

THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

FREETHOUGHT IN THE CHURCH CONGRESS.

(Concluded from p. 89.)

THE Rev. C. H. Shuttleworth continued the discussion. He described himself as a member of the Guild of St. Matthew, which "consisted of not more than fifty persons resident in London." His opinion of Secularism was very simple and summary—"What is true in it is not new, and what is new is not true"—a playful exercise of memory which was greeted with loud applause. Since Coleridge invented this neat antithesis to characterise Wordsworth's famous "Prose Introduction," it is astonishing what a number of writers and speakers have palmed it off as an original observation. In our opinion the very use of it bespeaks a certain feebleness of mind.

Mr. Shuttleworth thinks that "Secularists very seldom come face to face with the real foundations of Christianity and the Christian Church, and when they do they generally get the worst of the argument." All this is very easy to say, but is perhaps more difficult to prove. If Mr. Shuttleworth has the courage of his boast, the editor of the *Free-thinker* is ready to give him an opportunity to discuss these "foundations" in public. But Christians are usually more proficient in assertion than in debate. They scold the Secularist with all the arrogance of piety, and tell him he is a very poor reasoner; but when he seeks to engage them in discussion in order to disprove the charge, they generally turn on him, as Jesus did on Peter, with a "get thee behind me Satan."

The Rev. R. A. Hatchard wound up the palaver. He boasted of "a great debate he had nearly a year ago with Mrs. Besant and Mr. Bradlaugh." Mr. Hatchard is no doubt a very brave man, but we scarcely think he would like to fight two such champions of "infidelity" together. Probably the excited atmosphere of the Congress led him astray. The fact is, he did debate with Mrs. Besant, but Mr. Bradlaugh only took the chair. Mr. Hatchard also boasted of having met "most of the leading Secularists in England." If he meant that he has met them in set debate, he was speaking what he knew to be untrue. He then proceeded to give the cure for scepticism. In his opinion it lay "in the historical evidence of Christianity during the first two or three centuries." And "upon that ground," he added, "none of the Secularist lecturers dared follow." That is simply false. If Mr. Hatchard really wishes to discuss this subject, he can easily be accommodated. We challenge him to prove his words. He may choose his own weapon for the duel, the tongue or the pen. The ground he has already indicated; namely, whether there is evidence enough to prove the historical character of the Gospels. Will Mr. Hatchard show that he can fight as well as blow the trumpet?

Now for Archbishop Thomson. His name is Scotch, and we suppose his blood is too. Archbishop Tait, we believe, is of the same nationality. These Scotties know how to climb. From the days of Lord Bute they have been adepts in the art, and like their great prototype, Sir Pertinax MacSycophant, they seem to appreciate the valuable accomplishment of "booming." When Archbishop Thomson lectures us condescendingly from the serene attitude of ten thousand a year, we feel inclined to retort that few men who enjoy such an income ever earn it, and that the chances are at least a thousand to one against a fairly honest clergyman becoming an archbishop at all.

Secularism, says Dr. Thomson, can "hardly be called a system. Its principles are, according to its most representative interpreter, Atheistic, Republican, and Malthusian—the practical rendering of which would be, No God, no King, and, at least for the present, as few people as possible." This may be witty, but is it true? Why father the pro-

gramme of Mr. Bradlaugh's paper on every Secularist of the United Kingdom? We have certain standards, and why not go to them? They are very accessible, and can be had gratis. Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions are not binding on us, any more than the Archbishop of Canterbury's opinions are binding on the members of the Church of England. Let our President defend his own statements, as he is well able to; and let us decline to be made responsible for anything but those definite principles which all of us, including Mr. Bradlaugh, subscribe as a condition of membership. Malthusianism is not included in our programme. Mr. Bradlaugh is himself a vice-president of a separate society established to maintain it. Secularism does not dictate any special solution of the problem of poverty; it only urges the problem on our attention, and declares the spirit in which we should approach it. Surely the Archbishop knows that the very man who gave the name to Malthusianism was a highly respected and pensioned member of his own church. Nor do our principles include a profession of Atheism, and we defy Dr. Thomson to show that they do. And as for Republicanism, it exists in the United States and in Switzerland side by side with Christianity. President Garfield was as good a Christian as Queen Victoria, and in America, as here, the judges affirm that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land.

The truth is, the Archbishop does not distinguish between inward and outward things, between principles and facts. Secularism, for instance, undoubtedly prompts us to realise what the Romans called a sound mind in a sound body. Now it may be true that linen next the skin is healthier than wool; but it would certainly be an exaggeration to say that sleeping between sheets instead of blankets is an integral part of Secularism.

As he proceeds, however, Dr. Thomson gets a little nearer to the heart of our mystery. We assume, he says, that we have made belief in Christianity impossible. Not so. We are but accidents in a great stream of tendency. It is modern thought which has discredited Christianity, and that goes far beyond the limits of our organisation. It is a subtle spirit which pervades society like an atmosphere. It affects us all whether we will or not. It directs the researches of science, moulds the speculations of philosophy, guides the politician and the social reformer, influences the very song of the poet, and modifies even the language of the pulpit. The spirit of the age is mightier than we; and if our organisation were broken and dissolved, the Church would still find itself in the midst a great world-movement, with which it must go on or be crushed to death.

What are we going to do with Religion? asks the Archbishop. We set our faces against the supernatural, and we must therefore admit it to be a natural production. Will we reason it away? That has been done continually. Will we banter it away? Voltaire tried that and failed. Begging his Grace's pardon, Voltaire tried nothing of the sort. He tried to banter the superstitious dogmas of Christianity away, and he very largely succeeded. But he never directed his irony against religion. What is true religion? "That sublime word," said the greatest orator and statesman now living in France, "means the bond between man and man, is that which enables a man on meeting his fellow to respect both his own and the other's dignity based on equity and liberty." We want a bond between man and man, and we find it in those noble feelings which have in the past been allied with error, but which in the future will be allied with truth. Our sentiments of love, reverence and service will be exercised in a more beneficent way than of yore, and we shall have a Religion of Humanity broad-based on immutable truth, with its walls wide enough to embrace the whole family of men, and its pinnacles as lofty as our divinest aspirations can soar.



Secularism may not be able, as the Archbishop funnily says, to cure the toothache. According to Falstaff honor cannot heal a wound or set-to a broken leg. Is it therefore an imposture? As for the taunt that we aim at "breaking up social obedience and the sanctity of marriage" we dismiss it as absurd. The law of marriage sanctioned by Dr. Thomson's Church binds people together in an unholy alliance when the wine-cup of love holds nothing but the dregs of hate; and while allowing the adulterous husband to di-port himself with impunity, dooms the suffering wife to drag out a life of bitterness to the grave. Would Dr. Thomson, with all his fine talk, refuse to celebrate a marriage in which, as too often happens, youthful beauty is sacrificed to aged lust, and the wealth which has paid for the laces, the diamonds and the gold, has also purchased the victim they adorn? For our part we believe in what George Eliot calls "the sublimity of the social order." We labor to cement it, and we hate those who would dissolve it. Of that social order *home* is a part, a noble and a beautiful part when it is the seat of domestic affection, and the halo of love encircles every dear head within it. But Christianity did not found this central institution of civilised life. Polygamy, which annihilates home, is sanctioned by the Bible; while monogamy, the alliance of one man with one woman, as husband and wife, father and mother, is derived from sources which will continue their beneficence when Christianity has "melted into the infinite azure of the past."

G. W. FOOTE.

PARADISE LOST.
A NEW VERSION.

I.

'Twas on a hot and glowing afternoon,
The scene was Paradise's lovely bowers,
The time, to be particular, was June,
The thirtieth day thereof, the summer flowers
Were parched with thirst, the birds sang out of tune,
Impatient longing for the twilight hours;
And Eve lay restless and impatient too
To get a sip of honeysuckle dew.

II.

Beneath an apple tree she sat reclining,
Whose branches veil'd the turf in ebon shade,
And kept the hot and eager sun from shining
Upon her round and radiant limbs, array'd
In their own naked loveliness; entwining
Her full white arm the tendril green display'd
In its fond fragrant clasp and quivering kiss
A seeming apprehension of its bliss.

III.

Thus Eve reclin'd; reflecting, dozing, dreaming,
Couched on the mosses of her soft retreat;
First claimed her thoughts the rills afar off streaming,
And then the cause of such unwonted heat,
Which melted in the shade the apples gleaming,
Already ruddy ripe, she must not eat;
Next rais'd her timid wonder that being placed
Within and thirsting so she must not taste.

IV.

Mother of man, cool dew o'erbrims the flowers
That star the curtains of thy od'rous bed,
Wells bubble ceaseless through the lazy hours
Sought readier than the fruit above thy head.
But, ah! it recks not, female will o'erpowers—
The arrow from the shaft of fate hath sped,
And thou, poor world, hast got a bitter lesson
Out of a silly petticoat's transgression.

V.

The act is yet undone—but soft, behold!
Steals from the thicket to the blazing sun
A wondrous thing in mail of green and gold
And ruby red, alternate bright and dun,
Po's'd on a coil of rings scarce half unrolled;
Erect! A sight she vainly sought to shun,
For, lo! it held her with its gleaming eye,
Deep burning in its socket, keen and shy.

VI.

One orb the arch fiend closed and opened 'tother,
Giving a sort of diabolic wink,
And straight began—"Why all this precious pother?
There's no great sin in tasting, I should think.
Come, don't your natural inclination smother,
Apples were made to eat, and wine to drink,
Here taste and try before you buy"—and then
He held the pippin to her longing ken.

VII.

"Munch, mother of mankind. Of course that term
You know not yet. Eat and you'll know it soon.

You reck not of what bliss it is the germ;
'Twill fire your veins and paint your cheek with bloom
Richer than that you wear. Nay come, be firm
To one good purpose, or good afternoon.
I have no time to waste and little leisure
To trifle with a woman's fickle pleasure.

VIII.

"Now view the matter thus. Here stands a tree,
The fruit upon it ripe and fair to taste,
The owners of this paradise are ye,
Its legal occupants;—then wherefore waste
A thought upon so plain a case; d'ye see
You're free to eat whate'er ye list. So haste
To gratify your longing and your thirst,
With which, and not the fruit, ye'll be most curst.

IX.

"The affair is of no interest to me.
A snake—a worm—the most abjectest thing
That crawls i' th' earth. I reck not a piu's fee.
And stuff my fill. There! eat and do not cling
To idle doubts. You'll find 'twont disagree.
God ma'am, 't wou'd seem you feared some deadly sting—
Bah! much I say. you little dream the pleasure.
You lose in shunning this ambrosial treasure.

X.

"What pains and penalties?—mere humbug!
Your parson's implements to frighten fools;
They say my home is hot and that I am
Old Harry. No, ma'am; they're Old Harry's tools.
I am just what you see—a lady's man,
Trained to politeness in the choicest schools,
'Tender by nature, enemy to no man,
Weak to a fault—especially to woman.

XI.

I am no whining sycophant, not I,
No truckler, lickspittle, no sorry knave;
Of pandemonium's aristocracy
Behold me chief. No favor do I crave
From mortal dust. My proofest panoply
Is honest virtue. aru'd in that I'm brave.
Believe me I've a care of my good name;
I wish the other brutes could say the same.

XII.

A snake! a worm! what then? all things of earth
Become worms' meat, and unto earth return:
So runs the saw; but I would have all birth
Eternal heritage, nor broil, nor burn.
Think you I'd do such mischief, e'en in m'irth?
Faith, no. Let parsons rail, their gibes I spurn.
Don't deem your angels, ma'am, with sin untainted,
Nor the devil quite so black as he is painted.

XIII.

"Come now, dear lady," urged the wheedling fiend,
Holding the rich ripe luscious fruit before her.
Poor thirsty soul! what could she do but lend
Her ready ear? The feverish spell came o'er her
And thrall'd her sense. 'Twas evident she lean'd
To the brilliant wit. Ah, where was he—that rover—
Her lord and lover? Where, ah, where was he?
P'rhaps gone to gather watercress for tea.

XIV.

Oh mother Eve, your case was surely hard;
Thus sore beset, no marvel you should fail,
Craving for knowledge, from its sweets debarred.
The fiend again resum'd his crafty tale,
With tear-dimmed eyes—that was his last trump card—
He had no kerchief, so he took his tail,
Thrice sniffed and sneezed, and gave a sort of sigh,
And hoped the world would know him by and by.

XV.

And so she hotly drank the demon's cunning,
Her soft cheeks flushing like the break of day,
And felt the while the subtle poison running
Through every nerve of her translucent clay;
Poor lady, she had not the trick of shunning
The tempter, whilst his eye enforced her stay;
She felt her brain grow wilder every minute,
She knew not why, but knew the devil was in it.

XVI.

The sun grew fiercer, fiercer grew desire,
Desire to quench the raging, maddening thirst
That fill'd each vein and artery with fire
Menacing, if not satisfied, to burst
And terminate in dissolution dire;
Thus circumstances being at the worst,
She snatch'd the apple she had shunn'd before,
And drove her tooth of pearl to the inmost core.

XVII.

Adam just then returned—all scratch'd and bleeding—
He had overreached and fell among some boughs
Stuck full of thorns, which sent him homeward speeding
To Mistress Eve. "Come, dame," said he, "arouse."

Then, looking downward, for the first time heeding
His legs, he saw had been among the cows,
Eve took and washed him well, and when she'd done it,
Gave him to taste of the forbidden runnet.*

XVIII.

He bit—a growl of thunder ran through space,
The snake vanished, his affair was done ;
Eve, having eaten, now ate on apace ;
The sky grew overcast, and sick the sun,
A few hot rain-drops fell on Adam's face,
And gave him warning to look out and run ;
He saw the forked lightning through the sky shoot,
And heard a din like the magic in "Der Freischutz."

XIX.

He turned upon his wife an eye of flame,
And scanned her graceful outline o'er and o'er ;
No longer like the ringdove, soft and tame,
The leopard's fierceness on his front he bore.
'Neath the hot glance her color went and came ;
Her pulses throbb'd with fires unfelt before.

* * * * *

XX.

Soon after, Gabriel entering, call'd forth "Adam !"
But he was mute and nowhere to be seen.
'Twas useless, though, to shirk it, for he had 'em
Beneath his eye whilst all the affair had been,
And presently he marked them, just as Madam
Had stitched two aprons out of fig-leaves green.
"Adam," the angel said, with indignation,
"Your presence henceforth here is profanation !"

XXI.

"Hook it," he ended. Mistress Eve began,
"Pray you, celestial sir, be not offended
What sinful deed hath my poor husband done ?
There's nought so bad but that it might be mended ;
It was the serpent's tempting talk that won
To do this thing for which we are suspended
From botanising in these lively gardens,
And sack'd our pleasant offices as wardens.

XXII.

"Forgive us and indeed we'll sin no more,
If sin it may be called to love sincerely ;
Forgive us and we'll praise ye o'er and o'er,
Indeed, indeed we both will love you dearly ;
Send us not hence at least, good sir, before
We prove our faith, for that will touch us nearly ;
Let it be thought some slight extenuation
Our strong and irresistible temptation."

XXIII.

In vain she pleaded ; Gabriel, frowning, heard,
His wings expanded, and refused to listen,
He said he should not fail his knightly word,
Whereat Eve's eyes began to glow and glisten ;
"Call you this justice," she again demurr'd,
"To sack us in this destitute condition—
Adam get up, my love, its no use kneeling,
This feathered cad is deaf to human feeling.

XXIV.

"Why place us here together when you knew
That we were subject to such sore temptation,
Why plant the tree and make the garden too ?
You're skilled, I should suppose, in divination,
And knew before-hand that we both should do
As we have done, and come to tribulation ;"
Gabriel here cut her short with stern derision,
And called a serjeant of the L division.

PATROCLUS.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Schoolmaster* is responsible for the following :—Mr. Hassell, inspector of schools, after speaking for twenty minutes on the subject of education at a late conference, was followed by a clergyman who agreed with him as to the value of simplicity. Once he gave a Bible lesson, and at the conclusion asked a boy what was the subject of it. "Murdering a baby" was the answer. The reverend gentleman did not understand until the boy explained that in the lesson it was stated, "And they killed a kid."

GUITEAU says the Lord is managing his case with consummate ability, but we don't think the Lord will succeed in getting him off. The rascal naively adds that "the Lord and the people do not seem agreed in this case." True, and the hangman is on the side of the people.

* Runnet, an apple.—Zummerzetshire Vocab.

TALMAGE has tried hard to pray for Guiteau and can't do it. "Pray for your enemies" looks easier than it is.

AT one of the Congregational Jubilee meetings recently held in Manchester, Dr. Fairbairn told the following story :—

"Two Baptist ministers travelling in the Western States, sought accommodation at a wayside inn, the landlord of which had an objection to parsons, and flatly refused to let them in. The ministers, however, were persistent, they having journeyed far and no other inn being at hand. At length the landlord consented to admit them on condition that they promised to pray for rain, which was sadly wanted because of a long continued drought. If they prayed for rain and got it, he would entertain them gratis. They agreed to try, and before retiring to rest offered up their prayers. In the middle of the night it began to rain, and before long it poured in torrents. There seemed, indeed, to be considerable danger of damage from a flood. The two ministers came down early in the morning, and, saluting the landlord, remarked that they had fulfilled their part of the contract. 'Well, yes,' returned the landlord, with a rueful glance at the deluge outside, 'but then, you Baptists always do overdo it.'"

If we had told this story it would have been considered as a profane joke.

THE Revised New Testament has 384 changes in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which contains only 155 verses. Fancy more than two separate risks of damnation in every verse!

WHILE the "revisers" are softening down the harsher features of the Gospels it is quite refreshing to come across a good old orthodox blast like that which Mr. W. S. Allen, M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyne, gave forth at the Methodist Conference in London. Said he, "Rowland Hill once said, some men preach the Gospel as a donkey mumbles a thistle, very cautiously. Let us be faithful. Let us make the Saviour as precious, heaven as bright, holiness as holy, sin as black, hell as hot, and damnation as awful and eternal as Christ and the Bible make them." Amen !

How fond of hell some people are. If the devil were about to retire from business, sooner than see the furnaces go cold, they would probably get up a joint-stock company, and run the concern themselves. It seems to give these people positive pain to think that nobody will ever frizzle in hell. They regard it as an outrage on God's mercy to say so.

A BANGALORE paper states that a belief in the approaching end of the world is spreading like wild-fire among the Hindus. Many of them are making preparation for it by paying their debts. The idea never had that effect on Christians.

SPURGEON says that "Christ's cause now creeps where it once ran, and only runs where once it was won't to fly as with wings of lightning." That's exactly what sceptics have been saying for many years.

THE Bishop of Manchester opened out his heart to the "working men" at the Church Congress. He said he had been amazed at seeing the notices of Atheistic lectures on the boardings in Manchester, but he hoped none of his audience ever went to hear such naughty discourses. And the "working men" groaned that they didn't. Now, if we were fond of betting, we would lay the Bishop of Manchester ten to one that Mr. Bradlaugh shall draw a larger crowd of workmen to hear him lecture against Christianity than his Grace shall himself draw to hear him preach in favor of it. The inference is obvious.

BISHOP FRASER told these "working men" that Secularism taught men and women to "tally." No, Moses did that when he told the Jews to take a wife for a month on trial. His Grace very gracelessly added that Secularism taught men to repudiate their wives "when they become sick." We answer that he lies. A friend of ours has written a letter to the Bishop on this misrepresentation, and has received a sneaking note marked "private" in reply. We thought Dr. Fraser above this sort of thing, but we are painfully undeceived. The Christian virus seems to have reached his heart.

AFTER disporting himself in the cesspool of slander, the

Bishop proceeded to deliver himself of a lot of rubbish on Chance, as though Materialists believe in any such thing. He had seen cannon made, and he scorned the notion that a fortuitous concourse of atoms could have produced an object like that. God was behind all. If that be so, it was God who really made the cannon. It seems to us bad enough for God to scoop out a big hell, without manufacturing guns for men to blow each other into it. But perhaps the Lord knows best, and if he should lack any information no doubt the truthful Bishop can supply him. The next time we hear of thousands slaughtered by these destructive instruments, we shall of course sing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

THE Bishop of Carlisle, who followed Dr. Fraser, wound up with a very funny peroration. He hoped they should all meet "where the worker's weary hands were folded, and the thinker's busy brain was still." A first-rate Paradise, that, for loafers and fatheads, but scarcely good enough for us. As the Yankee said, doing nothing's the hardest work in the world—to keep at. The awful burden of idleness would be too much for us even in Heaven, and the laziest saint would be glad of a little stoking in the pit for a change.

In an earlier part of his address the same Bishop asked what Science could do for a man in a time of sorrow? How could it help him when fever had killed his only daughter, and taken away the joy of his life? Science, we reply, proposes to help us *at the other end*. It aims at warding off the fever and saving the life it assails, and that is better than any amount of comfort after all is lost. Christianity only tries to cure; Science tries to prevent.

THE Rev. G. Engstrom, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, who is at home in England though not in English, says that "the *Freethinker* will destroy itself by its indecency." What an observation for a person who puts into his children's hands as God's words a book containing the Song of Solomon, the stories of Judah and Tamar, Lot and his daughters, the Levite and his concubine, Onan, and a number of similar delicacies! Our pages are free from such obscene stuff. Physician Engstrom, heal thyself!

ATHEISTIC SONNETS.

By John Rowell Waller, F.R.H.S., Author of "Unstrung Links," "Wayside Flowers," "Rambles and Musings," "Men we Meet," etc.

IX.—MOSES

There lived in ancient days, the fable tells,
A murdering rascal of the darkest dye,
Who forged the wonderful creation lie;
Who smiled upon his fellows' dying yells;
Who from the father's arms the daughter tore,
And to his couch the gentle victim bore;
Who led aggressive thousands to their tombs,
And carried grief to crowds of peaceful homes;
Who ever did the cruel god's behest,
Preyed on the poor and fattened on the best.
This *great good* man in life so glibly lied,
That after death he told us how he died,
Told where himself was buried, then he said
No man could tell where he, himself, was laid.

A MISSING LINK IN THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

NOTE.—The manner in which the Christian salvation was brought about by the apprehension of Jesus has never been clearly explained. A manuscript, purporting to be a translation of a Hebrew petition praying for his arrest, has been sent us, presumably for the use of the Christian Evidence Society. Our readers can judge of its value for themselves.

"ZADOC, SON OF Jehodiah, purveyor of doves in the outer court of the Holy Temple, Jerusalem, to Caiaphas, most illustrious high priest of the Jews, and the Sanhedrim assembled—

"With forehead in the dust, and in obedience to the commands of our most holy religion, I have dutifully to warn your most exalted assembly concerning a certain blasphemer, who has for some time been stirring up sedition within our sacred city.

"He is called Jesus, and is thought to have come from Egypt, though whether born of Jewish parents or not is unknown, for he disowns all parentage, and it is credibly reported that, inspired by Sathanas, he hath secretly proclaimed himself the Messiah, and the Son of the Most High.

"He hath travelled hither southwards from Galilee, teaching sedition and schism by the way, even in the synagogues, and followed by certain ignorant [and disaffected] fisher-folk from Tiberias, to whom he hath promised that they shall sit on thrones. He hath been heard to speak publicly in disrespect of scribes, elders and priests, and, in the presence of witnesses, hath broken and blasphemed the Holy Sabbath, protected harlots and adulteresses, reviled the ever blessed Moses, and claimed to abrogate his sacred Thora.

"Of a cunning and evasive disposition he hath uttered his blasphemies for the most part mystically, and in parables, until now, having by means of certain thaumaturgic cures, wrought by the aid of Sathanas, gathered a large following of the lowest rabble, to whom he panders while denouncing the priests, he dares to more openly proclaim his horrible heresies, and, at the commencement of the present Pasach, did create commotion in the most Holy Temple itself, violently laying hands upon the sacred things, and profaning the dwelling place of the Most Holy as a robber's cave, and even instigating to its destruction, as witnessed by myself, Zadoc, son of Jehodiah.

"Wherefore that the sacred law may be fulfilled, which declares that whosoever teacheth new gods shall be put to death, I humbly beseech you to see that this dangerous disturber of the peace be immediately apprehended and examined, lest a more weighty evil fall upon us."

3793.

DESIGN IN DISEASE.

THE authorities whose function it is to modify revealed religion, in accordance with the latest science, ought by this time to have something to show in connexion with the presidential address in the Health Section of the Social Science Congress. There is clearly an opening for some fine Christian philosophy in the matter of the propagation of disease by animalcules. In the absence of science, social and otherwise, "down in Judee," the "author and finisher" of the faith could only illustrate the extensive character of the paternal responsibilities by asserting that the ups and downs in the career of the—in every sense—familiar sparrow were foreordained and duly recorded. It is needless to point out how much more telling would be the intimation that not a single disease-germ out of the millions which constitute a case of fever comes to an untimely end unobserved. M. Pasteur has opened up to the discerning eye new depths in the unsearchable wisdom of the unfathomable. The world is now made fully aware that a contagious disease means the prosperity of an infinity of microscopic organisms. The curing of the disease means their annihilation. Being all "God's creatures," they enjoy the divine supervision equally with the person whose interest it is to put them out of existence. Disease, in fact, is only a form of the beneficent activity of the All-wise. Human "health" is the suppression of corpuscular vitality, and "disease" means the coming into existence of intangible worlds of life. And the "Aristophanes of the Universe" gravely takes note of the proceedings and figures up the glory he gains from each of the extensive transactions known to mortals as cases of zymotic disease. What a comfort it must be to the believing mind to reflect that not a *Bacillus anthracis* meanders into the nostril of a bullock without the divine guidance! And as the warbling of the fly-gorged birds represents praise to the Creator, so doth the tumult in the veins of the chicken which hath fowl cholera indicate the grateful activity of nations of bacteria having a good time.

LAUS DEO.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN used to tell a story of a client of his out West who, when asked whether he would make oath or affirm answered that "he didn't care a damn which."

CHRISTIANITY IN PRACTICE.—"Is there any hope, Captain?" asked a Christian old lady, during a terrific Atlantic gale. "There is nothing for it now but to put our trust in God," answered the captain. "Oh Lord, has it come to that," despaired the old lady with a groan.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

October 23rd, Claremont Hall, London; 25th, Walworth; 30th, Edinburgh.
 November 4th, Paisley; 6th, Glasgow; 13th, Hall of Science, London; 20th, Sheffield; 22nd, Walworth; 27th, Manchester; 28th, Hyde Eclectic Institute.
 December 4th, Huddersfield; 11th, Claremont Hall, London; 18th, Rotherham.
 January 8th, Bradford; 15th, Rochdale; 22nd, Halifax.

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OWING to a press of matter the concluding article on Etienne Dolet stands over till next week.

SOUTHAMPTON.—The *Freethinker*, N.R., and all Freethought literature can be had at the Library Stall, Freethought Institute, Hanover Buildings; Frederick Rayner, sec.

J. MACDONALD.—Contents Bill shall be posted weekly. Thanks for the offer to expose it.

W. H. writes: "I can testify to the popularity of your paper at Walworth. Numbers who never bought a Freethought paper before take the *Freethinker* in."

O. HUGHES.—We are pleased to know that "Death's Test," by Mr. Foote is a "step in the right direction." The biography of Etienne Dolet will probably be followed by others, and your wishes will be more fully gratified by the new edition of "Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought," which Mr. Foote intends to bring out as soon as he has the necessary leisure.

W. E. D. J.—We thank you.

T. M. H.—Received with thanks.

H. SHARPLES writes that "the *Freethinker* is making steady headway in Blackburn."

E. D.—The incident is somewhat old. The "Reverend" Charles Edward Clarke's case was dealt with by most of the papers three weeks ago.

W. JAMES.—Mill's "Utilitarianism" is very good, but read also Spencer's "Data of Ethics."

T. LEWIS writes that he dropped in last Sunday to hear the Rev. Harry Jones, who preached an excellent sermon against taking no thought for the morrow and other Gospel doctrines. An Atheist could not have done better; and our correspondent would like to see some extracts printed from Mr. Jones's sermon as a Secular tract. Not having a copy of the sermon, we cannot oblige.

Professor Clifford's epitaph last week there was a mistake. *Lived* was printed for *loved*.

G. BARNES.—Received with thanks. Mr. Foote was sorry to disappoint the Spennymoor friends, but he kept all his other engagements, and is quite well now. Eleven lectures in eight days, with seven hundred miles of railway travelling, and plenty of writing to boot, must tax any man's strength.

F. SUTTILL.—Thanks for the cutting. We are glad to know that the *Freethinker* takes so well in the busy Manchester district. Our circulation increases weekly, and a good many Christians who revile this journal in public read it with avidity on the sly.

J.—As your relatives are all "roaring believers," we, of course, keep your name private. Dropping the *Freethinker* into an empty pew at church is certainly a novel method of propaganda. Beware of excommunication. We shall be glad to hear from you again.

Just as we are going to press we receive a letter from the Rev. George Bishop, which shall appear in our next with the editor's reply.

R. BAKER AND D. R.—In our next.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE *Weekly Mercury*, a copy of which has reached us from Napier, New Zealand, contains a most admirable letter, by "Trigon," against the reading of the Bible in public schools. We rejoice to see Freethinkers so ably defending the rights of conscience in the remotest of our colonies.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Christian World* says that he has come into contact with some of the leading Freethinkers in Siena. "To them," he says, "Protestantism, as a vital doctrine of divine truth, was no more acceptable than Catholicism itself. They wanted to get rid altogether of what they called clerical ideas and clerical influence, as the great enemies to freedom, educational progress and true manliness. Some of them were Theists, others even avowed Atheists." But they all spoke highly of the life and efforts of Jesus, whom they regarded as "a great historic type of the religious and patriotic emancipator."

WE are glad to learn that the Newcastle Freethinkers are likely to secure premises of their own, suitable for lectures, classes and meeting. We hope soon to be able to publish fuller information.

FOLLOWING the example of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, the *Liverpool Daily Post* has taken a kind of religious census in that city. Last Sunday its agents visited every place of worship and counted the congregations. This is the result:—

GENERAL SUMMARY.

	No. of Churches.	Sittings.	Attendance.
Church of England	71	72,933	22,610
Roman Catholic	23	22,945	14,488
Presbyterian	17	13,190	6,075
Congregational	9	7,560	2,987
Baptist	14	11,400	4,022
Methodists (various sects of)	39	21,384	7,051
Welsh Presbyterians, or Calvinistic Methodist	8	6,100	2,702
Unitarians	6	2,400	972
Bethels (for seamen)	3	900	154
Churches of Christ	2	450	195
Free Gospel Churches	2	750	191
Welsh Independents	5	2,760	705
Welsh Baptist	6	2,030	538
Various Denominations	13	4,440	1,486
Total	218	169,242	63,576

This general summary is preceded by a detailed table of every church and chapel. In the year 1853 a somewhat similar census was taken, of which the following is a

GENERAL SUMMARY.

	No. of Churches.	Seat Room.	Attendance.
Church of England	58	63,279	34,598
Roman Catholics	12	15,310	38,612
Presbyterians	10	8,680	4,925
Independents	11	8,450	4,870
Baptists	11	7,100	3,680
Methodists (various sects of)	35	22,934	11,965
Unitarians	3	1,750	650
Other Chapels (including Bethels, New Jerusalem, Mormon, Israelites, etc.)	14	4,890	2,687
Total	154	132,393	101,982

Now, in 1853, the population of Liverpool was only 400,000, while it is at present over 552,000. The population of the city has thus increased by 152,000, while the attendance at places of worship has decreased by over 28,000. Yet there has been an increase in the accommodation to the extent of nearly 37,000 seats. That is, there are more chapels and churches and less people in them.

WE congratulate the Scottish Secular Union on the plucky way in which it has encountered and surmounted its financial difficulties, and we wish it the prosperous future it deserves.

BLASTS FROM THE NORTH.

"And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind."
 —1 Kings xix., 11.

I SAT in the waiting-room of Branspeth Station, the other day, and scanned two rolls of printed matter hung against the wall; I turned over leaf after leaf of silly and unmeaning sentences, which, according to a parson's prefatory remarks, were "choice selections from God's Word." Bah! The poor, silly creatures who annoy the sight of sensible people with this Biblical rubbish ought to be taken care of. I observed, however, some unbelieving hand had scribbled comments in the margins. A sign of the times.

THE *Newcastle Chronicle* Office issued a double sheet report of the Church Congress the other day. When the Freethought Congress was held, the same paper gave a notice of about a dozen lines. The *Newcastle Chronicle* is a little sycophantic and timid yet, but it is gathering nerve slowly and steadily, and we must not be impatient.

I HAD twenty minutes to wait at Durham Station a few days ago, and I spent the time very pleasantly, watching a very chatty and affectionate group. Something of importance must have taken place in the old cathedral city. About twenty-four white-chokered parsons surrounded the Lord Bishop of Durham and seemed wrapped in glowing admiration of the little fat man, his gaiters, his banded hat, and his indescribable eyes. Around the skirts of the reverend and god-fearing bishop-worshippers, fluttered a number of delighted and smiling better-halves, and in and out among the holy crowd fluttered and fanned that abominable Atheist.

THE NORTH WIND.

THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON VIII.

“And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.”—Acts v., 11.

No doubt! No doubt! Peter was now in power: the Church was at his feet. Peter, who always had a keen eye for the main chance; who gave up nothing himself for or to his master except under promise of one hundredfold more in the time that then was, and in the world to come life everlasting (Matt. xix., 28, 29). The most unconscionable money-lender or bill-discounter in the world never excelled that. Peter was determined to do his best, while the new converts were at the white heat of their “first love” and religious excitement, to realise the promise of Jesus and secure the one-hundredfold here, at any rate, whatever might be his fate in the “life to come!”

In this respect, the followers of St. Peter, whether at Rome or elsewhere, have closely copied his meritorious example, and done their utmost to win the one-hundredfold, or the millionfold, if that were possible.

Of course, Peter soon saw that it would be highly impolitic to allow these two, Ananias and his wife Sapphira, to give in just what they pleased to the exchequer of the Church—others might follow the example, and thus much wealth be diverted from the *proper* channel.

Besides, something bold and terrible needed to be done to impress the rabble, inside and outside the Church, with the power of this new movement and especially the power of the leaders. It was not legitimate power they were content to wield, but the power of superstition. The Church started life without a single grain of objective truth; and to support itself was compelled to have constant recourse to the supernatural—that is, to fraud, to tricks, and to jugglery. Now, if Peter could only make away with Ananias and Sapphira, and give it out that the Holy Ghost had done it, what a deep and horrible impression it would create! and how effectually it would prevent anyone following the example of these two! So the deed was done.

I now proceed to give definite reasons for holding the opinion that the Holy Ghost did not kill these two, nor any other person of the Trinity:—

1. Those divine persons never hated lying—most of what they themselves are reported to have said is of that stamp.

2. They not only indulged in this weakness themselves, but had friends who did the same. Abraham told lies about Sarah; Jacob deceived his poor old blind father; Jesus said he came down from heaven—a manifest falsehood; Peter swore he did not know Jesus! Now, if the Holy Ghost wanted to make an example of any person, why not of one of those? 'Tis true, Jesus and Peter, if reports are to be credited, did die violent deaths. Is that to be regarded as proof that the Holy Ghost killed them for lying?

3. It has never been the practice of the Holy Ghost, Father, or Son to kill people for lying. If it had been, in what age of the church would there have been half-a-dozen saints left alive? Why, there never could have been a church without wholesale lying. The worst thing that could happen to any church is the dissemination of truth. Lying! In it the Trinity, the church, and all other shams “live and move, and have their being.” What! let the Holy Ghost go through the church to-day and slay all that preach false doctrine, and that do little else than teach conscious and unconscious lies, and the churches would be in the condition of Sennacherib's army—they would waken up next morning to “find that they were all dead corpses!” (Isaiah xxxvii., 36). No, my brethren, the Holy ghost never did kill liars; they are his very best friends.

But if the Holy Ghost did not kill Ananias and Sapphira, who did? That is the question. There can be only one answer, and that is, Peter was their murderer. Look at the facts. They had offended Peter. He was furious with them. Both these persons died suddenly in a place where Peter and the officials of the church were assembled. There were certain “young men” who at once disposed of the bodies. And that was the end of it.

1. Are christians satisfied with the story and the conduct of Peter?

2. Could Peter possibly stand forth in a worse light?

3. How was it he did not challenge investigation? Why were the corpses so suddenly, and without the least examination, buried?

4. Would not an honest man or church have done something to clear themselves of suspicion in such a case?

5. What would be said if such a case—exactly or in all essential points similar—were to occur to-day? Let Lefroy plead that the Holy Ghost killed Mr. Gold—would any christian church believe him?

6. What would a few able detectives and an honest coroner's jury have brought to light, had they investigated the Petro-Ananias and Sapphira case? It is a fortunate event for christianity that it rose in an age and time when coroner's inquests were unknown, for in modern London the killing of these two would have resulted in the sudden death of the church as well. And this double murder *will* eventually help to kill the church. Murder will out; and the blood of those two cries, not to heaven, but to common sense, for vengeance, and vengeance it will have.

There is nothing in the character of Peter to warrant or even suggest his innocence; and fanaticism and crime have generally gone hand in hand. Witness the bloodthirsty temper of Moses, Joshua, of Abraham, and Jephtha, of the Jews who murdered Jesus, and of Jesus who threatened worse than murder against *all* who disbelieved and opposed him; witness the wholesale and horrible persecutions of the Church in all ages. Let any candid man weigh the matter, as if he were on a jury trying the case, and say whether, having regard to the whole circumstances and the almost invariable character of apostles, prophets, and religious leaders in all countries and ages, the chances are not a thousand to one that Peter, the first of Popes, did what Popes have rarely hesitated to do—committed murder for the sake of the Church's peace, and covered his crime by a dreadful falsehood in the interest of truth?

Lastly, I care not much who murdered Ananias and Sapphira—they were murdered, whether Peter or the Holy Ghost did it: the one had as a good a right to kill as the other. And even if either had possessed that right, the two offenders should, in common justice, have had a fair and open trial. Instead of which, they were murdered without the least chance of self-defence.

We need not wonder that Christians to-day keep Mr. Bradlaugh from his seat by brute force; they have never been friends of justice—except for themselves. Their divine book gives no example of an honest criminal trial; the highest judicial proceedings known to the Bible and the blessed Trinity are just those of the barbarians or of the “unspeakable Turk,” when he exhibits himself in his worst possible fashion.

Reader, instead of “remembering Lot's wife,” Remember Ananias and Sapphira, who, whatever their character, were murdered for the good of the infant Church, as millions of innocent people have been for the same institution and principles in later centuries. J. SYMES.

MUSINGS BY A WOULD-BE PHILOSOPHER.

No. 2.—ON DEATH.

THE shuffling off of this mortal coil is an occurrence which cannot fail to be a matter of concern to humanity until “victorious analysis” conquers Nature so far that human life may be indefinitely prolonged (as contended by Professor Hufeland and Dr. Evans), and men “get rid of Death as they have already done of the Devil”; a consummation perhaps not to be devoutly wished in the interest of succeeding generations, however desired by present owners of that fluctuating property Life, unwarned by the noted example of the Strullburgs. Death must be met, and, although the proper study of a wise man is how to live and not how to die, no philosophy and no absorption in the world's work will permanently put aside the thought “I must leave it all.”

In the Confucian Analects we read “Ke-loo said, ‘I venture to ask about Death?’ Confucius answered: ‘While you do not know life how can you know about death?’” ’Twas a canny answer, full of the Confucian wisdom that rests with what it knows and does not pretend to knowledge of what it does not and cannot know; but it cannot and should not deter others who “venture to ask about Death.” One question forces itself on the attention of the Freethinker. It is this. What will be the result of the surrender of all hopes of a life hereafter? Will it intensify the sense of death, making us realise more fully that the hands we clasp, the lips we kiss are on the road to rot even as we touch them; or will this limitation of our outlook to this bank and shoal of time, induce a keener zest and greater concentration of the instinct of life; making us more eager to realise such instalments of immortality as lie in having children and transmitting posthumous influence down the ages; more active to work while it is day, for the night cometh wherein none can work.

DAIB.

A NEW PHILOTHEIST.

ANOTHER prophet has risen in Israel. The Lord has inspired the Rev. George Wooller, a Unitarian minister in South London, to fulminate a series of six propositions against the demon of Atheism. Those propositions are as follows: "1. The human mind demands a cause for every effect. 2. An effect never is a cause. 3. The universe is a system of effects, therefore, 4. The universe cannot be its own cause, therefore, 5. There is a cause for the universe. 6. The cause must *correspond* to, whilst it does not resemble, the effect." Mr. Wooller, with the enthusiasm of a discoverer, claims originality for his cool assumptions, but we at once recognise them as the pale ghosts of slain Theistic arguments of bygone times. Like most of the paraphernalia of Christianity they are neither new nor true. But lest Mr. Wooller should imagine that his spectral arguments have caused us to give up the ghost, we propose to examine his propositions and to shed upon them the daylight of Freethought.

1. On this head it is useless to waste words. The statements here made we readily admit.

2. Mr. Wooller argues thusly in support of this thesis:—An absolute cause is nowhere to be met with in the universe. Example: A watchmaker, who is said to make a watch, really does no such thing, inasmuch as the materials for the making of the watch existed prior to its maker.

To which we would reply: That Mr. Wooller's contention is a mere quibble; that cause and effect are mere terms denoting certain stages in the sequences of phenomena. Nevertheless, though from a strict hard-and-fast philosophical standpoint, this proposition may be true, yet in the ordinary and conventional sense effects do continually operate as causes. It would be hard lines on revengeful Jehovah if this proposition were true, seeing that being an effect, the creature of circumstances beyond his personal control—man cannot be the cause of sin, and consequently the deity would lose the satisfaction of punishing for ever his own image.

3. If this proposition means that the universe once was not, and was effected by some non-natural or supernatural cause, it propounds an assertion which is in flat contradiction with all the physical sciences, and is not supported by the faintest scintilla of evidence.

The outward and visible signs of the alleged origination of the universe nowhere exist. The scientific maxim of the eternity and indestructibility of matter give the lie direct to the statement.

The only beginning we know of is not *of* the universe but *in* the universe; in other words the phenomena of matter are ever fleeting and evolving fresh phenomena, but matter itself has ever been, and ever will remain, "world without end."

4. The preceding remarks will equally apply to this proposition. Atheists are sometimes scolded for their naughtiness in asking the very pertinent and clenching question "who made God?" Our pious friends affect to be too shocked to answer us, and simply remind us that the Deity is eternal and uncreate. The evidence however for this assertion is never vouchsafed—perhaps it was all washed away at the flood!

The universe is a mighty temple not made with hands, nor fashioned by the breath of a new God. It is as old as eternity, and will live to immortality,—being like Melchisedec "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." (Heb. vii., 3.)

5. The above remarks have, we venture to think, already shown that the Deity is not the putative father of the universe, and have exposed the bastard reasoning which the Theists put forward as the legitimate article. We have now to note the *non sequitur* of this proposition. Why limit to one cause the honor and glory of making the universe? The universe contains an infinitude of varied phenomena, and we should be warranted by the first proposition alone in ascribing these effects to an indefinite number of causes. Polytheism is here far more consistent and logical than Theism. The former gives, very reasonably, to separate Deities their several spheres of creative energy. The latter makes God into an infinite Jack-of-all-trades, to whom nothing comes amiss, from the creation of a pig to that of a planet.

The alleged cause of matter must either be material or

immaterial. In the first case, we have to imagine either the Deity clothed with matter, or matter with Deity; in the second case, we are predicating for the universe an unknown and unknowable cause, which "no man hath seen at any time."

6. Mr. Wooller explains this enigma thus:—"The watchmaker has a correspondence with the watch as with every article he makes, though he does not resemble them."

This proposition seeks to evade the difficulty of the idea of an immaterial cause of a material effect. The analogy does not assist him. In the watchmaker we behold a material being arranging and adapting already existing materials. With God it is otherwise. We hear the prestigious fiat of Deity, and cockorum! the universe appears. Like the conjuror at the fair, he utters the magic words and the whole business of creation is over, to the admiration of the angels and cherubim and the unspeakable dismay of Doctor Darwin.

In conclusion: Having read and considered these propositions, we may go on our way rejoicing, thanking God we are Atheists.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

EVIL AND GOD.—A scheme which permits thousands of generations to live and die in wretchedness cannot, merely by providing for the well-being of later ages, be absolved from the alternative charge of awkwardness or malevolence. If there exists a personal Creator of the universe who is infinitely intelligent and powerful, he cannot be infinitely good; if, on the other hand, he be infinite in goodness, then he must be lamentably finite in power or in intelligence. By this two-edged difficulty, theology has ever been foiled.

—*Professor Fiske.*

EARLY FATHERS AND THE GOSPELS.—There is not a single sentence in all their remaining works in which a clear allusion to the New Testament is to be found. They do actually quote Moses, and other Old Testament writers by name, "Moses hath said," "But Moses says," etc., in numerous passages, but we nowhere meet with the words "Matthew hath said in his gospel," "John hath said," etc. They always quote, not the words of the evangelists, but the words of Christ himself directly, which furnishes the strongest presumption, that, though the sayings of Christ were in general vogue, yet the evangelical histories, into which they were afterwards embodied, were not then in being.—*Rev. Dr. Giles, "Christian Records,"* p. 52.

WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN?—Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year 140, says that the "Memoirs of the Apostles" were read out in the Sunday meetings, and that their title to reception consisted in the support they derived from the prophecies of the Old Testament, the fulfilment of which they recount. He does not mention the existing gospels by name, and gives particulars not appearing in them, and which he consequently must have had from some other source.—*Judge Strange, "The Bible,"* p. 23.

PROFANE JOKES.

"WHEN I have prepared a remarkably good sermon," said the Rev. Mr. Gushwell, "it generally happens that I have a very small congregation to listen to it." "What a memory you have!" exclaimed Fogg, in tones of astonishment, "how long ago was it that you prepared that sermon, did you say?"

A LITTLE boy in a Sunday school put a poser to his teacher. The lady was telling her class how God punished the Egyptians by causing the first-born of each household to be slain. The little boy listened attentively. At the proper interval he mildly inquired: "What would God have done had there been twins?"

"Papa," said an inquisitive boy, "this morning the domine prayed for more rain, and this afternoon Deacon Bixby prayed for dry weather to get his hay in. Now if the Lord loves the deacon and the domine just the same, what do you suppose he'll do about it?" "My son," answered the old gentleman sternly, "Whenever you want to ask foolish questions, go to your mother, don't come to me."

"THAT'S what I call a finished sermon," said a lady to her husband, as they wended their way from church. "Yes!" was the reply; "but, do you know, I thought it never would be."

REVIEWS.

Hagar; or, Scripture Facts Concerning Marriage, especially in Relation to Polygamy, Concubinage, Divorce, Marital Authority, etc. By M. D. London: Wertheimer, Lea and Co. 1881.

THAT concubinage and polygamy should be seriously defended at the present day on the ground of their Biblical authority may seem to some a little staggering. So little are the contents of the Jew books known and appreciated. We confess that the first glance at "Hagar" gave rise to a suspicion that it might be the work of some wicked sceptic bent upon bringing the precious Bible into disrepute. Though little likely that a Freethinker would indulge in above 200 pages of ironically serious Biblical exegesis and examination of ecclesiastical authorities in regard to a matter wherein society has so manifestly outgrown "revelation;" it seemed almost improbable that a polygamist would be found outside Utah with courage of his convictions sufficient to defend concubinage as lawful to-day to all Bible believers. Yet such is the fact. A perusal of "Hagar" will, we think, convince anyone that the writer is both a sincere Christian and a sincere believer in the lawfulness of concubinage. In this position he is not alone. A century ago the Rev. M. Madan published a book entitled "Thelyphthora," embodying similar views. It is a pity that the present work, which is understood to be the production of a Chiswick physician, is published anonymously as those who simply hear of without reading it will probably jump to the conclusion that it is by an unbeliever. Whoever the author, there can be no two opinions as to the strength of his arguments. He cites all the passages of "Holy Writ" bearing upon the subject, and points out that both polygamy and concubinage were practised by those Hebrew saints who were most distinguished by their personal piety, faith and communion with God, who in no case censured or condemned these practices. He shows that they were positively recognised and allowed in the code of laws, said to have been delivered to Moses by Jehovah, which code, by the way, sanctioned the sale of a daughter as a concubine to a master, who might put her away if she pleased him not. Moreover, in Ezek. xxiii., Jehovah himself is said metaphorically to have espoused two sisters, Aholah and Aholibah; and our author asks (p. 92): "Could that be a sin in Jacob, when done literally in the flesh, which the Lord declares himself to have done in the Spirit?" In the New Testament neither polygamy nor concubinage, which the writer shows were distinguished by the Bible writers from fornication and adultery, are spoken against, while wives are declared to be subject in all things to their husbands. The passages limiting bishops and deacons to one wife show, by specifying these dignitaries, that monogamy was not general in the Christian community. Even the tenth homily of the Church of England defends the Jewish saints by declaring that "after the phrase of the scripture a concubine is an honest name." Yet the right reverend Father in God, the Lord Bishop of Manchester, has the unblushing audacity to speak of a connexion between unbelief and impurity. The slanderer should reflect upon the obscenity of his own sacred book, and be silent for very shame. "Hagar" is but another of the many proofs that while the Bible is regarded as an infallible standard of morals there is no crime or depravity that may not plausibly be defended from its pages.

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SUNDAY EVENINGS FOR THE PEOPLE.—

South Place Institute, South Place, Finsbury.—SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23rd, at Seven o'clock, READINGS FROM THE POETS, by Miss COWEN. Followed by Mendelssohn's "ATHALIE." Miss Jessie Royd, Miss Ellis Walton, Miss Jessie Bond (by permission of R. D'Oyly Carte, Esq.) Reader, Miss Cowen. Full Band and Chorus. Conductor, Dr. J. W. Bernhardt. Tickets at the doors, 6d. and 1s.—Oct 30, Lecture by Dr. Edward B. Aveling, on "Hamlet;" followed by Selections from "Elijah."—National Sunday League, Office, 15, Bloomsbury Street, W.C. HENRY SAVERAUX, Secretary.

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