

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH AND HIS TAIL.

WE had occasion to remark, a few weeks ago, that there were Freethinkers who regarded the Salvation Army as a vulgar copy of the Order of Jesus. Allowing for the difference in doctrine, the Booth organisation is modelled on that of Ignatius Loyola. Even the "social" successes (real or delusive) of the Salvation Army are more than paralleled by those of the Jesuits, who managed to drill anarchic savages into order and decency in several parts of the world. What "the Army" lacks, and is ever likely to lack, is the learning of the Jesuits. Voltaire himself, to say nothing of other great heretics, was educated in one of their schools; and although he afterwards fought their creed with matchless skill, he never failed to praise the superior education they imparted to their pupils.

For a striking proof of our estimate of the Salvation Army, we refer the reader to the "Orders and Regulations" issued by Booth in the form of a penny pamphlet. This singular publication will convince any one open to conviction that the "General" feels he has his cattle well in hand, and can not only drive them where he pleases, but flick them smartly on any part from ears to hoof with his long-reaching whip. His aim is to subject them absolutely to his personal despotism. Every part of their lives is to be regulated. Not only the public but the private—not only the religious, but the political, social and domestic—conduct of his followers is to be rigorously and minutely determined for them. He is to be the head, and they are to be the tail.

First of all, as with the Jesuits, the Army is to be everything to its soldiers. They must court and marry within the ranks. "No soldier," says Booth, "should commence courting with any one who is not already a soldier, or unwilling [he means *willing*] to become one." He goes to the length of dictating: "Should a soldier become engaged to an officer who afterwards gives up or forfeits his or her commission, the soldier would be justified in breaking off the engagement." Personal honor and plighted troth are to be trampled under foot for the good of the Army. The dearest affections are to be governed, or even killed, by "orders and regulations." It is evidently the purpose of General Booth to *breed* Salvationists from Salvation fathers and mothers, and he zealously guards against any cross-breeding.

According to the Apostle the faithful are to "salute one another with a holy kiss." But Booth is superior to the inspired writer, and the Bible, like everything else, must give way to his requirements. No Salvationist is to "kiss anyone of the opposite sex unless it is a relative or some person to whom he is engaged." And perhaps the order is a wise one. The General may know the inflammability of his soldiers, and remember the liveliness of the "all-night meetings" they once indulged in. Religious and sexual excitement are very closely related; and a kiss, which to a sober person may be a mere salutation, is apt with

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others to be the gate of concupiscence. Given a Salvationist all aflame with love for Jesus, and a kiss may send him God knows where.

Salvationists are to wear "wool or merino next the skin all the year round." This is sensible advice, but the soldiers must be very ignorant if they require it. They are also to eat "brown bread and good vegetables" to keep their blood cool, but this is largely nullified by the recommendation of "eggs."

Cardinal Newman, even in his unregenerate Protestant days, preached that the Christian was only a passenger through the world. Booth inculcates the same idea. "Though still living in the world," he says, the Salvationist "is not of it, and he has, in this respect, no more business with its politics—that is, the public management of affairs—than he has with its pleasures." The Salvationist is not a citizen of this world. He is not to trouble his head about its business. But the General has his own notions, and when he wants them carried out he will issue his manifesto, and every soldier is then expected to "act in harmony with the rules and regulations laid down for him by his superior officers."

This charming aspect of the Salvation Army may partially account for its subvention by wealthy Christians. If half-a-million of working people, who might otherwise be Radicals, are to hold aloof from politics except when Booth orders them to vote solid, their support might be very valuable on particular occasions, and meanwhile they are subtracted from the popular side in the great battle between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Every rich Conservative is a fool if he does not send a yearly cheque to General Booth.

The Boothites are told to "surrender themselves to the guidance" of their officers, who are all appointed, shifted, and cashiered by the General. They are bidden to "rely on the wisdom and goodness" of these Booth-appointed officers, and to believe that "they have the Spirit of God, and will only command what is right." That is, Booth has the Spirit of God, and will only command what is right; and as "'tis he himself who says it," who on earth will entertain a doubt?

It appears that the soldiers held meetings for the consideration of business affairs, but this led to "discussions and disputes," and such meetings are henceforth prohibited. "There is no room in the Army," Booth says, "for people who want to vote or argue or get their own way." This is on the face of it despotic, but in Booth's eyes it is "compatible with the largest amount of personal freedom." His soldiers have "the fullest liberty to be good," and the judge of what *is* good is William Booth, who is inspired by "the Spirit of God." This Spirit also inspires him what to do with all the cash.

Lest the Boothites should take to thinking, the wily General prescribes what they should read. They may "read with profit" the following:—"The Bible, *The War Cry*, and our own publications." These contain all the necessary pabulum for Salvationist minds, and as all except the Bible are published by

Booth they may be "read with profit" to the General as well as his troops.

Such are the "Orders and Regulations" of this pious despotism, as far as they interest outsiders. Booth is more than the Pope of the Salvation Army. The Vicar of Christ at Rome is infallible, but is after all unable to do anything without his Holy Council of cardinals. The Vicar of Christ, whose headquarters are at the back of our own office, is far more potent within his more limited scope. He is absolute. The elective principle is unknown in his Army. He is self-appointed and he appoints everyone else. He holds all the power, all the income, and all the property. Beside him there is none. He is the *head* of the Army in every sense of the word; he thinks for it and wills for it, down to the smallest details of the battle, the bivouac, and the barracks. His followers are his *tail*. They are all wagged, and by keeping his personal clutch on the property he prevents them from wagging *him*. The whole thing is a splendid tribute to his power of organisation. But after all he does not organise independent men and women, and it is comparatively easy to organise *sheep*.

G. W. FOOTE.

SOCRATES AND JESUS.

[CONCLUDED.]

THE great, the essential contrast between Socrates and Christ is that the one character is real, the other ideal.* I do not say that all that is told of the Athenian "cross-examining missionary," as Grote calls him, is true, or that all that is told of the prophet of Nazareth is false. But the records concerning Socrates are untainted with that legendary supernaturalism attributed to Jesus. We know not one brief year out of thirty, but something like thirty years out of double the number. We have, moreover, the witness of adversaries, or at any rate caricaturists, in Aristophanes and other comic writers. It has been doubted how far the merit of the Platonic Dialogues are due to Socrates himself, and how far to Plato. What is certain is that their impulse came from Socrates. The pictures given by Plato and Xenophon of their common master are, in the main, in accordance, differing only as drawings from the same original by two authors radically different in spirit and in character. The Athenian is pictured before us, not as a supernatural wonder-worker, but as a man with human virtues and human frailties. We see the grotesque Silenic features, the snub nose, thick jesting lips, prominent eyes, round stomach, and sturdy frame of the Athenian cross-examiner; we see him shoeless, shirtless and ragged, yet unmistakably a man; we know him as a citizen, a husband, a patriot, a prisoner, a hard drinker, a droll, and a martyr. If we reverence him, it is because we know his defects and reverence him in spite of them. Who can say we have any such portrait of Jesus? The numerous contradictory lives of Christ are sufficient to refute any such contention. On their own showing the gospels give but scanty incidents in the short career of one who is never seen in the essential positions, for an example, of husband and father. Moreover, Xenophon and Plato substantially agree, despite the fact that the former, a man of the world, regards Socrates from the practical side, while Plato, a contemplator, regarded him rather from the theoretic side. Yet both testify from personal knowledge to his contented poverty, his integrity, his good-natured irony, and his unremitting interest for the improvement of man and society, and his serenity and playful equanimity to the last. Xenophon and

Plato were extremely diverse authors, while the gospels, although said to be inspired by the same divine being, abound in manifold contradictions.

Jesus in some respects looks superior to Socrates just because he is an ideal. It is evident, for example, from St. Matthew, that the earliest conception of him was as sent "only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To the Syrophenician woman he says it is not mete the children's bread should be cast to dogs. Yet in the appendix to Mark, added after Christianity had been spread by Paul among the Gentiles, he is idealised and made to say "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Evidently the earlier Jesus was a Jew of the Jews as much as Socrates was a Greek of the Greeks.

Of the Gospel of John it may truly be said "The trail of the serpent is over it all." What critic who has compared the discourses attributed to Jesus in John's Gospel with the Johannine epistles, can for a moment think Jesus ever used such phrases as "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." "Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." "I am the way, the truth and the life." Such phrases bear in themselves a token of being the beliefs of after ages. They are as much inventions as the speeches attributed by Livy to the Roman generals. If Plato Platonised Socrates, still more did the writers of the fourth gospel Johannise Jesus.

The ideal character of Christ is well seen in Justin Martyr, a Christian father, who lived before the compilation of the gospels, and who is the first of many who has drawn a comparison between Socrates and Christ. The tenth chapter of his Second Apology is entitled "Christ compared with Socrates," and he therein distinctly says "that Christ was partially known by Socrates" "for he was and is the *Word* [Logos] who is in every man." Only philosophers could be expected to worship the abstract and ideal Logos, hence it was identified with "the man Christ Jesus," a man of whom strictly speaking nothing whatever is known. If however we take the Gospel narrative of Jesus as having a historic basis, we must allow that the character of Socrates is more natural, more human. The difference between the son of Sophroniscus and the Carpenter's wife's son is the difference between a humorous philosopher and a fanatic.

One word in conclusion. The task of pointing out flaws in a character held in veneration is an ungracious one. It is only because Jesus is set up as an idol and placed on a preposterous pre-eminence above all others, that justice demands a scrutiny of his claims. To single out one man as the sole Savior of the world is to do injustice to all its benefactors. Before him men like Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tse, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno and Epicurus contributed to the world's welfare. Since his time to many of his own followers, to many too who rejected his claims, humanity owes a deeper debt of gratitude. To place one man, and that a bachelor of whose life so little is known, above all the rest, as a perfect example, is to stultify human morality and sap the springs of self-reliance and progress.

J. M. WHEELER.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake's recent papers in the *Freethinker's Magazine*, entitled "What would Follow on the Effacement of Christianity?" has been published in pamphlet form by Mr. H. L. Green, of Buffalo, New York.

The *Guardian* holds that "School Board religion is usually endowed Nonconformity." The *Church Reformer* draws the proper lesson that the remedy is a movement in favor of secular education.

* "En un mot, ceux qui nous racontent Socrates sont des témoins; ceux qui nous parlent de Jésus ne le connaissent pas, ils s'imaginent."—E. Havet, *Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, tom. i., p. 168.

CLEANNESS OF LIFE.

[CONCLUDED].

A^o STRONG necessity is laid upon us of the new thought that we should lead clean lives. And I mean by that, in the first place, physical cleanness. I believe profoundly in the bath tub. A daily bath is better than morning prayers. I think that one of the greatest needs of the world to-day is for the preaching of the gospel of water, towels, combs, toothbrushes and shoe-blackening. The moral influence of clean linen is somewhat tremendous. If a man of cleanly habits were attacked by a gang of roughs, he would need no firearms. It would only be necessary for him to open his coat and show a clean shirt front. No ruffian can stand his ground before a white shirt bosom. He fears it more than the Devil dreads holy water.

No matter how much truer certain doctrines may be than others, the world will never accept them at the hands of men and women who do not keep their finger-nails clean. No matter how just the claims of the working people are, they never will be regarded until they are pressed by persons who wear clean collars and blacken their shoes. An unwashed people will always be oppressed by those who overpower them with the mighty moral potency of soap.

If a man is an utter hermit he may be as filthy as he likes, because there is no such thing as right and wrong for a person who lives alone. But it is wicked for one who comes in contact with others, in horse-cars, railroad trains, places of assembly, and above all in home life, not to be clean. The difficulties in the way of personal cleanliness among the poor are very great, but they must be overcome before the industrial world can be redeemed.

But the necessity for cleanness of living in our moral relations is greater. What can be hoped from persons who get drunk. A Secularist and social regenerator is the last person in the world who should disgrace his opinions and his mission in life by allowing it to be said of him that he was under the influence of liquor. Robinson Crusoe had a perfect right to get drunk, if he wished to, before he found Friday; because for a man alone on an island there is no moral code. But a man with a wife and children, friends and neighbors, has no right to drink too much liquor, because he thus fights against the fitness of things; he violates the rights of others, by making himself troublesome and in every way offensive. And now in these struggling days of the new thought that is better than the old, Secularists should feel a peculiar and especial obligation to avoid doing anything that could justly bring Secularism into reproach. It is quite certain that each man must decide for himself how much or how little liquor he will use, because no one else has the right to decide for him and force that decision upon him, but it is equally certain that the inspiration, the wisdom, the good judgment, and self-control that are needed to redeem this world from the horrid dominion of the priest and politician will never be found flowing from the bung-hole of a beer-keg. And the counsel of men whose brains are fuddled with liquor cannot be good. I do not wish anyone who gets drunk to tell people that he agrees with me in opinion, because he does not. If he did he would stay sober. I may pity a person who drinks too much, but if that person calls himself a Freethinker I have a grudge against him as one who stands in the way of progress, whose apostles should be above reproach. A man who abandons the worship of Jehovah only to bow before the shrine of Gamberinus can have no real part nor lot in the great effort for human emancipation that is now going rapidly forward.

So, too, no Secularist should allow it to be said of him that he has not the moral courage to live within his income or that he does not pay his debts; or that

he in any way robs his neighbor. Let those who "praise God from whom all blessings flow" and look forward to streets of gold and gates of pearl, be guilty of all the business dishonesty they please, by way of illustrating the purifying influences of religious beliefs. Leave plutocracy to the pious, burglary to the believing and cheating to the churchmen, if they like. If doctrines have any influence on character, the word of a Secularist should be better than the bond of a Christian.

And perhaps more important than all, our home life should be like the odor of flowers on the summer air. The new morality looks with abhorrence upon women who go forth with bags of gold to buy counts and earls and dukes, and despise men who buy women who do not love them. The new moralists believe that marriages contracted for any reason but because the man and woman want each other are against the happiness of the world. They believe that children should grow up in an atmosphere of love, gentleness and politeness. They believe that where love and respect are not, a family in the true sense of the word cannot be. They look upon the immoral and lewd practices of many religious persons and believers in things as they are, with abhorrence. They regard many of the deceptions, brutalities, and humiliations that are put upon wives owing to the slavish position in which the priests and politicians have placed women, as hateful beyond compare. They look upon the home life of many persons who believe they will go to heaven when they die as beneath the contempt of persons with an enlightened idea of right and wrong. They abhor many of the practices of persons who have family prayers, and even of some ministers' practices which do not cost these offenders their place among decent people. They believe in the utmost purity between men and women. And for any Secularist to violate any of these beliefs by personal uncleanness of life in any way is to become an enemy of that desired development of home life that is to make the hearthstone the noblest altar and the family circle the dearest church.

It is difficult to make people understand that the idea of God makes morality impossible, that religion degrades the human race, and that the arbitrary enactments of the Church and State fill every home with a miasma, except in those rare cases where love laughs at enactments; but it is true, and some day people will understand it as they now know their A B C's.

It is difficult to make people understand that when we seek to destroy religious faith we are not trying to destroy restraints meant to keep men from doing wrong, but that we are trying to knock off handcuffs and balls and chains that forbid them to do right. It is difficult to make people understand that when we try to break the authoritative power of the Church and State we are not seeking to make a way for vice to flourish, but to give virtue a chance to grow. But so it is. And the only way we can ever hope to make them understand it is by living in the presence of our neighbors clean and blameless lives.

It is said that Jesus was so good that when they were about to stone him he said to them, "For what wicked work do you stone me?" and they could not answer him. It is said that Garrison's life was so free from blemish that though they called him Infidel and disturber of the peace, no charge of immorality could be brought against him. Would Bruno have a monument to-day if he had been a bad man as well as an unbeliever? These men should be examples for us, and in these days, when saints spend oceans of money to corrupt elections and legislators, when Church members control almost all the monopolies, when grinding employers live and die in faith, when some of the flower of the English Church, as far as influence and position go, are guilty of nameless crimes, when priests and clergy are not always stain-

less, when burglars are worshippers and murderers are devout, it should not be difficult for us to show that without God and without the fear of hell or the hope of heaven we know how to deal justly and to love mercy, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

It ought to be that if one should say of you, "He is a Secularist and social regenerator," it would be said again: "Is it so? Then mark him well. He is a thinker. You may trust him in business. You may introduce him to your daughter, your sister, your wife. Follow him to his home and you will find it glowing with goodness. He is a clean man."

OMNIPRESENCE.

LISPING Blue-eyes went to church,
For she'd pretty things to wear,
And she listened, as she ought,
While the preacher did declare,
In his most Talmagic style,
"God, our Lord, is everywhere!"

Blue-eyes had a roguish bent,
Sweet and harmless, but she thought,
"I don't want him watching me;
In some mischief I'll be caught,
For nobody's little girl
Can do *always* as she ought."

She was worried, and next day
Sought her mother's sympathy.
"Mamma," said the little one,
"Is God in this room with me?"
"Yes, my dear." "And on the lawn?"
"Yes, in every place there be."

Blue-eyes dropped her flossy head
On her dog in earnest thought.
No philosopher could have been
More provokingly distraught,—
Such a bothering thing to know
Had the preacher's sermon taught

Half in pretty petulance
Out among the flowers she ran.
Dash ran after her, but she stamped,
"Dog, go back, and leave me be!
It is bad enough to know
God is always 'tagging' me!"

—*Freethinker's Magazine.* EMMA ROOD TUTTLE.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, August 27th, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Baker, E. Anderson, Gordon, Heath, Hunt, Killick, Larkin, Reynolds, Roger, Smith, Stranding, Truelove, Warren, J. M. Wheeler, and Forder, secretary. Mr. A. Wheeler attended to represent the Finsbury Branch, but as he had not the authority of the Branch the President ruled that he could not vote. Delegates are requested to note that in the event of their being unable to attend, a written authority from the Branch must be sent with the substitute. The cash statement showed an increase on the General Fund of £26 7s. 2d., and a decrease in the Benevolent Fund of £10 15s. 6d. A letter was read from Mr. Gorrison (of Brussels) relating to the appointment of a delegate at Brussels to represent England on the Council of the International Federation of Freethinkers, Mr. James having retired. The further consideration of the sale of the shares presented to the Society by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant or of their transfer to trustees was then proceeded with. Mr. Hunt moved and Mr. Smith seconded that Mr. Foote be requested to interview Mr. Bradlaugh, and report to Executive at their next meeting; carried. Letters were then read by the secretary from nine gentlemen applying for the post of secretary; these were Messrs. S. Stranding, C. Griggs, J. Clarke, C. J. Hunt, T. Thurlow, and C. Ivatts of London; C. Naewiger and J. Hart of Hull, and Mr. E. Stanley Jones of Liverpool. Mrs. Thornton Smith moved and Mr. Hunt seconded, that the applications for the secretaryship be remitted to the Organisation Committee, to be dealt with at a special meeting; carried.

ACID DROPS.

The Eastbourne Town Council has decided by a majority of 19 to 9 to prosecute the Salvation Army for "proceshing" and playing a band through the streets on Sunday in violation of the bye-laws. So far as freedom of meeting is involved we should stand up even for the Salvation Army, but we never could understand why these fanatics should be allowed to make as much gratuitous noise as they please in the public streets, especially at a time when the inhabitants want to be quiet. The other afternoon their band could be heard all over Finsbury Park, and as they were playing on the space set aside for public speaking they were simply preventing all other bodies from being heard. This is not freedom, but impudent outrage, and should be put a stop to.

According to the *Christian World*, though probably from a Boothic source, a rich infidel at Jorkum (Holland) was so much taken with a couple of hallelujah lasses, and their primitive Christianity, that he built them a hall for their work there. For our part, we should like a little more precise information. What is the rich infidel's name, what is his address, and in what sense was he an "infidel"?

The recent fire at Tokay destroyed places of worship with great impartiality. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews all suffered alike. "Men, women, and children," says the *Daily News*, "rushed about the streets wringing their hands and crying to heaven for help." The only answer was a blast of wind that threw the flames on many of the unfortunates and set fire to their clothes. Let us pray.

The Rev. W. Rose, minister of the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Mansfield, died suddenly on Sunday morning. He was attacked with a sudden stroke of paralysis while engaged in prayer on Saturday. A curious answer to prayer from an all-loving Father.

In Turkey the liquor selling shops are known as "Christian drinking places." No self-respecting Mohammedan would be seen in a Christian drinking place.

George Shortland died at 180 Moselle Avenue amid an odor of sanctity and a good deal of dirt. He was found lying on the hearth an emaciated corpse black for the want of washing. A small parcel and a book were found tied round his neck; in the centre of the parcel, consisting of rags and brown paper, money to the value of about a couple of pounds was found. Texts and religious books were about the place, "but cleanliness wasn't next to godliness in this case (says the *Star*) for the house was so filthy that it took a deal of disinfecting." Perhaps George Shortland is now reposing in Abraham's bosom.

The *Ironclad Age* gives an account of the American Messiah, George Jacob Schweinfurth. Schweinfurth was a Methodist minister until several years ago, when he made the discovery that he was the veritable Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, returned to earth after an absence of upwards of eighteen hundred years to look after his followers. Christ Schweinfurth has a number of believers, especially among the women. He is a genteel-looking blonde of about forty, and has a palatial residence some six miles south of Rockford, Illinois. Here he is surrounded by a number of wingless angels, who minister unto him, and a few males, who, says the *I. A.*, "it is greatly to be deplored have not become eunuchs." In consequence of various virgins who have visited the Christ becoming mothers, the Rev. Mr. Condie, a fanatical Presbyterian, called a religious meeting at Rockford, where it was proposed that Christ Schweinfurth should be treated according to the directions in Matt. xix., 12.

Our heavenly Father is still in his tantrums. He blights the potatoes in Ireland, and threatens the harvest in Hungary. Floods submerging villas, destroying bridges, and stopping trains are among his other little eccentricities.

God's mercies are manifold. A new form of influenza is spreading on the Continent. This latest development comes with a swollen tongue, covered with blisters, which fester. The suffering they cause is extreme, and eating, drinking, or speaking is very painful, if not impossible.

Helsingfors, Finland, has been visited with a terrible hurricane. Many houses have been demolished and bridges swept away. Is this on account of Freethought, which we know is spreading in Finland?

The following has just come to our notice. Some time ago, Mr. H. L. Hastings, the Yankee infidel-slayer, was lecturing at Leicester, and in the course of a rambling speech he remarked that Freethinkers were all ill-looking. This silly observation induced a very wholesome-looking Freethinker to get up and ask the audience if he was any worse-looking than Mr. Hastings; and the contrast was so great, that the Christians themselves laughed at the lecturer's expense. Mr. Hastings tried to extricate himself by saying "Oh, there are exceptions to every rule; this gentleman has been picked out by the infidels and sent here on purpose." Thereupon another very good-looking Freethinker jumped up and exclaimed "But what about me?" It was really too funny, and the whole audience, including the Christians, roared again with laughter.

"Mr. Bradlaugh," said the *Daily News* on Monday, "was excluded from a House which contained dozens of notorious Freethinkers." We are glad to note the admission. It is better late than never. Every honest man now sees that the exclusion of Mr. Bradlaugh was a disgusting exhibition of authority.

Mr. William Rossiter, who debated with Mr. Foote, is once more on the war path. On Sunday evening he lectured at 207 Camberwell Road on "Gladstone and Genesis." We believe his object was to address Secularists, but we have not heard of any converts. Mr. Rossiter is a well-meaning man, though of egotistical temper, and we fully appreciate his efforts in connexion with the South London Art Gallery; but we are quite unable to understand why his friends do not remonstrate against his ludicrous defence of Bible Christianity.

Newman's "Lead kindly Light" is a beautiful hymn, and the "heretics," as Rome calls them, are boasting that it was written while he was a Protestant. But if they examine it a little more closely they will find that the hymn is neither Catholic nor Protestant. It contains absolutely nothing which is distinctively Christian, and might have been written by a Theist; indeed, except for the line about "angel faces," it might almost have been written by an Atheist. True poetry is always human, transcending all sectional differences of creed.

Who wishes to join the literary world, through the medium of a religious weekly? One of the choicest "ads" I have seen for a long while, I have just cut out from a religious organ, published in an Australian capital. Knowing what a number of "good young men" there are on the Barrier field, I reprint it for their benefit. It appeared under the heading of "Wanted," and is as follows:—"A godly young man to assist in the increasing clerical work of the office. One to whom salary will not be the first consideration, but who will seek the advancement of the Savior's kingdom. Accommodation and small salary." It's a fortunate thing the office of the paper which issued this magnanimous offer was not located in Adelaide, or there would have been such a rush of applicants as to render it impossible to get near it. The contents of so-called religious papers are, as a rule, of the most 'wishy-washy' character, but after this exposé, is it to be wondered at?"—*The Silver Age* (Broken Hill, Australia).

The Northern Miner, a smart South African paper, is severe on "Mr. Missionary Stewart" who tried to stop a balloon on Sunday. It declares that such an exhibition of the triumphs of science would be more edifying than "listening to a sky-pilot hashing up the Queen's English, and keeping one's mind morbid and melancholy by the everlasting parading in our eyes the fact that we shall some day be turned to (h)ashes and dust."

It appears that New Orleans is the only city in the United States which makes no distinction between Sunday and other days of the week in opening its public parks, gymnasiums, etc. Washington and Richmond furnish no means of recreation, and permit no amusements whatever in their parks on Sunday

The *New York Sun* says the Sunday closing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art is more and more of a farce, for there is a constant increase in the number of Sunday passes issued to artists and their friends.

Mr. A. B. Curtis uses a column and a half of *Unity* to explain "why men do not believe the Bible to-day." He might have cut his essay short by writing that men do not believe the Bible because they have found that its statements are untrue.—*Truthseeker*.

Judge North seems to have a relative out in South Africa. According to the *Johannesburg Star*, Mr. Justice Turnbull in sentencing Peter O'Neil, a soldier, to two years' imprisonment for stabbing a constable, remarks that O'Neil was evidently instigated by the Devil. Surely the Devil ought to have shared in the punishment.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," said Jesus Christ. Eighteen hundred and sixty years have elapsed, and according to the *Christian Commonwealth* "not one in 10,000" of the Chinese "ever heard of the religion of Jesus Christ." No wonder that Mr. Gore, the editor of *Luz Mundi*, talks about "the gradualness of God's methods."

By the way, the *Christian Commonwealth* should try to be consistent, or at least not to contradict itself flatly in a single number. On one page it tells how the Chinese despise and degrade women, and on another it tells of Lin, the Governor of Chinese Turkestan, who begs the Emperor to relieve him of his official duties (and the salary too, of course), in order that he may go home and give his undivided attention to the care of his aged grandmother. The *C. C.* is bound to admit that the Heathen Chinese "in some respects at least in no wise suffer by comparison with so-called Christian lands." By the way, again, that "so-called" is simply delicious.

By some mistake, or perhaps by some subtle irony, the vicar of Sedgley, near Wolverhampton, has been giving his parishioners vinegar instead of wine in the Holy Communion. The communicants, it seems, were much disgusted at finding their blessed Savior had turned so sour. If the Lord's Supper had actually been dry bread and vinegar it would have made a good test of devotion to those who present themselves at the Lord's table.

Dr. Maclagan, Bishop of Lichfield, endeavors to promote Christian Reunion by inviting one hundred Nonconformist ministers to partake of Michaelmas goose with him. Perhaps he hopes the geese may save the Church Establishment as they once saved Rome. But the Dissenters who do not dine with him will hardly be brought any nearer to Christian Reunion.

It is said the views of Archbishop Benson on the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln are contested by the Bishop of London, but supported by the Bishop of Oxford and Salisbury. This seems to indicate it will show High Church leanings.

There are many arguments against the legal eight hours, but the *Church Times* must take the cake for discovering the decisive one. It is this—the same cook would then no longer be able to prepare her master's breakfast at 9 and his dinner at 7 o'clock. After this all agitation must cease.

England is a Christian country, and you are liable to twelve months' imprisonment for bringing Christianity into "disbelief and contempt." But for the same amount of punishment you may half kill a dozen persons, especially if they happen to be women. Mr. Bros, the North London magistrate, a few days ago sentenced George Boyce to a fine of forty shillings or a month for an aggravated assault on Elizabeth Ankers, a woman with whom he was living. This gentleman's supper was not ready when he came home, and he proceeded to teach her a lesson. He punched her face, kicked her about the body, and finally beat her with a poker. Had not the police come to her assistance the poor creature might have been killed. She had twenty-nine bruises on her body, and she was exhausted from loss of blood, the bed being quite saturated. The worthy magistrate, himself a man and a Christian, had so much

sympathy with the assaulter that he made allowance for "provocation," and inflicted a trifling penalty; and surely no one, after this, will be able to deny that Christianity is the friend of woman.

The *St. Pancras Guardian* waxes facetious, cruelly facetious, over the vicar of Camden Town parish church, who had an "up-and-downer" with his churchwarden, Mr. Vears. The vicar began the Homeric combat but was miserably defeated. Even this does not fill the church, for one morning last week the reverend gentleman had a congregation of one.

Mr. E. B. Lanin has a paper in this month's *Fortnightly Review* on "Sexual Morality in Russia." If Mr. Lanin's view is correct the subject might be treated as briefly as the famous chapter "On Snakes in Ireland," and simply record "There is no sexual morality in Russia." Yet that country is pre-eminently pious and Christian.

The Rev. A. Sayce, writing in the *Contemporary Review* on Excavations in Judæa, corroborates an opinion recently expressed in the *Freethinker*. He says: "The recurrence of an ancient name in the mouths of the modern inhabitants of Palestine by no means implies that the place to which it is given is the representative of an ancient locality of the same name."

At an International Congress at Rome, the Academy of Bologna will propose Jerusalem as the universal meridian from which longitude shall be calculated in order that all nations shall have a common hour. As, however, England and America are the most maritime nations, and they are content with Greenwich, it is doubtful if the proposition will take effect. Many people think we have taken our time from Jerusalem too much already.

"May you never die!" said Annie Mooney to Mr. Marsham, the Southwark magistrate, as he discharged her from the dock. But we should hardly think the worthy "beak" would like the wish to be realised. The Wandering Jew is said to have had enough of that blessing, and "never" is a good deal longer than eighteen hundred years.

Superstition dies hard. Here is the *Young People's Weekly* writing up the Bible giants, and pointing out that the grave of Abel, near Damascus, is thirty feet long, and that of Noah seventy yards. But why not add that Noah's tomb is really the remnant of an old aqueduct? Instead of lending any support to Bible mythology, this bogus tomb of Noah might furnish materials for a picture of Christian superstition maundering over the relics of ancient science, which it had neither the genius to equal nor even the sense to understand.

The *West Sussex Gazette* had the following all very fine and large on its placard—"Violent death of an Atheist." According to its report, John Henry Dixon a retired optician 65 years of age, hung himself at Shalford. Nothing seems to have been disclosed at the inquest as to his religious opinions, but the reporter volunteers the information that the deceased "was never slow in pronouncing himself an unyielding Atheist." We print the statement for what it is worth. But why does the *Gazette* come out with "Violent Death of an Atheist?" Why not come out in other cases with "Violent death of a Christian?" Probably for two reasons; first, because Atheists and Christians are not treated alike; secondly, because the suicide of a Christian is too common to excite attention.

A writer in last Tuesday's *Times* describes the "sport" of pigeon-shooting as practised in Christian England. Birds are let out of traps by a string, and immediately peppered with small shots, spreading out like a fan, and bound to maim or kill. The writer says "It was seldom that a bird was killed at the first shot." Many of the poor birds escape to a lingering death. The "gentlemen" who call this revolting cruelty "sport" would probably show much indignation if the orthodoxy of their Christianity was called in question.

Major von Wissman has published a pamphlet to substantiate his contention that Catholic missionaries do more effective work in Africa than Protestants. He says the

Scotch missionaries at Lake Nyassa act as political agents to advance British interests at the expense of Germany and Portugal.

According to *Vanity Fair* a disconsolate widow threatened to bring an action for defamation of character against an editor who in writing an obituary notice of her late husband, stated that he had "gone to a happier home."

Preaching at Sunderland Dr. Parker, according to the report in the *Newcastle Chronicle*, said addressing Agnostics: "You acknowledge that the universe must have had a maker or a making; and you say you do not know who made it." Surely Dr. Parker knows that Atheists at any rate do not acknowledge that the universe must have had a maker. On the contrary they cannot conceive of anything outside and beyond "the universe." Something in addition to All is a contradiction in terms.

Dr. Joseph Parker, who is staying at Sunderland, has been interviewed by a correspondent of the *Newcastle Leader*. Asked if he thought there was such a thing as orthodoxy, he said, "I do, but I do not believe we have yet found it." Pretty good after 1800 years of Christianity.

Dr. Parker said one sensible thing. He remarked that "I consider that 200 preachers would be an abundant supply for England." No doubt he would expect to be one of the 200.

Dr. Parker also thinks the pulpit is dying of cowardice. There we differ. When the ordinary sky-pilot gets up and pours out his prosy incapacity with a solemn, superior air, he shows tremendous courage, though some people, perhaps, would give it a different name.

According to a writer in the *Star*, the vicar of Laindon in Essex, has a nice billet. The living is worth £800 a year, and he treats the parishioners to a morning service every other Sunday.

MacPherson's goat is dead. He lived at Findhorn, N.B., and was a terror to the place, but he enjoyed a certain respect, or rather immunity, on account of his belonging to the Free Kirk minister. But one day he butted a retired New Zealand merchant, who drew his shooting iron and laid his aggressor low. MacPherson prosecuted on behalf of his pet, but the court found it a case of justifiable goaticide. Puir MacPherson! What is the world coming to when a man of God may not so much as keep a goat to butt his neighbors?

What on earth has Lord Halsbury, late Sir Hardinge Giffard, ever done in the world except badgering Mr. Bradlaugh and sending Mr. Foote to prison? Why, he has done this. He has climbed to the woollack, where he sits and is paid £10,000 a year, with a prospect of a £5,000 pension as soon as he is kicked off by a general election. The wily old fellow has feathered his nest beautifully, and now he turns up the whites of his ill-looking eyes at a missionary meeting, and deplores that "the great efforts of the world are directed more to trade and commerce and conquest than to the propagation of those truths which were intended to produce the greatest happiness." Capital! most excellent Lord Chancellor Pecksniff. But why did you plead for right or wrong, just as you were paid, except for cash? How was it you did not go into the pulpit? At this question we can fancy we see the old lawyer's wintry face all a-grin, the smile playing on it like moonlight on a muddy pool.

"E. S.," who hails from 5 Charlotte Street, Edgbaston, protests in the Birmingham *Daily Post* against the Town Hall being "desecrated" by Mr. Foote's "infidel" lecture. This indignant gentleman in-inate that the lecture was a surprise, but what kind of a lecture did he expect from a Freethought leader? Certainly Mr. Foote advocated the Gospel of Secularism, but we defy any one to indicate a single sentence in his discourse which could (in itself) be regarded as offensive to his opponents. The concluding remark of "E. S.," that Mr. Foote is a "stranger" and "contributes nothing to the maintenance" of the Town Hall is beneath contempt. The Society he lectured for are ratepayers, and so (directly or indirectly) were the audience.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 7, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town; at 7.30, "A World Without God."

September 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester; 28, Hull.
October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

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

V. V.—Glad to hear the *Freethinker* has readers in the "loyal" borough of Kingston-on-Thames.

C. H. KELF.—We find room for the Federation acknowledgments of subscriptions, but it is impossible to do so for all the individual Branches.

ICONOCLAST.—Thanks for the cuttings.

A. M.—There will be a chapter on Christianity and Slavery in the next volume of *Crimes of Christianity*. Both Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler have written on the subject in this journal.

F. WESTERN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. GEE.—Glad to hear of continued success at Woolwich. Continue the present policy. Keep cool, and leave all intemperance to the bigots.

S. CREWS.—Our view is unchanged. The intervention of a third person in such a case is unnecessary. We don't deny your right to an opinion. The point at issue is the use of our space.

J. ROBINSON, 35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law, Durham, R.S.O., says the meeting called there to-day (Sept. 7) to form a Branch of the N.S.S. will take place at 6 p.m. The hour was previously omitted.

W. J. LEWIS.—Bell and Daldy, York Street, Covent Garden. A new and cheaper edition is now announced, beginning with Rossetti's *Blake*. Mr. Foote will doubtless be visiting Cardiff again. We should like to see a good Branch at Swansea.

H. RICHARDSON, 43 Seaton Street, King's Road, Chelsea, will distribute any Freethought literature sent him for that purpose.

M. CAMPBELL.—Hardly up to the mark.

J. G. FISHER.—Thanks for the explanation, but the wording of the bill is certainly unfortunate.

T. RYAN.—Sorry you found the vermin so irritating. Like you, we think it is a great pity that the Vegetarian Rooms at Portsmouth are not open on Sunday. Even divine worship must be unsatisfactory on a craving stomach.

S. STAUGHTON.—It is rather late for a report of what happened on August 17.

J. D.—See "Acid Drops."

REX REGES.—Jokes are always welcome.

JOHN RICHARDSON.—Mr. Wheeler's statement that Socrates gave us the word philosophy is taken from M. Ernest Havet. It is quite possible the word philosopher was used before this by Pythagoras, but we have none of his writings, and those which are extant of Pythagoreans are later than the time of Socrates.

A. J. FIELD.—As President of the N. S. S. Mr. Foote is bound to care for the welfare of your Branch. We are glad to receive your excellent report, and we feel convinced that the recent success is chiefly due to your own tact and energy.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CENTRAL FUND.—W. H. Whitney, 2s. 6d.; J. De Lord, 5s.; J. Hicks, 1s.; H. Strong, 6d.; P. Gibson, 2s. 6d.; "Adams," 1s.; T. Campbell, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Holloway, 3s. 6d.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—Per V. Rogers, 3s.; Bethnal Green Branch (Victoria Park), 4s. 9d.; ditto, "Salmon and Ball," 1s. 6d.; Brighton Branch, 10s.; Ball's Pond Excursion, 4s. 3d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschentum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Fair Play—Twentieth Century—Freethinker's Magazine—People's Press—Chat—Tocsin—Liberty—Mansfield Reporter—Church Reformer—Johannesburg Star—Marlborough

Times—South-Eastern Herald—La Verite—Newcastle Daily Leader—Newcastle Chronicle—Magazine and Book Review—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Sunday Chronicle—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Lancashire Evening Post.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Our next number will contain the first part of an article by Mr. Foote entitled "Gladstone on Moses," dealing with the Liberal leader's latest essay in *Good Words*. We venture to ask as many of our readers as can afford to do so to take extra copies of that number and circulate them among their friends and acquaintances. We shall print a larger edition than usual.

Mr. Foote paid a very successful visit to Birmingham on Sunday. Despite the very fine weather, there was a good audience at Baskerville Hall in the morning, and in the evening the hall was crowded. The afternoon free lecture in the Town Hall was well attended. The floor and the side galleries were fully occupied, and there must have been nearly two thousand persons present. One old lady bustled out when she found the lecture was not an orthodox one, but with this exception the lecture was listened to throughout with great attention and heartily applauded.

Nearly two hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were sold at Mr. Foote's lectures on Sunday, to say nothing of other publications; and as many of these must have found their way into the hands of strangers, we may expect an increase in our circulation at Birmingham.

Before and after the Town Hall lecture, a full band—most, if not all Freethinkers—played some good selections. The chair was taken by the venerable Mr. Daniel Baker, who presided also at Baskerville Hall. At the close of the meeting, a vote of thanks was passed to the Mayor for granting the use of the municipal building.

Freethinkers came over from Dudley, Wolverhampton, and other towns. Some came all the way from Redditch. Mr. Foote had a chat with many of these visitors, and we believe an effort at organisation and propaganda will now be made in several places. A Branch will certainly be started at Wolverhampton, and lectures will be arranged for at Dudley. The Redditch friends are moving forward discreetly. Before commencing more decided operations they are pushing the sale of Freethought literature. Already there are fifty copies of this journal sold weekly there.

North and North-West London Freethinkers are requested to note that Mr. Foote will open the winter course of lectures for the Branch at the Milton Hall. This evening (Sept. 7) he will deliver his new lecture on "A World Without God." On the following Sunday evening his subject will be "Mr. Gladstone on Moses." It is to be hoped that the Freethinkers of the district will attend and bring some of their more orthodox friends, so that the Branch may be encouraged by a good start in reopening the Hall after the summer vacation.

The Secularists are still "holding the fort" in Beresford Square, Woolwich, the bigots being unable to dislodge them by argument, calumny, or violence. We congratulate the Branch on its courage and perseverance.

Mr. Moss lectured at Woolwich on Sunday evening to a very large meeting. His opponents seem to have been of the scurrilous type. Some ruffian flung a large stone at the van, but it passed over the heads of the lecturer and those around him, and fell harmlessly where no one was standing. This was not a civil argument, but it was the strongest employed by the orthodox party.

The South Shields Branch's annual picnic to Holywell Dene was a great success. The weather was very fine, and the members of the party were all delighted.

The Hull Branch held its first annual excursion on Sunday, in conjunction with the Sheffield Secular Society. Cleethorpes was the *rendezvous*, and the party took tea at the Colonnade Dining Rooms. A hearty vote of thanks was given to Messrs. Billany and Naewiger for organising the excursion.

In connection with the West Riding of Yorkshire Freethought Federation two open-air meetings were held last Sunday in Farsley. Considering the various attractions (it being Feast Sunday) in different parts of the village, the gatherings were fairly successful. Two addresses were delivered: that in the afternoon by A. B. Wakefield, of Hipperholme, subject, "The Historic Struggle of Freethought"; the evening's by Mr. Henry Smith, of Farsley (President of the Federation), subject, "Evolution *versus* Devolution." No discussion followed either meeting, but a quantity of Freethought Tracts were distributed by several friends.

We are informed that the West-Riding Freethought Federation intend extending its activity and influence as far as the sands of Morecambe. A resident of that sea-side resort having promised to arrange for two gatherings (at an early date) some Sunday—several well-known provincial speakers will deliver addresses.

On Sunday evening a meeting of several hundred persons in the Market Place, Huddersfield, resolved that the Blasphemy Laws were opposed to religious liberty and should be immediately repealed.

The late Mr. Josiah Gimson, of Leicester, left £100 a year for ten years to the local Secular Society. The last annual payment will be received in 1893, and the Committee are naturally anxious about the future. Mr. T. Allsop, of London, has suggested the raising of £500 by the end of the year, and promised to contribute £100 himself if the remainder be subscribed. Promises to the extent of £280 have already been received, and it is hoped that the full amount will be raised before Christmas. Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, the honorary secretary, will be glad to hear from all persons who are willing to assist in any degree. Letters will find him at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. It is calculated that the £500 will place the Society in a financially safe and sound position to the end of the century, by which time it may be possible to make a similar or a more permanent provision.

Mr. Heaford's recent lectures at Grimsby has provoked a correspondence in the local *News*. Mr. Wittering and "Homo" well reply to Mr. Heaford's assailants.

The Finsbury Park Branch, notwithstanding the occasional rowdiness of its Christian opponents, is making good progress. Lectures are now delivered in the park in the morning as well as in the afternoon. Mr. Toleman-Garner had a very large audience on Sunday, and in consequence of his special appeal a few persons joined the Branch on the spot.

Mr. A. J. Field, the energetic Finsbury Park secretary, has been endeavoring to obtain a room for indoor meetings during winter. Up to the present time he has met with no success. Proprietors of rooms will have nothing to do with such "wicked" people as Secularists. Apparently the only resource will be to buy out the Young Men's Christian Association.

By an order of the London Secular Federation the lecture notices of all the Branches will be sent to the weekly papers (not including the Freethought journals) by Mr. Pownceby, the Federation secretary. As he will use the monthly programme for this purpose, the secretaries of Branches should give him due notice of any change in their lecture lists.

In the French Chamber of Deputies, M. Forcioli has brought forward a bill modifying the French form of oath. M. Forcioli proposes to omit the words "Before God and before men," and substitute "On my honor and conscience I swear." He also proposes that all religious emblems shall be removed from the tribunals.

The heartsease or pansy (French, "La pensée") is used in France as the symbol of Freethought. It was used as the sign of renunciation at the International Conference at Paris last

September. We see from *La Vérité* that it will be proposed to the International Federation of Freethinkers, by the French Federation, that this flower shall become the universal emblem of Freethought.

Captain Otto Thomson, in sending a vote of thanks from the annual meeting of the Utilistiska Samfundet, desires us to thank all the English Freethinkers who have helped to sustain the cause in Sweden. We can assure Captain Thomson we are always proud and happy to be of assistance to Freethought comrades in any part of the world.

We see from the *Fritänkaren* that Mr. Victor E. Lennstrand is once more actively resuming work, and has been engaged in a debate with a Christian named Loftman. We trust his health is now established beyond all danger of a relapse.

Open Court of Aug. 21 has a discussion on "Monism" between Dr. E. Montgomery and Paul Carus, the editor.

R. C. D'Ablaing van Giessenburg, an eminent Dutch Freethinker, has issued the first volume of a large work in three volumes, entitled, *De L'Evolution des Idées Religieuses dans la Palestine*. We have seen the first part in the hands of a Dutch friend, and it is of a nature to make us wish to see the whole.

A Buddhist Catechism by Subharda Bhikshu has been published by Trubner.

The call for the Convention of Secularists of Canada at Toronto, Sept. 13 and 14, states that: "During the past year the efforts of Mr. Charles Watts in lecturing have produced marked results, and have occasioned the manifestation of a growing interest in Rationalism in many places. The government censorship has been defeated, and Paine's *Age of Reason* has been imported into the country where it was lately prohibited. An Oaths Bill has been prepared, which has fair prospects of being passed at the next session of the dominion Parliament. By this measure oath or affirmation will be optional with the person testifying, and all official inquiry into religious opinions will be prohibited. Canada will thus be made the freest country in the world as to tolerance."

Readers of the September *Fortnightly* will turn first of all to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's article on "Human Selection." Dr. Wallace holds that in the future the superiority in numbers of males at birth will not be diminished, as formerly, by war and accident, but continue throughout life. This will greatly increase the influence of women in the improvement of the race. Being a minority instead of, as in the past, redundant, they will be sought for and have a real choice in marriage, which, as the silly season correspondence on "Matrimonial Agencies" in the *Daily Telegraph* shows, is too rarely the case now.

Professor Dowden gives, in the *Fortnightly Review* for September, an interesting account of "Goethe's Last Days," with an hitherto unpublished letter. It appears that the famous last words, "Light! more light!" were really "Raise the bed-room blinds so that more light may enter." As explained in *Infidel Death-Beds*, the great poet's demand was purely physical.

Curiously enough *Macmillan* for September also has an article on the "Last Days of Heine," translated from the German of Dr. G. Karpeles. After lying eight years on his mattress grave, it is little wonder that the exhausted poet's mind returned to the creed of his youth. He said, "I am a poor Jew, sick unto death," and when it was told him he was said to have returned to Judaism, he said, "I make no secret of my Jewish proclivities, to which I have not returned, simply because I have never renounced them." One of his last sayings—"Dieu me pardonnera—c'est son métier" (God will pardon me—it is his trade)—showed he retained till the end some spice of profanity.

Prince Kropotkin contributes to the September number of the *Nineteenth Century*, a paper on Mutual Aid Among Animals, of which he gives numerous instances among bees, ants, and birds. He contends that mutual aid is no less a law of nature than mutual struggle.

Mr. Judge, one of the business committee elected by the Trade Congress, used to deliver Freethought lectures in Leeds and elsewhere. We knew him pretty intimately at one time, but we have not met him of late. We understand, however, that his religious views are unchanged. We are also informed that the secretary of the N. S. S. Branch at Liverpool is a delegate to the Congress. One of the two delegates of the London Compositors is Mr. Marks, the foreman of Mr. Bradlaugh's printing-office.

The National Secular Society's Benevolent Fund has been considerably drained of late, and there are sure to be heavier demands during the approaching winter. We therefore venture to call the attention of Freethinkers to this Fund, in the hope that it will be liberally supported. Subscriptions should be forwarded as early as possible to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, or to the Editor of the *Freethinker*. All sums will be acknowledged in these columns.

Our reprint of Shelley's *A Refutation of Deism* is now ready. Mr. Foote provides a brief Introduction, containing all that is necessary for the ordinary reader's information. Every admirer of Shelley—and what Freethinker does not admire him?—will be glad to have a copy of this remarkable pamphlet. The young poet of *Queen Mab* handles the speakers in the Dialogue very adroitly. The Deist demolishes the Christian, and the Christian demolishes the Deist. Indeed it is remarked by Mr. J. C. Jeafferson that the pamphlet should have been entitled "A Dialogue for the Fuller Demonstration of the Necessity of Atheism." This week's *Freethinker* contains an extract from the Christian's assault on Deism. The Deist's assault on Christianity is, if possible, still more vigorous and incisive.

Two fresh numbers of "Bible Romances" are now ready—*The Tower of Babel* and *Lot's Wife*. Both have been much altered and largely rewritten.

SHELLEY ON DESIGN.

DESIGN must be proved before a designer can be inferred. The matter in controversy is the existence of design in the Universe, and it is not permitted to assume the contested premises and thence infer the matter in dispute. Insidiously to employ the words contrivance, design and adaptation before these circumstances are made apparent in the Universe, thence justly inferring a contriver, is a popular sophism against which it behoves us to be watchful.

To assert that motion is an attribute of mind, that matter is inert, that every combination is the result of intelligence, is also an assumption of the matter in dispute.

Why do we admit design in any machine of human contrivance? Simply because innumerable instances of machines having been contrived by human art are present to our mind, because we are acquainted with persons who could construct such machines; but if, having no previous knowledge of any artificial contrivance, we had accidentally found a watch upon the ground, we should have been justified in concluding that it was a thing of Nature, that it was a combination of matter with whose cause we were unacquainted, and that any attempt to account for the origin of its existence would be equally presumptuous and unsatisfactory.

The analogy which you attempt to establish between the contrivances of human art and the various existences of the Universe, is inadmissible. We attribute these effects to human intelligence, because we know beforehand that human intelligence is capable of producing them. Take away this knowledge, and the grounds of our reasoning will be destroyed. Our entire ignorance, therefore, of the Divine Nature leaves this analogy defective in its most essential point of comparison.

What consideration remains to be urged in support of the creation of the Universe by a supreme Being? Its admirable fitness for the production of certain effects, that wonderful consent of all its parts, that universal harmony by whose changeless laws innumerable systems of worlds perform their stated revolutions, and the blood is driven through the veins of the minutest animalcule that sports in the corruption of an insect's lymph: on this account did the Universe require an intelligent Creator, because it exists producing invariable effects, and inasmuch as it is admirably organised for the production of these effects, so the more did it require a creative intelligence.

Thus have we arrived at the substance of your assertion, "That whatever exists, producing certain effects, stands in need of a Creator, and the more conspicuous is its fitness for the production of these effects, the more certain will be our conclusion that it would not have existed from eternity, but must have derived its origin from an intelligent Creator."

In what respect, then, do these arguments apply to the Universe, and not apply to God? From the fitness of the Universe to its end you infer the necessity of an intelligent Creator. But if the fitness of the Universe to produce certain effects be thus conspicuous and evident, how much more exquisite fitness to his end must exist in the Author of this Universe? If we find great difficulty from its admirable arrangement in conceiving that the Universe has existed from all eternity, and to resolve this difficulty suppose a Creator, how much more clearly must we perceive the necessity of this very Creator's creation whose perfections comprehend an arrangement far more accurate and just.

The belief of an infinity of creative and created gods, each more eminently requiring an intelligent author of his being than the foregoing, is a direct consequence of the premises which you have stated. The assumption that the Universe is a design leads to a conclusion that there are [an] infinity of creative and created gods, which is absurd. It is impossible indeed to prescribe limits to learned error, when philosophy relinquishes experience and feeling for speculation.

Until it is clearly proved that the Universe was created, we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is less incomprehensible: it is easier to suppose that the Universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive an eternal being capable of creating it. If the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

A man knows, not only that he now is, but that there was a time when he did not exist; consequently there must have been a cause. But we can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. There certainly is a generative power which is effected by particular instruments; we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments, nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration. We admit that the generative power is incomprehensible, but to suppose that the same effects are produced by an eternal Omnipotent and Omniscient Being, leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

We can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. An infinite number of effects demand an infinite number of causes, nor is the philosopher justified in supposing a greater connection or unity in the latter than is perceptible in the former. The same energy cannot be at once the cause of the serpent and the sheep; of the blight by which the harvest is destroyed, and the sunshine by which it is matured; of the ferocious propensities by which man becomes a victim to himself, and of the accurate judgment by which his institutions are improved. The spirit of our accurate and exact philosophy is outraged by conclusions which contradict each other so glaringly.

You assert that the construction of the animal machine, the fitness of certain animals to certain situations, the connection between the organs of perception and that which is perceived; the relation between everything which exists, and that which tends to preserve it in its existence, imply design. It is manifest that if the eye could not see, nor the stomach digest, the human frame could not preserve its present mode of existence. It is equally certain, however, that the elements of its composition, if they did not exist in one form, must exist in another; and that the combinations which they would form, must so long as they endured, derive support for their peculiar mode of being from their fitness to the circumstances of their situation.

It by no means follows that because a being exists, performing certain functions, he was fitted by another being to the performance of these functions. So rash a conclusion would conduct, as I have before shown, to an absurdity; and it becomes infinitely more unwarrantable from the consideration that the known laws of matter and motion, suffice to unravel, even in the present imperfect state of moral and physical science, the majority of those difficulties which the hypothesis of a Deity was invented to explain.

Doubtless no disposition of inert matter, or matter deprived of qualities, could ever have composed an animal, a tree, or even a stone. But matter deprived of qualities, is an abstraction, concerning which it is impossible to form an idea. Matter, such as we behold it, is not inert. It is infinitely

active and subtle. Light, electricity and magnetism are fluids not surpassed by thought itself in tenuity and activity: like thought they are sometimes the cause and sometimes the effect of motion; and, distinct as they are from every other class of substances with which we are acquainted, seem to possess equal claims with thought to the unmeaning distinction of immateriality.

The laws of motion and the properties of matter suffice to account for every phenomena or combination of phenomena exhibited in the Universe. That certain animals exist in certain climates, results from the consentaneity of their frames to the circumstances of their situation: let these circumstances be altered to a sufficient degree, and the elements of their composition must exist in some new combination no less resulting than the former from those inevitable laws by which the Universe is governed.

—From Shelley's "Refutation of Deism."

PROPHETS AND PROFIT.

Now this prophet is unlike Daniel or Jeremiah in several ways, but we will only mention one. Prophet Baxter earns £7,000 a year; we have seen no record that Daniel or Jeremiah earned such a respectable sum. Mr. Baxter is owner and editor of a very valuable property in the shape of two newspapers. They are newspapers that pay him well, and it is not difficult to see why they pay. Applying his imagination to dark and ambiguous passages of Holy Scripture, he foretells and fixes the date for terrible events. His lucubrations are read by hundreds of thousands, who are thrilled by painful pictures of trouble to come; and the newspapers in which these prophecies are written are a good investment. People like to be frightened. They have read these melancholy and mystic manifestoes to such purpose that the newspapers which bear them to the world are certified by respectable accountants to earn more than £7,000 a year!

Wondrous to say, Mr. Baxter seems to have an inclination to dwell on debentures and interest. The public have been invited by advertisement to purchase these prophetic papers. Mr. Baxter is to be chairman of a limited company, and is to receive £25,000 in cash and £66,000 in shares for the commercial value of his comments on Holy Writ. The £25 seven per cent. debentures are highly recommended. After all his talk Mr. Baxter has a keen eye to business. One would think he would be satisfied with £7,000 a year for the five or six years during which he is to remain on earth. But the pen which has drawn such fearful pictures is equally good in drafting a prospectus. Mr. Baxter proposes to hold on to the editor's chair until January 1, 1896, but asks no salary. This £25,000 cash and £66,000 in shares will keep him until that date, when he will be free to join the other 143,999 living Christians who are to ascend later in the year. Will not quite a number of these be subscribers to the paper, the debentures of which are to be repaid on June 24, 1897, a year after the holders will have disappeared? Mr. Baxter sells his paper on the eve of an era of chaos, in which money can be of no service. Let those who are bewitched by him ponder these things.—*Christian Commonwealth.*

OBITUARY.—We regret to notice the death at the advanced age of 73 of Mr. Wathen Mark Wilks Call. Mr. Call was for ten years (1847-57) a clergyman of the Church of England, but he thought himself out of the Christian Creed and resigned his position. He became a regular contributor to the *Westminster Review*, doing the notices of theological books as well as contributing many articles of a most advanced character. Mr. Call was a decided Freethinker, inclining to the Positivist school. In addition to numerous essays he has left two volumes of poems entitled *Reverberations* and *Golden Histories*, and was engaged up till the last on a book on *Final Causes*.

☞ Sunday-school teacher: "I have brought you some odd sayings of the children in my class. I thought perhaps you'd like to print them." Religious editor (looking them over): "They are hardly blasphemous enough to be funny."

☞ Mr. Kirke Depew (Sunday morning): "I see the Rev. Mr. Alban Cope is going to preach at our church this morning." Mrs. Depew: "Why, isn't he awfully High Church?" Mr. Depew: "Awfully. He carries his ritualistic notions so far, that he wears stained glass spectacles."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

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

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. J. Hunt "Design in Nature."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation." Monday, at 8, social evening. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green—At Mr. Simson's, 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 9, meeting of members to form a committee for two debates in a hall.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Christ and Civilisation."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Bible as a Guide in History."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Milton Orchestral Band; 7.30, M. G. W. Foote, "A World Without God."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Eternal Torment."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. R. Forder, "Christ: Was he God, Man, or Myth?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Heaford, "What must I Do to be Saved?"

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. S. Standing, "Christ's Followers."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Christ and Christianity."

Clckenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they True?"

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Hastings on the Bible."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Exodus"; 3.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Devil's Doom."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 6.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Inspired Nonsense."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Prayer." Monday, at 7.30, debate between the Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Who or What is God?" Wednesday, at 3, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Creed of a Man." Thursday, at 8, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Veracity."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. M. Smith, "God so Lov'd the World."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "The Jews in Egypt."

Regent's Park near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Death."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Hastings on the Bible."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, a lecture.

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Doctrine of the Atonement"; 6, Mr. C. Cohen, "Morality"

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 5, tea; 7, entertainment for the benefit of the Piano Fund.

Bradford—Lycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate, meeting of the Yorkshire Secular Federation.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, an important business meeting, all members requested to attend.

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, "Reply to Mr. Anyan's Law, by which we have storm earthquakes, pain and death."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30 (and Wednesday, at 7.30), general meeting of Sunday Music League.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mrs. A. R. Atkey, "The History of Religion in England I."

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, an adjourned debate on Hugh O. Pentecost's Article. Subscriptions now due.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. G. Pinhorne, "An Hour in Utopia."

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Music and recitations by several friends.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, a meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 7 (morning) Pimlico, (afternoon) Finsbury Park, (evening) Hammersmith; 10, Hyde Park; 14 (morning) Bethnal Green, (afternoon) Victoria Park; 21 (morning) Midland Arches, (afternoon) Finsbury Park, (evening) Hammersmith; 28 (morning) Clerkenwell, (evening) Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—Sept. 7, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Sept. 14 (morning) Camberwell 21 (morning out-door and evening in the hall) Plaistow; 28 (morning) outside "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green. Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening) Woolwich; 28 (afternoon) Finsbury Park. Oct 5 (evening) Woolwich; 19, Mile End, debate; 26, Woolwich.

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