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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

WHO KILLED PARNELL?

A MAN'S life is a debit and credit account, justice strikes the balance, and the result is his true value.

When the account of Charles Stewart Parnell's life is made up, there will be a big balance in his favor, and it will be a colossal monument to his memory.

During the past twelve months he has been judged by a false standard. Morality in England is still in the "thou shalt not" stage. It pays more attention to the passive than to the active. It values decorum above positive virtue, and respectability above heroism. "The Nonconformist conscience" narrows righteousness down to a single rule of conduct. Refrain from violating the sexual conventions, and though you have not performed an act of benevolence in your whole life, you are fit for the kingdom of heaven.

Parnell made one slip, and it was fatal. There was a Mrs. O'Shea, a clever, accomplished, fascinating woman. She was married very young. The match was a conventional one. There seems to have been acquiescence on her side, but no love. Her husband by-and-bye spent his time elsewhere than at home. She was in the position of a neglected woman. True, there was no positive neglect, such as the law would recognise, but a woman like Mrs. O'Shea was not to be "secured" by a man who paid her occasional visits as a husband. Now if a woman so placed meets with a man she can respect, a man of extraordinary character whom she can admire, and the flame of a real love is kindled in her heart, it will burn up waggon-loads of conventions; and the world that rolls up its eyes, lifts up its hands, and cries "Oh fie!" is half a fool and half a hypocrite.

Mrs. O'Shea and Mr. Parnell became entangled. How we know not, and what does it matter? "I loved the maid for loving me," says an old song. There was nothing of the "ladies' man" about Mr. Parnell, and his "fall," to use the language of the world, may have been a fresh illustration of Shakespeare's lines—

And when a woman woos, what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till she have prevailed?

That it was a great passion—one of those that easily run up into tragedy—which Mrs. O'Shea felt for Mr. Parnell, is proved by the inscription on one of the wreaths that went from Brighton to Dublin with his dead body: "To my true friend and lover, my husband, my king." Whoever understands passionate speech, and has any knowledge of a woman's heart, will conceive how the woman who penned that inscription could rest satisfied with such a man's love in any solitude, and smile at the world's displeasure breaking like idle foam around her dwelling-place.

This is not a text for screaming. It should teach us a great lesson. Marriage should be based upon love. Nothing else renders it honorable or secure. People may marry without love, and travel side by side to the grave. But they are never one. Nor is that all. Love may come. And then the comedy turns to tragedy.

Mr. Parnell should have broken away from temptation. If he cherished a passion for Mrs. O'Shea he should have locked it up in the deepest recesses of his

heart. So the world will say. And certainly, *we* say, the leader of a great cause should strive to keep himself stainless. But the love of Mr. Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea took the course it did, and the *liaison* was finally bruited from the housetops. Then the very people who maintain a marriage law which chains men and women in hateful unions, cried at the top of their voices against a couple who had acted surreptitiously because they could not act openly. These people, in Protestant England, exclaimed, "We shall see if he will marry her." Well, he did marry her, and that was some atonement. But in Catholic Ireland the priests declared that his marrying her was a fresh infamy. So much for the consistency of Christian ethics!

But let us drop argument all round. Let the fact of the adultery stand in any light you please. What at the very worst does it prove? Simply this. Mr. Parnell had a vein of weakness in his strength. He was not perfect.

Ask any number of Englishmen who was their dearest hero. Nine out of ten will name Lord Nelson. The halo of consecration is around that beloved head. Yet Lord Nelson, in dying, commended his mistress, Lady Hamilton, to the care of his countrymen. "Emma" was one of the last words on his lips. But who thinks of this as he stands in the cockpit of the "Victory," and dreams of the smoke and flame of Trafalgar, and pictures the great admiral lying there, with ghastly torn flesh and fast-flowing blood, dying for England?

Generations hence the weakness of Charles Stewart Parnell will be no more than a speck of dust on his monument. He shared the weakness with his fellow men. His greatness was all his own.

But what happened when his weakness or his shame—call it what you like—was published to the world? All the pure creatures who fasten like carrion-flies on impurity, all the pietists who set up impossible standards for flesh and blood, all the hypocrites who do their morality by proxy, all the respectable mediocrities who love the abasement of greatness, howled in fierce chorus against the sinner who had the misfortune to be found out. The culprit was to be judged by that one act of offence. And the sentence was to be final and complete. He was to be blighted, ruined, damned.

It was a judgment to make angels weep and devils laugh. That act of offence was put in one scale. In the other was put a heart and brain given to Ireland; toil, anxiety, and sacrifice; social ostracism borne with tortitude, and calumny with disdain; unquenchable hope in darkest hours of adversity, and imperturbable courage in hottest danger; years of patient, sagacious leadership that brought a whole people from the Egypt of oppression to the sight of the very Land of Promise. Behold the contents of the two scales; and see! the little lump descends and the mountain kicks the beam!

English hypocrisy is responsible for that unspeakable judgment. Yes, *hypocrisy*. English life is not so pure that Englishmen have the right to damn an Irish adulterer. Mr. Gladstone himself cannot lay his hand on his heart and say that no loose-liver ever sat in his

Cabinet, or that no loose-liver will ever sit in it again. Convicted adulterers sit in our House of Lords. Nineteenths of the Englishmen who howled at Mr. Parnell would hush up any scandal affecting a Prince of the Blood.

Englishmen put Mr. Parnell in jail, Englishmen treated him like an outcast, Englishmen libelled him most foully, Englishmen falsely accused him of trading in assassination, English hypocrisy gave him his first stab when he stumbled. And the present writer, who is an Englishman, says it with grief and shame.

The next stab came from Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. They never liked Mr. Parnell. Mr. Gladstone could not be expected to like him. No man loves his conqueror, and Mr. Parnell had conquered Mr. Gladstone. It was not mere reason and humanity that made Mr. Gladstone a Home Ruler. He was converted by Mr. Parnell's serried phalanx of eighty-six Irish members in the House of Commons. No doubt the Liberal leader honestly deferred to "the Nonconformist conscience," but it must be plain to the meanest intelligence that his task was an easier one with the Irish leader out of the way. Had Mr. Gladstone chosen, he could safely have said, "I do not condone adultery, but I have declared that Ireland is a nation, the matter is one that solely concerns Irishmen, and they must deal with it in their own way."

The next stab came from the Irish priests, who always hated Mr. Parnell. They loathed a Protestant leader of Catholic Ireland. They looked upon the Land League and Irish Parliamentary funds as diversions from their own exchequer. They felt themselves to be playing second-fiddle in the Irish orchestra. And when their opportunity came they struck the hated Parnell with the sharpest priestly dagger. They warned all Catholics not to support him on peril of losing their immortal souls.

The last stab came from Mr. Parnell's own followers. Caesar was hacked by his henchmen. Some of them had long nursed a jealousy of his predominance, and others a hatred of his "tyranny"—a tyranny which was hardly dispensable in such a fight as they were waging. Others, however, were undoubtedly honest in their opposition. Men like Justin McCarthy, John Dillon, and William O'Brien are above suspicion. Yet they may find they were mistaken. It is idle to say they dethroned Mr. Parnell because of the Divorce Court revelations, for they elected him afterwards. What they did was to pay Mr. Parnell as the price of the Liberal party's support to Home Rule. They reversed the Parnell policy of trusting no English party except in the way of a bargain. That was the policy which brought them success, and when the day of reckoning comes they may discover their blunder. They sacrificed their leader to Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. True, Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party are pledged beyond recall to Home Rule. But there is Home Rule *and* Home Rule, as no one knows better than our grand old master of enigmatical phrases; and the Home Rule that will be carried without Mr. Parnell may be a different thing from the Home Rule that might have been carried with him.

Three things are noticeable in connection with Mr. Parnell's funeral. First, the love and devotion towards him of the Irish people. Second, the presence of not a single English member of Parliament. Third, the presence of not a single Irish priest.

That death-bed message, "Convey my love to my colleagues and to the Irish people," went to the heart of a nation, whose worst enemies never accused them of ingratitude. They went out to bury their dead Chief in a fashion that kings might envy.

The utter absence of English members of Parliament shows that Ireland must look to herself. She is a separate nation. This fact was emphasised at Mr. Parnell's funeral. It was also emphasised when the English Liberal press, which fawned on Mr. Parnell when he overwhelmed his Tory libellers and seemed to

be hand in glove with Mr. Gladstone, poured upon him the vilest abuse directly his "fall" gave them an opportunity to display their real feelings.

The utter absence of priests at the funeral shows once more how the Catholic Church is capable of crossing the political sentiments of the Irish people. This fact will be remembered in the days to come. Before Parnell died the fight had already commenced between the Clerical and the Anti-Clerical parties. It was this that made the battle so interesting to Freethinkers. Happily there are signs that the Clerical and Anti-Clerical struggle will continue. One prominent Irish American has just declared that there will be no peace in Ireland until the priests are driven back into their pulpits.

We are not departing from our settled policy in writing an article like this. We have nothing to do in these columns with party politics, and on the whole we are glad to be free of such dirty business. But we have always felt ourselves constrained to speak out in critical times in favor of the higher sentiments of justice and freedom. When the Phoenix Park murders occurred we raised our voice against the policy of gagging and terrorising a whole nation for the criminal folly of a few scoundrels. When the purists and pietists and priests called on the Irish people to sacrifice their leader, we stigmatised their clamor as hypocritical. And now that Charles Stewart Parnell is dead, and the greatest practical leader the Irish ever had is at rest from all pain, and toil, and sorrow—slain in a terrible fight against overwhelming odds, after giving the strength of his life to his country; we raise our voice, however feeble it may be in the general roar, against the measure of justice that was dealt out to this man. He slipped, and his enemies were upon him. They decorated their malice with fine names; but if there be a just God, and a day of judgment, this man will stand safer than myriads of his persecutors. He injured one man, the husband of the woman he loved—one man, who half-courted his fate, and bears up wonderfully under the sad infliction. On the other hand, he gave the best of his life and strength and genius to a great cause. If false to one man he was true to Ireland. His weakness did some harm, his power did mightier good. Yet in face of this the balance was struck against him and he was slain.

That masterful leader will be missed; above all when Irish statesmanship has to curb the power and pretensions of the Catholic Church. But his memory will cause a divided allegiance in the breasts of Irish Catholics. The priests will draw them one way, and Parnell will draw them another way from his grave. That will work mischief to the Church, and it may be that Charles Stewart Parnell will live in history, not only as the leader who freed Ireland from English misrule, but as the statesman who struck the first great blow at the priestcraft which was ever her darkest curse.

G. W. FOOTE.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S ALMANACK, 1892.

THE twenty-third yearly issue of the Almanack of the Society will be published in November. It has been determined to print a larger edition of the forthcoming number. As the profits are devoted to propagandist work, the Executive earnestly hopes that each Branch will do its utmost to promote the sale.

The Almanack has a large circulation, and is kept as a work of reference in hundreds of clubs and libraries. It is, therefore, a valuable medium for advertisements. The charge will be £1 per page; 12s. per half-page; 6s. 6d. per quarter-page.

There will be a Trade Directory, one shilling per line. A circular has been sent to all the Branches of the N. S. S., asking particulars of their officers, place, and time of meeting, etc. All other Freethought Societies are also invited to send in this information, which will be inserted free of charge. These particulars and advertisements should reach me not later than October 31.—ROBERT FORDEZ, hon. sec.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS.

It is often said that the differences between various versions of the Bible are neither many nor important. This misses the point of the sceptic's objection, which is that in a revelation from an omnipotent, all-wise being there should be no possibility of even the slightest error. It is, moreover, not true that the variations are few or unimportant. The various readings of the New Testament alone amount to over two hundred thousand, and though many of them are, of course, trivial from a human point of view, it is absurd to represent them all as of slight consequence. That 1 John v., 7, the only verse directly teaching the doctrine of the Trinity, is omitted from the Revised Version as spurious, being omitted in all early Greek MS., should be a sufficient eye-opener on this point. That the narrative of the appearances of the resurrected Christ and of his ascension, at the end of Mark (xvi., 9—20), is not found in the two oldest Greek manuscripts, and that the story of the woman taken in adultery, found only in John viii., 1—11, is also wanting in them, are facts also full of significance.

Nor are the trivial points of various renderings unimportant. There is a wide doctrinal difference between the Authorised Version of Matt. i., 22, "which was spoken of the Lord *by* the prophet," and the Revised Version, "spoken *by* the Lord *through* the prophet." Even the manner of punctuation makes a vast difference. Thus the orthodox read Rom. ix., 5, "Christ came who is over all, God blessed for ever." The Unitarians put a full stop at "all," and read "God be" or "is" "blessed for ever." These little illustrations show that apparent trifles may be of the utmost importance, especially if our salvation depends on right belief. Religious wars have been carried on through as trifling matters as these.

Our version of Job ii., 9, declares, "Curse God and die." The Catholic version is "Bless God and die." There may be little theological difference between cursing God and blessing him, but some people may mistake them for teaching directly contrary doctrines. So 1 Cor. xv., 51, reads in the Authorised Version, "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." The Roman Catholic version reads, "We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed." An important difference on an important doctrine. One edition of this verse left out the *c* and read, "we shall all be hanged." In the Authorised Version of John iv., 29, we read, "Is not this the Christ?" This is a complete misrepresentation of the meaning of the Greek, which is, "This is not the Christ"; or, as it is given in the Revised Version, "Can this be the Christ?" So with Acts xxvi., 28, the Authorised Version makes Agrippa say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." His meaning was quite the contrary, and is given in the Revised Version, "With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." This may be a small matter, but it is no small matter when in the Lord's Prayer we find that, instead of demanding "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"; it is from the Evil One that we must ask to be delivered. It may be contended that "evil" is just as good a translation as "Evil One"; but a reference to Matt. xiii., 38 and 39, shows that "the children of the Wicked One," *i.e.*, the Devil, and not of the wicked, is intended. So in 1 John v., 19, "The whole world lieth in wickedness" should be, as in the Revised Version, "lieth in the Evil One," that is, the Devil has it in his clutches.

The translation "do penance" instead of "repent" has occasioned volumes of angry controversy between Protestants and Catholics. So with the question whether "priests" or "elders" should be read in Acts xv., 2, and James v., 14. In Luke i., 72, the Protestant versions dishonestly read, "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers," while the true

reading is given in the Douay, "To perform mercy to our fathers," *i.e.*, to get their souls out of purgatory. So Catholics allege the words "for all" are added to Heb. x., 10, to get rid of the doctrine of the mass; and in the 38th verse of the same chapter is substituted "any man" for "he" because the passage opposes "the final perseverance of the saints." In the next chapter Hebrews xi., 21, the Protestant versions put "leaning upon" to conceal the right reading that Abraham "worshipped the top of his staff." Here the *lxx.* reads, "he bowed himself upon the bed's head."

Tenses in Hebrew may often be variously rendered. But there is a good deal of difference whether Is. vii., 14, should read, "a virgin shall conceive" or "a young woman has conceived," as Jewish scholars agree to render this famous "prophecy." So in Is. liii., "he shall grow" is properly changed into "he grew" in the Revised Version. The prophet is not predicting the future sufferings of J. C., but narrating the past sufferings of Israel. In Is. ix., 3, the Revised Version leaving out "not," teaches the direct opposite to the Authorised Version. There is an immense theological difference between its rendering of Ps. civ., 4, "Who maketh winds his messengers," and the Authorised Version, which reads, "Who maketh his angels spirits." If winds can be turned into spirits and messengers into angels, there may be authority for the Samaritan Version, which reads (Gen. i., 1), "In the beginning the Goat created the heavens and the earth." In Prov. xxvi., 10, for "the Great God that formed all things," the Revised Version substitutes "an archer that woundeth all; an owl" is changed into an "ostrich" (Lev. xi., 16); and "a flagon of wine" into "a cake of raisins" (2 Sam. vi., 19). Was Paul right in quoting Eph. iv., 8, "When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men"? or did the passage stand then as now, "thou hast received gifts for men" (Psalm lxxviii., 18)? Did he quote correctly, a little further on (Eph. v., 11), "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" or is the Hebrew correct (Is. lx., 1), "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jahveh is risen upon thee"? Did Jesus quote correctly as from Scripture (John vii., 38), "He that believeth on me out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"? or was the nearest approach to this Prov. xviii., 4, which reads, "The words of a man's mouth are as deep water, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook"?

Perhaps the worst translations are to be found in those distributed among the heathen by our Bible societies. Malcolm, in his *Travels in Hindustan and China* (p. 78), gives instances of misleading versions which he found in circulation. Thus, John i., 1, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with the Lord God Boodh, and the word was the Lord God Boodh." This was doubtless so rendered to make the gospel acceptable to Buddhists. Acts i., 8, was rendered, "Ye shall receive the power of life and death"; Matt. v., 3, "Blessed are the destitute of life"; and 1 Cor. v., 6, "A little crocodile crocodileth the whole lump."

What becomes of thin persons when they die? was asked of a missionary. On inquiring the reason for this strange question, he found that for the word "good" he had used one of the native equivalents which was "fat." He had been preaching as the blessed gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that only the fat could enter heaven. Still more shocking errors have arisen from the confusion in the savage mind between religious love and sensual passion. What you want me to love God for? asked a Central African of a missionary who he thought had made what civilised people would call an abominable proposal. The difficulties of rendering the scriptures into languages which have no direct equivalents for theological terms such as sin, righteousness, atone-

ment, sanctification, etc., may be imagined. In the Sandwich Islands no term was found for the theological virtue of faith, so as *manaio* means thought and *io* real or true they combined these into *manaio* as a word for faith. But this to the native mind conveyed a widely different meaning. We have heard even in England of simple minded provincials putting strange constructions on texts of Scriptures read from the pulpit, and it can be imagined what are a cannibal's thoughts when he is told that Christ said: "He that eateth me shall live by me (John, vi. 57). Colenso said: "The Word of God now commonly in use has no meaning whatever for the Kaffirs."

The versions in little-known tongues are by no means always printed correctly. Even in English and in German there have been Bibles printed with the command "Thou shalt commit adultery." This appeared in London in 1631, and for long afterwards the wits contended it was the right reading. So we may say of the version, also printed in the reign of Charles I., which read, Ps. xiv., 1, "The fool hath said in his heart there is a God." For this improved version, according to Nye in his *Defence of the Canon of the New Testament*, the printer was fined £3,000. I have myself seen a copy of the Bible printed by Field in 1653, which reads in 1 Cor. vi., 9, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God?"

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN, NATURE, AND DESTINY OF MAN.

III.—Conclusion.

WHATEVER doubt there may be respecting the future of the individual man, there should be none as to the future of the race. The march of progress is unmistakable and so clearly written that he who runs may read. The entire history of mankind is one of advancement. True the steps are sometimes almost imperceptible and the progress very slow, but still, like the gentle stream of the river wending its course to the sea, although the movement may not be very apparent it is certainly there, and will sweep away all obstacles that may obstruct its course. Real progress has perhaps never actually ceased since humanity has existed on the earth, although many interruptions to its gradual onward march have been seen. The advancement of the race has not always been regular, but it has been persistent nevertheless. Nations have seemed to retrograde for a time, and the course of progress has been shifted from one land to another, but on the whole it has gone on, and as the centuries have passed its course has been very apparent. This will probably not be disputed by even the most conservative of theologians, who will admit and really contend for progress.

The only question of importance that arises here is, what direction is this onward march of events likely to take in the future under the law of evolution? And on this the history of the past may throw some light. In the early ages of the existence of organic beings on the earth, the law of the survival of the fittest invariably operated in the direction of the physical. The cause for this was simple—the struggle for life was a contest in which the strongest would be almost sure to conquer and the weakest be defeated; the result was that physical power was supreme. Hence natural selection operated exclusively along those lines. But at the present time the course is changed. As far as man is concerned the contest is no longer a physical but an intellectual one. The struggle for life in the case of the human race is not now a contest in which physical prowess is always triumphant, but one in which skill and ingenuity—that is, intellect—is certain in the end to come off victorious. The result of this must be obvious to any one who reflects upon the development of mankind. The law of the survival of the fittest will

hereafter operate in the direction of the intellectual and moral powers. We are not led to look for any higher beings than man to appear on the earth, but for the evolution of a superior race of men and women—superior intellectually and morally. Mankind, therefore, in the future, will be more exalted beings than are the present race. When one considers what has been accomplished in this century in penetrating into Nature's arcana, and conquering her most powerful forces, bending them to the comfort and convenience of humanity, we can easily imagine what may be done in the future. The coming man will, by his mighty intellect, reign the king of nature, making all its powers subservient to his will.

Morally the law of the survival of the fittest must, by its very nature, operate beneficially. Its tendency is to eliminate the worst elements, leaving the purest and best to survive. Vice ever produces physical deterioration, and its tendency is therefore to destroy its victims. By this means no doubt drunkenness and all forms of dissipation will largely disappear, for in this particular nature herself has provided a much more potent remedy than schemes of prohibition and legislation in the direction of passing sumptuary laws. Morality is necessarily conducive to health and long life, while immorality promotes disease and hastens death. The former will be preserved in the persons of those who regard its teachings and the latter will decay.

It is not difficult, therefore, to predicate what the future of mankind will be upon the earth. The toil of human labor will be more than ever lessened by the invention of machinery that shall utilise the forces of nature, so as to compel them to accomplish what is requisite in that direction. Rain and sunshine will be under the control of man, if not thoroughly, at least to a partial degree, so as to make them available for use when and where they are needed. Natural phenomena bringing disaster in their train will be checked by human skill, and the earth made an abode much nearer than what it is, to the condition of the fabled Garden of Eden, and the fulfilment of the dreams of poets of a golden age will dawn upon the world. Vice will be diminished, poverty will be reduced, and the anxiety that its fear engenders will be a thing of the past, while honesty will become the best policy in a sense never yet realised.

From a theological standpoint the destiny of man cannot be adequately considered without a recognition of the doctrine of immortality. Now, it is not at all difficult to understand how the general belief in immortality has arisen and the reason for its prevalence. There is sound philosophy in that couplet of Pope's:

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be blest.

But is it not too much to say that the time in which man shall be blessed will never come?—in this world, of course, being understood, because the following lines are:

The soul, unsettled and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

How a world which man has never seen, and of which confessedly he knows nothing, can be his home, the home in which he is resting, is somewhat difficult to comprehend. Still, the sentiment expressed is not altogether unreal. The experience of hope, existing and acting amid the ills of life, sees a future world in which peace shall reign and all these evils will disappear. Hence the belief in a future state. When, however, reason is brought to bear upon the question, it is seen how flimsy is that on which the hope is resting, and that the structure which imagination has built at the bidding of hope has no substantial foundation. There is no doubt a glorious future for man, but it is for the race, not for the individual; and it is in this world, and in no other. It is in this

fact that lies the basis of the sentiment, and herein it finds its complete realisation. We need not wonder at the direction that man's aspirations have taken on this question, for they are largely the outcome of that selfishness which is so distinguishing a characteristic of perverted human nature, which will have no benefits but personal ones. This we believe, is destined to pass away before an enlightened altruism which is already manifesting itself in many ways throughout human society. Selfishness had its origin in the days of brute-force, when each individual cared for nothing higher than his own self-interest or personal pleasure, and when, consequently, all his powers were bent in the direction of securing to himself as much happiness as possible, regardless of the rights of others and even of the feelings of others. It is too true that this vestige of a brutal past is not yet obliterated; still, there are numerous schemes for benefiting, not merely oneself, but one's fellows existing in every civilised land, and altruistic philosophy is becoming every day more widely known and accepted. Under the benign influence of Hedonism or Utilitarianism, the world is gradually growing better and selfishness is happily on the decline. We hope the time is not far distant when men will see that their conception of immortality had its origin in an erroneous interpretation of a natural sentiment, an interpretation largely the result of a desire for personal gratification. How truly did Pope speak when he said that "Hell was built on spite, and heaven on pride."

The basis of this belief in immortality is the yearning to enjoy somewhere immunity from the terrible drawbacks of human life; and as there appears to the orthodox mind no possibility of bringing about such a condition of things in this world, the happy state is relegated to some other existence. It does not appear to be taken into consideration that no guarantee can be held that the future life, if there be one, would be any better than this. It does not avail to say that injustice prevails in this world which will be remedied there. In what lies the remedy? Men who are unjust here may be unjust elsewhere, and human selfishness of this world will but be transferred to another, if the same beings pass from one to the other. It is no assurance to say that a God of justice will see that right is done. The same God, it is assumed, will reign there as here, and most certainly he does not prevent injustice being done upon a very extensive scale in this world. Why, then, should his plan of government be altered in the next? The assumption that it will be is based upon no evidence whatever, and is even in direct opposition to the declaration so often made by the same persons, that God does not and cannot change. Besides, we know nothing whatever with respect to the conditions of a future life, and can consequently predicate nothing with regard to the state of society there. Great numbers of men who die pass away with the worst passions of human nature exercising supreme control over the rest of their faculties. How can these be expected to form, or even to take part in, a pure and unselfish society where each man is supposed to love the others as well as himself? Death can effect no active change in such persons, and it is clear, therefore, that the probabilities are that the next world—if there be one—will be no better than this. The consequence is that the hope which underlies the belief in immortality does not find its realisation in the ordinary conception of a future state. It does, however, become realised in an improved future for the race, a future which is arrived at by an induction of facts and a close observation of the trend of the times.

CHARLES WATTS.

A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

[*Explanatory.*—"The ruffian beat the poor woman savagely for some hours. At length the attention of the police was attracted, but the miscreant evaded his pursuers and is still at large." That is precisely what is the matter with me. I am "at large" for the present, and have received a commission from the worshipful editor to journey from Dan even unto Beersheba, and to record in the pages of this journal anything which I may discover of interest to my fellow Freethinkers. I hold the usual reporter's license to invent effective incidents which *ought* to happen, but *do not*. This privilege, however, will be sparingly exercised, and I shall in all cases warn the reader when I begin to tell lies.—G. S.]

I.—THE REV. STEWART D. HEADLAM AT THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

IT is generally known that the Sunday lectures at the Hall of Science are now under the control of the N. S. S. Executive; and it has been wisely determined that the mornings shall be devoted to the expression of as many shades of opinion as can conveniently be represented upon the platform. It was therefore in the nature of things that the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, who has long been upon terms of the most cordial friendship with the leaders of the Freethought party, should be among the first to be invited to address an audience at the Hall of Science. He readily accepted an invitation, and thus it came about that last Sunday morning the Warden of the Guild of St. Matthew lectured to a large and attentive gathering on "Some Popular Mistakes about the Church's Teachings."

For many years I have known Mr. Headlam, and have never entertained an unkindly thought regarding him; but with respect to his views upon matters of theological controversy, I have been unable to divest my mind of an abiding impression of whimsical unreality. In Mr. W. S. Gilbert's operas the spectacle of the Lord High Chancellor, in his robes of office, dancing a *pas de deux* with a pretty lady in short skirts does not amaze us; but upon a Freethought platform one is perennially surprised to see the Atheist, Tweedledee, on one side of the table saying very much the same thing as the Church of England clergyman, Tweedledum, on the other. Last Sunday Mr. Headlam lectured upon "Some Popular Mistakes about the Church's Teachings"; his lecture would perhaps have been more accurately entitled: "Some of Mr. Headlam's Mistakes about the Church's Teachings."

Mr. Headlam commenced by saying that the friendly reception which had been accorded to him in that hall seventeen years ago had encouraged him to carry on the work which he had begun in his Cambridge days, under the influence of Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley. He had long felt that the Secularists were doing a good work for religion "by enabling the Church to get rid of a lot of rubbish which encumbered it," and for doing this work he, as a priest in Christ's Church, heartily thanked the Secular party. Mr. Bradlaugh had rendered glorious service in this way; Mrs. Besant had left the Freethinkers, but she, too, had done much good work while she remained with them. There were very few of the leading churchmen who now held the monstrous doctrines which Freethinkers had been wont to attack. He wished the Secularists God-speed in their work. There was not much left for them to do so far as the Church of England was concerned; but perhaps the crude theology of the Salvation Army and kindred bodies might yet afford a field for their exertions.

Mr. Headlam, after this exordium, proceeded to deal with certain teachings of the church which he believed to be popularly misunderstood. With regard to "Inspiration," he derided the notion that the Bible was "a book of infallible sentences dictated by God to men." Bible-worshippers found a verse for everything, as if God had laid down a special rule for every conceivable set of circumstances. "Get out of your minds altogether," said Mr. Headlam, "the idea that the Bible is the word of God." Mr. Bradlaugh, in discussion, had once triumphantly quoted a text against him (the speaker), and appeared quite shocked when he replied that the text was nothing to him! The true view of Inspiration was that everybody who wrote or did a good thing was inspired by God. The life and works of Jesus

Mr. Collins has been induced to stay six months at Christchurch, New Zealand, before returning to Sydney. Freethought is progressing there rapidly.

Christ were the real word of God. Then Mr. Headlam went on to denounce his audience (as representing the ratepayers of the metropolis) for "the bad work you are doing in allowing the miserable old biblical religion to be thrust upon the children in Board schools. The connection of morality with Bible follies must do infinite harm to the moral nature of the children." It was the ratepayers, not the church or the clergy, who were responsible for this.

Referring to the doctrine of "Atonement," Mr. Headlam said that this did not involve the crude notion of substituted death, of the punishment of an innocent Savior for the sins of others." Such a cruel and hideous doctrine as that should be smashed; but Atonement does not mean that at all." The true doctrine, it appeared, could be found by splitting up the word in such a fashion as to make it "At-one-ment," or making man at one with God. This set me off thinking of the old Christian wheeze of the dying Atheist who, being speechless, defiantly wrote on a slate the words, "God is no-where." His precocious little child read it aloud as "God is now here." The Atheist, of course, at once found Christ, and everybody lived happily ever afterwards. This reminiscence absorbed my attention, and I was not aroused until Mr. Headlam had finished the At-one-ment section, and had arrived at the next station—Hell, to wit.

On the doctrine of "Eternal Torment," he declared that hardly any responsible leader of the church believed in it. The old English equivalent for "hell" was the hidden place to which couples retired to pay the osculatory penalty in kiss-in-the-ring. The salutary part of the hell teaching was the lesson that consequence follows causes. To nullify the pernicious effects of the teaching of eternal torment, parents should explain to their children what hell really is.

Then as to the "Kingdom of Heaven," Mr. Headlam had a novel view to expound. Christ, he said, turned the attention of his disciples on every possible opportunity from the next world to this. Barely half a dozen times did Jesus refer to a future state: it was the present life to which he continually directed their attention.

At this point the sense of unreality, of topsyturvydom, overwhelmed me. Here, in truth, the Lord Chancellor was dancing with Belinda in the short skirts; for here was a clergyman of the Church of England exhorting Freethinkers to treat the Bible just as they would any other book, and proving to them that Jesus Christ was the prototype of the nineteenth century Secularist. I began to speculate upon the possibility of my attending at St. Paul's Cathedral one Sunday night to hear a sermon by the Ven. Archdeacon Foote; and in my reverie I even imagined the magic "Rev." prefixed to the name of

GEORGE STANDRING.

SIGNS OF PROSPERITY.

(From the Chinese.)

Where spades grow bright and idle sounds grow dull,
Where gaols are empty and where barns are full;
Where school-paths are with frequent feet outworn,
Law courtyards weedy, silent and forlorn;
Where bonzes foot it and where farmers ride,
Where age abounds, and youth is multiplied.
Where these signs are they clearly indicate
A happy people and well-governed State.

FUND FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF MR. BRADLAUGH'S LIABILITIES.

Per W. Diver, 16s. 9d. Per John Hill, £3. G. W. Foote, £1 1s.; Dr. A. Walker, £1 1s.; Charles Kelf, 2s. 6d.; Thomas Horsman, 1s.; J. Wright, 1s.; Friend, 6d.; F. J. Steel, 10s.; H. W. S., 10s.; J. Llaney, 2s. 6d.; Sussex Rector, 2s. 6d. Per A. Forrester, £3 5s. J. Tomkins, 2s. 6d. Per W. Hade, £1 7s. 6d. Per J. G. Bartram, 6s. 6d. Mr. Dannant, 2s. 6d.; H. H., 5s.; J. Lintoll, 1s. Per Thomas Drewry, £1. Highlander, 5s.—Total, £1,080.—W. H. REYNOLDS, Treasurer.

Do not inquire if a man be a heretic, if he be a Quaker, a Jew, or a heathen; but if he be a virtuous man, if he love liberty and truth, if he wish the happiness and peace of the human kind. If a man be ever so much of a believer, and love not these things, he is a heartless hypocrite, a rascal, and a knave.—*Shelley.*

ACID DROPS.

The Bishop of Bedford, at the Church Congress, said "there was a mania for outdoor preaching, and the emissaries of Socialism and Atheism must be met on their own ground." *Mania* is good! Was not Jesus Christ an outdoor preacher? Was not the only sermon of Paul's that was reported an outdoor discourse delivered on Mars Hill? Were not the greatest preachers of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages wont to speak in the open air? Did not Donne and other great English preachers, in the days of Elizabeth and James the First, deliver their finest sermons at Paul's Cross to open-air audiences? Yes, "mania" is good!

It is consoling to know that the Atheists, if the Bishop of Bedford has his way, will be met on their own ground. That is precisely what the Atheists desire. Hitherto the Christians have been very backward in coming forward, but it is never too late to mend.

Says the *Christian World*: "The Baptists believe, and are right in believing, that the true missionary policy is summed up in Talleyrand's motto 'De l'audace, de l'audace, and toujours de l'audace.'" Now we are not going to quarrel over what the Baptists believe, but we are going to correct that misquotation. It should read, "De l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace." Then again, it was not Talleyrand's motto. It was the cry of the fiery Danton in the French Convention. Try again, O worthy editor of the *Christian World*.

Our pious contemporary, the *Christian Commonwealth*, is ten years old, and is crowing very loudly over its length of life, not to mention its great success and prodigious usefulness. For our part, we admit it is old enough to know better in some things. For instance, it says that "Mr. George Long, who gave the British public a fine version of the *Reflections of Marcus Aurelius*, has now put forth in a convenient form the *Discourses of Epictetus*." The said Mr. George Long has been dead some years, and the volume "now put forth" was published in 1877.

Dr. Parker is very kind to Freethinkers. In a recent sermon he said that some men were jealous, suspicious, and mean-hearted, and he added "Would to God such men were infidels." Evidently at present they are Christians, and if wishing is in order we hope they will remain so.

Concerning the recent successful ballooning experiments to produce rain, Mr. W. W. Judson writes: "Considering the large sums squandered by the people on priests and preachers to explain what the will of God is, it seems somewhat inconsistent for the same people, acting through their representatives in the Government, to expend large sums to find out how we can get along without regard to God's will; and as the so-called 'will of God' evidently recedes before the progressive advance of man, it is fair to infer that human will, directed by human intelligence, is, after all, the only 'will force' in the universe."

Another of the periodical outbreaks between the rival showmen of the Greek and Latin Church at the Spurious Grotto of the nativity, Bethlehem, is reported. The Greeks are said to have taken possession of the Franciscan altar by force. Had not the French consul interfered there would have been bloodshed. It is usually the Mohammedan Turk that has to preserve peace between the rival Christians.

A special correspondent of the *Spectator* (Oct. 10) thus refers to the doings of the rival showmen in Palestine: "Everyone knows that for many centuries Greeks and Latins have struggled for the possession of the holy places; but in the last ten years this struggle seems to have been pursued with unscrupulousness and vulgarity which have defaced some of the most beautiful scenes in the land and built high before Mahomedans enduring monuments of Christian jealousies. It would be difficult to exaggerate the impudence of the operations—their defiance of history, of common sense, of the well-founded ridicule of the infidel. Where one church has secured the traditional site for which both may have been competing, the other immediately transfers the tradition to a neighboring spot, and begins his building very soon after that of his rival. The hostile

sanctuaries are often as near and as aggressive as the rival booths in a village fair."

The writer continues: "The spectacle which for centuries has disgraced the Christian name in the Grotto of Bethlehem, the separate denominational chapels of the Nativity, is now repeated in the face of the sun on the scene of our Lord's agony. The Franciscans walled in their Gethsemane some years ago; but now above it, separated only by a narrow lane, rises a new garish, ghastly pile of white stone walls and pinnacles called "the Greek Gethsemane."

As for the Mount of Olives, he says: "If this sort of thing goes on it will fast become impossible to realise that there ever was a garden or an olive on the mount."

The Salvation Army has got into trouble in Ceylon by their inveigling a high caste girl and seeking to marry her to a member of the Army. A forcible raid was made on the barracks, and the girl was taken away. This action had led to legal proceedings. The girl's friends have been imprisoned, but they are satisfied that their girl is not disgraced.

We recently heard a Christian defender contradict his blessed Savior as to the creature that swallowed Jonah. He said it was not a whale, but a fish created expressly for the purpose. We smiled and passed on.

Some gentleman with more money than brains has given £2,500 to the Barbican Mission for the Jews. If this gentleman inquired into the history of the conversion of bad Jews into worse Christians, he would—if sane—probably conclude he could find a better use for his money.

Volney, in his *Ruins of Empires*, pictures a congress of all religions and the debate that ensues. This has actually been started as an attraction for the World's Fair at Chicago. Ministers of all faiths are to be invited, but with the proviso that they speak English and are respectful towards Christianity.

Prophet Baxter has been interviewed by the religious journal which recently interviewed Mrs. Besant. The ever-green P. B. admits he was mistaken as to Boulanger being the fore-runner of Anti-Christ, but he is looking out for another French general to fill the vacancy. Anti-Christ himself "must be a Napoleon," that is Apollyon. The names sound something alike, and that is near enough for P. B. and his fool-crop.

P. B. is not mistaken in one thing, however; he is still cocksure that before the end of 1892 "there will be a great revolution in Europe and the greatest war the world has ever known." Well, we shall see. Of this at least we may be certain. Just as Jonah was annoyed because the destruction of Nineveh was put off after he had prophesied it, the worthy P. B. would sooner see the world in a conflagration than see himself discredited.

A leading article in the *Methodist Times* advises fashionable folk to "attend places of worship more or less regularly, and lend their ears to the preacher, if not once a week, at least occasionally." We should have thought that most preachers' ears were long enough already.

Hugh Price Hughes is sending letters to his paper from America. The first gives an account of his setting off from England, his sea-sickness on board ship, and other trifles of special interest to his noble self. He remarks that he left London on September 16, the very day the Pilgrim Fathers "started on their epoch-making journey." Of course he is too modest to draw the inference. The admiring reader can do that for himself.

Those Pilgrim Fathers, by the way, have had a lot of superfluous oil of flattery poured over them. They fled from one tyranny and set up a worse one. Indeed, a facetious Yankee has said that the Pilgrim Fathers landed upon Plymouth Rock, but it would have been better for America if Plymouth Rock had landed upon them.

The self-denying Hughes gives an account of his hardships as a Methodist missionary. The Inman Line provided a special saloon for his little party of six, and it only wanted

a little consideration on the part of the Atlantic to make the voyage perfectly miserable. But the Atlantic did not understand who was on board the "City of New York," so Mr. Hughes got seasick and thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Anent Mr. Wheeler's article on "Bible Translations." A Catholic writer gives the following as two sermons based on different versions of the Bible:—*Catholic*: "I, a priest placed in the church by the Holy Ghost, in the name of Christ declare if ye be not baptised and prepared for the sacrament of the altar, you will be damned body and soul to hell with the evil one and his angels." *Protestant*: "I, an elder, put in the congregation through the Holy Wind, in the name of the anointed, say if ye be not washed and ready for the secret of the table, you will be condemned flesh and life to the grave with evil and its messengers." Such is the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Holy Wind is certainly an improvement on Holy Ghost, but Holy Gas would be better still.

The religious people of the ward of Farringdon Without have passed a resolution that the letting of any portion of the land on the Thames Embankment to the Salvation Army will be detrimental to the interests of the City, and a danger to the comfort of the neighborhood. A meeting on the subject is to be held at the Session House, Old Bailey, on Oct. 16.

The *Times* (Monday, Oct. 12) has at length devoted an article to Theosophy, which it takes as an illustration of the existence of an unsuspected atrata of ignorance and credulity. It says: "Over all the words and deeds of Theosophists and of kindred dreamers, there rests, as Faraday pointed out, the curse of absolute sterility. They have been prolific of empty speculations, but they have added nothing to the sum of human knowledge." A strong illustration of this might be found in Theosophic India in the hands of Europeans endowed with materialistic science.

Mr. Stead—W. T. Stead—the great Stead—has been conducting a religious service at Edinburgh in connexion with the Wesleyan Mission. He gave out the hymns, read the lesson, and preached the sermon. The lesson was from the first of Isaiah, and before reading it the great Stead gave a disquisition on prophets. It was his opinion that prophets—at least nowadays—are not so much found in pulpits as in editorial chairs. Yes, and they generally look after the sporting department.

The great Stead declared that he "received a solemn message from God in Holloway Jail." The editor of the *Freethinker* was in the same shop eight or nine times as long as Mr. Stead, but he was not favored with a solemn message from God. Perhaps he was on the wrong side of the jail. Mr. Stead was on the debtor's side, with a big, well-furnished cell, anything he liked to eat and drink, and visits galore. Our editor was on the criminal side, in a brick vault twelve feet by six, dressed like a convict, eating skilly, and seeing two friends for twenty minutes once in three months.

That message "startled" Mr. Stead. It was this—"Cease telling the people to be Christians, tell them to be Christ's." Poor Stead! He must have been wool-gathering. The "solemn message" is to be found in St. Paul, and the revelation was only a reminiscence.

At Savannah, Georgia, two enemies, named Dorming and Fussell, met in the vestibule of the Methodist Church. They immediately pulled out their shooting irons and fired without ceremony. Both were mortally wounded.

A married woman at Toulouse, named Lucie Dreyfus, being afflicted with an overdose of faith, in the absence of her son and child, smeared her body with petroleum, and then striking a match, set fire to herself. Her sufferings must have been intense, and she uttered shriek after shriek as the flames extended over her body and burnt into her flesh. Her agonising screams were heard by the neighbors, who speedily came to her assistance, followed by men from the adjoining fire brigade station. By their efforts the flames were extinguished, and the wretched woman was transported, still alive but in a hopeless condition, to the Hotel Dieu. It appears that she was a religious maniac.

John Barningham got into trouble at Grimsby for selling

religious books without a pedlar's license. He said he had not broken the laws of God but those of man. A small fine should be an inducement to see that it is the laws of man that really matter.

No fewer than 27 parsons residing elsewhere join in holding a little bit of land in Bassettlaw, Notts, in order to secure a vote each. The revising barrister has struck five off, and it is to be hoped will dispose of the remainder.

"Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss," says Paul (1 Thess. v., 26). Joseph Clarke read this as if "brethren" embraced sisters. For carrying out his error and kissing ladies while at their devotions in Clarendon Church, Dublin, he was fined 40s.

A row took place at the Portsea Synagogue the other Sabbath, one of the chosen denouncing the minister, the Rev. Isaac Phillips, and pointing a pistol at him. It seems the quarrel was about the heavy duty which the man of God puts on the meat which he makes Kosher. If 8s. is paid for the meat, there is 1s. 4d. for duty. This goes into the Lord's treasury or the Rabbi's—it is all the same.

There is a champion romancer down Bermondsey way, and his name is Sinclair. He alleges that at the Hall of Science, the Sunday after Mr. Bradlaugh's death, he saw posted up "The last dying confession of Charles Bradlaugh, M.P." This document was actually signed by the said Charles Bradlaugh, and it declared that he fully recanted his Secularism and died believing Christianity. Mr. Sinclair has mistaken his vocation. He would earn a good living by writing pious tracts. Accuracy is not so much wanted in that line of business as a good unscrupulous imagination.

The Archbishop of Burgos, in kindly visiting the English patients wounded in the recent railway accident in Spain, expressed his regret that he could not cure the sick as the Apostles did. Yet Jesus Christ promised all his disciples they should do even greater works than himself.

It is hard to satisfy Christians. One of them has been declaring, in Finsbury Park, that Mr. Foote has turned the Hall of Science into a music-hall and "descended" to read Shakespeare. Fancy "descending" to read the greatest poet in the world! No doubt that poor Finsbury Park Christian, if he ever buys a copy of the bard, will feel that William Shakespeare ought to be very much obliged to him. But probably he won't invest. No doubt he prefers "Jonah" to "Hamlet."

The Jews are said to show a large excess of their fair proportion of insane in all lunatic asylums both here and on the continent. Possibly this may be due to their ancestry having to endure the Christian atrocities of "Jew-hunting."

The four dioceses of Wales form ecclesiastically part of the Province of Canterbury. We cannot wonder, then, at Archbishop Benson being up in arms against disestablishment in Wales, which would deprive him of a part of his government. But we did not expect him to show such deliberate misrepresentation or crass ignorance, as he did in saying that the case of Ireland was no analogy to that of Wales, for there nine-tenths of the inhabitants were Catholics. The Archbishop, even without any special efflux of the Holy Ghost, ought to know that the Protestants of Ireland constitute one-fourth of the population, and not one-tenth, as he for his own purposes would make out.

An Italian statesman says he is not sorry the Pope has had a lesson as to the disposition of the people of Rome; otherwise next year, instead of 20,000 pilgrims, they might have been treated to 40,000, all armed and prepared to effect violent restoration of the Papal power.

At the meeting of the Methodist Conference at Washington yesterday, Mr. Hugh Price Hughes declared that, in his opinion, religious papers should never be used for political purposes. If this is true, such a recantation ought to have been read in a white sheet, candle in hand. It is not so long ago that the Irish Methodists, who are staunch Unionists almost to a man, angrily remonstrated against the Home Rule proclivities of the *Methodist Times*, and the name of Mr.

Hughes thereupon disappeared from the title of the paper, though he still remained editor.—*Echo*.

Among other things discussed at the Conference was how far they could accept the doctrine of evolution. This gave rise to widely divergent views, though it was generally conceded religion could only take into account the working of evolution after the fiat of Divine creation. They must still keep their bogie man to boss the concern.

General Booth is having a good time in Australia, and his telegrams to headquarters in England are worthy of Barnum. Here is a sample—"Sixty souls, hundreds out for clean heart. Proceeds £400."

Self-denial pays, writes "A Lover of the Army" in the *War Cry*. Two years ago his wife and he went without sugar, and the children gladly (?) did the same. They soon had their reward in the shape of new-laid eggs, apples, clothing, and a bottle of tonic worth one and sixpence. "The next year (that is last year) I doubled the amount, and before I had given it in the Lord sent me three tins of condensed milk for my dear baby, who is now in glory. Of course, I shall not be lacking this year." Quite a good investment. Let us hope it was not the condensed milk that sent the dear baby to glory.

The parsons are not allowed to interfere directly in the Board Schools, but they often contrive to do so indirectly. At Tilbury the children were given a circular for their parents to sign, requesting permission for the children to leave school in time to attend church at 11.30 on a certain Thursday. The clergy, in disobedience to the spirit of the Education Act, still consider the school children as far as possible an appanage of their own.

Trèves has always been a godly city. It boasts that in the good old times no fewer than 7,000 persons were burnt there as witches.

Dr. Adam Clarke, the great Methodist commentator, like John Wesley, devoutly believed in witches, and has left on record his faith in witchcraft. He pointedly says, "If there had been no witches, the law putting them to death would never have been made. The existence of the law, given under the direction of the Spirit of God, proves the existence of the thing."

The South London Mission (Methodist) report is in some respects a curious document. Here is a very curious passage:—"The other night a man was in much visible distress about his soul. He believed in Christ as his Savior, but he couldn't receive Christ because the woman in his house was not his wife. Yet she was the mother of four of his children; he had separated from his wife years ago, and had never since seen her. Our pulpit appeals had brought his guilt home to his conscience. What was he to do? We couldn't advise him to abandon the woman he had ruined and the children at his table. Inquiries were instituted as to the whereabouts of his first wife, and it transpired that God had, by anticipation, solved for him the problem of his life."

Mr. E. A. Hulks, who appropriately lives at Folly Villas, St. Albans, has apparently received a copy of the *Freethinker*. He sends us a truly Christian postcard, and winds up with the remark that "Addison says, the man who says there is no God is a liar." This doesn't seem like Addison's style; there looks a lot of Hulks in it. Anyhow, we don't say there is no God. We only say we haven't the honor of his acquaintance. Mr. Hulks, however, appears to enjoy that privilege, and it has a notable effect on his manners.

You can now book a seat for one service only at Parker's City Temple on payment of sixpence. Joseph was meant for the stage. He combines in himself the talent of actor and of manager.

The Rev. E. Gough, Congregational minister of Barrowford, is displaying a cheap form of courage. After the close of the service he allows questions to be put. That looks all right. One would think, on the face of it, that the coward's castle was abolished in Mr. Gough's church. But wait a bit. All questioners must be prepared to accept the Bible as a final authority, so the queries are not likely to be very awkward.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, October 18, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.—“Man, Nature and God.” Service begins at 6.45 p.m.
Thursday, October 22, Hall of Science, at 8, “The Gospel of Freethought.” Admission free.

October 25, Camberwell; 29, Deptford.
 November 1, Portsmouth; 8, Sheffield; 15, Leicester; 22, Wolverhampton; 29, Grimsby.
 December 6, Hall of Science; 13, Manchester; 20, Nottingham; 27, Hall of Science.
 January 3, Birmingham; 10, Bolton; 17, Newcastle Sunday Lecture Society; 24 and 31, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—October 18, Birmingham; 25, Hall of Science—morning and evening. Nov. 1, Hall of Science; 8, Birmingham; 15, Birmingham; 22, Portsmouth; 29, Leeds. December 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Leicester; 27, Birmingham. Jan. 3 and 10, Hall of Science; 17, Milton Hall; 24 and 31, Birmingham. Feb. 7, Hull; 14, Glasgow; 15, Hamilton; 16, 17, 18 and 19, public debate in Glasgow; 21, Edinburgh; 28, Birmingham. March 7, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

J. JUDGE.—The date is booked.

JAMES NEATE.—We will keep your letter by us, or print a summary of it if you give us leave. Celestine Edwards is evidently as accurate as the Bible.

W. HOLLAND.—Comte's *General View of Positivism*, translated by Dr. Bridges, is published by Reeves and Turner at half a crown. It is a summary, by Comte himself, of his own philosophy. Read it for yourself.

J. CHERRY.—There must be a mistake somewhere. The matter is receiving attention.

F. SWATTS.—Cuttings received with thanks.

INQUIRER.—The alleged massacre of the innocents is unrecorded by the Talmud or Josephus, though the Jews did their best to blacken Herod. No contemporary writer speaks of it, though such an atrocity could not have been kept from the knowledge of Cæsar.

W. S. CLOGG.—Thanks. It was only a misprint.

W. SOWDEN.—Theosophy does not teach “the recognition of spirits after death”—at present.

G. CROOKSON.—Glad to hear you were so delighted with your visit to the Hall of Science, and that you joined the N. S. S. on the spot. Glad also to hear that the *Freethinker* is selling well in the Barnsley district, and that “the new enlarged placard is a great improvement.

P. O. HALL.—Perfect nonsense. See “Acid Drops.”

A. SCORES.—Contents-sheets shall be forwarded. Mr. Foote will write.

J. BATON.—Thanks for your taking four extra copies of this journal for distribution among your friends. We hope your example will be extensively followed. Contents-sheet shall be posted weekly to the newsagent.

PHILALETHES.—See “Acid Drops.” Thanks.

CORIOLANUS.—It is not true, at least to our knowledge, that John Stuart Mill ever retracted his Malthusian teaching. Byron's reference was to a debate in the House of Commons on the slavery question. We cannot give you the exact passage at the moment.

QUIZ.—We cannot tell you the author.

S. B. SYKES.—(1) Nobody knows how old Joseph and Mary were when Jesus was born. See Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *A Virgin Mother*. (2) We should define vice as an excessive indulgence of the animal passions. (3) *Bible Romances and Letters to the Clergy* will be resumed shortly.

T. H. JARRENS.—The Liverpool Branch secretary is Mr. Doeg, 9 Cromwell-terrace, Garden-lane. He will be happy to enrol you as a member. Pleased to hear you have been influenced by this journal.

W. T. LEEKEY.—Sorry to hear you have had trouble. Thanks for cuttings.

B. INGHAM.—Your suggestions will naturally be considered. Thanks.

E. PARKER.—Pleased to hear from you. See “Sugar Plums.”

W. C. HOLLICK says he saw the *Freethinker* exhibited in a shop-window at Swindon for the first time on Saturday.

F. C. PERCY.—The prayers of your orthodox friend do not seem to have prospered. We are happy to say the circulation of this journal is still improving.

S. COLEMAN.—No doubt a good many Freethinking Jews will join the N. S. S. We have several Jewish members already.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschentum—Echo—Neues Frereligioses Sonntag-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Better Way—Sheffield Evening Telegraph and Star—Grays and Tilbury Gazette—Modern Thought—Gil Blas—La Question Sociale

—Sheffield Anarchist—Herald of Anarchy—Countryman—Dundee Evening Telegraph—County of Middlesex Independent—Cosmopolitan—Twentieth Century—Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald—Open Court—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Manchester Amusements—Standard—Kansas Lucifer.

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

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.

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.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Last week's *Freethinker* went a good deal better than the previous week's. We have again left a liberal margin for an increased sale. There is nothing like striking while the iron is hot. We therefore appeal to our friends to push our circulation all they possibly can *just now*. The great thing is to get newsagents to sell the *Freethinker* and to display a contents-sheet. If our friends will all help us in this direction we shall soon eclipse the wildest dreams of Freethought editors in the past.

Despite the wretched weather there was an improved audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. The music was well appreciated, and Mr. Foote read a strong scene from “The Merchant of Venice.” The lecture followed, after more music, the subject being “Who Wrote the Bible?” Canon Driver's new volume, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, was made use of to show how the positions of scepticism are being gradually adopted, and, what is more, avowed, by learned men within the church.

This evening (Oct. 18) Mr. Foote delivers his third lecture—the last for the present—at the Hall of Science, on “Man, Nature, and God.” Before the lecture he will give another poetical reading. The musical program will of course be continued.

Mr. Foote invites any ladies or gentlemen who are willing to serve on a Committee for organising a London Freethinkers' Ball at the Hall of Science to meet him in the committee room upstairs after his lecture this evening (Oct. 18).

Last Sunday morning's free lecture at the Hall of Science was delivered by the Rev. S. D. Headlam. There was an improved attendance, and some discussion after the lecture as well as a good collection in aid of the expenses. This morning (Oct. 18) the lecturer is Mr. A. B. Moss.

On Monday morning the President of the National Secular Society signed nearly a hundred certificates for new members. Nearly five hundred names have been added to the list since the Birmingham Conference on Whit-Sunday. The Society is making more members—ay, and doing more work—than ever. But its funds have been falling off this year. The reason of this, of course, is the extraordinary demand made on Freethinkers' purses by the special funds that have been running of late. The matter will right itself in 1892. Meanwhile we venture to ask our wealthier friends to remember the N. S. S. The working expenses must be met, and donations at the present time are very welcome.

Last Sunday was a miserable day in Manchester, so far as the weather was concerned. It rained from morning until evening, which of course interfered somewhat with Mr. Watts's audiences in the morning and afternoon, but at night the hall was crowded. An animated debate followed the evening lecture, which highly gratified the large audience.

There was a great demand for the *Freethinker*, over sixteen dozen copies being disposed of during the day.

Mr. Watts's recent lecture at Spennymoor has created considerable local excitement. The Rev. S. M. Thompson, who opposed Mr. Watts on the evening of his lecture, has since written to the *Auckland Times and Herald* disputing some of his statements. Mr. Watts has replied to the rev. gentleman in a very pointed manner, inviting him to a four or six nights' debate. The editor of the above-named journal printed in its last issue Mr. Watts's reply. We shall be pleased to hear that arrangements have been made for the debate to take place.

Mr. Watts is desirous of forming a Federation of all Free-thought Societies throughout the Midland districts. With a view of carrying out this plan he will be pleased to hear from friends in Wolverhampton, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, and other places in the Midland counties. Mr. Watts's permanent address is Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

The following subscriptions have been received towards the fund for settling Mr. Charles Watts at Birmingham:— J. S. M., £1; W. Paul, £2 10s.; W. J. Morley, 10s. 6d. (quarterly for two years).

The new hall of the Finsbury Park Branch, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road, though in a side street, is well situated within a stone's throw of where the tramway cars stop for the entrance to the park. The hall has been painted and decorated by the members themselves. Mr. Ward and Miss Robins in especial have been unceasing in their efforts to show that the cause of Secularism is not decaying in their district. The society, though a comparatively new one, has a large membership, including two vice-presidents of the N. S. S., and has a good library under the charge of Mrs. Samson. Mr. Foote opens the hall on Wednesday next, Oct. 21, at eight o'clock. After his address there will be brief speeches by various gentlemen. Messrs. Holyoake, Robertson, Parris, Forder and G. and S. Standing are expected, and a musical and dramatic entertainment will follow. It is hoped that all Freethinkers in the neighborhood will attend, and, by joining the Branch, help to assure the success of the new hall.

Monday was the Jews' *Yom Kippur*, or Day of Atonement, and the Freethinking Jews in London kept it in a most unorthodox fashion. They had a big afternoon meeting at the Hall of Science, which was crowded in every part. Speeches were delivered in German and Yiddish, and every advanced sentiment was applauded to the echo. Mr. G. Standing spoke in English, and was heartily greeted. Mr. Foote addressed the meeting, also in English, before it broke up, a little before six o'clock. The President of the N. S. S. was given a splendid reception, and his remarks were cheered vociferously.

This year's meeting of our Jewish Freethought friends was larger than last year's. The movement seems to be growing rapidly amongst the London Jews.

A welcome relief in the lectures at Milton Hall (a correspondent writes) was given on Sunday evening last, when Mr. Coppock, F.C.S., delivered a very able lecture on "The Age of the Earth." The chair was occupied by the Secretary of the London Secular Federation, who, in introducing his friend, remarked that after their liberal indulgence at that hall in a quasi-philosophical hotch-potch, it might act as a corrective to the intellectual dulgence which such mental diet tended to induce, if they came down from the clouds to what some might profess to regard as the "lower plane" of material science, but which was nevertheless the region of ascertained fact. Mr. Coppock's lecture was listened to with appreciative interest, and at the conclusion the lecturer was accorded a hearty vote of thanks for the lucid manner in which he had, in his lecture and replies to questions, explained some of the latest researches in physical science; and a wish was expressed that Mr. Coppock might again visit Milton Hall.

The American Freethinkers of the State of Washington have won a victory, the Attorney General of the State having determined that the reading of the Bible in public schools is not in accordance with the spirit of the constitution.

The Bethnal Green Branch begins business at its new Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road, E., to-day (Oct. 18). There will be a tea at 5.30 for members and friends. At 7.30 Mr. W. Lyons will lecture on "Ancient Science." On Monday, at 8.30 p.m., a lecture on "The Outcome of Trade Unionism" will be given by Mr. Pearson. On Thursday, at 8.30, Mr. Cohen is to open a debate on "Is Crime a Disease?" On Saturday there will be a members' social evening. The admission to all meetings is free.

The Camberwell Branch held its quarterly meeting on Sunday. Mr. Hartmann, who presided, gave a good report of the past three months' work. The open-air lecturing had been very successful, and a good number of students had joined the Science Classes. The old officers were elected *en bloc*. Tea was afterwards served in the large hall, after which the Battersea Dramatic Society entertained the company, local friends giving songs, and dancing being interspersed for the young and active.

There are five avowed Secularists on board H.M.S. *Trafalgar*. Directly the number is seven they will form a Branch of the National Secular Society. Thirty or forty sympathisers are on board, and Mr. Footes' *Prisoner for Blasphemy* is being "passed round and read with great relish."

CONSTRUCTIVE OBSCENITY.

BOW-STREET Police-court, on Friday afternoon, Oct. 9, was the scene of a peculiar trial. A gentleman named Young, an Oxford M.A., was prosecuted under the Post Office Protection Act for sending an obscene object and three obscene pamphlets through the post. The "object" was an article openly sold in scores of shops under the very eyes of the police. The pamphlets were three copies of a Malthusian leaflet, couched in the most inoffensive language. Mr. Young sent them in sealed letters, which were broken open by the Post Office authorities. It appears that this department of "the State" claims, and indeed exercises, the right of breaking open any and every letter, even if registered, of spying into the contents, and of confiscating them if they happen to offend the susceptibilities of the inquisitors.

Mr. Young declared that his leaflets were only sent to married men, and no attempt was made to disprove this, although hundreds of his letters had been for months in the hands of the police, who could have made inquiries of the persons to whom they were addressed.

Mr. Besley, who prosecuted on behalf of the Post Office, the Home Office, and the Treasury, contended that the letters were obscene because they taught the limitation of families. He positively declared that the *only* check to female immorality was the risk of maternity, and if this were removed the British nation was lost. Surely this is a frightful libel on the women of England. If their virtue is only ignorance, we are in a very sad condition; and as Mr. Besley talked about religion, we may ask him whether he is proud of such a state of things after so many centuries of Christian training.

Mr. Young made an able and a spirited defence, but the magistrato's mind was clearly made up, and he listened to the defendant with ill-concealed impatience. Mr. Lushington shared Mr. Besley's view of morality. He found that the object was obscene. He also found that the Malthusian leaflet was obscene. Yet he allowed that there was nothing at all offensive in its language. His judgment, therefore, comes to this, that the most temperate discussion of the population question is "obscene."

We must protest against this doctrine of constructive obscenity. A book, pamphlet, or leaflet is not "obscene" simply because it is "immoral." This is calling things by wrong names. "Immorality" is often a matter of opinion. What Mr. Lushington regards as *immoral* is regarded as highly *moral* by many men as able as himself and of no less elevated character. If "immoral" doctrines

may not be promulgated, let the law distinctly say so; and let offenders be prosecuted accordingly. It is cowardly and hypocritical to charge them with "obscenity," and then to argue that although their language is irreproachable, they are guilty of obscenity because their doctrines are "immoral." This is a mere trick of the authorities to gratify their vulgar prejudices or to suppress the discussion of "unpleasant" questions. And the trick must be resisted. Mr. Young was fined £40 and costs, but he has appealed against the sentence, and it is to be hoped that a different decision will be given in a superior court.

The *Freethinker* is not concerned with any special solution of social problems. Our business is to fight Theology and cultivate the Positive spirit. But we are profoundly interested—in both senses of the word—in fair play and free discussion. Magistrates should be a terror to evil-doers. That is a business to which they are perhaps adequate. But it is farcical to make them judges of *opinions*, and every lover of truth and justice should resist their usurpation.

MY VISIT TO THE HOLY COAT.

"The heads thereof judge for reward and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophet thereof divineth for money."
—Micah iii., 10-11.

DURING a short holiday in Paris a week or two ago, I was glad to be able to call on the Freethinkers of that city and exchange greetings. I was told that we English had but little conception of the evil influence exerted by the French Catholic priest on the homes and social life of the workmen. One earnest worker assured me that the greatest enemies to the cause of mental freedom were often those of their own household. Unfortunately this is not confined to France; it is so wherever the priests get a footing into a man's family. Their doctrine is, if you can't convert the man, and you may not burn him, the next best thing is to make his children hate him. English mothers should take note, and follow Clifford's advice to "keep their children away from the priest, or he will make them haters of mankind."

While there, I was possessed with a desire to see the Holy Coat of Jesus Christ, which is exhibited to the faithful at Argenteuil, and is said to have been placed there by Charlemagne on August 13 in the year 800. It had been given to him by an Eastern empress; where she got it from God only knows. No matter what disease you have got, you have only to "touch the hem of his garment" and you are perfectly cured. I knew it was foolish; but the thought of being able to see it *myself* made all other thoughts its slave; and so with an English companion, whom for the purpose of this description we will call Jack, I set out.

Jack is an enthusiast by nature, and, once the subject in his mind, had eyes and ears for nothing else. He wanted to go to Trèves straightway, but my sterner judgment prevailed, and we went to Argenteuil. I was rewarded for this, because the holy sister in Christ, who eventually showed us the sacred relic, took pains to remind us that this was the real coat, and not that which they were showing at Trèves. She considered we had been blessed to choose this one, and so did I; because there was no advantage in paying a small fortune to see a spurious article, when the real coat—the A1 at Lloyd's, registered—was to be had for a five-franc piece. On arriving at Argenteuil my friend considered it consistent with the object of our pilgrimage that we should take sacrament; as he observed, we had made a good resolution, and he was resolved to treat it. The old lady of the auberge laughed copiously as I inquired the way, and ventured the remark that she had seen many pilgrims come there in her time, but she had never seen one who, like him, had the wisdom to fortify himself with brandy and soda.

At length we approached the spot, and an old nun took us to the coat. In the first place, the cathedral is not well lighted, and you cannot approach nearer to the Sainte Tunique than about eight feet. First, there is a raised platform, and from this, at some four feet away, rises a tall altar; then again, in each case receding like a staircase, is a sort of bookcase, protected with bars of iron, heavy cur-

tains, and glass. Inside this is a smaller one, protected in the same way except that the bars are wide and horizontal, with a hole two inches in diameter, through which you are supposed to see the coat. She told me that it was wound round a roller; and I think she was winding me round her finger, for I looked above and below many times, but I could not see a bit of cloth to save my life, and I defy anyone else with normal eyesight to see it. Others who were there fell on their knees before it, but they asked no questions. I felt sure my companion would see it if but by the eye of faith, so I turned to ask him to point it out to me, but, alas! he could not see it either. His faith was shaken, so he departed. As I commenced asking the old lady for a sign, she asked me if I was not a Catholic, to which of course I replied "No," and without another word she drew the curtain and went away. That a piece of cloth is there I am willing to believe, but I could not see it.

As they said they had a piece of the true cross and the crown of thorns at Notre Dame, we returned and paid a franc with alacrity. Needless to say, the whole thing was a fraud. The only thing in the way of a relic came in the shape of a tooth of one of the massacred innocents, richly set in jewels, etc. Jack's face shone with a spiritual glow; he said there could be no doubt about this. I thought he was translated. I knew then that I had found the English Mahatma, but when I pointed out that this was no milk tooth belonging to a child under two years of age, but was a huge molar that must have astonished many a beefsteak in its time, he came away convinced that all religion was either fraud or delusion. Wise men know it to be both.

H. SNELL.

JESUS AN AGNOSTIC.

WHEN Mr. Heaford speaks of the vanity of Jesus, surely he follows the very common practice of confounding the man with the nominal, though not practical, position accorded to him by sections of humanity. So far as the record goes, he appears to have been on the whole a very lovable character, a high moral teacher considering the times in which he lived, and certainly, more or less consciously, an early Freethought martyr. Equally whether God or man he was of necessity, while human, a Freethinker, if he was to be an ensample of the nobility of manhood; for a teacher who does not proclaim the freedom of body and mind can awaken no responsive echo in the great soul of humanity. It is one of the most ordinary requirements of the Freethinker to have to leave "father and mother, and brethren and sisters," for what he esteems the "kingdom of heaven's sake." And all honor to him for it! It is also the burden of every moralist's teaching, Freethinking or otherwise—"Come unto me, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It must be so to any teacher with faith in himself and enthusiasm for his cause. Jesus was born at a time when a sacrificial priesthood was in force, and among a "peculiar people" and a "stiffnecked" race, who believed in a revengeful god requiring to be pacified by the blood of bulls and of goats and of doves. And such an easy method of vicarious and comparatively cheap religion has always had for many men an attraction difficult to eradicate. For hundreds of years some of their prophets had tried to show them that the only thing the Lord required was "to cease to do evil; learn to do well." And Jesus impressed the same upon the people. But they could only receive meat for babes. They could not all at once eradicate the idea of a revengeful Father, so Jesus modified this by giving them the idea of a loving one. Allowance should always be made for the oldtime personification of everybody and everything; for oriental imagery, idealism, and verbal inexactitude. The ever old and ever new doctrine of love and brotherhood had naturally its full share of this. In such expressions as "I and my Father are one," the ordinary Christian educes two Gods into one. Though this seems a sufficiently far-fetched conclusion, some will say that otherwise the phrase possesses no meaning. On the contrary, if you take it as stating that he knew no outside God apart from himself and his own perception, the expression is replete with meaning; and he stands before us, at least, agnostic; possibly, atheistic. And this is at bottom the standpoint of both Christians and Freethinkers, though they arrive there in opposite ways. The Christian elects man as "God," almost invariably in his own manly image. The Freethinker knows nothing beyond nature and his own per-

ceptions of it and and himself, and elects himself as the most "Godlike" by virtue of such perception. The result is much the same; the method different.

MATT. BROWN.

EFFECTS OF THE SPIRIT.

The *Indian War Cry* (July 6) has the following illustration of the operation of the holy spirit:—

"A brother and sister were praying much for the outpouring of God's spirit and a revival. But they got no answer to their praying and no revival came. Still they went on praying and working, and one day while in prayer the brother felt that God told him he must separate himself from all idols. He said, 'Yes, Lord, I am ready to do so,' and the Spirit then showed him that he made an idol of a favorite dog, and said distinctly, 'You must

SHOOT YOUR DOG!

It was a sacrifice and the servant when told to do it refused, thinking the master did not mean it; so he had to take the gun and shoot it himself. The next day, strange to say, the sister had as clear a conviction from God that she should

DESTROY HER FAVORITE PARROT.

She at first struggled against the idea, thinking it was her own thought or notion. But the Spirit spoke still more powerfully, and showed her it was an idol and she must let it go if she wished to get the answer to prayer. And so she destroyed it."

Next day their prayer was answered. Evidently they were inspired by Jahveh, who in the old days told Abraham to slay his son.

BOOK CHAT.

Mrs. Bonner has collected and published through Mr. Forder the very characteristic "Doubts in Dialogue" which Mr. Bradlaugh wrote from time to time in his journal. The volume is neatly printed and bound, and the price is one shilling. Every Freethinker should provide himself with a copy. It contains the last and ripest Atheistical writing of our dead leader. There is no literary embellishment, but plenty of sheer hard thinking. Young Freethought advocates will find materials here, at least in germ, for scores of good lectures. The last Dialogue is on Jesus. It was first printed on January 11, 1891, a little more than a fortnight before Mr. Bradlaugh's death. And the last words of the Dialogue are these:—"The alleged life of Jesus is to me impossible. I simply cannot believe it." Surely this is a sufficient answer to the silly talk about Charles Bradlaugh's "becoming more Christian" towards the close of his life.

Neighborhood Guilds is the title of a new volume in Sonnenschein's "Social Science Series." The writer is Dr. Stanton Coit, the lecturer at South-place Institute. It is a very interesting volume, though the author is sparing in literary adornment. He is anxious to spread the social experiment he has himself been conducting, apparently with much success, at Leighton Hall, in Kentish Town. The essence of this experiment is the bringing together for extra-domestic life of people of all grades of society. It is difficult to give a fair idea of Neighborhood Guilds in a few sentences. One point, however, is worth a special notice. The Guilds provide for social recreation as well as mental and moral culture; they are also strictly democratic; and they are kept down to a certain number of members, so that it may be possible for them all to know each other.

Dr. Coit's book is worthy of the serious attention of social reformers. We scarcely think the Guilds are of such far-reaching promise as he imagines, but a little exaggeration is allowable to an honest enthusiasm. In one sense, at any rate, we feel that he has "got hold of the right end of the stick." We wish him all success in his generous efforts to make a rational and humane impression on the Modern Babylon.

Thoughts on Religious History, by the Hon. A. S. G. Canning, reaches us from Eden, Remington, and Co. The author is a man of culture and refinement, and his observations on Religious History have therefore a certain interest; but we cannot say he is either original or profound; while his semi-supernatural Christianity (if we may use the

expression) leads him into blunders. For instance, he remarks that "The character of Jesus himself is very slightly glanced at in Gibbon's history." This is quite true, but a better knowledge of Gibbon and the subject would have prevented the remark. Gibbon knew, what Mr. Canning does not, that "the character of Jesus" is a hopeless theme for discussion or speculation. For the rest, we recognise the spirit of tolerance which Mr. Canning displays. Probably the wish was father to the thought in his statement that "Opinions the most extraordinary, and speculations the most daring, about religion are now uttered or diffused without the former danger of either legal penalty or social degradation." We are sorry to say that this is far from true.

Mr. Josiah Hughes, a Freethinker, has published through Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., a volume entitled *Australia Revisited*. It is very readable and interesting. Mr. Hughes kept his eyes open during the voyage and his travels in Australia, and his book is full of valuable information. The style is light and chatty, though never vulgar, and carries the reader along without a hitch. At the end of the volume is a sketch of the author's life, which shows that he left the Christian Church because he could not believe its legends and dogmas.

Darkest World turned into Brightest Glory is the title of a very bulky volume sent to us from the Christian Commonwealth Publishing Co. The author is Mr. J. W. Hebblethwaite, who appears to be a City merchant and a great friend of the Salvation Army. The book itself is a curiosity. One half of it is a pious rhapsody; the other half is a descriptive catalogue of the "Principal Towns of the World." The catalogue is valuable; the rhapsody is fairly well written, but worthless. On page 17 there is a reference to Atheism. "It is a fearful thing to be an Atheist," says Mr. Hebblethwaite, and he adds: "No matter what good or noble work for worldly benefit of humanity, such as the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh may have done, yet, methinks, his fearful end ought to be a serious standing warning to all men." His *fearful end!* What does the man mean?

Mr. Hall Caine's powerful but sombre "Scapegoat," which has been appearing in the *Illustrated London News*, depicts the condition of the Jews in Morocco, and is allowed to present a graphic picture of their inner life. Mr. Caine is now going to Russia to do a similar work on the Russian Jews. His present romance would have been better for a little humor. Mr. Caine should have worked in the following historic anecdote about the Jews of Algiers. A speculating but ignorant merchant once made the mistake of sending there a cargo of cheap hats. In a country where only turbans were worn this was a bad enough blunder. But a way was found out of the difficulty. A good bribe was given to the Bey, who thereupon proclaimed that no Jew should appear abroad without one of these hats, which proved a profitable speculation.

BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL FUND.

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BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE.

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. xii., 6). According to this he is a close imitation of the patriarchal tyrant. But what a consolation it is to know, when you have got the toothache, that your "whacky, whacky, whack" comes from a loving father's hand.

Lightning struck a church at Tolmezzo, Germany, during mass and killed three persons. But then they doubtless went to Abraham's bosom.

It is said that more than one half of living species of animals are parasites, living on and often in others. This is a proof that things are made for the greatest good of the greatest number.

The unsearchable wisdom of the Unfindable is displayed in zymotic diseases. These afford a high old time to animalcule germs, who revel in an epidemic and find their worst foe in sanitation. What we call disease is the bursting into life of myriad germs, all longing to sing their Maker's praise. What a comfort it is to know that cancer and cholera morbus spread under divine guidance.

Five hundred hogs were roasted alive at the fire at Squire's great packing-house, Boston. Their outcries were pitiful. But the Lord likes the smell of roast meat.

Thousands of Russian peasants are reported to be dying from famine in the country round Baku. Vast numbers have left their homes and are without either food or shelter. But this should stimulate the benevolent feelings of the well-to-do.

The black bread which most of the Russian peasants are now compelled to eat is but a mixture of chaff and pig weed, and is usually covered with mildew. A traveller says, at every station crowds of miserable peasants are seen who have left their villages in the hope that bread will be brought them by the trains. Many are in the last stages of fever.

Many Scotch farmers have had their harvest utterly spoiled by the rains. This is explained as being owing to other farmers having wickedly got theirs in when the Sundays were fine.

West Africa possesses the most terrible of spiders a being so foul and malignant that no reptile compares with it for horror. It dwells in the woods, but by one chance or another it too often finds its way into dwellings. This is called the tarantula; with legs spread, it covers a dinner-plate, clothed in pretty fur like a tabby cat's. Its beak is the shape of a parrot's, and the size of a sparrow's; the venom of it fatal to women and children—often to strong men, as the natives say. Its paws end in suckers, clinging so tight that they must be picked off when the legs have been cut away. They say that the brute springs a great distance, and alights with its suckers together in a bunch; the frightful beak is inserted quick as thought, and no human strength can move that hideous excrescence. It seems unlikely that a creature which has no claws, but holds on by expelling the air under its feet, could jump; but, after studying the tarantula, one inclines to believe any fiendish habit attributed to it.

Cornhill for October has a paper on "The Plague of Locusts," referring especially to Algiers, where the whole military resources were employed in vain against these pests. Great trenches miles in length were cut in front of the advancing army, which was destroyed in millions with lime, iron rollers, etc., etc. Still the insect army went on, leaving their progeny to destroy the crops, and poison (by their wholesale suicides) any wells left open.

The appearance of locusts in Southern Italy and the country near the mouth of the Rhone reminds the correspondent of a German paper that this is by no means the first time that the latter district has been visited by them. The local history of Arles mentions between the years 1545-1576 several processes at law against the locusts; for at that time the custom still survived of subjecting animals and even inanimate objects to trial, sentence, and the ban of the church, just as if they were human beings. In 1565, when

the locusts laid waste the region in question, the people were in despair, and forthwith demanded their expulsion. Accordingly a summons calling upon the insects to appear before the court of the "Official" was issued and proclaimed throughout the fields around Arles. As in due time the locusts, who it may be presumed were wary of justice, failed to appear, a well-known advocate named Martin was appointed to plead for them "in absentia." The defence was admirable. The locusts, said Maitre Martin, were but instruments in the hand of God for the punishment of those who refused to pay the tithes due to the church, and to lead them to penitence and the renewed fulfilment of their duty. He submitted, therefore, that the curse should not be pronounced against the "defendants," but that they should be regarded as blessings in disguise, and suffered in patience till God should remove them. But this pious defence failed. The locusts were formally cursed, and called upon to leave the country without delay. The record adds that notice of appeal was given against this decision, but that before the day of hearing arrived the locusts, probably finding their quarters no longer safe, had flown to seek fresh fields.—*Daily News*.

THE IDENTITY OF CREATOR AND CREATION,
THEIR ORIGIN IN SELFISM (EGOISM).

PRAY allow me the small amount of space necessary to ventilate, for the more thoughtful of your readers, the above strictly scientific formula of subjective mentation, which, by transferring Creation and Creator from the sphere of the superhuman to that of the merely human, and ultimately to that of natural function like respiration, makes each individual of humanity, or egoity, the surrogate and supplanter of a superhuman Deity—a position which affords to Freethought a complete, short, and summary vindication. A Theodicy of an omnipotent, unconditioned, and transcendent Supreme Being clearly nowadays, with the spectacle of evil in the world as never before so vividly realised as in our age of demonstrated medical and other science—seems no longer credible or tenable. Demography and hygiene (defined by Dr. Parkes as supreme culture of mind and body—not merely sanitation, as the term is vulgarly considered) must be the only religion of the future. At first blush it seems startlingly absurd to postulate self and not self-creation. It superficially resembles the motherhood of God, as embodied in the *Theotokos* or Virgin Mary. But on reflection, this sense of surprise and absurdity must disappear, as this world-scheme only amounts to the postulate, that in the relative or non-absolute and conditioned sphere to which our race is confined, all consciousness—precept and concept alike—is purely mental (cerebral)—a truism indeed, not free from tautology like that of the syllogistic major and minor premiss. Outside the domain of *personal* consciousness it seems quite patent we cannot range, since it lands us in blank nothingness. It is equivalent to predicating the *impersonality* of knowledge, *i.e.*, its objectivity or externality. It is the affirmation of the thing *per se*, not of the thing *per me*, a predicament hitherto held necessary by special scientism; only the halfway house resting-place to Truth, though its necessary preliminary or starting point. In its pretence to avoid anthropomorphism, and, on this view, *auto-morphism*, it finds it essential to predicate two factors—the "thing" perceived or percept, and the percipient—a dual fallacy, superseded by this *automonism*, which in the last analysis unifies the seemingly two. This unified analysis is tantamount to the now quite familiar notion that the god or gods worshipped as divinities, like every "thing" else in sense or thought, are only creatures of the latter, and that it, in its turn, is equivalent to the affirmation that the Ego or *I* generic is the parent, not the son of Deity. *Inter alia*, this bird's-eye view of things completely humanises the sacrosanct Christian myth, which, like Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, Zoroasterism, etc., does mitigate the inexorable cruelty of natural law or religion, and supplies, on degrading terms it is true, a *modus vivendi* with nature's otherwise intolerable putative author. Natural religion is thus the fire, and revelation only the frying-pan. We believe this readily enough in the case of the Greek oracles and Polytheism generally. Its extension to all forms of Monotheism, including that of Zion, is nowadays equally imperative. God is clearly just as much a nonentity as a personal devil. Jehovah, Jove, Lord, Father, Allah or Brahma, etc., are all alike of cranial origin. Each of us, gentle or simple, learned or unlearned, may pose as the latter, of whom esoteric Hinduism teaches that Brahma, looking round, can see nothing but himself. *Mut uo nomine fabula de nobis narratur.*

R. LEWINS, M.D.

PROFANE JOKES.

Girl in church looking for the collect—"George, is this the Sunday before Trinity." George—"No; it is the Sunday before the St. Leger."

Mrs. Piggins, a true self-satisfied bigot, of comfortable creed and circumstances, when she heard that so-and-so were likely to be partakers of the kingdom of heaven, exclaimed, "God forbid!"

A boy came home from school very much excited and told his father that he believed all human beings were descended from apes, which made the old man so mad that he replied angrily—"That may be the case with you, but it ain't with me; I can tell you that, now."

Lord Howe gives the following account of one of his crew, an Irishman—"The fellow was brave, but a little too fond of a can of grog, yet never omitted to repeat this prayer every night as he went to his hammock, 'I never murdered any man, and no man ever murdered me. So God bless all mankind.'"

A French author tells the following story illustrative of the "passion strong in death." A Parisian usurer was on his death-bed, and the priest, to awaken in his bosom thoughts of his approaching dissolution, held before his glazing eyes a silver crucifix. "I can lend you," said he, faintly, "but a small sum on so small a pledge, sir."

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: 7, Mr. J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Delusions Scientifically Explained."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Christianity and Materialism." Monday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "A Freethought View of Christ."

Finsbury Park—1 Lock-street, Blackstock-road: Wednesday, at 8, opening of Hall by Mr. G. W. Foote.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "John Stuart Mill" (admission free); 6.45, musical selections; 7.15, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Man, Nature, and God." Thursday, at 8, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Gospel of Freethought."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Life of Paracelsus." Monday, at 8.30, social meeting.

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 10.30, quarterly meeting; 6, tea and social meeting, after which Mr. F. Haslam will give "Some Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh" (tickets, 9d. each). Thursday, at 8, open debate.

West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon-road (close to Latimer-road Station): Friday, at 8.30, discussion.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Materialism, Spiritualism, Theosophy."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, Mr. G. Shambrook, "What is the Use of Prayer?"

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. C. Cohen will lecture.

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Reason and Revelation."

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 6.30, Mr. C. Cohen will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Jesus and his Parents"; 3.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Miracles of the Old Testament."

Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 3.30, Mr. J. Pagan, "What is Sin?"

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. H. Snell will lecture.

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (close to Queen's Park Station): 3, Mr. E. Bowles, "Prophecies Concerning Christ." In Market-place, Canterbury-road: 6, Mr. St. John, "A Criticism of Some Claims of the Church."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, Mr. J. Pagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Sophistry."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "What we have Gained by Freethought."

Stratford—Matthew's Park Estate, Ham Park-road: 3.30, Mr. S. H. Alison, "Atheism or Christianity: Which?"

Tottenham (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Why I Never Pray."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 3.15, Mr. C. Cohen will lecture.

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's-hill: 11.30, Mr. Standing, "Jonah and Nahum."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, public debate on "Theosophy and Spiritualism," introduced by Mr. Charles Watts; 7, Mr. Charles Watts, "Science; its Conflict with the Church."

Bradford—Albert Buildings, bottom of Great Horton-road: Mr. J. G. Fisher, 3, "Evolution of Man"; 7, "The Population Question."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: noon, debating class, An Essay; 6.30, Mr. James Robertson (President Spiritualist's Association), "Theosophy, I.—The Theosophical Society: its Origin."

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Club, No. 2 Room, Northumberland-street: Tuesday, at 8, business meeting.

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: 6.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "Modern English Politicians."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. G. Rowland, "Christian Evidences and Christianity."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, Mr. G. Selkirk, "Secularism: Destructive and Constructive."

Northampton—Coffee Tavern, St. Michael's-road: Readings and discussion.

Nottingham—Mechanic's Large Hall: Saturday, at 8, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Theosophy and Occultism."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, lecture by an old Member.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 2.45, reading circle (in connection with the National Home Reading Union); 7, Mr. Scarrott.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, Mr. T. Garrett, "Free Inquiry: the Sure Pathway to Knowledge."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, a reading.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation-street: 7, Mr. T. R. Fox will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Oct. 25, Liverpool. Nov. 1, Battersea; 8, Milton Hall; 15, Leeds; 22, Hall of Science; 29, Camberwell.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Oct. 18, morning, Finsbury Park; 25, Birmingham. Nov. 1, West Ham; 8, Nottingham.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 18, morning, Hall of Science; 25, Camberwell. Nov. 15, Reading.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Oct. 18, morning, Mile End; 25, Manchester.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Oct. 18, morning, Hyde Park. Nov. 15, evening, Camberwell; 22, evening, Ball's Pond. Dec. 20, evening, Camberwell.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth-road, Stratford, London, E.—Nov. 29, Ball's Pond.

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