed in your application for membership in the Secular Society, Limited.

A. BUTTON.—We do not propose to keep the Wheeler Memorial Fund open indefinitely. We said it would be closed at the end of September. Of course we shall not return any subscriptions that may yet reach us. Pleased to hear you intend subscribing to the Circulation Fund.

W. B. THOMPSON.—Glad to hear the reopening of the New Brompton Secular Hall was so successful, and that Mr. Watts was in such good form.

R. F. MACK.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder, to whom please send direct in future. We have printed hosts of "argumentative" articles, including some on the Design Argument.

N. ASHWORTH.—Our thanks to the Blackburn friends.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Mr. Cohen, like other contributors, takes the entire responsibility for the contents of his signed articles.

MARTIN WEATHERBURN.—We value your support. It has moral weight, being that of a veteran stalwart. We note your hope that our appeal will meet with the general support of those who, like yourself, would greatly miss the *Freethinker*.

RICHARD JOHNSON, subscribing himself, trusts that everyone who loves the Freethought cause will do something for our Circulation Fund.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for the paper. We are glad to see that the South London friends are holding their ground on Peckham Rye. You are in error when you say the Executive has resolved to do nothing. The Camberwell Branch has not asked the Executive for advice or assistance. When they do it will no doubt be given. Mr. Foote would take the matter up himself if necessary, but there does not appear to be any need at present for his intervention. Let the speakers stand firm, let the local Secularists support the platform, and the battle must end in a triumph for Freethought. Meanwhile our cause has the benefit of the advertisement.

R. WILKINSON.—Mr. Foote is in good health, but sometimes weary from overwork. On Saturday afternoon he travelled four hundred miles to Glasgow, delivering three lectures (a very hard day's work) there on Sunday, and travelling back again on Monday in order to attend to his editorial and other duties, which had to be resumed within an hour of arrival in London. Fortunately travelling is more comfortable, even by third class, than it used to be; but long journeys are always more or less wearisome when the only object is to get to the end of them.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your welcome weekly batch of cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New Century Review—Cork Constitution—Ethical World—Humanity—New York Truthseeker—South London Mail—Zoophilist—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Leeds Mercury—Yorkshire Post—Liberator—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Hackney Standard—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Freemason—Two Worlds—Secular Thought—Record—Islington Gazette.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

SEVERAL correspondents have suggested that Shilling Week should be changed into Shilling Month. They say that this has had to be done on previous occasions, and should be done now, in order to give the less ready ones the opportunity of subscribing. Well, I have assented to this before, and I assent to it again. During the month of October, then, instead of merely during the first week of it, I ask my friends and readers to send me a contribution of one or any number of shillings, for the purpose of enabling me to advertise the *Freethinker* judiciously and to promote its circulation in other ways. The matter has already been explained, and I leave it now with the Freethought party.

G. W. FOOTE.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures twice to-day (October 9) in the Secular Hall, Leicester; in the morning on "The Czar's Appeal to Europe," which is a live topic that should interest all sections of reformers; and in the evening on "The Meaning of Death," which is of interest to everybody.

After an absence of nearly six months Mr. Foote revisited Glasgow on Sunday and delivered three lectures. The morning and afternoon audiences were good, and the evening audience was a bumper. The lecturer was told that he was in his very best form, and the committee expressed themselves as delighted with the day's proceedings. Mr. Black, who took the chair in the evening, urged upon Freethinkers the necessity of supporting the Secular Society, Limited. A collection was made on behalf of the *Freethinker* Circulation Fund.

It was announced that Mr. Cohen would follow Mr. Foote at Glasgow to-day (October 9). He lectures three times in the same hall, and we hope the Glasgow Secularists will see that he has good audiences.

We are happy to report that the Glasgow Branch is in a most flourishing condition, and full of hope and enterprise. The prospect is rosier than it has been for years. There is nothing particularly exciting, but plenty of good, steady, fruitful work, and a most gratifying internal harmony.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts reopened the Secular Hall at New Brompton for the season. He lectured morning and evening to excellent audiences, who gave him a hearty reception and enthusiastically applauded him throughout his lectures. A goodly number of ladies were present, also many young persons of both sexes. Mr. Watts was highly pleased with the great improvement that has been made in the hall during the recess. The whole of the alterations

have been done free of charge by members of the Branch. The result of their labors reflects the highest credit upon the Secularists of Chatham and New Brompton.

Mr. Watts lectures this evening (October 9) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "The Doom of the Churches."

Owing to the prolonged fine weather it was thought best to postpone the first General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, which is now fixed to take place on Friday, November 4. The place of meeting will be duly announced. Members' certificates will be sent out with the notices and proxy forms. Another meeting of the Board of Directors will be held within a week of the date of this issue of the *Freethinker*. All who wish to attend, or to vote at, the Members' Meeting should therefore apply for membership immediately. Nearly one hundred are already admitted, but this number ought to be considerably increased. London Freethinkers should join more numerous, in order that the new Board of Directors, to be elected on November 4, may be as representative as possible.

The *South London Press* condemns the attempt to break up the Secular meetings on Peckham Rye, and declares the *Mail's* policy to be "repugnant to the English idea of fair play." "It is singularly unfortunate for us, as Christians," it remarks, "that the elements of disorder have emerged from our own ranks."

Mr. William Heaford occupied the Athenæum Hall platform on Sunday evening, and had a good audience. His address was much appreciated. Mr. Heaford lectures on Peckham Rye this afternoon (Oct. 9), and we earnestly hope he will be thoroughly well supported by the local Secularists, especially in view of the organised disorder of the Holy Hooligans of the *South London Mail*.

Miss Vance, the N. S. S. Secretary, desires to call attention to the necessity for all Branch Secretaries to immediately forward particulars for the Almanack on the forms supplied. Certain space will be set apart for business announcements and advertisements, and members and friends of the movement would greatly assist her by suggesting likely advertisers. Terms and particulars can be obtained from the office of the Society, 376 and 377, Strand, W.C.

The Finsbury Branch of the N. S. S. concluded their outdoor season on Clerkenwell-green on Sunday last, when Mr. A. B. Moss lectured to a good audience. Twenty-four lectures have been delivered during the season, and a highly successful demonstration arranged by Mr. G. W. Foote. The thanks of the Committee are due to Mr. E. Bater, Miss Bater, and Messrs. Gregory and Quay for their assiduous attentions during the summer season.—H. BROWN.

Mr. J. M. Robertson delivers a course of lectures at South Place Institute on "The History of Freethought, Ancient and Modern." The course opens on Tuesday evening, October 18, when the admission is free. Tickets for the other Tuesday evenings (4s.) can be obtained at the Institute.

"A. G. W." in the *Glasgow Weekly Citizen* contributes an interesting account of his "Two Hours in a Monastery." The writer's temper is impartial, but he saw nothing to tempt him into becoming a monk. As he left the monastery he caught sight of a convent in the distance, and wondered whether "vagrant thoughts ever troubled the souls of the gentle monks as they too gazed across the valley to where the *belles filles* lay immured."

The Birmingham Branch celebrated the anniversary of the birth of Charles Bradlaugh in a social way. A capital concert was held, at which Mr. Harrison, Miss L. Skett, Miss Berkeley, and Messrs. Skett, Berkeley, and the Brothers Terry and other friends assisted. Mr. Partridge gave two readings, and short addresses were given by Messrs. Ridgway and Percy Ward. On Sunday last Mr. A. Scrimshire had a crowded and appreciative house for his recital of "Henry VIII.," which he generously gave for the benefit of the funds of the Branch. To-day (October 9) Mr. G. J. Holyoake occupies the platform, and we trust that the Freethinkers of Birmingham and the surrounding district will attend in full strength and give the veteran a hearty welcome.

"Christianity and Sabbatarianism" is the heading of an excellent letter by Mr. J. M. Headley in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. A longer letter bears the name of J. W. de Caux. It is well-written and very outspoken on the Freethought side, and incidentally shows that Christianity neither abolished slavery nor promoted peace. Such letters as these in ordinary newspapers do a great deal of good. They reach a public which is otherwise not easily accessible.

## SHILLING WEEK.

[Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.]

A Glasgow Friend £5, James Thomson 2s. 6d., Hugh Thomson 5s., J. W. 2s. 6d., W. H. Deakin 5s., H. F. Sesemann 15s., J. Stanway 2s. 6d., J. Lawson, J. G. Dobson, J. D. Leggett 2s., John Walker 2s., H. A. Cumber 5s., S. Holmes 2s. 6d., Policeman 2s., E. Lawson 10s., R. B. M., J. Lawson, Annie Hampson, Louie Hampson, Mrs. Hampson, J. F. Hampson, T. Holstead 2s., J. W. Griffiths, W. Lamb 3s., G. Cruddas, J. Hockin, C. Parmer 2s., C. E. Hall 2s., W. H. Spivey, T. Whiteley, S. Whiteley, A. J. Marriott 3s., C. Watkinson, V. Page, J. W. Lancaster, F. J. Thurlow 2s., J. Titherington 3s., J. Haworth, J. E. Harley, N. Ashworth, F. Morgan 2s., Old Nick, W. Waymark, Martin Weatherburn 2s., Richard Johnson 10s., Two Brothers 2s., C. Heaton 2s., F. J. Voisey 2s., R. Bulman 2s. 6d., collection at Glasgow £1 10s., T. H. Seymour £1, E. C. Cooke £2 10s., Thorney, J. Wetherell 2s., J. Pruett 5s., Appreciator, W. H. Lawrence, Castor 5s.

## UP ABOVE AND DOWN BELOW.

THERE'S a city—oh, so splendid!—

Up above!

In the "Milky Way" suspended

Up above!

'Tis Jerusalem the golden—

Not the Asiatic "old" 'un—

Cranky Johnny's "new" extolled 'un

Up above.

There's a party who can "spot" you,

Up above!

Thank your stars he hasn't got you

Up above.

To his whims you'd have to pander,

Or you'd quickly raise the dander

Of the "touchy" goosey-gander

Up above!

There are angels in that city

Up above!

They are anything but witty

Up above!

They're for ever shouting "Glory"

To Almighty Jah, the gory,

For they're empty in their "storey"

Up above!

My advice is, keep away from

Up above!

Keep for ever and a day from

Up above!

If you go there you're a silly,

For you'll stop there, willy-nilly,

And you'll find it very chilly

Up above!

Seek the City that is warmer,

Down below!

'Tis more pleasant than the former,

Down below!

My advice is good—don't scorn it,

You will have no cause to mourn it,

*No one plays upon the cornet.*

Down below!

Like the angels, you and I, when

Down below!

Will have wings, for we shall fly, when

Down below!

Yes, the fact that we'll be soaring

It is useless their ignoring,

*For there isn't any flooring*

Down below!

You will find no "beasts" in Hades,

Down below!

Only "gentlemen" and "ladies"

Down below!

Though they've had old Jah's rejection,

They would bear a close inspection;

Satan's got a choice collection

Down below!

ESS JAY BEE.

Iceland has but one jail in the entire country, and there are no illiterates, no tramps, and no one suffers for the necessities of life; and yet the resources of the country are very meagre, and subsistence is only obtainable by frugal industry.

## THE CHURCH AND LITERATURE.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(Concluded from page 636.)

THE Roman Catholic Church has taken the trouble to register its relationship to literature by publishing lists of the works it forbids to its followers. For a long time the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was itself a forbidden work. It showed not only the nature of the forbidden fruit, but made manifest what it was the Church really feared. Since, however, bibliographers have published unauthorised lists, the Society for the propagation of the faith has issued an Index from which, since it has the Papal *imprimatur*, there can be no appeal.

Just three centuries ago Pope Sixtus V. finally organised a special "Congregatio Indici," which is still in operation, and which, besides publishing a list of prohibited books the writing, printing, publishing, distribution, reading, lending, or having possession of any of which is visited with excommunication, publishes also an *Index Librorum Expurgandorum*—a list of books which may be read after being expurgated and freed from certain offensive passages. In the words of Milton, they "rake through the entrails of many an old good author, with a violation worse than any could be offered to his tomb."

The latest edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* on the reference shelves of the British Museum Library is dated Rome, 1877. A later one has been issued by the present Pope. It gives a list of over a thousand names of persons, from Abaelardus to Zwinglius, whose works must be avoided by the faithful. The work is a curiosity from many points of view. Thus it contains the name of Erasmus Darwin, but the works of his more famous grandson are apparently unknown. Many of the works of the heresiarchs are not enumerated, but have simply the words *opera omnia*, so that it is an offence to read even an ordinary letter by these authors. The list of works deemed objectionable by the Church contains some of the most eminent names in every department of literature. Our historians are represented by such men as Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Hallam, and even Oliver Goldsmith. Among foreign historians Macchiavelli, Guicciardini, Raynal, Sismondi, Botta, Mosheim, and Ranke are interdicted. Philosophy is represented by the most illustrious names: Occam, Bruno, Bacon, Campanella, Pomponatius, Hobbes, Descartes, Bayle, Pascal, Leibnitz, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Comte, Hegel, Kant, Fichte, V. Cousin, and Vera. J. S. Mill is catalogued as Stuart, not for his *Logic* or *Essays on Religion*, but for his *Political Economy*. Archbishop Whateley's *Elements of Logic* is forbidden. Hume is inserted both as Mr. Hume for his *Essays*, and as David Hume for his *History of England* and *opera omnia*. Addison is down for his *Tours in Italy*, Swift for his *Tale of a Tub*, Lord Chesterfield for his *Letters to his Son*. That exceedingly chaste novel, *Pamela*, is interdicted, although, apparently, the Congregation of the Index do not know the name of its author, Samuel Richardson. Among novelists are George Sand, Balzac, Soulié, Murger, and Flaubert. Poets are represented by Ariosto, Petrarch, Milton, La Fontaine, Lessing, Lamartine, Béranger, Carducci, and Heine. Shelley and Burns are apparently unknown to the Congregation. Dante has the honor of a place, not for his epic, but for his treatise, *De Monarchia*, in which he argues against the Pope's temporal power. Hugo is catalogued for his *Nôtre Dame*, not for his *Torquemada* or *Religions and Religion*. Among theologians one finds, of course, the names of Wiclif, Hus, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Servetus, Sherlock, Tillotson, and Michaelis. The critical works of such learned Catholics as Father Simon and Dupin are interdicted, as are also Fenelon's *Maxims of the Saints*, the complete works of Molinos, and the reconciliations of Bordas-Desmoulins.

Of the Freethinkers, of course, all works are excluded as far as known. In the case of Voltaire an attempt seems to have been made to enumerate his objectionable works, but it does not exhibit much bibliographical knowledge. The well-known works of Dupuis, Volney, and Pigault Le Brun are inserted, as well as the treatise on Religion by Benjamin Constant, and the modern works of Renan, Strauss, Péyrat, Jules Soury, Baissac, Larroque, and Jacolliot. The numerous translations of Draper's *Conflict of Religion and Science*, and of Büchner's *Force and Matter*,

have got those works inserted in the Index; but there is no mention of important Freethought works best known in England, possibly because it is understood that all works coming from heretics are forbidden.

There are also upon the Index a number of works such as most fathers would keep from their children. Rabelais, Boccaccio, and others, of course are there. Among the smuttiest collections are the works of Aretino, who was a Cardinal's favorite, and the *Fucetia* of Poggio, who was apostolical secretary to three popes. These are inserted, although, in several editions, Poggio is carefully concealed under the name of "Florentinus"; but we miss the works of Abbé Brantôme and others only too well known in the Church.

In addition to the published list of prohibited literature, bishops and priests are supposed to exercise a censorship over the reading of those under their charge. Peignot, in his "Dictionary of the principal works which have been committed to the flames," gives a ridiculous instance of the way in which this has sometimes been carried out. He says:—

"In Styria the censorship of books is carried on in singular style, and one which shows that the function in Austrian states is not confided to very enlightened men. In the year vi. [*i.e.*, 1798] one of these censors condemned as heretical two books, of which one was entitled *Principles of Trigonometry*, and the other the *Destruction of Insects*. The censor thought Trigonometry was closely related to the Trinity, upon which it is forbidden to write; and took Insects for Jesuits."

Let not Protestants lay the flattering unction to their souls that it is the Catholic Church alone that has made war upon literature. Penal laws against the full expression of opinion are yet in force in every Protestant country. Many heretical works have been burnt by the common hangman and summarily suppressed both in England and Germany. In the reign of Elizabeth the Independents had to have a private travelling printing press to issue their Marprelate tracts. Among works publicly burnt were all the early Unitarian and Deistic pamphlets, John Milton's *Defence of the People of England*, and Defoe's *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. The works of Servetus were seized by Bishop Gibson, and burnt in 1723; and the same dignitary suppressed the second volume of Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. In my *Historical Sketches of Freethought in England* I have, I believe, adduced sufficient evidence that it is to the labors and sufferings of the Freethinkers that we are mainly indebted for a free Press, the palladium of civilisation.

No doubt, in the palmy days of Christianity, the Church could claim that such literature as there was bore the impress of Christian teaching. The only opening for talent was by entering the service of the Church, and the blighting influence of its creeds is evident in all the writings of the Middle Ages, when it has been said there was no such thing as philosophy, but only scholastic logic and theology. The nature of the Trinity, of the soul; "whether angels in going from place to place move over the intermediate space"—such questions as these formed the intellectual exercises of the cultured, while the mental pabulum of the unlearned consisted mainly of lying legends of the saints. With the Renaissance of Pagan learning came a change for the better; Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Spinoza, Hobbes, Descartes, Bayle, and Voltaire found new directions for the human mind. Gradually the affairs of this world took pre-eminence over those of a speculative world to come. Historical criticism, directed at first to "profane" matters, gradually trenched upon the domain of Jewish records labelled "sacred." Science, ascertaining more and more of the workings of nature and of the immutability of law, has gradually displaced "Providence"; and literature, despite the copious publication of unheeded sermons, becomes ever more and more secular in its character. Theology, which a few centuries ago commanded the attention of the highest minds, is now left to rhetoricians like Farrar or charlatans like Cook. The world is beginning to give more heed to the opinions of the most insignificant journalist of the present than to the united pulpit speaking with the voice of a discredited Church of the past.

## Wheeler Memorial Fund.

E. C. Cooke, £1; James Thomson, 1s.; A. Button, 5s.; L. J. Slack, 2s. 6d.

## PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

## I.—MRS. ADAM.

It is impossible to write about the lady whom Milton ungallantly terms "our general mother" without emotion. I do not, of course, pretend that Mister Milton is a last and final authority on any such subject; but, when it comes to ink-slinging, a first-class poet ought to be able to make a display. The more polite Tennyson had the supreme audacity to call her "the snow-limbed Eve," which is a fairly good chortle for Alfred the Great; but he knew nothing about her. Like the present writer, he lived some six thousand brief summers after her death. Mr. Moses has written her biography, it is true, but he omitted to mention whether she was a blonde or a brunette, and no portrait accompanies his monograph. So we must even leave the fact in the twilight of human history. We may, at least, be certain that she was—

A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

The fabled Garden of Eden looked more delightful because she was in it, the grass greenest where she trod. The rose never was so lovely till it was twined in her hair, the lily never was so beautiful till it was held in her hand. Snow-limbed she certainly was not, for Mr. Moses emphatically tells us that she had "nodings on"—that is, she could have acted as an artist's model for what Trilby calls "the all-together."

Like her helpmeet, Adam, she never went to school; she was in the happy position of starting life at full age. Her friend Adam was put into a deep sleep, and Eve was carved out of one of his ribs, which interesting case has been facetiously termed by Colonel Ingersoll as the first operation under chloroform.

She was a very fortunate woman in one respect—she had no washing to do on Mondays; neither did she have to sew buttons on Adam's shirts, patch his pantaloons, get his overcoat out of pawn, or even argue with him about a long hair on his manly shirt-front. She had a great deal to be thankful for.

Before Adam was introduced to his future housekeeper he resembled nothing so much as the mule, being without pride of ancestry and without hope of progeny. But Mrs. Adam changed all that. I make no apology for giving this courtesy title to this lady, although it has ever been a matter of great surprise to me that pious forgers have neglected so long to furnish a marriage certificate for the grand old gardener and his lady friend.

I presume that Eve looked after the conservatories in the Garden of Eden. Adam was employed by the well-known firm of J. Hovah, Son, & Co., universal providers, and considerable intimacy must have ensued between employers and employed. Some descendants of Eve still call the senior partner their "evinly fawther"; but, after reading about Adam suddenly receiving two weeks' money, I regret to add that he seems to me a papa who thinks more of his apples than he does of his children.

The row with Adam's employer appears to have been caused by a talking snake. Eve listened to him, and then the fat was in the fire. It was the first "household of three" on record. This is one reason why none of Eve's children even now will take advice on any mortal subject. The ending is sad. Adam must have sighed when he found he had to go down town daily, and work like thunder, so that his wife and daughters could have nice, clean, ornamental fig-leaves to wear to church on Sundays. He must have regretted the time when he always did his work lying in a meadow, and listening to the foolish larks and melancholy thrushes. He must have looked back with envy to the days when he was only a tramp—when in reality he was the first aristocrat. In his later years he once told Eve that the chief pleasure of work was—leaving it undone. That he was deeply sorry, and that he had the true commercial instinct, may be gathered from the fact that he used to exhibit his agonised countenance between sunrise and sunset daily (Sundays excepted) for the small charge of one shekel. On Sundays he could be seen in tears; entrance fee, two shekels.

Small wonder that the Chosen People of to-day are so smart that, even whilst attending divine worship, they wear their hats, because they know each other's little ways.

MIMNERMUS.

## BOOK CHAT.

*Humanity* (organ of the Humanitarian League) for October contains an excellent article by Mr. H. S. Salt on "De Quincey as a Humanitarian." The rest of the contents are on the usual sound lines of this admirable little monthly.

*Industrial Imperialism* is the title of the second of Mr. Malcolm Quin's "Political Tracts." It takes the form of an open letter to the members of the recent Trade Union Congress. We should have noticed it earlier, but somehow it got mislaid. Mr. Quin conducts the Church of Humanity at Newcastle. He is a man of great ability and firm character, which we always recognise even when we happen—as will happen in this world—to differ from him. In this tract he protests against the growing imperialism of English statesmanship, which works under the pretence of securing old and fresh industrial markets; and he prophesies that, unless it is checked, it will lead to disaster abroad and degeneration at home. Mr. Quin's tract is well worth reading. Copies can be obtained gratis on application to Mr. J. T. Looney, 119 Rodsley-avenue, Gateshead.

The *Adult* for October (still under Mr. Seymour's editorship) contains the full text of Mr. Bedborough's indictment. Dr. Havelock Ellis's book has the first count to itself. The second count is directed against a pamphlet by Oswald Dawson. Nine other counts refer to a large number of articles in various numbers of the *Adult*. A note from Mr. G. J. Holyoake is printed in "Editorial Memoranda," which is as follows:—"So far as I can learn, the prosecution violates all the pledges formerly given that scientific truth sold at a high price was exempt from the repression of the law. Your best defence is to do as we did in the defence of Hetherington—indict all books of a similar character, by whomsoever published. You will soon stop any similar proceedings, and probably this."

The Humanitarian League has just issued cheap editions of two new volumes through different publishers—viz., 1, *Humane Science Lectures*, the series of addresses given last winter in London by Edward Carpenter, the Rev. Douglas Morrison, chaplain of Wandsworth Prison; Professor Thomson, of Edinburgh University; and Dr. Milne Bramwell (Bell and Sons); and 2, *Humanitarian Essays*, being vol. iii. of *Cruelties of Civilisation*, dealing with various subjects contributed by Harry Roberts, Maurice Adams, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Joseph Collinson, G. W. Foote, and H. S. Salt (Reeves). The first part of this series dealt with certain social questions of immediate human interest; the second with those questions that more closely affect the welfare of animals. In the present volume both kinds are included, but in such proportion as to leave no ground for the complaint so often brought against humanitarians—that while pleading the cause of the lower animals they forget that of their fellow-men. It has, from the first, been the Humanitarian League's purpose to show that the cause of humanity is everywhere one and the same, and that it is iniquitous to inflict unnecessary suffering on any sentient being.

It is with real pleasure that we hear that Mr. Frazer is actively engaged in the revision of a second edition of his monumental work, *The Golden Bough*.

The October *Cornhill Magazine* contains a very interesting article on Mrs. Aphra Behn, whom the author claims as the first lady novelist. The publisher who ventured to reprint this lady's writings would, in all probability, make the acquaintance of Detective Sweeney (Phœbus, what a name!), Mister Anderson, and his amiable colleagues.

We are enabled to renew acquaintance with the delightful *Stories Toto Told Me*, by Baron Corvo, through the instrumentality of Mr. John Lane, of the "Bodley Head." We all smiled when we read these sly stories in the pages of *The Yellow Book*, of irreverent memory; but the quaint burlesques seem more exquisitely humorous than ever now they are collected into a volume. There is a laugh on every page, and a smile in every line. Such stories! As satirical as Heine, as profane as Voltaire, and as modern as Catulle Mendes. Toto is a very Ariel, or rather an imp of Satan. What sentiments he puts in the mouth of the Padre Eterno, of San Pietro and San Paolo. Nothing could be more daintily blasphemous than "A Caprice of the Cherubini." The Cherubini, who have neither arms, nor bodies, nor legs, but only heads with wings instead of ears, obtain permission to come down to earth and to have a little devil to play with. So the little devil was brought, and annoyed the cherubini by cheekily asking them to sit down, and then jeering at them because they had not the wherewithal.

Toto tells with great spirit the tale of San Pietro's mamma,

who was allowed to leave hell if one good deed could be found recorded in her favor. She had once thrown a beggar the top of an onion; so the angel held the onion top over the pit; she gripped it, and the angel began to rise. But the other damned souls hung on her skirts, and others to the feet of those, and there was grave danger of hell being emptied. Nor was the onion-top too weak to bear the tremendous strain; so great is the virtue of a single good action. But San Pietro's ma, being greedy, took the onion-top in her teeth, so that she might use her hands to beat off the others. She bit through it, and tumbled back into "the place where there is no winter." The satire in the tale "About the Heresy of Fra Serafico" is quite as fine.

\* \* \*

The humor is never forced in these tales, and all that is good is better than the best of recent works of humor. The star of this author is as yet but in its ascendancy, and readers who take these tales to pass an idle hour will find them too good to set aside and forget. There is every element in them that goes to the making of a live book. Quip, repartee, epigram, are to be found in these charming contes, and we confidently predict that years hence this volume will survive. We regard it as the very finest effort in the line of humor we have seen since the *Satires and Profanities of James Thomson*.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE REASON WHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Besides sending my mite in response to your appeal to the Freethought party for help in your endeavor to make the *Freethinker* more widely known by advertising, I feel constrained to say a few words as to why I think that the journal in question has a special claim, in this connection, upon all Freethinkers. In the first place, it is not only specially devoted to the distinctive work of promoting Freethought, but it is also conducted on such lines as to justify confidence in its permanency as the chief organ of our party. This was not the case with the late *National Reformer*, which, in addition to its Atheistic propaganda, professed to be Republican in politics and Malthusian in sociology, and which, therefore, commanded the support of a large circle of readers who could not be reasonably expected to support a paper like the *Freethinker*, seeing that it is specially and exclusively devoted to the first of those three items of policy only. The dear old *National Reformer* may be said to have died with its world-renowned editor—a fact that seems to warrant the opinion that it was only the great commanding influence of that distinguished leader of men that enabled it to live as long as it did. A due consideration of these and many other facts pointing the same moral goes to show that the *Freethinker* has a special claim upon the Freethought party, in that it can claim to be, as far as England is concerned, the first exclusively Freethought journal ever established.

I can only hope, sir, that the response to your very reasonable appeal will be such as to show that the Freethinkers of England are both numerous enough and generous enough to enable you to accomplish your very desirable object.

T. J. THURLOW.

### A CALL TO ARMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—For the past two or three months our lecturers on Peckham Rye have had to meet a great deal of rowdiness, which has of late been greatly enhanced owing to the inflammatory language of one of the local organs. This state of affairs reached a climax on Sunday, Sept. 25, when Mr. Heaford was forced by the police to desist from speaking on account of disorder.

Yesterday (Oct. 2) I made my way to the Rye to help to swell the supporters of the meeting, and was asked to take the chair. I am bound to say it was the most colossal meeting I have seen assembled in our open spaces at Freethought platforms. This we owed to the splendid advertisement given us gratuitously by the local press.

Having made the announcement that we intended carrying the meeting through at all costs, I called upon the lecturer to commence his address; but he had barely spoken for a few minutes when a rush was made for the platform. This is instructive, as it proves that the disorder was not due to the language or bad tact of the lecturer, but obviously premeditated. Our supporters easily repulsed this attack, but the police stepped forward, and demanded that the meeting should be brought to a close, as it was disorderly. This we strenuously refused to do, and succeeded in carrying on the meeting for an hour, bringing it to a successful conclusion; so successful, in fact, that the total amount collected came to 33s.

But this is not my main object in appealing to the readers of the *Freethinker*—to give an account of the meeting. What I wish to do is to call for help for next Sunday.

At the close of the meeting the names and addresses of the chairman and speaker were demanded by the police, instructed by the Superintendent of Open Spaces, who was present; and this seems to indicate that next week we shall have to meet not only the rowdiness, but that the police, on the slightest disorder, will stop the meeting. In the old days an appeal of this sort would have drawn a contingent from every branch in London, and I confidently expect to meet some fifty or sixty Secularists willing to do their utmost in support of our right to as fair a hearing as is accorded to other bodies on Peckham Rye.

To those of us who have had to fight for the open spaces in the past this should be mere child's play.

Now that we have won over Victoria Park, Finsbury Park, Hyde Park, Clerkenwell, and other spaces, to our side, in face of the bitterest opposition, are we to give way at Peckham? Having reached the pinnacle of success, inasmuch that almost every argument put forward from our platforms is reiterated within the Church itself by its greatest lights; having accomplished such results, I ask, are we to give way to a rowdy gang of Christians who claim the right to dictate as to who shall speak, and what shall be said, at our public spaces?

I do not believe that the Secularists of London will allow such a stigma to be put upon them, and I trust that when the call for "friends to the front" is made next Sunday afternoon at Peckham Rye there will be such a muster as will ensure order till the end of the season.

ROBERT EDWARDS.

## PROFANE JOKES.

AT an elementary examination in English, which was lately held in a school near New York, two sentences were given out to be corrected. The first sentence was to be corrected as to its subject matter, and the second sentence as to its syntax. These were the sentences: "The hen has three legs"; "Who done it?" When the papers were handed in, it was found that one of the examinees had apparently regarded the sentences as subtly connected in thought, for his answer was as follows: "The hen didn't done it. God done it."

Congressman Linney, of North Carolina, created considerable laughter in the House of Representatives some time ago by telling the following story: "A dying man once said to a neighbor, 'Read me some comforting portions of the Scripture.' It was done. 'What next can I do for you?' inquired the zealous Christian. 'Will you pray for me?' 'Certainly,' he replied. Prayer being over, 'What next, my dear suffering brother?' 'Please give me a small drink of brandy from that little bottle of yours.' 'No, I can't,' was the reply. 'The Scripture-reading and the prayer were all free, they cost me nothing; but this brandy cost me 25 cents a quart; I can't afford it.'"

A Sunday-school teacher was talking to her class of the necessity of a divine friend, both in life and death. Finally she said: "Charley, if you were about to die, what would you want most of anything?" And Charley replied, with practical wisdom: "A doctor." He was recently matched, however, by another small boy. "Johnny," asked his teacher, "what must we do before our sins can be forgiven?" "Sin," replied Johnny.

"And will you be mine forever?" he asked, after he had her head nicely pillowed on his shoulder. She straightened up with a start. "Now, look here," she said, in her eminently practical way, "if you want to get up a discussion on the future life, you might just as well be moving along. Father is an Agnostic and mother is a Methodist, and I'm marrying as much as anything to get away from controversies about this forever business."—*Chicago Evening Post*.

Adam—"Cain, how did you come to kill Abel?" Cain—"He asked me if it was hot enough for me."

"You kin git yo' daily bread by prayin'," says Uncle Mose. "But de nightly chicken has to be hustled fo'."—*Indianapolis Journal*.

"Here's an article which says preachers should never work at their sermons when tired." "How about working at them when their congregations are tired?"—*Chicago Record*.

The war-cloud has shifted, and is now hovering over Xenia, Ohio. The *Herald* of that place proclaims it thus: "The time has come for action. The streets are in a horrible condition. The police fund is exhausted, and our militia has gone to the war. 'Ed' Schmidt owns the council, and the city is in darkness. Burglars are at large, and the Methodist Conference will be here in a few days. Johnny, get your gun!"—*Voice*.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

### LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Doom of the Churches."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A concert.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, F. A. Davies, "Faith and Finance."  
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. Heaford, "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil."  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Crusade against Ritualism."  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Hereditry." Peckham Rye: 8.15, Mr. Sanders.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. Heaford. Peckham Rye: 8.15, W. Heaford.  
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, Stanley Jones; 7, W. Heaford. October 12, at 8, W. J. Ramsey.  
HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Hunter, "God."  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.15, R. P. Edwards, "The Church Congress."  
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond, N.; Balance-sheet and other business.  
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack. October 11, at 8, W. J. Ramsey.  
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): G. J. Holyoake—11, "The Profanities of Piety"; 7, "Policy in Politics."  
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen—11.30, "Present-Day Problems"; 2.30, "Substitutes for Religion"; 6.30, "Jewish Testimony to Christ."  
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): G. W. Foote—11, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 6.30, "The Meaning of Death."  
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, W. T. Haydon, "Ancient Egypt's Literature, Arts, and Science."  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. M. Robertson—11, "Recent Pleas for Theism"; 8, "Patriotism and Ethics"; 6.30, "The Revival of Catholicism." Tea at 5.  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Reflections on the Late Church Congress." Members' and friends' dance every Wednesday evening at 8.  
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Readings, etc.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 9, Glasgow; 16, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 23, Sheffield; 26, 27, 28, Derby; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsforth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—October 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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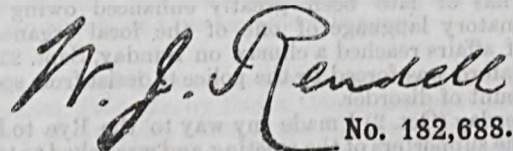
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