

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

That Atheist Shoemaker.

THE Wesleyan Conference met on Tuesday, after a twelve-hours' prayer-meeting on Monday. For seven hundred and twenty minutes at a stretch, without an interval for rest and refreshment, the Lord was supposed to be listening attentively to the outpourings—perhaps they call it wrestlings—of relays of Wesleyan Methodists; although any sensible God would have taken (say) five minutes of it, at the outside, as a sample from bulk. It seems pretty clear that all this petitioning of the Throne of Grace produced no miraculous effect. Just what was expected took place. President Macdonald was elected by an overwhelming majority to succeed President Hughes. Nor with any special flashes of divine inspiration.

Glancing at the London *Echo* on Tuesday evening, I noticed a number of "Gossip" paragraphs on the retiring President, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, one of which contained a reference to the editor of the *Freethinker*. After giving a list of Mr. Hughes's literary productions, ending with *The Atheist Shoemaker*, our contemporary remarked that "The last mentioned was made the occasion of a fierce attack upon him by Mr. G. W. Foote, the Freethinking leader, and it brought Mr. Holyoake, the veteran leader of Freethought, to the assistance of Mr. Hughes against his vehement assailant."

I am not anxious to revive this old controversy, but I am gradually being forced into it in self-defence. Taking advantage of the lapse of time, Mr. Hughes's friends in various parts of the country are pretending—as this *Echo* passage half suggests—that Mr. Holyoake came to the assistance of Mr. Hughes at the critical moment of my attack. But this involves a very bad error in chronology. Mr. Hughes's farcical story of a converted Atheist shoemaker—who was a popular orator amongst the London Freethinkers, almost rivalling Mr. Bradlaugh himself—had been before the public for a considerable time. Mr. Bradlaugh had told him publicly that many of the incidents in his story were "clearly untrue," and had invited him in "common decency" to explain how he had been misled. Mr. Hughes, however, took no notice of this challenge. He simply went on selling the book. I also challenged the story in the *Freethinker*, going through it point by point, and proving its absolute falsehood; but I bore every appearance of deliberate falsehood; but I added that if Mr. Hughes would give the real name of his convert, and prove the substantial truth of his story, I would confess my mistake and apologise for throwing a doubt upon his honor. Mr. Hughes took no notice of this challenge either. I therefore published my criticism in pamphlet form, and entitled it *A Lie in Five Chapters*. This pamphlet was very extensively circulated. Copies of it were sent to Mr. Hughes's friends and colleagues, and to the chairmen of his provincial meetings. It was internal, domestic grumbings that disturbed his equanimity. He saw that something had to be done. And what did he do? Instead of appealing to a court of honor, or to a representative committee, he picked out one man to hold a secret investigation. This man was Mr. George Jacob Holyoake. Without saying a word to any other Freethinker, without consulting anyone who had challenged Mr. Hughes's story, he went and interviewed the persons who were the sources of that gentleman's information; and, without

asking to see a single one of the other persons referred to in this story, he wrote out a fair and large certificate of its truth, which was published in the *Methodist Times*. Upon that certificate Mr. Hughes has been relying ever since. But that was not the end of the matter. Providentially, as the Christians say, I came into contact with the father, mother, and brothers of Mr. Hughes's "Charles Herbert," whose real name was Charles Alfred Gibson. I brought the father and two brothers up to London, and they declared from the Hall of Science platform that the deceased young man was never an Atheist and had never been a public speaker. I hunted up the landlady of the house where Mr. Hughes visited him in his last sickness, and she also denied his Atheism and his public speaking. I hunted up his old fellow workmen in a boot factory in the Gray's-Inn-road, and they all laughed at Mr. Hughes's story. The Gibson family furnished me with documents in proof of their narrative, and I published all the facts in the *Freethinker*, giving the real names of all the persons in Mr. Hughes's story—names that he had carefully concealed—and adding dates that were of the highest importance. Afterwards I published this exposure in the form of a pamphlet, of which more than a hundred thousand copies were circulated. It will thus be seen that my exposure of Mr. Hughes was not prior, but subsequent, to Mr. Holyoake's "vindication." And as Mr. Hughes's friends are now pretending otherwise, I am beginning to feel I ought to republish the exposure.

Mr. Hughes has withdrawn his book. It can no longer be had for love or money, although it was so calculated to bring souls to God. I have, therefore, been inclined to let the matter rest. The substantial victory was on my side. Not a single Freethinker accepted Mr. Holyoake's "vindication" as anything more than a good turn done to a Christian friend—at the expense of Secularist friends; and Mr. Hughes was clearly ashamed, or afraid, to keep his "true story" in circulation. Nevertheless, he has never retracted it, never confessed that he was misled by a number of ardent ladies, and particularly by the clever wife of his pretended convert, and never acknowledged what a lot of decoration was added from his own fertile fancy. Mr. Hughes very sensibly, from his point of view, maintains a splendid reticence. No doubt he trusts to time, which buries so many things, to bury this also, and hopes that eventually its very grave will be forgotten. But his friends are not all as discreet. They will keep talking; some of them do so with considerable audacity; and their reckless babble is making it almost necessary for me to keep the facts of this case before the public.

A good many Secularists think there is another reason why that Atheist Shoemaker fraud, and its thorough exposure, should be held in remembrance. It is a salient specimen of the unscrupulous tactics of professional soul-savers, a striking instance of lying for the glory of God—a vice which has been more systematically practised by the champions of Christianity than by those of any other creed on earth. Mr. Hughes himself still alludes to converted "infidels," though he does so now with cautious vagueness. Perhaps the continued publication of this exposure will make him still more careful. It may also check the readiness of orthodox credulity, and warn the unwary against plausible deceptions, even when the author of them is "an eminent minister" who is "entitled to be believed upon his word." For the truth is that personal authority is no substitute for evidence and logic.

G. W. FOOTE.

London Christian Missions.

PROFESSING Christians have evidently acquired the art of begging; they not only hold bazaars, where things are often sold for double their value; they not only engage the services of Jubilee singers, who work for pay and not for "the glory of God"; they not only arrange for the sale of kisses, where the lips of a charming woman are far more attractive than the love for Christ, but they issue regular periodicals appealing for money to be devoted to Christian missions, and they even send children from door to door to collect money for this missionary work. Now, there can be no possible objection to soliciting pecuniary aid for the purpose of carrying on successful work that administers to the secular welfare of the people; but when money is collected upon the pretence that it will be used for mundane requirements, and is really spent for alleged spiritual objects which have proved a failure, then it appears to us very much like a fraud upon human benevolence. Besides, the question arises, Why are there so many poverty-stricken people who require the so-called charity, and why does not the Lord take care of his own? We are told in the New Testament that he will do so, but experience has proved the fallacy of such Christian promises, for it is admitted by the supposed followers of Christ that, although millions of pounds have been subscribed for the "benefit of the poor," their social condition is at present most deplorable, and their spiritual state is equally as bad.

We have just been reading a very pious paper, the *Record of the Tower Hamlets Mission*, which is devoted to religious work under the guise of social reform, and its results in East London. Its columns bear ample testimony to the utter failure of the Christian method of reforming the community. And no wonder that it is so, for the leading preachers there put the "saving of the soul" above all other considerations. The *Record* has an article called "Prevention is better than Cure," wherein reference is made to the destitution, disease, crime, and misery caused through the drink traffic in "Christian England," and the pious writer adds: "What can be done to stop this terrible curse? The work of rescue has been, and is being, tried; but for every one rescued there are hundreds who go under." This is a clear admission that the Christian means employed to rescue the people from the sad effects of drink have not succeeded. This, to us, is not surprising when we read in the same article that "Temperance, after all, is only a means to an end, and that end the saving of the soul." Here is the secret of the non-success of Christianity as a reforming agency. Its teachers place the speculations about another world before the realities of this. We thought the aim of temperance was to make people sober and healthy in this life, independent of the "soul's" salvation. This Christian writer should have remembered that if the principle, that "prevention is better than cure," had been adopted in the Garden of Eden, the present specimens of our "fallen nature" would not have existed to vex the minds of modern reformers. True, it might have taken from the "soul-saviors" much of their employment, and thereby have deprived them of their income; but that should be of no consideration with believers in the altruistic principle, of which so many Christians boast.

The non-success of Christian missions is equally apparent in what is termed the spiritual field. The *Quiver* recently published an article on Christian work in East London, written by the Bishop of Stepney, in which he said: "The habit of church-going or chapel-going has been almost entirely lost, and it is only after the most patient efforts on the part of the clergy and others that it can be brought again into the district. After sampling on several occasions eighty men out of different streets taken in turn, I discovered that only about one in eighty went either to church or chapel, and, out of a thousand boys of the age of fourteen or fifteen who were questioned on entering one of our large boys' clubs, nine hundred were found to have 'g. n.' written after their names, which means 'goes nowhere.'" Here the open confession is made that both from a secular and religious standpoint the gospel mission has been of little practical use in improving the

condition of the masses among whom it has been carried on. It is quite time such sham remedies were dispensed with, and the true panacea applied to the present defective social and religious hypocritical state of society. The conductors of Christian missions are dishonest, because they know that they are unable to accomplish what they profess. Of this fact experience bears abundant evidence.

Take, for instance, the Mission conducted at the East-end of London. This mission is declared by its official organ to be "one of the most gigantic and powerful evangelical works for God in the world." Under these circumstances it is natural to expect great results; but, as we have seen, the very opposite is the case. At their meetings no intellectual food is offered to the hearers, but, instead, the most silly twaddle is indulged in by the speakers, and sentiment takes the place of common sense. The Rev. Marcus Rainsford, M.A., one of their principal preachers, extolled the singing of a song in which occur these words: "When they meet the devil down the lane, beat him with the gospel cane." This singing, we are told, brought a young lady to "decide for Christ." The rev. gentleman told a tale of a young man who acknowledged that he had been benefitted by hearing him preach. When asked in what the benefit consisted, the young man replied: "Why, you see, sir, I am practising shorthand, and you are such a fast speaker." Among many other "precious testimonies to the power of the gospel" was a young man who was an Atheist. It is alleged that "he had done much to try and further the principles of Atheism," but at last he was brought to "believe in Christ." Now, the advantage of this "precious testimony" would be considerably enhanced if the name and address of the testator had been given. We are told that he lived "a life of sin and awful blasphemy," but where? In the absence of these important details we may be pardoned for doubting the accuracy of the statement. All that we are further told of this Atheist is that "he left the hall rejoicing," but what became of him we are not informed. The East-end Mission may be "gigantic and powerful," but we should be very much interested in learning that its reports are truthful. In past times men were allowed to "lie for the glory of God," and we fear that bad habit has not yet died out.

The rev. gentleman was anxious to win the sympathies of his audience; he, therefore, delivered himself as follows: "Some time ago I thought I had found an honest and intelligent unbeliever who had really read the Bible and was acquainted with its contents. These people talk very loudly about the difficulties of believing, some even professing to be anxious to believe if they could but understand, yet they never seek. I found this man like all the rest. I extracted a promise from him that he would carefully read the Epistle to the Romans twelve times, and in four weeks come and have some dinner with me. On the appointed day he turned up sharp to time. I asked him if he had kept his promise, and he began to make excuses about being too busy, and equivocated generally for not doing so. This shuffling roused me, and I said: 'As you have not kept your promise, you have not won your dinner, and you'll have to pay for it,' which he did. I afterwards found out that he was not even leading a moral life." We should really like to know who this man was. In the absence of information upon the subject, we frankly state that we don't believe what is here alleged. Unbelievers, as a rule, are generally familiar with the contents of the Bible. In fact, it is this knowledge that in many instances has made them unbelievers. But what does the rev. gentleman mean by accusing "all the rest" with ignorance of the Bible? This includes ourselves, yet we always thought that we had a fair knowledge of Bible teachings. At any rate, we are quite ready and willing to meet the Rev. Marcus Rainsford in public debate and place our alleged ignorance side by side with his assumed knowledge, and allow our hearers to judge upon which side is to be found the greater amount of Bible information. Supposing, however, that all he said about the unbelieving man were true, refusing him his dinner as promised was not even Christ-like. The clergyman should remember that his Master told him to render good for evil, which in this case he did not.

The fact is that the missionary enterprise—both at home

and abroad—is a gigantic fraud. As the Rev. Canon Taylor says: "It is plain that these futile missions should be given up. To extort from Sunday-school children their hoarded pence for the ostensible object of converting 'the poor heathen' seems to me to be almost a crime—the crime of obtaining money under false pretences." And, be it observed, the failure of such missions is as great abroad as it is at home. Canon Taylor quotes Mr. Johnson, the well-known African traveller, who says: "In many important districts, where the missionaries have been at work for twenty years, they can scarcely number, in honest statistics, twenty sincere converts. In other parts, where large numbers of nominal Christians exist, their religion is discredited by numbering among its adherents all the drunkards, liars, rogues, and unclean livers in the colony." Would it not be better to have Secular missions to save the body from the many evils and vices which have originated and extended in the midst of Christian propaganda? We think so, for even if man has a "soul," whatever that may be, it must be the better if contained in a pure and healthy body.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Easiest Trade in the World.

AN OPEN LETTER TO A FRIEND.

I AM not at all surprised that, with your keen regard for "getting on in the world," and with your son rapidly approaching maturity, the question of his future profession should be now exercising your mind. In these days of keen, bustling competition, it becomes more and more difficult to fix on a profession in the pursuit of which a fair competence may be regarded as certain, and parental responsibilities and anxieties increase in proportion.

In such a matter, however, the first thing to be done is to try and form some estimate of the young man's capacities. This you have not failed to do, and your sketch of your son's character renders the matter comparatively simple. You tell me that he has a good presence physically, and mentally, although not profound, is the possessor of a certain kind of shrewdness—a less partial critic might call it cunning—a glibness of speech allied to plenty of confidence in himself, and, while not showing a marked capacity for any one thing in particular, exhibits a decided tendency towards managing the universe in general. Your own conclusion is that you fear he is neither astute enough for commerce, logical enough for the law, patient enough for medicine, smart enough for literature, or sufficiently careful as an observer or a reasoner for any branch of science. Under these circumstances I do not think that it is very difficult to point to the profession that would suit your son best. Make a clergyman of him. There are few other professions that would suit a young man of your son's calibre so well; there are certainly none that would suit him better. Qualities that would be of small service elsewhere will prove extremely useful here, while deficiencies that would spell ruin in other departments will pass unnoticed in this one.

In this connection you will allow me to call your attention to a few sentences from George Eliot:—

"Given a man with moderate intellect, a moral standard not higher than the average, some rhetorical affluence and great glibness of speech, what is the career in which, without the aid of birth or money, he may most easily attain power and reputation in English society? Where is that Goshen of mediocrity in which a smattering of science and learning will pass for profound instruction, where platitudes will be accepted as wisdom, bigoted narrowness as holy zeal, unctuous egotism as God-given piety? Let such a man become an evangelical preacher; he will then find it possible to reconcile small ability with great ambition, superficial knowledge with the prestige of erudition, a middling *morale* with a high reputation for sanctity."

If your son were a genius, there would be little or no necessity to discuss his future career—the matter would settle itself. As he is not a genius, and as you are sensible enough to recognise as much, all that I need do is to point out some of the advantages to be derived from following the above advice. First, and what is important in your son's case, comes

the consideration that in the clerical profession the collection or study of facts, or even adherence to them, is reduced to a minimum. The politician, the lawyer, the doctor, the commercial man, all find the study of facts essential to their reaching eminence in their respective professions. The clergyman, on the contrary, has everything essential settled for him. His beliefs, his prayers, his postures, are all arranged in advance; his only task is to commit them to memory. In other professions a man is tied down to facts; the average cleric treats them with a lofty contempt. The less he knows of a subject, the more he talks about it. His assurance increases in proportion as his statements defy verification; and he is most certain and most dogmatic when expounding the character of a deity whom he tells you beforehand is incomprehensible, or dilating on a future life concerning the existence of which he cannot produce the slightest shadow of a spark of evidence, although the genuineness of his belief in its transcendent glories, as compared with those of earth, is shown by his readiness to stay here as long as possible, so that he may show others the way. If your son cannot obtain a reputation as a thinker in other directions, he may easily do so in the pulpit. Let him acquire the habit of pouring a deluge of words over a desert of ideas, cultivate a mere nodding acquaintance with truth, carefully champion only movements out of which capital may be made, and his career will be both a profitable and an easy one. To cry "damn" in the pulpit will ensure prominent press notices; he may gain the reputation of an "advanced" thinker by solemnly hinting that possibly Jonah did *not* spend his vacation in the inside of a whale, or that Moses did not write an account of his own funeral; and he may even pose as an energetic social reformer on the strength of inducing the Prince of Wales to abstain from hot rolls one morning out of seven.

In these democratic days, when not even "the divinity that doth hedge a king" is free from unpleasant questioning, the greater immunity of the clergy from public criticism is certainly something to be valued. Again I would invite your attention to the following from George Eliot:—

"He (the clergyman) has an immense advantage over all other public speakers. The platform orator is subject to the criticism of hisses and groans. Counsel for the plaintiff expects the retort of counsel for the defendant. Even the scientific or literary lecturer, if he is dull or incompetent, may see the best part of his audience slip out one by one. But the preacher is completely master of the situation; no one may hiss, no one may depart. Like the writer of imaginary conversations, he may put what imbecilities he pleases into the mouths of his antagonists, and swell with triumph when he has refuted them. He may riot in gratuitous assertions, confident that no man will contradict him; he may exercise perfect free-will in logic, and invent illustrative experiences; he may give an evangelical edition of history with the inconvenient facts omitted: all this he may do, certain that those of his hearers who are not sympathising are not listening."

The priesthood is thus a profession that almost anyone may qualify for. Lack of intelligence is no obstacle. In the whole history of the Christian Churches no man has ever been turned out for not thinking enough, or for not thinking accurately. Plenty have been turned out for thinking too much, and the spectacle of their expulsion has apparently had a salutary effect on those who were left behind. Minute and searching as the table of ecclesiastical pains and penalties has been, lack of thinking has no place in it. And modest as the claims of the Church has been on the intelligence of its ministers in the past it bids fair to be still less exacting in the future. In certain directions, I have read, the War Office has been obliged to lower its standard of efficiency owing to the impossibility of getting a sufficient number of men that were up to the old standard of excellency; and, with the intelligence of the nation rapidly drifting in other directions, it is certain that the Churches will be compelled to follow the same policy.

Then, again, the profession has this advantage—bad times are reduced to a minimum. If Christianity is booming, the parson is secure; if it is not, capital may always be made out of attacks on infidelity, and timid and credulous "old ladies of both sexes" induced to "shell out" liberally in defence of the faith. Or even if there should be a "slump" in parsons, and their number prove greater than there are churches for them

to fill, even then the prospect is not so gloomy as it appears on first glance. There are still left both the home and foreign mission fields—spheres of operation in which irretrievable mediocrity is tolerably certain of success. Very comfortable salaries are received by the clerical gentlemen who act as secretaries of the foreign missionary societies. Three secretaries of the London Missionary Society—all parsons—receive between them £1,450, besides expenses, and the remainder of such agencies are equally lavish, or more so, in their payments.

Or, if foreign missions are not to one's taste, one can easily try a mission at home. Here the field of operation is practically limitless. The number of waifs and strays created and perpetuated by a Christian society is as great as the credulity to which missionaries appeal. And the method of working is so beautifully simple. You rent a big house—Finsbury Square is a favorite locality—stick up a sign advertising its missionary character, fit out a suite of rooms for your own use (rent, furniture, clothing, annual holiday, etc., coming out of the expenses of the mission); you live up to three or four hundred a year, and pose before the country as a highly benevolent character. Of all professions that of a Christian philanthropist is the most profitable; it combines the maximum of profit with the minimum of risk. The capital is found by the public, the profits are taken by the promoter. A liberal use of religious phrases disarms all criticism except such as may be offered by Freethinkers, and their statements are hardly likely to have much weight with the religious public.

Of course, there are a certain number of the clergy who earn but modest incomes; but it is not clear that their earnings would have been larger in any other profession; and it is certain that the vast majority of the clergy would receive nothing like their present income in literature, commerce, or in any of the learned professions.*

There is, indeed, only one objection to the course I have pointed out. It may be argued that "it is no light thing to have secured a livelihood on condition of going through life masked and gagged; to be compelled, week after week and year after year, to recite the symbols of ancient faith, and lift up his voice in the echoes of old hopes, with the blighting thought in his soul that the faith is a lie..... To read hundreds of times in a twelvemonth with solemn unction as the inspired word of the Supreme what to him are meaningless as the Abracadabras of the conjurer in a booth; to go on to the end of his days administering to simple folk holy rites of commemoration and solace, when he has in his mind at each phrase what dupes are these simple folk, and how wearisomely counterfeit their rites; and to know through all that this is to be the one business of his prostituted life."† No light business, truly! and yet sufficiently bearable, apparently, for many thousands of our fellow-countrymen.

C. COHEN.

What is Religion ?

(Concluded from page 453.)

THERE is no intelligence without force. There is no force without matter. Consequently there could not be any possibility have been any intelligence, any force, back of matter.

It therefore follows that the supernatural does not, and cannot, exist. If these four corner-stones are facts, nature has no master. If matter and force are from and to eternity, it follows as a necessity that no God exists; that no God created or governs the universe; that no God exists who answers prayer; no God who succors the oppressed; no God who pities the sufferings of innocence; no God who cares for the slaves with scarred flesh, the mothers robbed of their babes; no God who rescues the tortured, and no God that saves a martyr from the flames. In other words, it proves that man has never received any help from heaven; that all the sacrifices have been in vain, and that all prayers have

died unanswered in the heedless air. I do not pretend to know. I say what I think.

If matter and force have existed from eternity, it then follows that all that has been possible has happened, all that is possible is happening, and all that will be possible will happen.

In the universe there is no chance, no caprice. Every event has parents.

That which has not happened could not. The present is the necessary product of all the past, the necessary cause of all the future.

In the infinite chain there is, and there can be, no broken, no missing link. The form and motion of every star, the climate of every world, all forms of vegetable and animal life, all instinct, intelligence, and conscience, all assertions and denials, all vices and virtues, all thoughts and dreams, all hopes and fears, are necessities. Not one of the countless things and relations in the universe could have been different.

If matter and force are from eternity, then we can say that man had no intelligent creator, that man was not a special creation.

We now know, if we know anything, that Jehovah, the divine potter, did not mix and mould clay into the forms of men and women, and then breathe the breath of life into these forms.

We now know that our first parents were not foreigners. We know that they were natives of this world, produced here, and that their life did not come from the breath of any god. We now know, if we know anything, that the universe is natural, and that men and women have been naturally produced. We now know our ancestors, our pedigree. We have the family tree.

We have all the links of the chain, twenty-six links inclusive from moner to man.

We did not get our information from inspired books. We have fossil facts and living forms.

From the simplest creatures, from blind sensation, from organisms with one vague want, to a single cell with a nucleus, to a hollow ball filled with fluid, to a cup with double walls, to a flat worm, to a something that begins to breathe, to an organism that has a spinal cord, to a link between the invertebrate to the vertebrate, to one that has a cranium—a house for a brain—to one with fins, still onward to one with fore and hinder fins, to the reptile mammalia, to the marsupials, to the lemures, dwellers in trees, to the simiae, to the pithecanthropi, and, lastly, to man.

We know the paths that life has travelled. We know the footsteps of advance. They have been traced. The last link has been found. For this we are indebted, more than to all others, to the greatest of biologists, Ernst Haeckel.

We now believe that the universe is natural, and we deny the existence of the supernatural.

For thousands of years men and women have been trying to reform the world. They have created gods and devils, heavens and hells; they have written sacred books, performed miracles, built cathedrals and dungeons; they have crowned and uncrowned kings and queens; they have tortured and imprisoned, flayed alive and burned; they have preached and prayed; they have tried promises and threats; they have coaxed and persuaded; they have preached and taught, and in countless ways have endeavored to make people honest, temperate, industrious, and virtuous; they have built hospitals and asylums, universities and schools, and seem to have done their very best to make mankind better and happier, and yet they have not succeeded.

Why have the reformers failed? I will tell them why.

Ignorance, poverty, and vice are populating the world. The gutter is a nursery. People, unable even to support themselves, fill the tenements, the huts, on hovels with children. They depend on the Lord, on luck, and charity. They are not intelligent enough to think about consequences, or to feel responsibility. At the same time, they do not want children, because a child is a curse—a curse to them and to itself. These babe is not welcome, because it is a burden. The unwelcome children fill the jails and prisons, the asylums and hospitals, and they crowd the scaffolds. A few are rescued by chance or charity, but the great majority are failures. They become vicious, ferocious. They live

* A writer in the *Echo* of July 11 found, from recently-proved wills in Somerset House, that 122 clergymen left behind them £15,677,948.

† John Morley, *On Compromise*, p. 92.

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by fraud and violence, and bequeath their vices to their children.

Against this inundation of vice the forces of reform are helpless, and charity itself becomes an unconscious promoter of crime.

Failure seems to be the trade-mark of nature. Why? Nature has no design, no intelligence. Nature produces without purpose, sustains without intention, and destroys without thought. Man has a little intelligence, and he should use it. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind.

The real question is, Can we prevent the ignorant, the poor, the vicious, from filling the world with their children?

Can we prevent this Missouri of ignorance and vice from emptying into the Mississippi of civilisation?

Must the world forever remain the victim of ignorant passion? Can the world be civilised to that degree that consequences will be taken into consideration by all?

Why should men and women have children that they cannot take care of—children that are burdens and curses? Why? Because they have more passion than intelligence, more passion than conscience, more passion than reason.

You cannot reform these people with tracts and talk. You cannot reform these people with preach and creed.

Passion is, and always has been, deaf. These weapons of reform are substantially useless. Criminals, tramps, beggars, and failures are increasing every day. The prisons, jails, poor-houses, and asylums are crowded. Religion is helpless. Law can punish, but it can neither reform criminals nor prevent crime. The tide of vice is rising. The war that is now being waged against the forces of evil is as hopeless as the battle of the fireflies against the darkness of night.

There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty, and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or by law, by priest or hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral.

To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will, or will not, become a mother.

This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are then born will be welcome. They will be clasped by glad hands to happy breasts. They will fill homes with light and joy.

Men and women who believe that slaves are purer, truer than the free, who believe that fear is a safer guide than knowledge, that only those are really good who obey the commands of others, and that ignorance is the soil in which the perfect, perfumed flower of virtue grows, will, with protesting hands, hide their shocked faces.

Men and women who think that light is the enemy of virtue, that purity dwells in darkness, that it is dangerous for human beings to know themselves and the facts in nature that affect their well-being, will be horrified at the thought of making intelligence the master of passion.

But I look forward to the time when men and women, by reason of their knowledge of consequences, of the morality born of intelligence, will refuse to perpetuate disease and pain, will refuse to fill the world with failures.

When that time comes, the prison walls will fall, the dungeons will be flooded with light, and the shadow of the scaffold will cease to curse the earth. Poverty and crime will be childless. The withered hands of want will not be stretched for alms. They will be dust. The whole world will be intelligent, virtuous, and free.

Religion can never reform mankind, because religion is slavery.

It is far better to be free, to leave the forts and barricades of fear, to stand erect and face the future with a smile.

It is far better to give yourself sometimes to negligence, to drift with wave and tide, with the blind forces of the world, to think and dream, to forget the chains and limitations of this breathing life, to forget purpose and object, to lounge in the picture-gallery of the brain, to feel once more the clasps and kisses of the past, to bring life's morning back, to see again the forms and

faces of the dead, to paint fair pictures for the coming years, to forget all gods, their promises and threats, to feel within your veins life's joyous stream and hear the martial music, the rhythmic beating of your fearless heart.

And then to rouse yourself to do all useful things, to reach with thought and deed the ideal in your brain, to give your fancies wing, that they, like chemist-bees, may find art's nectar in the weeds of common things, to look with trained and steady eyes for facts, to find the subtle threads that join the distant with the now, to increase knowledge, to take burdens from the weak, to develop the brain, to defend the right, to make a palace for the soul.

This is real religion. This is real worship.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

Acid Drops.

THE famous Lille murder seems likely to remain a mystery. It will be remembered that the body of a murdered boy was found in the parlor of the Christian Brothers' school, and that the circumstances were particularly atrocious. One of the Brothers, called Flamidien, was arrested. The evidence against him was that, when confronted with the corpse, he would not look at it, but kept his head averted and sobbed convulsively. As this is the *only* evidence against Brother Flamidien, he has been discharged. Of course we are all for justice, even to one of these Brothers. At the same time, it is most deplorable that the perpetrator of such a horrid and disgusting crime—whoever he is—should go undetected and unpunished; and it is hard not to sympathise with the indignation of the working-classes of Lille, who loudly demand that the education of children shall be taken out of the hands of men who, in consequence of their vow of celibacy, are so liable to become victims of sexual perversion.

Rev. Forbes Phillips, the sensational vicar of Gorleston, has been preaching against the "Autocracy of Dissent" and pitching severely into the high-and-mightiness of leading Dissenters like Dr. Parker, Dr. Clifford, and President Hughes—the last of whom is accused of talking as though he almost held the keys of heaven. All this is very good fun for the Freethinker, who is naturally charmed to hear the beautiful opinions which the rival Christian sects hold of each other. We must, however, in common fairness, correct Mr. Phillips when he charges leading Dissenting members with having "appeared in the company of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and men like him" on the Liberation Society's platform. They never did so. Mr. Phillips is entirely misinformed. Dr. Parker and other "Liberationists" would have nothing to do with Mr. Bradlaugh in connection with the Liberation Society. They said so, they meant it, and they stuck to it; and Mr. Bradlaugh was not the man to obtrude himself where he was not desired. As far as we recollect, he only sat on the Liberation Society's platform once in his life. That once was enough—thanks to the bigoted conduct of the leading Nonconformists.

A sceptic was talking to a parson in a railway carriage. "I cannot understand any man being so ridiculous as to deny that there is a god," said the sky-pilot. "It is not so strange," replied the sceptic, "as to believe in two gods and a ghost."

The National Protestant League (Nottingham Lodge) has printed and published at one penny a sermon on "The Last Judgment"—which it calls "an extraordinary sermon"—preached by the Rev. Augustine Graham, Redemptorist Father, at St. Edward's Roman Catholic Church, Nottingham, on Sunday evening, March 12, 1899. According to this preacher, all men and women who get married at a Catholic church will go to heaven, and all men and women who get married at a Protestant church or a registry office will go to hell. All who go to Mass on Sunday will stand at last with the sheep—no doubt of that!—while all who never go to Mass will stand in with the goats. "Oh," the preacher exclaims, "I think there will be a lot of people lost!" And he expressly includes all who eat meat on Friday.

The Protestants are quite indignant at this Catholic preacher. Fancy the cheek of a "Popish" priest who declares (practically) that every Protestant is bound for hell! But do not the Protestants declare that every Freethinker is bound for the same place? And is not the difference between Catholic and Protestant bigotry merely one of direction?

The Rev. Donald Gotto, who is not a volunteer, but a paid soldier of Christ, probably with expectations of promotion and very little fear of actual danger, preached the other day to the Volunteers at Maldon, and in the course of his sermon he said: "It was not manly to sneer at religion—that was the work of a coward." We beg to differ from this reverend gentleman. It takes some courage, in a country like this, even to "sneer" at religion. There is social and political

ostracism to face, and the Blasphemy Laws on top of that, with the chance of a taste of Christian charity in the form of imprisonment. Parson Gotto should really be more accurate. It would do him good—at least, we hope so—to recollect that this is an age of reporters and newspapers, and that what is said in a church, where contradiction and criticism are not allowed, may be published outside and become the subject of free and open discussion.

New York has a population of about three and one-quarter millions, of whom about two hundred thousand—or one in sixteen—attend church. This is worse than London. It is high time that Jesus Christ arranged for his second advent, or Christianity will soon have to be advertised for.

The American clergy would dearly like to get rid of Colonel Ingersoll. He won't die, he won't get converted, and he won't stop lecturing to crowded houses. One man of God, Bishop E. B. Kephart, says that Ingersoll ought to be transported to the Island of Borneo, where the people have no religion, and left to witness the results of his own theory. But that is just where Bishop Kephart should go, if he is an honest Christian. Where the people have no religion is just the place for him to preach it. Ingersoll's business is where the people have a religion. Bishop Kephart must try again.

In 1813 it was provided in Spain that every nun then living should have a pension for life. Not one of them has died since. Anyhow, not a single death has been notified by the Roman Catholic authorities to the government. Consequently the Minister of Justice has had to kill them all at one fell swoop. There is not much cruelty in this act, for they only lived on paper, and he has only killed them with a stroke of the pen. He has signed a decree that the 1837 pensions shall all cease, unless the person interested can be proved to be alive.

A Battersea draper, who has a sale "now proceeding," keeps an eye on religious propaganda. On one window he has pasted the text, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Is this a warning to thieves and pickpockets? Or is it a prophetic hint as to the probable fate of the draper in consequence of that sale? He will pardon us for asking. We are a bit puzzled.

The St. George's (Ramsgate) *Parish Magazine* for this month contains the following: "The Sunday evening congregations on the last two Sundays have been small owing to the absence of regular members. This does not speak well for the religion of the absentees. They should at least attend Evensong, even if they may like to leave church before the sermon. It is becoming increasingly the fashion to go to church once only on Sundays. The truly religious are not content with this."

The vicar of Ramsgate, like a good many other vicars, is evidently becoming alarmed at the decrease in his congregations. He is, however, not quite up to date as regards the present fashion, which is not to attend church at all while there are other and much more attractive means of whiling away the time. A pleasant walk in a picturesque park, or by the seashore on a fine Sunday, is much preferable to sitting out long-winded discourses in a stuffy church. Then there are some parsons who make it a practice not to let their congregations out in time to secure a good seat at the band performances on Sunday evenings.

The *Hospital* has been discussing the Yankee "twang," which, by the way, is not universal. Take the Ingersoll family, for instance. The Colonel has very little of it—just a bit now and then when he talks like an American. Mrs. Ingersoll has just a piquant dash of it. Mrs. Brown, their married daughter, has absolutely no trace of it, nor did we detect it in her husband. Cultured society at Boston eschews it almost entirely. Many years ago, hearing Wentworth Higginson speak in London, we noticed how very precise and absolute he was in his pronunciation, and got a glimpse of what one of his fellow townsmen meant by saying of a certain old-country professor, "He speaks very good English for an Englishman."

It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the Yankee "twang" is not at all due to any peculiarity of the Yankee vocal organs. Our own explanation of it is as follows. A great many Yankeeisms are not really modern, but survivals. "Guess" is old English, so is "right here." Expressions of that kind were taken over to America by the early English settlers, and have survived there, though they have nearly died out here. Now the earliest settlers mostly came from Devonshire and Cornwall. The Devonshire man took his peculiar "er," which is common over all the Eastern States. The Cornishman took his habit of singing up to the end of his sentence, with emphasis on the last word, which also is common in the Eastern States. No doubt this peculiarity has been strengthened and prolonged by the assertiveness of a young and energetic people. But the root of the matter, we believe, is to be found in the linguistic character of the English that was first spoken in America.

Mere "accident," imitativeness, and habit count for so much in these matters. What are the racial or climatic differences between one English county and the next to it, that their native inhabitants talk such different dialects? You hear one dialect in West Yorkshire; go a mile off into East Lancashire, and you hear another. On one side of the river Tamar you hear the Devonshire dialect, and on the other side the Cornish. The Devonshire man uses the objective case in pronouns, even where he should use the nominative; the Cornishman uses the nominative, even where he should use the objective. The Devonshire man says "Her be gwain" for "she is going." The Cornishman says "Go along a' we" for "go along with us." Such fashions of speech are like fashions in clothes. Nobody knows who sets them, but they get vogue and continue, and in time they become almost a religion.

Reviewing Mr. Tighe Hopkins's new book, *An Idler in Old France*, the sober *Daily News*, which seems to be heated by the Clergy Relief Bill, speaks of "the hollowness, and even the grotesque insolence, of the Church's claim to be the guardian and teacher of morals." During the Middle Ages it says, filth was common amongst ecclesiastics, and "monks and secular priests dined, drank, swore, and fought like any lay rakes." Every one of them, however, was called of God and anointed of the Holy Ghost.

"There is no doubt at all," says the Hon. John Tudhope in the *British Weekly*, "that the President [Kruger] is an intensely religious man. I believe that, according to his light, he truly seeks Divine direction." But seeking seems to be one thing, and finding another, for Mr. Tudhope himself agrees with Sir Alfred Milner.

It is always soothing to our inexpugnable self-conceit to find that the ideas for which we are laboring, and have labored, are gaining ground, and, therefore, it is with a feeling of more than ordinary pleasure we note the *Church Gazette*, in its issue of June 17, referring to Paley's *Theory of the Universe* as being out of date.

"God commanded me to do this," said Bertha Haggerston Peterson, who shot John Whibley, shoemaker, at Biddenden, on February 5. Dr. Davies, Superintendent of the Kent County Asylum, testified that the prisoner was suffering from strong delusions, and held the belief that she was acting directly under divine direction in murdering Whibley. The jury returned a verdict accordingly, and the prisoner was directed to be detained during her Majesty's pleasure. These divine commissions are no longer valid in this part of the world.

Stephen Sheppard Maguth, clergyman of the Church of England and quack doctor, is charged with causing the death of Harry Arthur Baker, aged seven, at Wandsworth. Prisoner sold pills at 1s. 1½d. a box and prescribed for diseases. He treated the deceased boy for ulcerated throat when it was a case of diphtheria. The reverend gentleman is in a tight corner, and a lot of prayer may be necessary to extricate him.

At Guthrie, Okla., U.S.A., on May 25, an aged revival preacher, the Rev. H. H. Baldwin, was killed while conducting a service. After the hymns and a prayer he gave out his text from the Bible, and just as he was appealing to sinners to turn to the Lord a crash of thunder came, and a brilliant flash of lightning almost blinded the occupants of the pews. When the confusion abated, the minister was stretched out on the floor—dead! Evidently "Providence" thought a little of that intended sermon was quite enough.

After welcoming Sarah Bernhardt at Shakespeare's native town in the name of the whole English-speaking world, Marie Corelli opened a Church bazaar at Henley-in-Ardennes. It would have added to the success of the show if she had brought her old friend Satan along. Apparently she keeps him for exclusively aristocratic circles.

The Cineograph has been brought to bear upon the Ober Ammergau Passion Play, and the visitors at the Westminster Aquarium may now see twenty-five pictures of the career of Jesus Christ, including the Crucifixion. Had this invention been in existence in the first century of our era, there would have been actual snap-shots of his trial, punishment, death, resurrection, and ascension. On the whole, it seems to us that J. C. came on earth too soon. Had he postponed his advent till now, he would have left unimpeachable evidence of his history. As it is, everything about him is "wrept in mystery."

Darwin destroyed the old doctrine of fixity of species, and with it the doctrine of special creation. This fact has been emphasized by Dr. Maxwell Masters, who presided at the International Conference on Hybridisation recently held at Chiswick. No one, he remarked, could draw a definite line between species, genera, or varieties. "Species" was no longer "a sort of sacrosanct thing," and the scientific botanists and growers were not to be deterred by ancient prejudices.

Masters stated that "Still, to so great an extent was religious prejudice carried, that nurserymen were afraid of exhibiting plants as hybrids, and so they introduced plants which they had reared in their own nurseries as having come from the Cape and other places." Such is the genial influence of religion on the development of science.

The *Railway Signal* reports an address delivered "at our Conference" in Exeter Hall on Wednesday morning, April 26, by the Rev. G. H. C. MacGregor. No wonder there are so many accidents if this is the sort of stuff that railway servants are in the habit of listening to. Mr. MacGregor takes a very low estimate of their intelligence, or perhaps his own intelligence is too low to let him take a higher view of theirs. He reminded his hearers that Jesus Christ was "King over their minds." "The intellect," he said, "has to be laid at the feet of Jesus." Well, if Mr. MacGregor laid his there, Jesus would be puzzled how to pick it up. He would have to see it first.

"Before father, mother, wife, or child—Jesus first," exclaims this man of God. This is good advice from a professional standpoint. For when Jesus looks in the man of God looks in with him—and takes the subscription.

Mr. MacGregor denounced drinking and smoking. "A man has no right," he said, "to make a chimney of himself." Apparently he has full right to make a fool of himself. Jesus didn't smoke—he had no chance to; but he drank the liquor of his time and country, and even manufactured a lot of wine to keep a marriage feast going. Mr. MacGregor seems to imagine that his hearers don't read the Bible. Well, perhaps they don't, and that is why they listen to him.

The Bishop of Bristol receives "disgraceful" letters, and says his heart is nearly broken. It is not quite shattered, though. We dare say he will live to a great old age and squeeze through the needle's eye afterwards.

Jews in England have to keep two Sabbaths, their own and that of the Gentiles; the first by choice, and the second under compulsion. Many of them find this a sad handicapping in the race of life, and a controversy is going on in Jewish circles as to whether they should make their Sabbath coincide with the Gentile Sunday. According to the Chief Rabbi, it would be "in opposition to the word of God" to do so. That ought to settle the question. But will it? Why, even the Chief Rabbi may change his view of the word of God if he finds a large majority in favor of the mooted alteration.

"A Presbyterian Elder," writing in the *Northern Whig*, pours scorn upon the Church clergy who trickle a little consecrated earth on coffins at the words "Earth to earth." "When one Church," he says, "can make holy water and another holy clay, if they would just unite and consecrate the whole country, land and water, it might produce better crops, and certainly less weeds and thistles." This is good as far as it goes. But what about the holy wine in which Presbyterians take the communion? Is that any better than holy water or holy earth?

With reference to Canon Knox Little's letter in the *Times*, regarding England to war with the Transvaal, the *Morning Leader* says that "the persistence with which the clerical crusader turns up to put in his word whenever the country has to make a choice between justice and violence is really remarkable." But why remarkable, thou gallant little Radical contemporary? Religion and militarism have always gone well together. Don't you know it? Or don't you like to say it? Even according to the Bible it was religion that prompted the first quarrel and the first murder in the world.

A cricket match was played on Sunday at Acton Athletic Ground between the Playgoers' Club eleven and a Lyceum Theatre eleven. To-day (July 23) another match is announced for the same place between the Playgoers' Club eleven and Mr. George Wilson's eleven. This is a most deplorable desecration of the Lord's Day. What are the Bishops doing? Where is the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes? What is the use of stopping the Prince of Wales's Sunday hot roll if cricket matches are allowed galore? Something must be done to put an end to this awful state of things, or England will soon be swept by a great tidal wave or visited with some other mark of the divine displeasure.

The *Phoenix* prints an imaginary "Sell's Directory of Unregistered Telegraph Addresses." Amongst them are the following: "Dr. Parker—Damn, London," and "Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—Truth, London."

Enthusiasts who expect the millennium shortly do not reckon with human nature. The average man is still too near the brute to become a saint and a philosopher in the twinkling of an eye. Watch the average man eating or drinking, and you will see how much of the crude animal there is still left in him. Civilisation is as yet little more than a veneer; scratch it, and you soon come to the

Man soon shows the savage, too, in his amusements; and how easy it is to awaken the old thirst for blood! For this reason we are in favor of a more rigorous suppression of all inhuman sports. We should like to see every Government stopping such things as the recent fight between a lion and a bull at Roubaix. It was splendidly arranged and advertised, and an immense crowd of well-dressed people patronised it, the seats ranging from five shillings to five pounds each. Every one of the spectators brought his own old inherited savage to have a treat, and witness a big fight, with the tearing of flesh, the spurting of blood, and a final death. Such "sports" demoralise a people, turn their faces backwards towards the beast they should be hastening from, and prepare a rich harvest of brutality in all the fields of life. Rather than allow such spectacles, it would be better to put them down with a high hand, even if that necessitated shooting some of the too eager "sportsmen."

Why will the Socialists go on coquetting with Christianity? They don't do so on the continent, but they do so very badly in England, where the average man, even as a Socialist, is too muddle-headed and inaccessible to ideas. Down at West Ham, for instance, Councillor Terrett treated an outdoor audience to a summary of Mr. Keir Hardie's spirited attack on Lord Overtoun, the benevolent patron of Christianity in Glasgow, who subventions churches and preachers out of the profits of "sweating." At the close of his address, however, Councillor Terrett "wished to point out that, while attacking the man, he was not attacking the religion he professed." Afterwards, in reply to a question, he said that "Socialists did not attack Christianity, because if the principles of Christianity were applied to the present system there would be no need for Socialists to denounce it." All this, of course, is very shallow to anyone who is in the least degree a thinker. A French or German Socialist would laugh at it. What are the principles of Christianity? They only exist as set forth by the Christian Churches. It is ridiculous to pick out isolated texts from the New Testament, and hold them up as the principles of Christianity. Every student of the Bible knows that there are quite opposite texts in its pages. We beg to ask Councillor Terrett whether he is prepared, as a Socialist, as a citizen, or as a man of common sense, to stand by (say) the Sermon on the Mount. Is he prepared to advocate taking no thought for the morrow, is he ready to preach and practise universal almsgiving, is he willing that all men should give over laboring for the meat that perisheth, is he going to preach the destruction of capital by laying up no more treasure on earth? It seems to us that Councillor Terrett, who calls Lord Overtoun a canting Christian, is himself rather liable to the same designation. And there is less excuse for him, because his canting is so gratuitous. Lord Overtoun's canting is at least a business policy. He makes a pile of money out of it. We don't say it is honest; we only say it isn't downright silly.

Mr. Bart Kennedy, who is writing "A Man Adrift" in the *Sun*, refers sympathetically to the hospitality of the Indians. He describes a potlach—a great feast—among the Siwash. These "heathen" would save up, not to enrich themselves, but to give a splendid entertainment to their friends, and even to strangers. To give one of these entertainments was the great ambition of the Indian's life. The missionaries are referred to as the great drawback to the life there: "They were a lot of loafing hypocrites, who corrupted the Indians, and who tried to spring a religion upon them that was not as good as their own."

A great many among those who have never lived in Utah, and those who never lived anywhere except in Utah, suppose there is a very wide difference in the views and practices of the Mormon church and those of other churches. Having lived both in the East and here, we are better prepared to judge this matter than either of the above-named classes, and we say without hesitation that they are all chips of the same block. They disagree and quarrel with each other, but it is for the same thing, and when it comes to an attack upon anything that savors of free thought, free speech, or free action they are all a unit. On one thing particularly they do agree, and that is on their so-called Sabbath-breaking. They each realise that they cannot prosper unless they can get the people to attend church. They also agree that people will not attend church so long as there is a more attractive place to go to. They also each fully realise that the Sunday resort is more attractive than their church services. So they are united in their efforts to shut up all places of rest and recreation on the Sabbath day, to the end that the people may be compelled to either stay at home or go to church. As we write, the Presbyterians, in general assembly, are protesting against Sabbath desecration, while the *Deseret News* and the Mayor of Salt Lake City are clamoring against the same thing. There was a time when men were compelled to go to church or pay a heavy fine. A free-thinking people made that so unpopular that it had to be abolished, but don't think for one moment that the same condition would not obtain again could the churches have their way. Remember, too, that when we say churches we mean all churches, for they are all alike in this respect.—*Living Issues*, Salt Lake City, Utah.

To the Friends of Freethought.

WITH the death of the late Charles Bradlaugh it may be said that the "heroic period" of English Freethought came to an end. Unless an unforeseen religious reaction should occur, it is hardly probable that the Freethought party will again be the object of such an outburst of persecution as that which occasioned Mr. Bradlaugh's great parliamentary struggle and my own imprisonment for "blasphemy." From the time when I became President of the National Secular Society, after Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation early in 1890, I have always seen and felt that the triumphs of Freethought in the immediate future were to be won in the field of organisation. It was the recognition of this truth which prompted me to devise and incorporate the Secular Society, Limited, which nullifies the worst effects of the old Blasphemy Laws, and affords full legal security for the receipt and expenditure of donations or bequests for Secular purposes. Having accomplished that task, I turn to a matter of no less importance. What I now seek to do is to organise our literary propaganda on a proper and sufficient basis. Hitherto it has been carried on at haphazard. There has been plenty of enterprise, but no resources, and the union of the two is requisite to efficiency.

I propose to start with the *Freethinker* and the publishing business connected with it. Both have been carried on by me for many years without the capital to develop them. This has entailed great and undue labor upon me; and since the loss of my invaluable colleague, the late J. M. Wheeler, I have found that my increased editorial work, in addition to lecturing in London and the provinces, seeing after the publication of books and pamphlets, and superintending the general affairs of our party, is really too much for me. Moreover, it prevents me from giving adequate attention to important matters which belong to the President's province. Thus the vital interests of our movement suffer; and I believe the friends of Freethought will see the advisability of a speedy alteration of this unsatisfactory state of things.

The *Freethinker* more than pays its way, without advertising or any sort of commercial management; and with these advantages it should become a valuable property. I have also a considerable stock of Freethought books and pamphlets. They are all saleable, some quickly, others slowly. This side of the business, with capital behind it, would be really profitable—commercially, by yielding an excellent return on outlay, and morally, by multiplying and improving the supply of Freethought literature to the public. Of course, it is the *Freethinker* which carries everything else along, and the first object should be to extend its circulation. This can only be done by means of capital. I therefore propose to form a Limited Liability Company to take over the *Freethinker* and my publishing stock at a valuation; one half payable in cash, and the other half in shares bearing no dividend until the other shareholders receive at least five per cent., after which mine would rank on a par with other shares. I would also enter into a contract with the Company to conduct the *Freethinker* and supervise the publishing business; and should be quite content to let a considerable part of my remuneration depend upon the Company's success.

A capital of £5,000 would enable the Directors to settle with me and provide ample working capital for the present. The shares should be £1 each, payable at intervals during a year, as might be found necessary. Further capital could be raised as the Company developed a profitable business.

I have already mentioned this matter to some friends,

and have received several promises of support, on condition that the whole 5,000 shares, or a reasonable number, are subscribed for, and that not more than 10s. per share be called up in 1899. I now lay the matter before the whole Freethought party, as far as it is represented by the general body of my readers. It is my desire to have this Company formed soon, if it is to be formed at all; and I therefore invite Freethinkers all over the kingdom, or even in other lands where they may be scattered, to let me know at their earliest convenience what number of £1 shares they are prepared to take on the foregoing conditions.

Those who can take only a few shares, or even one, should not hesitate to do so. The larger the number enlisted in this enterprise the better. It will give them a tangible interest in our movement, and, to the extent of their investment, a certain influence in the conduct of its operations.

Perhaps I may be pardoned for thinking that I have some right to expect a handsome response. I have suffered imprisonment for Freethought, I have fought in the front of its battles, I have been elected year after year as President of its national organisation. What I am proposing will render my own service more fruitful to the cause. But it will do more than this. It will place our literary propaganda upon a proper footing; it will enable us to face well-organised Superstition on something like terms of equality; and it will lift the leading Freethought journal in England, and all that is connected with it, above the accidents of my own personality, so that whether I stand or fall, or live or die, the Flag will be kept flying.

G. W. FOOTE.

28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., July 12, 1899.

P.S.—The following are the promises of support already received, the figure after each name indicating the number of £1 shares:—

Previously acknowledged:—

Mr. George Anderson, 500; A London Friend, 500; Mr. Horace S. Seal, 200; Mr. Fr. Esseman, 100; A Scotch Friend, 50; Mr. S. Hartmann, 30; Messrs. John and James McGlashan, 20; Mr. Richard Johnson, 20; Mr. C. Girtanner, 20; Mr. T. E. Green, 10; Mr. George Dixon, 10; Mr. C. Daviss, 10; A Gateshead Friend, 10; Dr. T. R. Allinson, 10; Mr. G. J. Warren, 5; Mr. Joseph Barry, 5; Mr. Jas. Partridge, 5; Mr. A. L. Brame, 5; Mr. S. M. Peacock, 5; Mr. W. H. Spivey, 3; Mr. M. Christopher, 3; Shares to Mr. G. W. Foote (say), 1,000. Total, 2,500.

This week's acknowledgments:—

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, 25; Mr. W. Hardaker, 20; Mr. Joseph Guy, 15; Mr. B. L. Coleman, 10; Mr. L. Gjemre, 10; Mr. William Bailey, 10; Mr. Peter Garvie, 10; Mr. R. A. Strange, 10; Mr. G. Langridge, 10; Mr. Richard Green, 5; Mr. A. B., 5; Mr. G. E. Lupton, 5; Mr. J. D. Leggett, 5; Mr. J. H., 5; Mr. T. Ollerenshaw, 3; Dragon, 2; Miss E. M. Vance, 2; Mr. L. Leggett, 2; Mr. R. Alger, 2; Mr. G. Freeman, 2; Mr. T. A. Spivey, 2; Mr. C. Shepherd, 1; Mr. Harold Elliot, 1; Mr. A. G. Lye, 2; Mr. John Sumner, 1; Mr. John Roberts, 3; Mr. J. Maling, 5; Mrs. Mary Ann Button, 5; Mr. David Mitchell, 5; Mr. Jesse Oliver Bates, 10; Mr. James Fulton, 10; Mr. H. A. Cumber, 5; Mr. C. E. Brammer, 5; Mrs. Nattie Dye, 5; Mr. G. H., 1; Mr. E. G. H., 1. Total for this week, 220.

Special Postscript.

A GREAT many Freethinkers who can afford to take shares in this Company have not yet responded to my appeal. May I beg them, if they intend to do so, to communicate as quickly as possible? I am anxious to lose no time, but to form the Company forthwith, so that operations may begin at the opening of the winter season in October. And there really ought to be no difficulty in doing this. Freethinkers should reflect on the great efforts that are being made by the various religious bodies at present, and bestir themselves in the promotion of their own cause. What is wanted is resources, without which effort is comparatively fruitless.

G. W. FOOTE.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 23, Victoria Park, Freethought Demonstration, 3.30.

To Correspondents.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.
- G. LANGRIDGE, who will take ten shares in the projected Company, says: "I sincerely hope better fortune will attend you in this appeal, than has hitherto been the case, when through the *Freethinker's* columns you have done your best to get the easy-going ones to assist in the useful appeals you have made. I wish you every success."
- DRAGON.—Thanks. The project will soon be carried through successfully if all do what they can. We should much like to see numerous applications for a share or two from the mass of the party.
- RICHARD GREEN.—Thanks for your promise of support in the new enterprise. Glad to know that you were at the "splendid meeting" in Hyde Park, and to have your opinion that these Demonstrations are "quite the thing to do." You would not have "bothered" us by accosting us there. Quite the contrary.
- A. A. KOHN informs us that, after the Freethought Demonstration was over in Regent's Park, the crowd hooted the Christian Evidence gang off the ground in consequence of their blackguardism, and three cheers were given for the late Charles Bradlaugh and Secularism.
- B.—We are obliged for your reference to the famous Paine motto in the *Rights of Man*, but it was given in the *Freethinker* some weeks ago.
- T. OLLERENSHAW.—Pleased to have an application for shares, and such a cordial letter, from a veteran friend of Freethought like yourself. You say that "the wealthier Freethinkers ought to invest, as there should be every prospect of a good percentage on their investment."
- I. M.—We have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Edwards and other friends of the West London Branch did all they could for the success of the Hyde Park Demonstration, which, we are glad to hear, is likely to do the Branch much good. By the way, your letter is dated July 12—Wednesday, and reached us after last week's *Freethinker* was printed.
- T. S. SANDERS.—Your letter is more suited to a Christian Socialist paper. Freethinkers, as a rule, have little sympathy with the maxim, "Resist not evil." It seems to most of them a counsel of sloth and cowardice.
- S. HOLMAN.—Your card arrived too late for last week's *Freethinker*, though the delay may not have been your fault. Kindly write out your Lecture Notices on a separate slip of paper, instead of mixing it up in a letter. We are pleased to hear that the Porth Branch is making some headway. "Mimmermus" is a much younger man than Mr. Foote.
- C. HEATON.—Sorry we are unable to give you the address of any such person in Dublin.
- A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to hear of your large meeting at Kilburn on Sunday evening. Sorry to learn that the Christians are doing all in their power to deprive the Freethinkers of that station. Mr. Schaller is, as you say, a brave and competent chairman, and may be trusted to do what can be done to defeat the Christian tactics. Your own reply to the police-sergeant was perfectly just.
- JAMES B. BOOTH.—If you read Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God* (6d.), you will see that you are in error as to that great man's opinions. Huxley did not say that "it is impossible to account for natural phenomena except through the agency of God"—or anything like it. Someone has been misleading you. You say that "matter came into existence somehow." Kindly tell us how you know that. With regard to Spiritualism, we have more than once offered to form a committee of Freethinkers to investigate the alleged phenomena; but our offer has not been accepted, and probably never will be.
- P. SABINE.—A sensible letter. All's well that ends well. We are glad to hear that you will continue to conduct the Peckham Rye meetings for the Camberwell Branch "until the Peckham people prove that they are in a position to keep a Branch going."
- T. IRWIN.—Professor St. George Mivart did not retract the views set forth in his articles on "Happiness in Hell." He was not ordered to do so. He was simply ordered to stop writing. That order he obeyed, not on the ground that he was wrong, but on the ground that his articles were inopportune. He was what the man in the street calls "too previous." Besides, he is a layman, and the Catholic Church never did like to see laymen discussing religion.
- S. H. KEWLEY.—Mr. George Wise has a romantic memory, unless our own is very defective. It would be novel information to us if he specified when and where he met Mr. Foote in debate—that is to say, a set debate, in the proper sense of the word. On one or two occasions he has opposed Mr. Foote for ten minutes at the end of a lecture, taking advantage of the opportunity offered to all who were present.
- MARY ANN BUTTON, who will take five shares in the new Company, says: "I do so with full confidence in you as its promoter, also with the belief that a Company will be better able to deal with the circulation of the *Freethinker* and the publication of Freethought literature."

- H. A. CUMBER writes: "Your scheme for converting the *Freethinker*, etc., into a Limited Liability Company should meet with instant success, even with a prospect of only a small dividend, or small prospect of dividends at all. I will take five shares on any conditions you like. And if a miracle is not required, you will make it pay. Upon my word, a man like you, who has sacrificed ease and pleasure to point out the severe and unpopular side of truth, ought to be supported. Had you gone into the commercial world, or a profession, you would be a rich man. You ought to get 4,000 Freethinkers to take up the 4,000 shares in no time. It is time something was done to rid you of worrying details." This correspondent says he has been living at Southend for six weeks without being able to get a *Freethinker* for love or money. At last, however, he discovered the "redoubtable Sykes," of whose shop he gives a humorous description.
- J. SUMNER.—Glad to have your best wishes for the new scheme. There are hundreds who could easily take one share, as well as scores who could easily take more. If all did their share, large or small, the movement would make far more rapid progress.
- J. O. BATES (Gloucester) writes: "I am very pleased to see your sensible and I might say necessary proposal to form a Limited Liability Company for the *Freethinker*, etc. I have spent nearly all my little pile in starting this Vegetarian business, but I will very gladly take ten shares with you, and I have no doubt that the whole will be speedily applied for, and more also."
- R. LAWSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.
- NATTIE DYE, who will take five shares in the projected Company, and actually sends £2 10s. in anticipation, writes: "I trust the movement will meet with the success it most certainly deserves. You ought to be supported in every possible way. What should we do without you?"
- S. A. S.—Thanks for the cutting. See "Acid Drops."
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Torch of Reason—Brann's Iconoclast—Two Worlds—Boston Investigator—Blue Grass Blade—Yarmouth Times—Ethical World—Freethought Magazine—Isle of Man Times—Northern Whig—Truthseeker (New York)—South London Press—De Vrije Gedachte—Essex Daily News—West Ham Citizen—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Progressive Thinker—Sun—Yarmouth Mercury.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance. It being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription expires, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Sugar Plums.

THE third of the Freethought Demonstrations was held on Sunday afternoon in Regent's Park. Mr. Wilson's brake, which formed the platform, was decorated (so to speak) by several members of the fair sex, including Mrs. Foote and her three young daughters. Mr. H. Snell acted as chairman, and made a capital introductory speech, which was evidently much appreciated. Mr. A. B. Moss followed with an admirable address, and then came Mr. Cohen—rather pale after his recent illness. He delivered a rattling speech, though, and was warmly applauded. By this time the crowd had grown to great dimensions, and it went on increasing while Mr. Foote was on his legs, much to the detriment of other meetings in the vicinity. There was an enthusiastic applause when Mr. Foote concluded, and the N.S.S. party drove off amidst cheers and the waving of hats.

The Christian Evidence people who follow the N.S.S. brake about were unable at first to get their conveyance into the Park, and had to speak from their ordinary platform. But they got their conveyance in at last by flatly lying to the superintendent. The lie was worthy of them, and specially worthy of the particular blackguard who told it. The speakers on their platform are incapable of anything but scurrilous personalities, and they are finding that such diet falls on the least fastidious public. On Sunday afternoon they started with a good-sized meeting, which dwindled away as the Secular meeting kept growing, until at last it was a mere handful.

The fourth of these Freethought Demonstrations will be held this afternoon (July 23) in Victoria Park. The list of

speakers includes Mr. Foote, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Snell, and there is sure to be a vast audience. But the bigger it is the better, and to that end we hope the local Freethinkers will give the utmost possible publicity to the gathering.

Mr. Charles Watts has reprinted the Bible Biographies he recently contributed to our columns, under the title of *Men After God's Own Heart*. The price is twopence, and the publishers are Watts & Co. We hope this good propagandist pamphlet will be well circulated.

The South Shields Branch goes on picnic to-day to Holywell Dene. The party starts from the Ferry at 12.45, and from North Shields (opposite) at 1. Tickets can be had from R. Chapman, 30 Madras-street.

The Liverpool Branch's picnic to Chester on Sunday was most enjoyable. A few Failsworth friends were at Chester, and sat down to tea with their Liverpool comrades.

The East London Branch has an Excursion to Stanford Rivers on Bank Holiday Sunday, August 6. The trip will be by four-horse brakes. Tickets are 3s. 6d. each, and there will be a hot dinner at 1s. and a tea at 9d., both optional. They can be obtained from Mr. Haines, 212 Mile End-road, or at the open-air lectures.

The *Yarmouth Mercury* gives a long and fair report of what must have been a most excellent lecture by Mr. Smith in the local Freethinkers' Hall. Full of facts and cogent arguments, it must do good to those who read it—and a great many must read it who never look at a Freethought paper.

The Sunday opening of the Crystal Palace is a step in the right direction. Sunday music, Sunday concerts, and Sunday recreation generally, all lead towards the ultimate secularisation of "the Lord's Day"—that is to say, the parson's day. It is good to note these signs of progress after the late (successful) agitation against two Sunday newspapers.

Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* does not reach us regularly from Melbourne. However, it is always welcome when it arrives. The last number to hand reproduces two of Mr. Foote's articles from the *Freethinker*. Mr. Symes's own pen is as active and as bright as ever, but he does not seem to have much literary help from others. Of course we shall be delighted to see him when he visits England as promised.

Camberwell Vestry has redeemed the tithe rent charges on the land on which the Vestry Hall, the Art Gallery, and the Central Library stand, for the sum of £42. Mr. A. B. Moss, who is a member of the Vestry, opposed giving £42 to the rector of Camberwell, and his speech is fairly reported in the *South London Press*.

London Freethinkers should make a note of Sunday, August 27. On that day their annual excursion takes place under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive. A special train will run from London Bridge and Victoria to Littlehampton, returning late in the evening, after allowing a full day at the seaside. And the tickets are only 3s. each for adults and 1s. 6d. for children. Given fine weather, and it is sure to be a most enjoyable trip. Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, Mr. Cohen, and other well-known Secularists, intend to join the excursion. It is to be a sort of big family party.

"Is that God's ribbon in the sky
To tie the worlds together?"
A sweet child asked
On seeing nature's rainbow belt
Worn after rainy weather,
"Or is it some of heaven's light
A-peeking through the floor
Or at the open door;
I wish I knew,
Don't you?"

She paused a moment,
Wondered, thought;
Then, with a long-drawn sigh,
Was heard the old, old cry:
"I wish God told us more,
Don't you?"

—Boston Transcript.

According to Mr. Augustus J. C. Hare, who has been interviewed by Mr. Blathwayt for *Great Thoughts*, Mr. Gladstone was a great disbeliever in Cardinal Manning. He said he knew for a fact that Pope Pius IX. was against declaring the doctrine of *personal infallibility*, but Manning fell at his feet and implored him to do it, and sorely against his will he consented. This is a very curious story. It suggests the thought that Manning had an idea of being Pope himself some day, and wanted to have that personal infallibility doctrine ready-made for his own use.

The Alleged Conquest of Canaan.

DURING the long Egyptian domination of Syria and Palestine, extending over a period of not less than four hundred years (B.C. 1630-1200), the Israelites, as has been shown, had not conquered and taken possession of Canaan, though, according to the Bible chronology, they entered that country and exterminated the original inhabitants in B.C. 1603 and in B.C. 1457. Hence, assuming that the Hebrews were a great and warlike nation, as represented in the book of Joshua, and that they did at some time achieve the conquest of Palestine, as therein described, they could not have appeared in the land until after 1200 B.C. Such a late occupation of the country would, however, flatly contradict the events recorded in Bible "history"; for it would curtail every reign, judgeship, or other period of time mentioned in the Old Testament, and would prove all the inspired statements respecting such periods to be grossly exaggerated, if not altogether fictitious.

But the difficulties connected with the Egyptian suzerainty of Palestine would not even then be reconciled. If the Israelites entered Canaan after the Egyptian monarchs found themselves unable to maintain their dominion over that country (say, in 1100 B.C.), such a late arrival would, no doubt, explain both the non-mention of the Hebrew tribes by the Egyptian kings and the silence of the books of Joshua and Judges respecting the Egyptian domination. But—and this is a most important point—we should expect to hear of the Egyptian rule in Palestine in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are stated to have resided in that land for 215 years prior to the sojourning in Egypt. Supposing the history of these patriarchs to be true, one or other, if not all three, would be in Canaan during several of the long and sanguinary wars which periodically devastated that country, and they must have suffered, like the other inhabitants, from the lawlessness which invariably attended such conflicts. There is, however, not a single word in the Hebrew records concerning any of these invasions. On the contrary, the land is represented as perfectly peaceful, and very thinly peopled, during the whole of this period. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in complete security, and led about immense flocks and herds from one part of the country to another without the smallest interference from anyone. No one, apparently, owned the extensive pasture land which these patriarchs freely appropriated; in fact, the few scattered inhabitants were rather afraid of them than otherwise. This description of the country is proved by the Egyptian monuments to be in complete variance with what is known to have been its actual condition.

We do hear, it is true, of one invasion; but not by an Egyptian monarch—and this fact, considered with a score of others of a similar character, stamps the whole history in Genesis as fictitious. We are told (chap. xi.) that the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar had for twelve years served Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and, upon their revolting from his authority, that Chedorlaomer came to Canaan, and defeated them in a battle near the Dead Sea, after which he departed with much spoil and many prisoners, among the latter being Abraham's nephew, Lot. Now, apart from the fact that we have overwhelming evidence proving that Canaan in these early times was subject to Egypt, we find upon looking at the map that Babylonia was separated from Palestine by five hundred miles of desert, and that Elam, the kingdom, said to belong to Chedorlaomer, was on the further side of Babylonia. It would be simply ridiculous, then, to suppose that the king of a country so distant as Elam could have, and maintain, a suzerainty over cities in the south of Palestine, which were by comparison next door to Egypt. We know, further, that the kings of Elam had quite enough to do to protect themselves from their powerful neighbours, the Assyrians and Babylonians, whose territories, besides, completely blocked the way to Canaan.

But, notwithstanding the alleged conquest of the land by the Israelites under Joshua, we find from the Bible itself that it was never conquered at all—that is, in the way represented. According to the most ancient Hebrew records, "the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their

gods" (Judges iii. 5-6). The account of the conquest of Canaan in the book of Joshua is a much later composition, and is, on the face of it, fictitious. This is confirmed by the following statements in the first chapter of Judges:—

1. 19.—The men of Judah "could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley" in the district allotted to them "because they had chariots of iron."

1. 21.—"And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem, unto this day."

1. 27.—"And Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, nor of Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land."

1. 29.—"And Ephraim drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them."

1. 30.—"Zebulun drove not out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them."

1. 31-32.—"Asher drove not out the inhabitants of Acccho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphek, nor of Rehob; but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land."

1. 33.—"Naphtali drove not out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anoth; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land."

1. 34-35.—"And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the hill country; for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley; but the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalvim."

In Joshua xvii. 16 the men of Ephraim and Manasseh, after the alleged conquest of Canaan and the division of the land, are represented as saying:—

"The hill country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they that are in Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are in the valley of Jezreel."

It will thus be seen that at least eight of the Hebrew tribes were living among the Canaanites whom they are supposed to have exterminated. Also, among the cities mentioned as still inhabited by those people are Jerusalem, Taanach, Dor, Megiddo, Gezer, and Aphek, which are named in the list in Joshua xii. as having been subjugated by the Israelites some time before. Reading between the lines, we find that the Canaanites and Amorites held possession of the greater part of the country, including the plains and valleys and the most ancient towns, and that they were too strong to be easily dispossessed. The presence of so many of the original inhabitants in Canaan called, of course, for some explanation, and this the editors who revised the historical books have taxed their ingenuity to supply. These nations were left, we are told, "to prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein," and also to be "as thorns in the sides" of the Hebrews, and "their gods to be a snare unto them." For these excellent reasons "the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua." Another good reason for not expelling the Canaanites was "to teach the Israelites war" (Judges ii. 3, 22, 23; iii. 2). Thus did the Lord with his usual loving kindness leave enemies to worry his chosen people.

If we come down, now, to an undoubtedly historical period, we shall get some idea of the peoples inhabiting Canaan. In the year 676 B.C. Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, came to Palestine and held a levee which was attended by twenty-two kings of Syria and Cyprus. These included the kings of the following localities in Canaan: Tyre, Judah, Edom, Moab, Gaza, Askelon, Ekron, Gebal, Arvad, Samaria, Ammon, and Ashdod. Here we have twelve independent sovereigns who each exercised authority over a certain district in Palestine or its environs. The extent of the territories belonging to Judah and Samaria (which represent the Israelites) is not, of course, recorded; but it is obvious that neither kingdom could form more than a small portion of the whole land. And this, no doubt, was the case from the very first.

The story of the Hebrew tribes coming from Egypt,

passing through the Red Sea, wandering for forty years in the wilderness, miraculously crossing the Jordan, fighting against and defeating thirty-one kings, and then taking possession of the land—this story must be set down as a Jewish fabrication. The Israelites did, it is true, suffer four hundred years of oppression; but this was in Canaan, not in Egypt. Looking at all the evidence, the fact forces itself upon us that the majority of the Hebrew tribes formed part of the inhabitants of the land during the whole period of the Egyptian domination. But, it may be asked, how comes it that the Egyptian conquerors make no mention of them in any of their inscriptions? and how comes it, also, that the writers of the Hebrew historical books appear to know nothing of the Egyptian invaders? The first omission is easily accounted for; the tribes had not in the days of the Egyptian suzerainty assumed the name of Israelites or Hebrews, and they were, besides, but a number of insignificant shepherds. The tradition of their taking the name of "Israel" is preserved in their writings; but the event is antedated and ascribed to a mythical ancestor, Jacob. We have two versions of this story, each independent of, and flatly contradicting, the other.

As regards the complete silence of the Hebrew writers respecting the Egyptians, it would appear that, in the first place, no records were kept of this period. The historical books of the Old Testament were, we know, compiled from more ancient writings composed by men in various reigns who called themselves seers or prophets. Thus we read, for example:—

"Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the History of Samuel the seer, and in the History of Nathan the prophet, and in the History of Gad the seer" (1 Chronicles xxix. 29).

The "histories" here mentioned have not been preserved; probably they have, for obvious reasons, been carefully destroyed. At any rate, Samuel, Nathan, and Gad are the earliest Hebrew writers of whom mention is made, and they lived at a comparatively late period. The books attributed to Moses were compiled many centuries after their time. In the next place, it appears tolerably certain that no written Hebrew language existed in Canaan in such early times. We know that about 1450 B.C. the Babylonian system of writing was employed in that country for letters and despatches. The monument of Mesha (viz., the Moabite Stone), about 850 B.C., is the earliest example we have of a narrative in Phœnician or old Hebrew characters, though it may, perhaps, be conceded that this system came into use as early as the time of Samuel, two centuries prior to the date mentioned.

The oldest document in the Bible is the Song of Deborah (Judges v.). In this song are named the Hebrew tribes who did, or did not, come to battle for Yahveh. These tribes are given as follows:—

"Out of Ephraim came down they whose root is in Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy peoples; out of Machir came down governors.....And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah.....By the watercourses of Reuben there were great resolves of heart.....Gilead abode beyond Jordan; and Dan, why did he remain in ships? Asher sat still at the haven of the sea.....Zebulun was a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death, and Naphtali, upon the high places of the field" (verses 14-18).

According to this ancient song, the tribes that took the name of "Israel" were Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh (viz., Machir and Gilead), Issachar, Reuben, Dan, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. These were evidently ancient inhabitants of the land. There can be little doubt that it was the intention of the composer of the song to name all the Israelitish tribes; yet Judah, Levi, Simeon, and Gad seem to be unknown. The first three had not yet appeared, though it is doubtful whether Simeon was ever a tribe at all. As to the fourth, Mesha tells us in his inscription that "the men of Gad lived in the land of Ataroth from of old"—the locality named being on the borders of Moab. And, since the name "Gad" was identical with that of the Canaanitish god of "fortune," there can be no doubt that the men of this tribe belonged to the original inhabitants of the land. Even according to the Bible itself the name Gad was connected with the land of Moab before the Israelites are said to have entered Canaan. In Numbers xxxiii., among the list of stopping-places in the neighborhood of Moab, we read:—

"And they journeyed from Obboth, and pitched in Iye-abarim, in the border of Moab. And they journeyed from Iyim, and pitched in Dibon-gad" (verses 44, 45).

Mesha in his inscription calls himself a Dibonite—a native of the city of Dibon. The resting-place of the Israelites would thus be "Dibon of Gad," or "Dibon in the territory of Gad"—the latter being a Canaanitish tribe.

The story of the Hebrew tribes being descended from twelve sons of one man, Jacob, can easily be shown to be a Bible fiction. ABRACADABRA.

(To be concluded.)

Ingersoll on Carlile.

RICHARD CARLILE was perfectly honest, and incapable of feeling afraid. He knew what he wanted to do, and he aimed at the centre of the target. He felt that he had a right to publish and sell the books and pamphlets that he believed would educate and elevate the people. He sold Paine's *Age of Reason*. He was arrested, indicted for libel, and tried.

He defended himself. He was charged with having published and sold a book in which it was stated that the Bible was filled with mistakes, contradictions, and immoralities.

Carlile offered to prove that the assertion was true. The judge would not allow him to show that the Bible contained mistakes or contradictions. According to English law, the Bible was inspired—and for that reason the defendant could not be allowed to show that it contained mistakes and contradictions.

Of course, with this ruling, there could be no defence, except to say that he had not sold the book. Carlile admitted that he had sold it, and that the book told the truth about the Bible.

Of course he was found guilty, and sent to prison for three years.

But he kept right on with his work. His wife took his place in the shop, and the *Age of Reason* was still sold. So, while in jail, he continued to publish his paper called the *Republican*. Then his wife was arrested, tried, and sent to prison. Another woman took the shop, and the sales went on as before.

Poor Carlile was in prison, I think, for about nine years in all; but he never surrendered. He never apologised, never begged for mercy, never knelt or knuckled. He faced the government—one man against a nation—stood his ground until he was victorious. His daughter has written the story of this battle, and her book is called *The Battle of the Press*. Everyone who feels an interest in liberty, who feels grateful to a hero who fought and suffered for freedom, should read this book. Richard Carlile was a hero—one of the best and bravest of men—one who fought and suffered for the civilisation of mankind.

His daughter—Mrs. Campbell—has told the story of her great father's life modestly and well. She has told the facts. That is enough. When I read her book, I said to myself: What hypocrites were in the pulpit; what beasts were on the bench; what cruel wretches were the King's ministers in Carlile's day! It is enough to make one ashamed of the human race. And yet the story of Richard Carlile—of his courage, of his devotion to a great cause, is enough to make us proud of our blood. R. G. INGERSOLL.

—*Freethought Magazine* (Chicago).

A new edition of the autobiography of George Muller, of Bristol, has been published. We do not know precisely how many editions have been printed; but very many thousands are in circulation. Every boy and girl used to have a copy given to them on leaving the Ashley Downs Orphanage, and the book always sold freely. This factor for publicity has invariably been ignored by the credulous people who still believe in answer to prayer.

The Birkenhead Free Library Committee draw the line at Bradlaugh. They decline to have his Freethought writings on their shelves, and Mr. T. R. Waring, in the *Birkenhead News*, calls them "arrogant bigots." Would it not have sufficed to call them "Christians"? It is shorter, and it means pretty much the same thing.

A Legend of Nain.

THE fiery splendor of the setting sun
With flaming crimson floods the walls of Nain.
Eastward the lengthening shadows weirdly run,
As heralding the night's abysmal reign.

The darkening air is thrilled with sounds of woe
From yon advancing mournful multitude;
They rend their hair in vain lament, and, lo,
Within their midst a bier uncouth and rude.

But hither cometh one of kingly mien,
Around whose holy head a glory glows
Shapen as cyclic porcelain, white and clean,
Wherefrom the famished soothe their gastric throes.

To him a frenzied woman speaketh thus:—
"O thou who dost incorporate within
That finite form the Infinite, on us
Have pity, O thou Fruit of Mary's sin!

"Lo, at the Feast Leguminous, my son,
Mine only son—a widow, lord, am I—
Joined in the jocund sport, and surely none
More blithe than he, the apple of mine eye.

"But, like the lily smitten ere its prime,
Sudden amid the merriment drooped he;
This noon he lived and loved; at eventime
Behold, 'tis thus we bring him, lord, to thee."

O, tenderly the Savior bends his gaze
On that recumbent form, that marble face!
Then looks around as if in great amaze
That faith like theirs abounds in such a place.

Thrice he exacerbates, as if in doubt,
The roots of his zingiberaceous locks;
Thrice digitally reeves those whiskers out
Rubescens as the root that glads the ox:

Three times he snuffs the circumambient air,
Then eyes the crowd in supplication sunk,
And answers thus that interceding prayer:
"Be comforted. He is not dead, but—drunk."
EX-RITUALIST.

Lest We Forget.

"If we live thus tamely,
To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,
Farewell nobility."—SHAKESPEARE.

"Clericalism, it is the enemy."—GAMBETTA.

Few have studied phrenology, and therefore cannot say where the bump of credulity is situated; but many must suspect that it is strongly developed in a great number of human heads. On no other principle can one account for the fact that many are being captivated and ensnared by the syren-song that Clericalism is not now what it once was, that it is wholly altered in its features. That Clericalism may be, that it has been, checked and limited by the pressure of external circumstances, is undoubted; but priestcraft is unchangeable and unchangeable in its spirit and purpose. It wants only the opportunity and the power to again forge those fetters which shall rechain the minds of men in the bonds of a silly superstition and damnable despotism. To the Church of Christ the progress of man is offensive. Under the glamor of the Gregorian chants, wax lights, and beautiful vestments, is a despotism nonetheless real because thatched by ecclesiastical stage-properties. Such despotism, meekly accepted by millions of Christians, cannot be lightly regarded, especially when the average worshipper deems it profanity to call an ape an ape, if it but wear a clerical collar. The "Established" Church, far less intolerant than the Catholic Church, and intellectually miles above any Nonconformist body, is still as hostile as ever to all modern impulses. Moreover, the introduction of the Church Endowment Bill, now before Parliament, shows clearly that the "strongest government of modern times" is anxious to repay the clerics for their support in the past.

The "Established" Church has not entitled itself to the respect of Rationalists. A glance at the conduct of the Lords spiritual is sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all liberal-minded men. Here are a few samples of Christian ethics in practice:—

Some Votes of the Right Reverend Fathers-in-God in the House of Lords, with date and number of the Bishops who voted against the Bill.

SHOP-LIFTING BILL.—To abolish capital punishment for stealing from shops property of value of five shillings (1810); 7.

NATIONAL EDUCATION BILL.—To authorise magistrates to provide schools, where wanted, out of rates (1839); 15.

ROMAN CATHOLICS' DISABILITIES BILL (1821); 25.

REFORM BILL (1831); 21.

REFORM BILL (1832); 15.

JEWISH DISABILITIES REPEAL BILL (1833); 20.

ADMISSION OF DISSENTERS TO UNIVERSITIES (1834); 22.
UNIVERSITY TESTS ABOLITION BILL.—To remove restrictions which debarred Nonconformists from privileges of Universities (1867); 4.

UNIVERSITY TESTS ABOLITION BILL.—To remove restrictions which debarred Nonconformists from privileges of Universities (1869); 3.

THE BURIALS' QUESTION.—Motion to permit in churchyards "Christian and orderly" funeral services other than that of Church of England (1876); 16.

MARRIAGE WITH DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL (1883); 22. [This Bill has invariably been opposed with the noble firmness of cruelties by these modern successors of the Apostles.]

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS' ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—To abolish pigeon shooting (1883). None of their lordships spoke or took part in the division. Humanitarian League please note.

Bill to render marriage lawfully contracted between a man and his deceased wife's sister in the Colonies valid in United Kingdom (1898); 9, including the arch-humbugs of Canterbury and York.

SEATS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS' BILL.—Providing that every shopkeeper who employed lady assistants should give them seats behind the counter and in show-rooms in the proportion of one seat for every two assistants (1899). This simple measure of humanity did not interest the Bishops. They were conspicuous by their absence.

Mr. Caine may well thank "Gawd that we have a House of Lords!"
MIMNERMUS.

The Man Behind the Plough.

THERE'S been a lot to say about the man behind the gun, And folks has praised him highly for the noble work he done: He won a lot of honor for the land where men are free, It was him that sent the Spaniards kitin' back across the sea; But he's had his day of glory, had his little spree, and now There's another to be mentioned—the man behind the plough.

A battleship's a wonder, and an army's mighty grand, And warrin's a perfession only heroes understand; There's something sort of thrillin' in a flag that's wavin' high, And it makes you want to holler as the boys go marchin' by; But when the shoutin's over and the fightin's done, somehow We find we're still dependin' on the man behind the plough.

They sing about the glories of the man behind the gun, And the books are full of stories of the wonders he has done; The world has been made over by the fearless ones who fight; Lands that used to be in darkness they have opened to the light; When our rulers snarl the soldier had to settle up the row, And folks haven't time fer thinkin' of the man behind the plough.

In all the pomp and splendor of an army on parade, In all the awful darkness that the smoke of battle made; In the halls where jewels glitter and the shoutin' men debate, In the palaces where rulers deal out honors to the great: There is not a single person who'd be doin' busines now Or have medals—if it wasn't for the man behind the plough.

We're a buildin' mighty cities, and we're gainin' lofty heights: We're a winnin' lots of glory, and we're settin' thing to rights; We're a showin' all creation how the world's affairs should run; Future men'll gaze in wonder at the things that we have done, And they'll overlook the feller—just the same as we do now— Who's the whole concern's foundation—that's the man behind the plough.

—Chicago News.

T. KISER.

Correspondence.

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In my letter of June 24 I asked for proof of "Mimnermus's" assertion concerning Christianity's indebtedness to Buddhism. In last week's issue he again refers to the subject; but it is still lacking in this one essential. To elicit this proof will he, with your kind permission, show—

1. That similarities are necessarily equivalents of derivation.
2. That Essenism was the *via media* by which Christianity was so influenced.
3. That there was such a knowledge of Buddhistic philosophy in the West that led to its incorporation by the "early Christians."
4. That there is sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that the Alexandrian schools were affected by Buddhism, and that they transmitted it to Christianity.
5. That there is any mention in "renowned Christian writers of very early periods" (italics mine) of either the person or the doctrines of the Buddha.

It is the veriest assumption that, apart from the Crucifixion and Atonement, there are no other *differentia*. The eschatology of the two systems most markedly reveals these dissimilarities, to specify but one instance. W. H. HOWARD.

Profane Jokes.

THE man who had his coffin painted a fiery red, and kept it for two whole years at his front door, had evidently a very clear idea of where he was going when he had departed from this world. He is not the only man, however, who kept Hades in view so continually. It is related of the late Marquess of Anglesey that when he married and settled down in life the many sins of his past youth troubled him not a little. There was a slight fire at the castle one night, and orders were afterwards given that hand grenades should be placed in every room, which were faithfully carried out. Some dozens of these fire-extinguishers were left over, however, there being no place for them, and the butler approached his master as to their destination. "You'd better put them in my coffin," replied his lordship gravely.

"I say, there," he asked, as he stood in the streets of New York for the first time and watched two sisters of Mercy pass along, "what kind of wimmen is them I seen go along, all in black, with a white thing round their face and neck?" "Oh," replied the man addressed, "they're the Sisters of St. John the Baptist." "Get out!" was the sneering answer; "you can't fool me. Why, man, John the Baptist has been dead more'n a hundred years."

"Are you fond of music, Dr —?" "Yes," was the divine's answer; "but I don't know very much about it. I don't think I have a very good ear—in fact, the only two tunes I really know well are 'God save the Weasel' and 'Pop goes the Queen!'"

The report of the East London Church Fund states that a vicar in North-East London, in the course of his notices of parish events, lately made the following startling announcement:—"It is unnecessary for me to give out the special preachers for this Lent, as you will find them all hanging up together in the porch."—*Christian World*.

A devout minister at a prayer-meeting prayed, "O Lord, keep me humble and poor!" A deacon followed, "O Lord, keep him humble, and we will keep him poor!"—*Church Times*, July 7.

"Had it not been the Sabbath day," remarked a Scottish minister to an elder of his church after morning service, "I would have asked you how the hay was selling in Perth on Friday?" "Weel, sir," replied the elder, "had it not been the day that it is, I wad just hae tell't ye it was gaun at a shillin' the stane." "Indeed! Well, had it been Monday instead of Sabbath, I would have told you that I have some to sell." "Oy, ou ay, sir! An' had it been Monday, as you say, then I wad just hae tell't ye I wad gie ye market price for't." The significant nod which the minister gave to this last remark brought the elder with a couple of carts to the manse on Monday morning, and by noon the minister's hay-rick was non-existent.

A good story comes from a little town in the Midlands. Among the members of the Methodist church is an old retired railway guard and ticket-collector. During the morning service at his church, not many Sundays ago, the railway man was called upon by the minister to assist in talking up the collection—one of the gentlemen who usually helped in that work being absent. The retired railway man started down the aisle with the contribution bag, and passed it round like an old hand at the business. Everything passed off smoothly until he reached a good brother who had nodded himself fast asleep, but just as he was about to pass by him he was suddenly overcome by the force of habit acquired in his railway days. Tapping the sleeping brother on the shoulder with the bag, he shouted—"Ticket, please!"

"The cashier informed me," said the president, "that he was strongly tempted to skip with the funds, but that he locked himself up with them and prayed over them all night and overcame the temptation." "I know it," said the chief director. "I had a detective at his door, one at each window, and one on the roof, at the chimney flue, while he was praying."—*Atlanta Constitution*.

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- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): Closed during July and August.
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "Christ and His Teaching."
BROCKWELL PARK (near Herne-hill Gates): 3.15 and 6.30, Stanley Jones.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones.
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, E. Pack.
FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, A lecture.
FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Triumph of Rationalism."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lectures every week evening at 8. Sunday, at 11.30, G. Parsons, "Basis of Christianity."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove): 7.15, W. Ramsey.
HAMPSTEAD HEATH (Jack Straw's Castle): 3.15, A lecture.
KILBURN (corner of Brondesbury-road): 7.15, Stanley Jones.
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford.
STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, R. P. Edwards, "The Triumph of Rationalism."

S. L. E. S. (Peckham Rye): 11.15, A lecture. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.30, Freethought Demonstration—Messrs. G. W. Foote, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, C. Cohen, etc.; 6.45, C. Cohen.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss; 7, The Members. July 26, at 8, C. Cohen.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, E. Pack.
THE TRIANGLE (Salmon-lane, Limehouse): 11.30, C. Cohen. July 25, at 8, C. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. White, "Faith and Miracle."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): 7, H. Percy Ward, "Christianity and the Slave Trade."

GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7, Violin Selections by Professors Elliott and Rae; 7.15, J. M. Headley, "Church Autocracy: A Reply to the Vicar of Gorleston."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, A lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): The hall will be closed during the months of July and August.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Closed for Summer Season.

PORTH BRANCH (100 Primrose-street, Tonypany): 6, Paper on the Lord's Prayer, and final arrangements for Bank Holiday excursion.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' Quarterly Meeting; 5, Tea; Lecture (see Saturday's local papers).

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): Picnic at Holywell Dene—12.45, Ferry; 1, Brakes leave North Shields.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—July 23, a. and e., Victoria Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 23, m., Mile End; a., Demonstration in Victoria Park. 30, probably Northampton.

R. P. EDWARDS, 52 Bramley-road, Notting-hill.—July 23, m., Battersea; e., Stratford. 30, m., Limehouse; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

E. PACK, 10 Henstridge-place, Ordnance-road, St. John's Wood.—July 23, a. and e., Peckham Rye. 30, m., Battersea Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—July 23, Birmingham. September 3, Northampton.

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