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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

"Surely if any one is persuaded, whether rightly or wrongly, that his fellows are expending the best part of their imaginations and feelings on a dream and a delusion, and by so doing moreover they are retarding to an indefinite degree the wider spread of light and happiness, then nothing that he can tell them about chemistry or psychology or history can in his eyes be comparable in importance to the duty of telling them this."—*John Morley.*

THANK GOD.

THE peculiarly selfish character of religion is often exemplified, but we do not remember a better illustration than the one which recently occurred at Folkestone. The twenty-seven seamen who were rescued from the *Benvenue* attended a thanksgiving service at the parish church, when the vicar delivered "a short address suitable to the occasion." Their captain and four of his crew were drowned, and the lucky survivors thanked the Lord for saving them, though he let the others perish in the yeasty waves.

We should like to see a copy of that vicar's suitable discourse. We suspect it would be an interesting study to a cynic. No doubt the man of God's chief motive was professional. The saving of those shipwrecked men was a splendid piece of work, but it required to be rounded off. It was not complete unless the parson blessed it and approved it with a text. He came in at the finish when the danger was all over, and gave the perfecting touch in the shape of a cheap benediction.

Probably the man of God put in a good word for Providence. The poor sailors had been snatched from the jaws of death; their minds were therefore in a state of agitation, and at the very best they are not a logical or reflective race of men. Very likely, therefore, they assented to the theory that they owed their deliverance to the blessing of God; but a little quiet thought about the matter would possibly make them see it in a different light.

The persons who visibly *did* save them from drowning were gallant lifeboat-men, who put their own lives in deadly peril, fighting the storm inch by inch in the hope of rescuing a number of unknown fellow creatures. All honor to *them!* We would sooner doff the hat to them than to any prince in Christendom. Some of them, perhaps, take a drop too much occasionally, and their language may often be more vigorous than polite; but all that is superficial. The real test of a man is what he will do when he is put to it. When those rough fellows saw a brave task before them all the skin-deep blackguardism dropped away; the heroic came out in supreme majesty, and they were consecrated by it more truly than any smug priest at his profitable altar. As they jumped into the boat they proved the nobility of human nature, and the damnable falsehood of the Christian doctrine of original sin.

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What share Providence had in the matter is not very apparent. Strong arms and stout hearts were in the lifeboat, and that accounts for her reaching the wreck. Had the rowers the choice of a stimulus, we dare say they would have taken a swig of brandy in preference to any quantity of the Holy Spirit. What Providence *might* have done if he, she, or it was in the humor, was to keep the shipwrecked sailors safe until the lifeboat arrived. But this was *not* done. Those who were lashed to the rigging were saved, while the captain and four others, less fortunately situated, were lost. Where the *material* means were efficacious there was salvation, and where they failed there was disaster and death.

So much for the logical side of the matter. Now let us look at the moral side. Religion pretends to minister to the unselfish part of our nature. That is the theory, but how does it work out in practice? Thanking God for saving the survivors of a shipwreck implies that he could have saved those who perished. It also implies that he did not choose to do so. It further implies that the saved are more worthy, or more important, than the lost; at least, it implies that they are greater favorites in the "eye of heaven." Now this is a frightful piece of egotism, which every one with a spark of manhood would be disgusted at if he saw it in its true colors.

Nor is this all. It is not even the worst. There is a viler aspect of this "thanksgiving" business. One man is saved in a disaster and another is killed. When the first realises his good luck he congratulates himself. This is natural and pardonable, but only for a moment. The least disinterestedness, the least sympathy, the least imagination, would make him think of his dead companion. "Did he suffer much, poor fellow? What will his wife do? How will his little ones get on without a father? After all, mightn't it have been better if he had been spared instead of me? Who knows?"

If these reflections did not occur under the stimulated instinct of self-preservation it would be bad enough. How much worse when the survivor keeps up the selfish attitude in cold blood, and deliberately goes about thanking God for *his* preservation! Ordinary reason and humanity would cry shame on such egotism, but religion steps in and sanctifies it.

Some of these days an honest man will be provoked into a bit of good strong "blasphemy." When he hears a fellow thanking Providence for *his* safety, while others perished, this honest man will shrug his shoulders. And when the fellow cries "Bless God!" this honest man will exclaim "Damn God!"

No doubt the priests would burn that honest man alive if they had the power. But his logic and his feelings will be better than theirs. He will abhor selfishness even in the disguise of piety, and he will argue that if God is to be credited with the lives of those who are saved he should also be debited with the lives of those who are lost. And how would the account stand then?

G. W. FOOTE.

ANOTHER THEORY OF THE GOSPELS.

IN 1822 John Murray, of Albemarle-street, published a large anonymous work entitled *Palæoromaica*. The object of the author was stated very guardedly as "humbly to inquire of persons skilled in the Greek language, whether the Greek text of some MSS. and printed copies of the New Testament, does not bear very strong marks of being a version from the Latin." The anonymous author was a learned Scotchman, the Rev. John Black, minister of Coylton, Ayrshire, and his book, now scarce, is anything but the production of a faddist or ignoramus. It gives numerous reasons for concluding that the phenomena of the received Greek text can only be explained by its being a translation from the Latin. Yet I am not aware that this theory has received any endorsement, or indeed attention, since the time of its publication. Then the Church scented danger, and the book was met with a storm of abuse, the Bishop of St. Davids leading the way with an accusation of "dreadful impiety." The work, written, as the author says, away from any public library, was open to criticism and correction on many minor points. But this was not the real objection, which was that such a question should ever have been mooted at all. The writer in the *British Critic*, for instance, assailing the author with considerable vehemence, said, "although the discovery of truth can do no harm, yet an inquiry after truth may be so conducted as to do a great deal of harm." The suggestion that the Gospels, received through the Church of Rome, really had a Latin origin, was evidently a disturbing one. That a revelation sent in the first place to the Jews should be written, not in Hebrew, but in Greek, is in itself conclusive that the Gospels were produced out of Palestine, and were consequently not put forward in the place where they could be effectively contradicted.* But if a Latin original should be assigned, the stories at once assume an aspect not only of incredibility, but of imposture. I am far from supposing that this can be proved. It is, and is likely to remain, nothing but a theory. But that it is not without some support, any may see who takes the trouble to examine *Palæoromaica*. It would be out of place in the columns of a popular journal like the *Freethinker* to enter into disputable questions of philology mainly dealt with by that work. Suffice it to say the author points to long lists of words formed from the Latin, and of phrases, constructions and iotacisms which support the same conclusion. He contends that the barbarous words and solecisms admitted to exist in God's holy Greek word really betray their Latin origin. One point, of many, may be mentioned. In John viii., 32, Jesus says, "The truth shall make you free" (*liberos*). The Jews' reply about being Abraham's seed would be more easily intelligible if we suppose the Latin word *liberos* having the twofold meaning of "free" and "children." Of course, too much may be made of such points; and after all the admittedly Latin words and phrases, the question arises whether they might not be expected to be found in Greek documents written at a time when Roman rule extended beyond Egypt and Syria. The question is one for research, not for dogma. Father Hardouin and the author of *Palæoromaica* opened up a field of inquiry from which students should not be deterred by theological warnings. We wonder that Mr. Edward Johnson, who in his *Rise of Christendom* has gone the length of ascribing the composition of the gospels to about the thirteenth century of our era, has not directed his attention to this aspect. The recent revival by Professor J. T. Marshall of Lessing's century-old hypothesis of a common Aramaic origin of the Synoptic gospels—a theory, we believe, endorsed by Professor Sanday

—may suggest the possibility of something being said for a common Latin origin. The opinion of modern scholars that Western texts are to be preferred before Eastern ones (which is strange indeed if the New Testament is of Eastern origin) is easily explicable if it is of Latin origin.

It was not without some good reason that the Mother Church has always kept to the Latin version; held it, indeed, as the true inspired authority superior to the Greek. The Vulgate of Jerome was not so much a translation as a revision, representing not only the Greek, but the early Latin versions, which, being used by Tertullian and Cyprian, date prior to any existing Greek MSS. The oldest of these, on the admission of orthodox Christians, do not extend beyond the middle of the fourth century. Probably they are later. One of the oldest, the Codex Bezae, now at Cambridge, exhibits side by side a Greek version with Latin translation, which Tischendorf thought might be the original. In Mark, at least, there is a superior knowledge of Latin idiom, best accounted for by supposing it transcribed from a Latin version of that Gospel. It has been contended, indeed, that the more ancient a Greek MS. the greater its coincidence with the ancient Latin versions.

Even some orthodox authorities have been found to favor the theory that one at least of the Gospels, and that one generally considered to be the oldest, was written in Latin. For Mark actually explains Greek terms by Latin ones, which would be singular indeed if he wrote in Greek for Greek readers. Thus he explains the widow's mite as *quadrantes* (xii., 42), the court as the *prætorium* (xv., 16), and the preparation as the *prosabaton* (xv., 42). But there is also direct external evidence as to this gospel. At Venice they show Latin fragments said to be in the handwriting of St. Mark, which, though spurious, show the tradition. In the Peshito, the early Syriac version, which is, with the possible exception of the Italic, the oldest version known, the subscription to Mark is that it was written in Latin, at Rome; as, indeed, if it was written, as alleged by the early fathers, for the use of Roman Christians, it seems natural to suppose it would be.* The Arabic and Persic versions make the same statement. Against this testimony, which is corroborated by the testimony of several ancient Greek MSS., there is only the fact that Mark is rendered from Greek in the Vulgate of Jerome, which is a translation later than the Peshito, although Jerome himself speaks of, and used several earlier Latin versions, which the Vulgate did not completely supersede until the ninth century. When Charlemagne in 802 ordered a revision of the New Testament, Alcuin, the most learned man of the day, did this, not by reference to the Greek, but to Latin manuscripts. In favor of it, there is the fact that Mark uses many terms which, in the Greek, are merely Latin words in Greek characters—as to select instances every one will know, centurion (xv. 39), speculator (iv. 27), legion (v. 9), sextarius (vii. 4), census, denarius, quadrantes, prætorium, fragello, etc.—and that the earliest authorities, from Irenæus downward, all say it was written in Rome for the Romans. Cardinal Baronius held that Mark was written in Latin, but his contention has, for sufficient reasons, been covered up by the Latin Church.†

Mark being usually allowed to be the earliest, and

* The supposition that Paul's epistle to the Romans was originally written in Greek can only be defended on the ground that it was not meant for the Romans at all, but for certain Jews, or Jewish Christians, residing in Rome. Ordinary Romans, even if Christians, could only understand Latin. Even in Corinth, a Latin colony, Latin was spoken.

† The learned Jesuit, Father Hardouin, is the only Catholic I know who contended that the whole of the New Testament was originally written in Latin; but he took up the untenable hypothesis that the Vulgate, ascribed to Jerome, was the original. Probably a better case could be made for the old Italic version.

* See "What Language did Jesus Speak?" *Freethinker*, May 23, 1889.

in some sort the foundation of the Synoptics (though it is likely there was once in existence a gospel in the Hebrew tongue, ascribed to Matthew, probably free from such rank forgeries as Matt. xvi. 18), it is something for the reader to reflect upon that the earliest account of the Christian wonders appeared in a language the Jews could not understand a thousand miles from the scene of the alleged occurrences.

J. M. WHEELER.

MIRACLES AND THEIR DEFENDERS.

The difficulties of Christianity are as insuperable as the grave, and as numerous as the fool-population of the British Empire. It is therefore surpassingly strange that professing Christians, especially when engaged in the task of argumentatively buttressing up the falling edifice of faith, should gratuitously aid in the dissemination of "infidelity" by taking up a line of defence which only further undermines the foundations of belief and increases the existing swarm of difficulties in the way of an intelligent assent to the doctrines once delivered to the saints. But does not the Latin proverb tell us that when the gods wish to ruin a man they first make him mad?

A series of examples in illustration of this astounding folly on the part of the defenders of the faith is furnished by the vagaries, whimsicalities, and self-contradictions of certain apologists, who have tried to put the humpty-dumpty of miracles again on the wall of credibility. We propose to examine some of their futile efforts.

Take, first, the question as to the continuity of miracles. Protestants illogically contend that the miraculous stream dried up when the New Testament writers were defunct. Catholics allege it is still flowing. Why the arm of the Lord was shortened 1800 years ago no Protestant can say. On this point a recent Catholic preacher* very pertinently says: "Infidels are logical Protestants. Protestants deny all miracles after Christ's and the apostles'. The infidel says, 'Why stop there? They are equally impossible at all times.'" If Protestants reject the mediæval and modern miracles in connexion with Catholicism on historical grounds, then the Catholic can turn round and say with truth—and Froude†—that on human evidence the miracles of St. Theresa and St. Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament. In fact, the evangelical marvels stand historically on a less firm, or a more rotten, evidential basis than the crowd of patristic and mediæval miracles believed in by the partisans of Signor Pecci.

The innate "cussedness" of Christian apologists has also been displayed by the exhibition on their part of a tendency to allegorise away the miracles of the Bible. The Fall, on which our blessed religion stands, is actually watered away in this fashion by the present Bishop of London, whose tender conscience does not prevent him from sleeping as soundly as a coal-heaver after he (the Bishop, you know, not the man of toil), has drawn his £10,000 for a year's snivelling and twaddling about the atonement of Christ, which event was a fraud if the other business was—as the Bishop declares—an allegory. Professor St. George Mivart, too, has declared that he knew a Catholic theologian who maintained that the Flood was simply a local inundation, during which a priest, with his wife and family, and their cocks and hens, were saved from destruction on a raft. The same writer, after pointing out how difficult it would have been for any one in the 16th century to imagine that the Church could eventually bring the Biblical narrative of the creation of Adam, and the miraculous formation of Eve from her husband's rib, into har-

mony with a belief that the ribs of both Adam and Eve were formed by natural generation in the womb of some non-human animal, admits that we have lived to witness both these events.* In fact, the policy of Christian apologists is a policy of scuttling. The inroads of the spirit of science into the domain of supernaturalism have so harassed the ranks of orthodoxy, and so scattered its legions of lies as to extract tears of blood from the sorrowing eyes of Prof. Plumptre, who comforts us by emitting the following melancholy wail: "We cannot conceal from ourselves that there has been of late what we may call a tendency to minimise the supernatural, even on the part of professed apologists. The plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the sun and moon standing still at the command of Joshua, the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, some even of our Lord's works of healing, have been brought down to the level of unusual operations of natural law, or legendary exaggerations of usual operations."† In other words, where science has not abolished it has largely modified the old-fashioned belief. If (as is likely) the existing policy of scuttle and surrender shall continue to guide Christian apologists we may expect to hear from them before long that the holy mother was a virgin; that J. C. was a foundling benevolently nurtured by the childless carpenter and his spouse; and that the Ascension story was based on the fact that our blessed Lord went up in a balloon and unfortunately lost his way amongst the clouds.

Certain apologists may be cited who look upon some of the biblical miracles as intrinsically more worthy, or evidentially more credible, than others. Such eclecticism is certainly strange for believers in a divine revelation to exhibit. For instance, John Henry Newman actually makes *dignity* the test of credibility. He tells us that "the scriptural accounts of Eve's temptation by the serpent, of the speaking of Balaam's ass, and of the devils sent into the herd of swine, are of themselves more or less impossible, being unequal in dignity with the rest."‡ Now from the point of view of science, all miracles are equally undignified. It views them as pious opinions, not as objective facts. They answer to no external reality observed or observable, and are unthinkable in a universe where law reigns supreme and gods are warned off as trespassers. Another of these erratic apologists is the present Bishop of London, who, in his "Bampton Lectures" in 1884, explicitly tells us that no evidence can be produced to show that the miracles of the Old Testament were ever wrought.§ The explanation he affords of this woful fact is strikingly suggestive. He pleads that "the times are remote, the date and authorship of the books not established with certainty; the mixture of poetry with history no longer capable of any sure separation into its parts, and if the New Testament did not exist [concerning which we too may point out that the dates are remote, etc., *vide supra*] it would be impossible to accept the Old Testament miracles as historically true."|| But when the Bishop examines these gospel miracles he admirably succeeds in demolishing every chance of any reasonable man retaining a vestige of belief in them. He surprises us by admitting that the disciples of Christ—the men who belonged to the group out of which, as the orthodox contend, the gospel writers emerged—"had no scientific conception of a miracle, and would have often called by that name what was in reality extraordinary but not miraculous."¶ In other words, they were intellectually incompetent to record a miracle, and their testimony accordingly is worthless. If they blundered in relating one group

* *Nineteenth Century*, p. 46; July, 1887.

† *Contemporary*, Aug. 1881, p. 173.

‡ *Biblical and Eccl. Mir.*; edn. 3, p. 30. Italics ours.

§ Bishop Temple's "Bampton Lectures," 1885, p. 206.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

* Rev. Dr. Sullivan, *Evidence for the Miraculous*, p. 7; 1891.

† *Short Studies*, vol. i., p. 232; edition 1886.

of events (pseudo-miraculous), they cannot be trusted in regard to the residuum (reputedly miraculous). The Bishop, however, takes us from mere surprise to a state of utter astonishment when (on page 154) he tells us "that it is true too that, if we take each miracle by itself [which surely is the only scientific method], *there is but one miracle*, viz., our Lord's Resurrection, for which clear and unmistakeable and sufficient evidence is given." Now if an event, in itself *prima facie* incredible, related by unknown writers belonging to a period long after the period in which the miracle is dated, and marked by mutual contradictions in almost every detail, is *clear* and so forth, as the Bishop maintains, then criticism is a vain thing and common sense a delusion and a snare. It is, we repeat, astonishing to find that, when the Bible fairy-tales are episcopally boiled down to the one and only miracle of the Resurrection, it should prove such a mere ghost of a miracle—albeit a holy ghost. But when we read further on in these miraculous pages (those of the Bishop) we are made to leap from astonishment up to the giddy heights of bewilderment, for we find that this solitary ghost of a miracle is, after all, nothing but the simulacrum of a ghost—the empty shadow of a mere phantom. For proof, listen to the episcopal oracle: "It is quite possible that our Lord's Resurrection may be found hereafter to be *no miracle at all* in the scientific sense."* Here's a fine prospect for you, my Lord Bishop. If your prognostication proves correct, the flood-gates of Infidelity will be flung wide open; the landmarks of religion will be swept away; Bampton Lectures will be voted an intolerable bore; and your episcopal breeches will no longer rattle with the jingle of 5,000 sovereigns on either side of your sacred person! If the Resurrection may *possibly* be no miracle at all—if, in the words of St. Paul, Christ be not risen from the dead—then, my Lord, your preaching is vain, and your teaching vain also; not only vain, but cursedly expensive too, and, depend upon it, the people will decree that your occupation, like Othello's, be gone. Just fancy a world without a bishop! It is more awful to contemplate than a world without God!

Let God and Jesus, Beer and Bible sink,

But keep afloat the bishops and their "chink"!

When "Gawdlemitey" witnesses the efforts of the apologetic Mrs. Partingtons sweeping back the waves of scepticism and unbelief with the mop of "Christian evidences"; building up an embankment of sermons, commentaries, "refutations" and tracts against the encroachments of the ocean of science, and saying to the rising waters, "Thus far shall ye go, and no farther," he must surely feel constrained to say, as many mortals have said under circumstances similarly vexatious, "The Lord preserve me from my friends."

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

"PRAYED FOR."

The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, on a visit to a rural district, was asked to preach in a Wesleyan chapel. The proceedings were opened by an extempore prayer from one of the deacons, who, in the course of his remarks, delivered himself to the following effect:—"O Lord, we pray Thee to bless our servant who is about to address us, and also his family. O Lord, Thou knowest who is meant; it is the Rev. Guy Fawkes." A few years ago one of the Nonconformist bodies opened a mission room at Harborne, near Birmingham, for service on Wednesday evenings. Shortly after, the person conducting the service in the chapel at Birmingham prayed as follows:—"Lord, we thank Thee that Thou hast enabled us to open a room for Thy worship at Harborne, on a Wednesday night. Lord, prosper Thy work. It is pain and grief to me not to be there; but, Lord, Thou knowest that I have to go and get shaved on that night, or else I should be there."

* *Ibid.*, p. 196. Italics ours.

THE CAT IS OUT.—II.

CANON DRIVER, at the end of his first chapter on the Growth of the Canon, fully justifies Thomas Paine's *internal* method of criticising the Bible. "The age and authorship of the books of the Old Testament," he says, "can be determined (so far as this is possible) only upon the basis of the internal evidence supplied by the books themselves, by methods such as those employed in the present volume: no external evidence worthy of credit exists." Even the opinion so often advanced that the Old Testament canon was closed by Ezra, or in Ezra's time, has "no foundation in antiquity whatever." It is not even a tradition; it is only a conjecture, and a false one too, for some of the books are centuries later than the age of Ezra. The books of the Old Testament are gone through systematically, one by one, in Canon Driver's volume. He begins with Genesis, but he is very far from allowing that this is the first in the order of time. It is not even the production of one writer. "As soon as the book is studied with sufficient attention," he says, "phenomena disclose themselves which show incontrovertibly that it is composed of distinct documents or sources, which have been welded together by a later compiler or redactor into a continuous whole." The two stories of creation in the first two chapters cannot possibly be the work of the same hand. The Elohist and Jehovist portions are distinct throughout the book. The Priest's Code, which is found in various parts of the Pentateuch, and especially in Deuteronomy, was probably compiled in the time of Manasseh, more than eight hundred years after the time of Moses. The whole Hexateuch (Genesis to Joshua inclusive) embodies ancient elements, but its actual authorship belongs "approximately to the period of the Babylonish captivity."

This practically settles the origin of the Creation and Flood stories. They were utterly unknown to the early prophets, or to the first chroniclers of the reigns of the early kings of Israel. Whence then were they derived? The only satisfactory answer is from Babylon and Persia. Long before the Hexateuch was written the myths of Genesis flourished among those two great nations, the conquerors and masters of the Jews, who imparted to them mythological ideas that go back into the vast obscurity of pre-historic times.

The so-called Law of Moses, which first appears about the time of the Captivity, was in no sense the work of Moses. It was concocted by the Jewish priests and fathered upon him. Canon Driver admits this, but he contends that it was not "forgery." It was a common practice among ancient historians to put discourses into the mouths of heroes and statesmen; and the authors of the Hexateuch, in framing discourses for Moses, were "doing nothing inconsistent with the literary usages" of their age and nation. The same defence of this misleading practice is made by the editor of *Lux Mundi*. According to the Rev. C. Gore, the Law of Moses grew up under the fostering care of the Jewish priests, who ascribed to him their own production; but they did this "probably unconsciously, and certainly not from any intention to deceive." As a matter of fact, however, it has deceived Jews and Christians alike, and it still deceives the vast majority of believers. No wonder that Mr. Gladstone objects to accepting this sort of "progressive revelation." "There are persons," he says, "who think that such a progressive revelation as this would for over two thousand years have palmed upon the whole Jewish and Christian world a heartless imposture." For our part, we accept Canon Driver's facts, for they are beyond dispute; and we accept Mr. Gladstone's description of them, for it is the plain verdict of honesty and common sense.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

MYSTICISM AND MYTHOLOGY.

In an age, like the present, given to the study of the mystical, much is read and more is written than from any other and less enthusiastic generation would have earned but very scant welcome. A slight contribution therefore which, without pretending to be of superior quality, shall nevertheless sin less in respect of quantity, may, it is hoped, "pass in the crowd."

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This opening sentence of one of the few books that have deservedly survived the ruin of ages is the fundamental axiom of the great religions of modern civilisation. There are no subordinate deities, no impersonations of good and bad qualities, no ghosts—one God, one central moving and creative force, has, to all appearances, satisfied the craving for dependence so characteristic of us weak mortals. This wish to worship and fear remains indeed; but the reasoning tendencies of modern times have abolished in the West most of the old myths and mysteries that lent so much picturesqueness to the faith of the Norsemen, and still clothe with much that is poetic and ingenious the great cults of the East. The origin of Mythology will ever be a disputed point, and there are indeed several distinct theories in connection with it, most of which are plausible on one account or another.

The first of these, that of the famous Sicilian Atheist Euhemerus, may be called the heroic theory, and considered that all the gods had once been men, deified in the ordinary manner after death. Closely allied with this is the theory of Mr. Herbert Spencer, who, however, takes the origin of mythology back to a far earlier and simpler stage in the development of the human intellect—back to the worship of deceased ancestors. He repudiates the philological theory, following which Max Müller described the growth of mythology as a "disease of language"; and shows that many nations possess a mythology whose language has no grammatical gender; apparently ignoring the possibility of such nations having borrowed their mythology from other sources. Equally emphatically does Mr. Spencer deny the existing notions concerning the savage mind—the supposed inquisitiveness regarding the causes of the phenomena of nature, the superstitious terror during a storm, etc. Perfect stolidity is his idea of the savage breast. But the belief in ghosts arises from disbelief in the death of the body, and from the illusion produced by such every-day phenomena as one's own shadow, reflection in a pool, dreams, etc. For us sceptical and matter-of-fact individuals of nineteenth century civilisation these things have no existence or significance whatever. But cannot a savage be pardoned if he attribute to so real an illusion as his own reflection in a mirror an existence apart from that which is under certain conditions visible to himself, when highly intellectual men, now professing the doctrine of unconscious mental modification, attribute a like immortality to ideas and thoughts!

Again, the savage only looks upon death as a trance, and accordingly buries his dead with food and weapons—nay, even goes so far at times as to slay a few wives or slaves, whose bodies are laid conveniently near his own, that he may reach the happy hunting-grounds with a retinue befitting a fallen brave. Taking into consideration the millions of deaths that have taken place every few years, the savage naturally pictures the world of the dead—the world of ghosts—as infinitely more thickly populated than his own; hence the wind, hail, lightning, earthquakes, are all actions of the volitional myriads.

Of similar nature are the various mystic periods in the history of the Western world, which have been due for the most part to the influence of the East. Thus, Pythagoras owed his doctrine to Egypt, while Plato was in turn indebted to Pythagoras. In the Scholastic school we have Tauler and Spinoza; and the Rosi-

crucians were followed by the 18th century revival under Schlegel and Kant. Aversion to the life of the senses is the chief characteristic of the mystics—an aversion half intellectual, half moral. All mystics are more or less ascetics; scarcely, however, belonging to that class of asceticism that requires not merely self-denial, but also mortification of the flesh, after the custom of the Adamites and Flagellants of the Middle Ages; nor exactly perhaps to that more convenient asceticism, in obedience to which that great and good man Sancho Panza used to flog a long-suffering and indifferent fir-tree instead of his own back.

Two more theories of the origin of mythology deserve our consideration, and then we will return to the more modern mystics.

The first of these, the Fetishistic theory, is exhaustively treated in Hume's *Natural History of Religion*, but derived its name, I believe, from Auguste Comte. It endeavors to explain the rise of mythology by the tendency of the savage to invest inanimate objects with life, attributing to them at the same time his own qualities and feeling. Comte considers that proper distinction between animate and inanimate objects was the first step in the development of culture; the next stage he calls the metaphysical, succeeded in turn by the modern or "positive" stage of thought.

The other theory, the allegoric, is less plausible than at first appears, accounting for comparatively few of the ancient deities, and not applying at all to the numerous spirits, nymphs and dryads, with which the imagination of primitive man peopled every wood, lake and stream.

Men believe to a great extent what they like to believe rather than what is easy to believe: an all-protecting Father, a pleasant place of sojourn after this world has done with us, which future state is apparently to be reached by means of a species of competitive examination in morals and devotion; a correspondingly uncomfortable situation, whither one can on occasion mentally consign one's enemies. To these simple matters western churches now generally consent to limit themselves; and even one Eastern race was content with the first two, discarding, like M. Voltaire, the unpleasant part of it. Much of this simplicity of modern faith is due to the great progress made by science. Now that men know the cause of thunderstorms, they no longer babble about the contests of the gods: Vesuvius is no longer the forge of Vulcan, nor does an earthquake denote any ill-humor on the part of Thundering Jove! For some religions, the whole system of nature is still, however, in the hands of a costly throng of artistic treasures of gold and precious stones. Somewhat diminished, these mortal gods, by successive deprivations of European redcoats!

One fact with regard to the mythologies of all nations appears to me to argue strongly in favor of the allegoric theory. It is the great similarity existing between them all: not a god of ancient Greece or Rome but had his equivalent in the pestilent jungles of India, in the sandy plains of Egypt, or among the snowy mountains and wild fiords of northern Europe. This would lead us to suppose them different equivalents for the same abstractions. But another generalisation points still more strongly to Euhemerism, or the heroic theory already mentioned.

This is the resemblance that exists in every case between the gods and their worshippers. Not only were they always represented in human form, but they actually varied with different races and climates. Thus the constant occupation of Buddha was to sit for untold ages contemplating his navel, which cannot be termed inappropriate occupation for anyone, even a deity, living in a temperature of more than a hundred degrees—whereas Thor and Freja saved themselves from the piercing northern blasts by the healthy exercises of hammering and chariot racing. But few warlike gods have ever found a place in Bengalee worship—not a deity of Greece and Rome but was ever at war: Odin was an out-and-out Viking, and Mars a

good Roman, while no one will deny the appropriateness of Hermes as the special object of Hellenic reverence!

The entire signification of mythology is as symbolical as was the world in the opinion of Bishop Berkeley. Its most pernicious influence was that which, in direct opposition to the teachings of evolution, robbed mankind of its own freewill and independence; and, as a species of original exposition of predestination, made it act rightly or wrongly in obedience to the supernatural. Modern creeds endeavor, to some extent, to evade the difficulty by representing man as a free agent, subject, however, to reward or punishment in a future state. But this seems at best a weak position, since men are apparently only to act well in the hope of a crown of glory, and to avoid evil from fear of a bed of thorns! Heroes were a connecting link between gods and men. By a life of bravery (or bloodshed!) men could arrive at a kind of intermediate state, apparently hereditary. The Christian goes to a spiritual heaven; the Indian brave crowns a life of valiant deeds with a blissful immortality of hunting perpetual buffaloes; but the old Norsemen and Romans improved upon this, and I believe the heroes in Walhalla or Olympus could at pleasure revisit this earth in bodily shape; their children, too, were immortal if born of goddesses, though mortal if born of mortal mothers.

Equally agreeable is the appropriateness of the future state in all these systems, which offers marked contrast to the arrangements of our modern churches. The good Indian went after death to hunt eternal buffaloes over boundless prairies; the valiant Viking left this world of tribulation to quaff endless stoups of wine from the skulls of his enemies—(by the way, tradition does not tell us what the unfortunate enemies were doing while their skulls were thus in request!) Why, then, should the Christian and Jew plan out so uncongenial an eternity as a halo and harpsichord? Why not a perpetual Exeter Hall or an everlasting Stock Exchange?

There is no doubt that the modern development of mysticism is at all events partially due to its affinity with asceticism. The life of the senses is that of present temptation: sensual pleasures, as long as they are enjoyed in moderation, are hardly culpable; but any excess may at once render them revolting, hence the great increase among ascetic mystics. The world of the senses becomes with the mystics a world of symbols. The love of everything symbolical and mystic has generally emanated from the East; but our own literature has been considerably enriched by Law, Bishop Berkeley, and the late Professor Maurice. The shocking failures of some of the early Greek philosophers to discover any truth about natural phenomena led them, especially Socrates, to abandon this research as frowned on by the gods.

But the mystics ignore the ordinary methods of seeking the truth. Following Plotinus they have an original method called "intuition," which consists in learning the truth while in a swoon. They seem, however, to be almost entirely controlled as to their speculation by the emotions; and Voltaire's disbelief in an unpleasant Prince of Darkness was worthy of some modern mystics. It is not to be supposed that the dignity of ascetic mystics has always been arrogant: their chief opponents, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, the Mills, and Bentham, have all shown us its frequent weakness.

Truth is surely a matter of the intellect and not of the feelings, and we are not all convinced by any means of the soundness of a system, the followers of which can only see the truth when in an abnormal condition of body and mind, though, to be sure, so many of us poor humans would be grateful for a glimpse of it even under such trying conditions.

F. J. AFLALO.

Who was the Prodigal Son?—The young man who went away a miser and came back a tramp.

ACID DROPS.

That fine old ecclesiastical spider, Cardinal Manning, joins in the little symposium of the *Review of the Churches*. He is good enough to throw out life-belts to the Protestants of all sorts, from the Church of England to Secularists, who are struggling outside the Catholic ship in the waters of perdition. "None are responsible," he says, "for dying *inculpably* out of the visible body of the Church." "They only are culpable," he adds, "who knowingly and willingly reject its divine voice when sufficiently known to them."

This is a most convenient doctrine for the Church. When those who reject her claims are strong and numerous she only deplores their obstinacy, and is charitable enough to hope they will be pardoned (say after 10,000 years in purgatory) on account of their invincible ignorance. But when they are few and weak she finds that their obstinacy is wilful, and burns it out of them for the glory of God.

Now that the pulpit is patronising the working man, and spouting so freely about the Carpenter's Son being the best friend of labor, it is instructive to see the list in the *Star of Christian journals* printed in "rat houses." The list is a long one, and includes most of the noisy friends of labor in the ranks of pious journalism. On the other hand, Freethought papers are all printed where Trade Union rules and good wages prevail. After all, it is better to do the right thing yourself than to recommend it to other people with the airs of a Pharisee.

Last year English Christians spent on foreign missions not less than £1,301,579. The sum speaks as loudly for their folly as for their generosity. Such a sum devoted to good secular work at home should have been attended by beneficent results, which, in the case of foreign mission, are only conspicuous by their absence.

Apropos of an account in the *Echo* of a Yorkshire village of which nothing is left but the church and the parson, a correspondent mentions a Kentish village, near Deal, where the church has departed, leaving, however, the empty churchyard, the parson, four farmers, and about 20 laborers, the latter having to earn, over and above their very scanty wages, some £400 to pay the parson for preaching once or twice a year under the lych-gate. Over the latter is inscribed the very characteristic motto, "Holy to the Lord," which the poor laborers often, with gruesome countenances, are in the habit of reading, "Wholly to the parson."

The pious editor of the *Oswestry Commercial Circular* says: "For several weeks past some of the walls of the town have been placarded with the announcement of a certain 'Freethought' publication of a very pronounced character. We sincerely hope none of our townsmen are parties to this 'Secularist' invasion; if so, they incur a very serious responsibility. God knows, the young people of our town are corrupt enough without the introduction of the empoisoned teaching of 'Secularism.'" Religion, with the assistance of the pious commercial man of the *Circular*, having failed, is a good reason for Freethought having a show.

George Kennan, the famed Russian traveller, says: "The Czar of Russia is a well-meaning man, but his judgment is bad, having been narrowed by his advisers. He believes that he is divinely appointed to persecute the Hebrews for having crucified the Savior, and that he is only fulfilling the commands in the scripture by so doing."

Kennan says, "The Czar's chief minister, Pobedonostsef, is a good representative of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, and the Czar's conduct towards the Hebrews is mainly inspired by this cruel man. The Czar and his ministers were in a railroad wreck several years ago, and, although their car was totally demolished, everyone escaped unhurt, and this escape the Czar looked upon as a divine intervention of providence that he might continue to pursue the men who killed his father."

The performances of Mrs. Annie Abbot, "the magnet lady," which were hailed in America as a proof of spirit power, and widely advertised here as revealing a new force, are declared by a *Star* man to be solely due to trickery. It is all a matter

of mechanical balance and has nothing to do with magnetism. He asserts that "anyone with a little practice may produce much the same results as Mrs. Abbott, if not exactly the same appearance."

Mrs. Besant is stated to have started suddenly for America to settle a difference which has arisen there between the Theosophists and brother W. Q. Judge, a gentleman who testified to Madame Blavatsky's supernormal powers, and threatened an action for libel against Prof. Coues, formerly president of the Washington Theosophical Society, who accused brother Judge of fraudulent practices. The apple of discord appears even among the apostles of universal brotherhood.

The Rev. O. Mitchell, a member of the London School Board, speaking at a meeting in Peckham, said that the tendency of the Board education was in the direction of infidelity—which, if true, is remarkably good news. The indignant man of God also declared that the Board "actually allowed one of its officials to write blasphemous pamphlets and deliver atheistical lectures." We presume this refers to Mr. A. B. Moss, who isn't likely to leave off for all the Mitchells or other men of God in the metropolis, or, for the matter of that, in creation.

Mr. Greeves Fisher, of Leeds, is standing for the School Board. But his candidature is a little farcical when he declares that his object is to destroy public education. This, however, does not excuse the foul and foolish attack upon him in the *Leeds Times*. According to a leading article in that journal his Malthusian views render him unfit to sit on the School Board, and he is taunted with being only friendly to education of "the sort which might have won the adherence of Mr. Tom Paine." It does not occur to this ill-tempered scribe, and perhaps he does not know, that Mr. Tom Paine was a well-educated man and a writer of beautiful English.

The divine Bible institution of polygamy is now finally abolished by the President of the Mormons. The civilisation of the United States is stronger than the authority of Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Solomon, with Jehovah thrown into the bargain.

Woodruff, the Mormon president, came to the conclusion to abolish polygamy after earnest prayer before the Lord. Like the ministers, he found the Lord called in the direction of his own interest. When pressure was put on Father Noyes to break up the Freelove Bible Community at Oneida, he besought the Lord and re-studied the seventh chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which was one of the foundations of his previous doctrine.

The Jesuit Father Buhr has been defending the Pope in the matter of Napoleon's divorce from Josephine, but he only does so at the expense of the Archbishop of Paris and the other ecclesiastical authorities who proclaimed Napoleon's first marriage to be invalid because it was celebrated without any religious ceremony.

The *Church Times*, in its answers to correspondents, says: "Lack of baptism is a disqualification for Christian marriage, and since the registrar's office is open to the parties desiring to be married, they could have no genuine cause of grievance in case of refusal by the priest to marry them in church. At the same time, it must be remembered that there has been no judicial decision on the point raised, and we merely express an opinion."

Some Radical member of the Bermondsey Vestry should see to the case of E. Kelsey. She was engaged for several months at the Bermondsey Workhouse, and not the slightest fault was found with her. One day, however, in the mess room, the conversation turned on religion, and she was asked what denomination she belonged to. Incautiously, perhaps, considering the malice of bigotry, she replied that she was an Atheist. Thereupon the others declared that they would not sit at the same table with an Atheist, and the head matron told her to find work among people of her own persuasion.

A clergyman named Foster committed suicide at Smedley Hydropathic Establishment, Matlock Bath, by jumping over the banisters on to the ground floor, a distance of 89 feet.

A popular minister of Geelong made a scene by offering in the pulpit to cut his right arm off with a carving knife. The ladies fainted, and when the men took the minister home it was found that he was "seriously indisposed."

Jealousy inflames the female heart, and probably the male heart too, even when the head is covered with a demure Salvation bonnet. Nettie Biedler shot Captain Hattie Smith at an Omaha meeting to welcome one of Booth's daughters. Then the murderess blew out her own brains. There was a man in the case, but it wasn't J. C.

Kenneth Mackenzie, in his *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia*, p. 340, gives the following rough computation of deaths through religious intolerance.

Holy wars	...	...	17,600,000
Holy Inquisition	...	...	5,000,000
Religious massacres	...	...	3,000,000
Various: burning, boiling, roasting, frying, drowning, beheading, stabbing, hanging, poisoning, crucifixion			500,000
			<hr/>
Hindu religion: murders and suicides			26,100,000
Old Testament murders and wars	...	...	18,500,000
			643,775
			<hr/>
Grand Total			45,243,775

The Rev. W. S. P. Skelding, vicar of Hoylake, Cheshire, has disappeared, leaving a letter to his parishioners, stating that, owing to circumstances which he cannot explain, he has placed his resignation in the hands of the bishop.

The Rev. H. W. George, of the Dutch Reformed Church, has been sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment for manslaughter. His crime consisted in causing an operation to be performed on Miss Louisa Townsend, a young girl who lived with him as his adopted daughter.

Another case of religious mania manifested itself last Sunday at St. Mary's, Kennington-park-road, where a regular attendant suddenly jumped up and began to shout and gesticulate violently. The poor young man, who had received too strong a dose of religion, was removed to Lambeth Infirmary.

The oath difficulty cropped up at Port Elizabeth, Cape of Good Hope, on Oct. 15. When Samuel Euchre was charged with stealing from Ah Foo Ching, a Chinese shopkeeper, the magistrate asked the prosecutor if he believed in God or Christ, which only elicited an expression of profound ignorance as to the existence of any such persons. Ching, however, professed belief in a joss, and the colonial government, not having provided any saucers wherewith to swear Chinamen, was duly made to slobber the Clistian bookee.

According to a religious tract which is distributed in Sunday-schools at Bow, in the east of London, it appears that "Youthful Hindoos are taught to torment themselves, that they may gain the favor of their idols." Well, what of that? Are not English boys taught to do the same, as far as our civilisation permits? Are they not taught, for instance, to deny themselves all legitimate pleasures on Sunday, or the Lord's Day? And is not this a sacrifice to the "idol" of the Christian faith?

War on Capital is the title of a threepenny pamphlet published by W. Reeves. The author is a Bible crank, who holds that since the word *Euporia* makes 666, capital is the predicted anti-Christ, and every one who dies a capitalist "dies damned." "You see, friends," he adds, "in fighting against capital, we are fighting for capitalists, as well as for ourselves. It is only by destroying capital that their souls can be saved, any more than ours."

The same crank gives his name, E. L. Garbett, as author of another pamphlet, entitled *Huxley's Mendacity and the Bible, and Darwin's Veracity on the Effects of Noah's Flood*, the title of which will be sufficient for most people.

At the close of the Ecumenical Methodist Conference at Washington, Bishop Keener said: "Go home; get rid of this doctrine of evolution that puts a bomb at the bottom of the Pentateuch and Moses that will blow you up if you don't get

rid of it. If you can't get rid of the doctrine, get rid of the men and the institutions that teach it, no matter how dear they are to you. They will blow you up if you don't."

A theory has been put forward that the Russian influenza, which seems to have taken up permanent quarters in Europe, originated from the foul air generated in Russian churches.

Is Christianity a failure? is still a theme of discussion in a contemporary. No one has yet introduced the rude old joke that it was any way founded on a miss-conception.

Canon MacColl, lecturing at Ripon, declared that "Islam and civilisation are eternally irreconcilable." This was a bold statement to make in face of the triumphs of art of the Kalifs of Bagdad and of the Moors of Spain. Dr. Draper held a very different opinion, and in his *Intellectual Development of Europe*, ascribes most of so-called Christian civilisation to the influence of Mohammedanism. It is their firm belief in the sovereignty of God, a doctrine they hold in common with, but more rigidly than Christians, which tends to repress progress among the Moslems.

The Mohammedans of India are much enraged at the Czar of Russia for his having ordered thirteen verses to be expunged from the Koran. The Czar wants all his subjects to be of the orthodox faith.

Could anything be more absurd than the usurpation of the Customs Department in the colony of Victoria? Its proper duty is simply to levy the taxes on imports, but it also undertakes on its own account to decide what the Victorians should read—and the joke of it is, the Victorians put up with this ridiculous censorship. Freethought works have often been confiscated, and now we read that a big consignment of Zola's works have been served in the same way.

All over the world it may be seen that "the supineness of the people is always inviting the insolence of power." Appoint a public servant, pay him his wages regularly, and dress him in uniform, and he soon looks upon himself as master, and orders about his employers with the most delightful impudence.

It is reported that Dr. Coit is going to leave South Place Chapel. He is apparently tired of reading an essay once a week to a dilettante congregation, and wants to go where he can help to carry out his ideas as well as putting them on paper. At South Place Chapel he is a sort of weekly entertainer. The rules forbid the "minister" to take part in any of the chapel work or to sit on any committee; an intolerable position for a man with any self-respect.

The *Hospital*, a medical paper, gives the following recipe for Theosophy: "Take of conveyed Christianity, 2 parts; Asiatic mysticism, 2 parts; crude metaphysics, 1½ parts; pure twaddle, 94½ parts; 100. Mix thoroughly in a brass mortar with a brass pestle, and evaporate. The resulting vapor will be a Besanto-Olcottian Theosophy."

The *Church Times* makes something like a confession that Christianity is allied to sun-worship. It says: "We bow not to the cross, nor to any material thing, but towards the altar, which symbolises the East as the seat of Christ's glory in the heavens." If Christ is not the sun, why should the East be specially assigned as the seat of his glory?

The *Church Times*, in an article on the coming School Board election, says: "The absurdity of trusting to the Sunday-school to make up for the lack of day-school religious education may be illustrated by pointing out that in secular Birmingham no less than 30,000 children never enter a Sunday-school." It concludes: "If men want a race of infidels, let them establish universal Board schools without definite religious teaching."

The Bishop of Wakefield seems to be a half-and-half convert to Darwinism. Lecturing at Osett, he said: "If they allowed the evolution theory to be right it did not disprove scripture history, but only showed us that the Creator had a wonderful way of working out his will." A tentative process which crushes out a million to preserve one is a wonderful way indeed. The bishop did not explain how the scripture story of Eve being made from Adam's rib fitted in with evolution.

"A.B.G.," writing in *Notes and Queries*, points out that the Bible dictionaries have nothing on the Zodiac, though there is much about it in the Bible. He says it was seen by Joseph in his dream. Jacob referred to the signs in blessing the patriarchs. Moses made use of them in blessing the tribes. The symbols were on the banners of the tribes; and, according to Josephus, engraved on the twelve stones. Even the cherubim were taken from the constellations Leo, Taurus, Aquarius, and Aquila. Thus far, "A.B.G.," it is easy to see the orthodox don't care to point out evidences of astronomical faith in their religion.

It is reported that the native clergy of the West Coast of Africa have revolted against the Church Missionary Society, and Archdeacon Hamilton and the Rev. W. Allan are to be sent out as a deputation to try and quell the mutiny.

"Mathetes" assures us in the *Kensington News* that God can do no wrong. He has been making great havoc in his recent gales. If anyone else destroyed so much property and so many lives, recklessly and without any apparent reason, he would be deemed a monster, but we must take "Mathetes" word for it that everything God does is praiseworthy.

Prince Krapotkin declares that if full correct accounts could be had of the terrible famine in East and South-east Russia, the world would know that the Russian nation is passing through a period of calamity which has had no precedent in history.

The Friends' Meeting House, High-street, Deptford, announces a lecture by "Mr. J. Marchant, a converted Atheist." Evidently the lecturer and his friends know his chief qualification. But what a farce it is after all. "A Converted Christian" might be put after the name of nearly every lecturer on the Secular platform. Such folly, however, is wisely left to the sheep in the penfold of faith.

The Wesleyans boast of having converted Fiji, but a new Messiah has arisen there who unites Bible prophecies with old native superstitions. The new Messiah runs on quite the old lines. His followers have only to give up their present possessions, and he will bring a high old time, and they will have a hundredfold what they have given up, including the wives of their enemies.

By the way, whatever did Jesus mean when he said, as reported in Matt. xiv., 29, that everyone who had forsaken houses, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, should receive a hundredfold. If this had appeared in the Koran, all good Christians would have seen a sign that Mohammed and his followers wanted a hundred wives apiece.

Christians are almost ready to go to war if missionaries who proclaim heathen religions to be false are insulted by the heathen. But when English Mohammedans establish a mosque at Liverpool they find they cannot enter into the streets (not to make a noisy demonstration like the Salvationists, but to go out on their ordinary business) without risk of being stoned.

The Rev. W. J. Williams, vicar of Butterton, near Leek, thinks getting in one's crops on a Sunday can only "give satisfaction to those who wish to convert God's decalogue into a monologue with a view to its ultimate destruction." "Freethinker" gives him a smart drubbing in the *Leek Times*, and reminds him that Bishop Wilberforce looked on and said nothing while Prince Albert played "Sabbath Chess."

"General" Booth is setting up extensive piggeries at his Hadleigh Farm Colony. It will be very awkward if J. C. passes that way when the pigs are there. The "General" had better hang out a notice:—"To all saviors and miracle workers. N.B. This is not Gadara."

"Jack's too religious for me," replied Joseph Jefferson, when asked his opinion of a well-known English actor. As no one has ever heard the Jack in question talk about religion, it was questioned whether he had religion. "Oh, yes he has," said Jefferson. "Remember, he's a self-made man, and he's perpetually adoring his creator."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 22, Exchange Hall, Wolverhampton; at 11, "The Tree of Knowledge"; at 3, "The Way to Heaven"; at 7, "Mr. Gladstone's Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

November 29, Grimsby.

December 6, Hall of Science; 13, Manchester; 14, Blackburn; 20, Nottingham; 27, Hall of Science.

January 3, Birmingham; 10, Bolton; 17, Newcastle Sunday Lecture Society; 24 and 31, Hall of Science.

February 7, Bradford; 14, Leeds; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

March 6, Merthyr.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—November 22, Portsmouth; 29, Leeds. December 6, Bolton; 7 and 8, Blackburn; 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; 14 and 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Birmingham. April 4, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

T. PHILLIPS.—We share your high opinion of Mr. Dawson. You must have been very sanguine to expect the vicar would debate. Your suggestion shall be considered.

S. G. MIDDLETON.—It is high time that the Birmingham folk began to see what they can do to assist Mr. Watts financially. We are pleased to hear they are at length awake to their duty, and we gladly note that collecting sheets for the Fund may be obtained of Mr. J. Partridge, the secretary, or of Mr. Watts.

HANLEY BRANCH.—If your lecture notices are not posted to 14 Clerkenwell-green you must take the responsibility for their omission.

W. JOICE.—Thank you for the tract, but we can supply you with any quantity of the same at sixpence a hundred. We have had it in circulation for years as "The Parson's Creed."

A. IDLE.—See paragraph.

F. A. DAVIES.—Send future announcements under the head of Lecture Notices.

H. B. PRICE.—Sorry we cannot assist.

F. ATTWOOD.—Treated in another way. See "Acid Drops."

J. P. CHACE.—We eschew politics in the *Freethinker*. The Cork election was only referred to because of the action of the priests. Sorry to decline your well written letter.

M. HAMILTON.—Always glad to receive good jokes.

R. MORGAN.—Thanks. Contents-sheet shall be forwarded.

R. DOWDING, 4 Hope Villas, Capworth-street, Leyton, will distribute any Freethought literature, periodicals or pamphlets, that may be sent to him for the purpose.

J. G. FISHER.—Can't send receipts for oighteenpenny advertisements. All we guarantee is insertion.

P. W. BALDWIN.—Shall appear.

W. S. TAYLOR.—We don't think Mr. Moss's *Bible and Evolution* is published in fancy bindings. You could buy the shilling edition and bind it to your taste.

R. KILLICK.—Thanks. See paragraph.

F. GILMAN.—Statistics are issued regularly by the Labor Bureau. Montgredien's *Wealth Creation* is a good book at the price. Vital statistics are issued regularly by the Registrar General.

E. ROBERTS.—Thanks for exhibiting contents-sheet and otherwise promoting our circulation. With regard to the incident, see paragraph.

W. H. FISHER.—Your photo-engraving of Mr. Charles Watts is very excellent.

W. HOLLAND.—It means—Church of St. Mary of the Angels, Saint Bruno.

J. STERRY.—See the top of our ninth page, first column, for the Wolverhampton address.

R. LANGLEY.—"Suppose my religion should be true" might be said to Christians by the devotees of all other religions. The only safe way, in that case, is to believe *everything*—if you can! We advise you to follow your own intellect, and if there be a God he can hardly be so foolish as to punish you for trying to be sensible.

A. PALMER, newsagent, 12 West Hill, Wandsworth, sells the *Freethinker*, and will display a contents-sheet. Also sells other Secular literature when ordered.

J. DAVIS.—We cannot interfere further in East Lambeth. If Mr. Gibbon goes in for Bible reading in schools we do not see what special claim he has on the support of Freethinkers. There is nothing sacred in the "Progressive" shibboleth. On the other hand, if Mr. Cooper has not a ghost of a chance, as you say, the local Freethinkers must decide for themselves whether they will waste their votes or give them to the best and most likely candidates in the circumstances.

A curious situation has been created by negligence or cross-purposes, and it is too late for any useful action on our part. E. LARKIN.—Your different notices must be written on separate pieces of paper. We cannot undertake to copy them out.

BROWN MEMORIAL.—E. Larkin, Ball's Pond Branch, acknowledges the following:—Mr. Crisp, 10s.; G. Turner, 5s.; E. Turner, 5s.; W. W. Roberts, 2s.; W. Symons, 1s.; F. Gardiner, 1s.; G. Ebbelwhite, 1s.; A. Guest, 1s.; J. Pearson, 1s.; E. Larkin, 1s. 6d. Total, £1 8s. 6d.

Mrs. BOON, 115 London-wall, Moorgate-street, E.C., sells a goodly number of the *Freethinker*, although she cannot display a contents-sheet, as she does a large business in religious publications. Christians are still apt to feel malicious when they see a *Freethinker* bill.

I. J. COCKS.—Year's subscription handed to Mr. Forder and balance disposed of as requested. The author of *Supernatural Religion* is reputed to be Mr. Cassels, a relative of the late Dr. Pusey. He has not published anything else to our knowledge, except two volumes of poems and his reply to Dr. Lightfoot.

W. H. GREGORY.—Certainly the reverend gentleman showed a lack of courage, but we don't like dealing with such cases unless they are first published elsewhere. The other matter is in abeyance; it will have to be dealt with at the proper time.

FRANK FEARSON, 262 Camberwell-road, S.E. (opposite New Church-road), sells the *Freethinker*, a local Secularist having guaranteed six copies weekly.

M. HAMILTON.—Cuttings always welcome. See paragraph. ENEMY TO HUMBAG.—Glad to hear that you have succeeded, after many fruitless attempts, in getting a newsagent to sell the *Freethinker* and display a contents-sheet. The latter shall be posted weekly if you will send us the newsagent's address.

ANXIOUS.—Mr. Forder is the only candidate in the Finsbury division who goes in for *secular* education pure and simple. He should therefore have the individual support of every Freethinker. "Plump for Forder" is the proper cry.

J. E. SMITH.—Pleased to hear of your good meetings at Rushden.

J. TULLIN.—The fallacy is the reversing of a universal proposition. Stating that rational creatures *are* accountable may be meant to imply that irrational creatures *are not*, but logically the two propositions are not identical.

W. SOWDEN.—It did not reach us.

F. W. C. B.—The address is sufficient.

R. DAVIS.—We are glad to hear that the Cardiff Branch is after all not in such a desperate condition. Mr. Foote will try to visit Cardiff when he goes to Merthyr.

AMICUS.—The dozen copies of the *Freethinker* have been forwarded to the given addresses. Thanks. Of course it is seldom possible to give great space to such a local matter.

J. PARKS.—Mr. Foote could not possibly stand for the School Board. He has too much to do at present. The interests of the Secular party require very careful nursing, and for a considerable time the President will have little leisure for other pursuits. He puts Freethought before all else, and thinks that the Secular party has the first claim on his attention.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Watts's Literary Guide—Port Elizabeth Telegraph—Echo—Hull Critic—Weekly Bulletin—Daily Chronicle—Dewsbury Reporter—Good News—Leek Times—Mirfield Reporter—Modern Thought—Sacred Melodist—Leeds Mercury—South London Press—Oswestry Commercial Circular—Boomerang—Progressive Thinker—Better Way—Christian News—Grimsby News—Nottingham Daily Express—Spennymoor Chronicle—Open Court—Dageraad—Secular Thought—Kensington News—Midland Weekly Herald—Sunday Chronicle—Sheffield Independent—Weekly Dispatch—Yorkshire Post.

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.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

We venture once more to call the attention of our readers to the *Freethinker* as a good advertising medium. Many papers subsist on advertisements, without having a half or a quarter of our circulation; and the reason why we get so few is simply the general prejudice against Freethought journals. Those who have not tried the experiment are invited to do so. This journal, it should be borne in mind, is not glanced at and cast aside; it is read carefully and is often preserved, and its advertisements are sure to be noticed.

Mr. Foote lectured in the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday. There was a good meeting in the afternoon to hear his exposure of the Follies of Theosophy. Mr. Sydney Gimson took the chair and invited discussion, but nobody had a word to say in defence of Mrs. Besant's superstition. In the evening, despite the rain, the hall was crowded in every corner, including the platform, Mr. Thomas Slater occupying the chair. The lecture on "Why I am an Atheist" was evidently relished by the audience. At both meetings there was a good sale of literature; no less than thirteen dozen copies of the *Freethinker* were disposed of.

We are glad to hear that the Leicester Secular Society has nearly raised that Guarantee Fund of £500. Only £25 is now wanting. The amount is in the hands of three trustees, who mean to invest it in a good mortgage. It is calculated that £100 can be drawn six years running after 1892, with a small balance still left over. This will give the Society time to mature plans for a more distant future.

Mr. Foote's second Thursday night lecture on Theosophy was better attended than the first. The third and last lecture deals with the practical and ethical side of Theosophy, and should be specially interesting.

The Thursday night meetings at the London Hall of Science will be continued, at least throughout the winter. They promise to become a regular institution. Next Thursday (Nov. 26) there will be a social gathering instead of a lecture. Dancing will go on in the large hall and a concert in the minor hall. During the evening Mr. Foote will present Mr. Forder with an illuminated address on behalf of the National Secular Society, in recognition of his long and faithful service as secretary. A good attendance is hoped for, and those who come may expect a most enjoyable evening. All the profits accrue to the N. S. S. The tickets are one shilling each, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, at the Hall of Science, and of the London Branch secretaries.

The address to be presented to Mr. Robert Forder at the Freethinkers' party on Nov. 26 has been beautifully executed by Mr. Austin. To see it alone should be an inducement to all Mr. Forder's many friends to attend. We expect to see a large and happy party on the night of the School Board Election.

Under the direct control of the N. S. S. Executive, through the appointed sub-committee, the Sunday and other meetings at the Hall of Science show a decided improvement. The rent paid for the use of the large hall on Sunday morning and evening, and on Thursday evening, with certain occasional uses of the minor hall and the committee room, is £250 for twelve months. Up to the present the experiment has realised a profit. This fact should silence the croakers—a species of persons who always prophesy evil without ever doing the slightest good. It should also satisfy the Secular party that the purchase of the Hall of Science, and its conversion into a first-rate Secular Hall and Institute, is by no means a rash enterprise. There's witchcraft in it if the entire use of the premises, seven days a week, especially if the front portion is rebuilt, would not yield a very fair dividend to the shareholders.

Mr. Foote is naturally giving this Hall of Science experiment his closest supervision, just as he does every other important part of the N. S. S. business. But he makes no pretence to be doing everything himself. He has the loyal co-operation of good, practical, hard-working colleagues. Messrs. R. O. Smith, W. H. Reynolds, R. Forder, and Miss Vance devote themselves to the drudgery of the affair, and Mr. G. Standing, as honorary secretary to the sub-committee, labors like a Trojan. Their toil is only seen in its results.

Like the works of a watch, they do the business; and all is right in front because they go on steadily and smoothly behind.

Mr. J. M. Robertson had very good audiences at the Hall of Science last Sunday, making due allowance for the dismal weather. His morning lecture, on "Bradlaugh as a Politician," was listened to with marked interest, and gave rise to a somewhat desultory discussion. Mr. Robertson's subject in the evening was "The Religion of Shakespeare," which he treated in a lucid and exhaustive fashion.

Mr. Robert Forder should certainly be returned for Finsbury. He is supported by the two most influential evening papers in London. Both the *Pull Mall Gazette* and the *Star* place him among the three Progressives for whom Liberals and Radicals should vote. The *Star* adds that Mr. Forder is full of energy and executive ability, and would make a first-rate member of the London School Board.

Mr. Forder is running alone. The two other Progressive candidates who are recommended by the Radical journals do not stand on the "secular" ticket. Freethinkers should therefore support their own man absolutely. We have six votes ourselves in this division, and we shall give them all to Mr. Forder. We should very much like to see him at the head of the poll.

Mr. Forder had a capital meeting at Banner-street on Monday evening, and the resolution in his favor was carried unanimously. Among the speakers were Mr. J. Rowlands, M.P., the Rev. S. D. Headlam, F. Henderson, G. Standing, and G. W. Foote.

Freethinkers in the Finsbury division should all plump for Mr. Forder. It is foolish to give any of their votes to the other Progressive candidates unless the supporters of those candidates will give some of their votes to Mr. Forder. Besides, there is only one Progressive who stands up fairly for "secular education," and Mr. Forder is therefore the only really Progressive candidate.

Since the above paragraphs were written we have been pleased to observe that Mr. Forder is recommended as a Progressive candidate by the *Weekly Dispatch* and the *Daily Chronicle*. Both papers are influential, and Mr. Forder's prospect is certainly a bright one.

Forder Election Fund.—G. Standing acknowledges the following subscriptions:—S. Stalder, 5s.; G. Standing, 5s.; D. Colville, £1; W. T. Leekey, 3s.; W. Pearce, 2s. Money to defray the election expenses is sorely needed. The treasurer's address is 7 Finsbury-street, E.C.

A public meeting in favor of the principle of Secular Education is announced for Friday (Nov. 20) at 8 p.m. at the Mildmay Radical Club, 36 Newington Green-road. The speakers are Messrs. Hubert Bland, J. M. Robertson, Ben Ellis, and Stanley Jones. Mr. Foote is announced to take the chair, but this was done without his consent, and he is not at all sure to attend. He is actually put down for three places that night—Ball's-pond, Islington, and Deptford. Not being a Mahatma, he can only travel by ordinary means.

The Birmingham Board School contest has shown a striking illustration of the Christian idea of that "charity which thinketh no evil." All the candidates profess to believe in the beneficial influence of the Bible on human conduct; and yet, with the usual Christian consistency, they charge each other with "gross misrepresentation" and falsehood. Surely if those gentlemen wished to prove the efficacy of the Bible in promoting right-doing among children, it is not too much to expect that the same book would have inspired the habit of speaking the truth among themselves. It is said that "practice is better than precept"; but here with these Bible candidates, they preach truth while they practise the very opposite. Of course they can justify either course from "Holy Writ," but is not this a potent reason why the Bible should not be forced upon children for educational purposes?

The Bishop of Worcester has been "assisting" the "Bible Eight" candidates for the Birmingham Board School, and in doing so he professes to have discovered that we are indebted

to the Bible for morality and modern progress. On last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts replied to the Bishop at Baskerville Hall, before a large and enthusiastic audience. Mr. Watts indicated the principal features of modern progress, and showed that if certain teachings of the Bible had been acted upon, such progress would have been impossible. Mr. Middleton, the President of the local Branch of the N. S. S. presided, and announced that at the next Board School election Mr. Watts would certainly be put forward as a Secular candidate. This announcement was received with tremendous applause.

The Bishop has startled some of his religious friends by saying that in the order of God's providence, "bad men may be the teachers of religious truths." In corroboration of the prelate's statement, he quotes the examples of Balaam and Judas. We are at a loss to know what truth of any value those Bible worthies ever taught. It may, however, be admitted that there is no lack of evidence even in modern times of bad men teaching "religious truths." Truly "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

Mr. Watts informs us that he is desirous of forming a choir in connection with Baskerville Hall, and he would be glad if some of the musical friends in Birmingham would communicate with him upon the subject. No doubt to have music and singing before the lectures on Sunday evenings would be an extra attraction.

Mr. H. O. Pentecost, editor of the *Twentieth Century*, one of our most welcome exchanges, recently printed a satirical sermon on "The Blessings of Poverty," by the Rev. Cater Totherich. It was so well done that one of his readers took it seriously, and threatened to stop his paper if such religious trash appeared in it. We have the sermon by us for reproduction in the *Freethinker*.

Colonel Ingersoll is to be the chief orator at the coming great cotton and corn fair in Texas. The Colonel has lately been interviewed on the Prohibition question. His views are characteristic. We shall find room for them as soon as possible.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured on Sunday at Reading to good and appreciative audiences. Mr. W. Heaford lectured at Deptford, and was warmly received by the Freethinkers. He was also warmly received by the Christians, some of whom made a great noise to the glory of God. To put an end to these pious exhibitions the Deptford lectures will henceforth not be free. A charge is to be made for admission. Mr. Moss occupies the platform to-night (Nov. 22).

Mr. William Heaford lectures three times to-day (Nov. 22) in the Secular Hall, Manchester. Readers of his articles will hardly need a pressing invitation to go and hear him.

The newly-formed Lambeth Branch has engaged the Nelson Hall, Lower Marsh, for three months. Sunday evening lectures will be given, commencing to-day (Nov. 22). Local Freethinkers should support this bold experiment.

Mr. Dipper lectured last Sunday in the South Shields market-place on "The Bible and Teetotalism." An animated discussion followed, and it was amusing to see the Christians bowled over by the infidel with texts from their own book. One of them staked a half sovereign, but the bet was off when he found he was mistaken.

Mr. G. Grainger, a Secularist, has been elected on the Grimsby Town Council. He was at the top of the poll in the ward he contested, although the bigots went to the length of chalking "Atheist" on his door.

Our old friend Michael Stitt, of Crook, finding that the local newsagent won't try to sell the *Freethinker*, has decided to sell it himself. He has ordered a dozen copies, and no doubt he will find customers for them.

De Dagvaal is now translating Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe* in its columns.

Fritankaren is now giving portraits and biographies of leading Freethinkers. The number for Nov. 15 has a portrait of Georges Brandes, a leading Danish writer.

Mr. M. Olroyd, M.P., addressing his constituents at Dewsbury, paid a high tribute to the late Charles Bradlaugh's personal and public character. The eulogy was loudly applauded by the meeting.

The *Spennymoor Chronicle* reports the first annual meeting of the local Branch of the N. S. S. as being a success. Mr. E. Fletcher presided, and there was a good attendance. The Branch intends a vigorous propaganda during the winter, and has engaged Miss Ada Campbell to lecture.

In St. George's burial-ground, in Uxbridge-road, there is a memorial, dating from the last century, to Honoretta Pratt, a lady who, believing that burials were unsanitary, ordered her body to be burnt. The Cremation Society should restore the memorial to this lady, which is now much dilapidated.

Mr. Foote's letter in the *North London Guardian* effectually disposes of "Jupiter's" lying statement that he was imprisoned for "blasphemy and indecency." Mrs. Louisa Samson's letter defends her gift of Freethought books to the Stoke Newington Library, and refutes the foolish falsehood of a correspondent about the "recantation" of Thomas Paine. Mrs. Samson is sending a paragraph on the Library bigots to the London press; it has appeared in some papers, including the *Star*, and it will do good to the Secular cause.

Canon Clayton, having, in an appeal for cash for church extension at Leicester, asserted that families out of the reach of the influence of the Christian church became degraded, has been smartly pulled up and forced to climb down by excellent letters from Mr. S. A. Gimson. The correspondence which Mr. Gimson carried on with great courtesy and ability has been published in the *Leicester Daily Post*, and Canon Clayton is hardly likely to claim in future any moral monopoly for his own sect.

A fine monument by M. Bartholdi, to the memory of Gambetta, has been erected by the Alsace-Lorainers at Les Jardies, where the great Freethinking statesman died. Within the monument Gambetta's heart was placed by Madame Paul Bert. It had been preserved by Gambetta's friend and fellow Freethinker, Paul Bert. His brain was sent to the Anthropological Society, in whose museum it is preserved.

The French Committee of Moral Studies has published, under the auspices of the French Federation of Freethinkers, *Principes de Morale et d'Education Laïques*—Principles of Morality and of Secular Education. We shall notice the book fully at our leisure. The price is 2 fr. 50., and may be obtained from G. Vêrone, 75 Rue Saint-Sauveur.

At a meeting of the Shelley Society at University College, on Wednesday evening, November 11, Mr. W. M. Rossetti being in the chair, it was resolved to commemorate the centenary of Shelley's birth in such ways as may be possible. The one way definitely agreed upon was a *private* performance of the poet's great drama *The Cenci*, a *public* performance being impossible in consequence of the Lord Chamberlain's interdict. It was further decided that a joint committee from the Shelley Society and from sympathetic outsiders should be formed to carry out this project. Dr. Furnival, Mr. Buxton Forman, Mr. Wise, Mr. Salt, and Mr. G. W. Foote, and a few ladies, including Mrs. Pitz, agreed to take part in the preparations. Every subscriber of one guinea will become a member of the Shelley Society for 1892, and be entitled thereby to two reserved seat tickets, with a conditional further supply according to circumstances.

Miss Alma Murray and Mr. Herman Vezin will, if possible, as at the previous performance in 1886, play the parts of Beatrice and Count Cenci, and it is devoutly to be hoped that they will be able to fulfil their intention.

Should there be a sufficient response to the appeal, the Shelley commemoration will be extended beyond this performance. How it is too early to indicate, but the Committee are anxious to make an impression on the working classes, whose best interests and highest aspirations were so frequently the theme of Shelley's song.

The *Weekly Bulletin* is a financial journal in which we have more than once noticed articles of a Freethought

tendency. The last number has an open Letter to the Bishop of London, which boldly declares that Science will do more for the world in 25 years, than two thousand years of Christianity.

The whole of the first edition of Canon Driver's work reviewed in Mr. Foote's article, has been exhausted within a month of its first appearance, and a second edition is being rapidly proceeded with.

The Freethinkers of Italy, headed by the Grand Master of the Italian Freemasons, have proclaimed their intention of procuring the abrogation of the Law of Guarantees, which leaves the Pope entire possession of the Vatican.

Mr. Conrad Naewiger has a good letter in the *Hull Critic*, on the cry for £20,000 for more churches in Hull.

J. D. Shaw, of the Waco, Texas, *Independent Pulpit*, has been on a lecturing tour in Colorado, meeting with success sufficient to induce him to protract it some weeks beyond the time he had planned to stay. Mr. Shaw relates this pleasantry at his own expense: "A certain lady, residing in this city, calling upon a neighbor, observed a copy of the *Independent Pulpit* lying on the table. Casting a surprised look at her, she said: 'Do you read the *Pulpit*? Upon the lady replying in the affirmative, she remarked with a contemptuous look, 'It makes a good iron-holder.'"

Ronald Bayne, reviewing a recent work by Bishop Westcott in the *Academy*, says: "Most Christians do not dare to allow any inspiration to 'profane' writers, as they profanely call them, lest the authors of the New Testament should be jealous; and young men are bullied or sneered out of their natural belief in the inspiration of Plato and Browning before they leave college, or as a necessary preliminary to entering holy orders. Clergymen and ministers are the worst offenders. Orthodox Christianity asks merely whether an author calls himself a Christian, and does not conceive that it owes any special reverence to a poet or painter merely because he has moved the minds of men." Orthodox Christianity is consistent. Where is the need of a divine revelation if as good "inspiration" appears without any such pretence?

THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION. TOWER HAMLETS DIVISION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

KINDLY permit me, through your columns, to inform our members and friends throughout this borough that the Committee of the East London Branch of the N. S. S. recommends them to plump for the Rev. E. Schnadhorst, who, in reply to our question *re Secular Instruction only* in Board Schools, says: "No money given by the State should be devoted to any religious purpose. The State is a secular institution and not a religious one. I have but little doubt that I shall be found in full touch with the Rev. S. D. Headlam."

The other Progressive candidates replied as follow:

Mrs. Ruth Homan—"I shall be an advocate of secular instruction in our schools, *only* provided there are lessons given every day on good conduct and morality."

Rev. J. F. Porter—"I am in favor of the first hour in the morning being given to the reading of the Bible."

Mr. G. L. Bruce—"I favor the present compromise, and am not anxious for the present to reopen the religious question. I should be sorry to see it (religious instruction) abolished."

G. J. WARREN.

THE BUDDHIST PRINCE.

Prince Damrong's a Buddhist who comes from Siam,

In his duties he takes a delight,
But for dogmas and creeds he does not care a jam.

Prince Damrong, I think you are right.

He thinks Christianity not very prime,
And prefers upright conduct to rite;
In short, he believes in one world at a time.

Prince Damrong, I think you are right.

He says that in Siam the priests have small pay,
And are satisfied with but a mite.

Their gods ought to pay them—I really must say.

Prince Damrong, I think you are right.

CONVERTING THE CHINESE.

THE Hon. C. K. Tuckerman, in the *New Review* for November, tells of an intelligent Chinese, the son of a Madarin, who came to make religious inquiries. Some of the foreign missionaries had got hold of him, and between their contradictory and peculiar notions he was extremely puzzled. A clergyman had informed him that the simple sprinkling of water upon the head during the baptismal ceremony sufficiently fulfilled the rite of the church in this regard. A Baptist, on the other hand, assured him that only total immersion deserved the name of baptism. A Unitarian minister, then on a visit to Canton, had endeavored to impress upon him the fact that there is but one God, and that Jesus was human, not divine. An Episcopalian had told him that his beloved brother was in error on this point, and that the doctrine of the Trinity is essential to the faith of a true Christian, and so on. The conclusion arrived at by my young friend from these conflicting statements was that the religion of the foreigner was "too muchee fools." I referred him to one of the most liberal-minded among my missionary friends for further information upon this and kindred subjects, and I gave him a note to the latter recommending him as one who under his fostering care might become a distinguished convert. When next I saw the young Chinaman I inquired as to the result of the interview. He replied, "That mellical man velly good man, but he no savee in religion. He talkee, talkee too muchy. My thinker more better for he, come Joss House side." My young friend was decidedly of opinion that the only good thing the foreign missionaries could accomplish was to abandon Christianity and go over in a body to the satisfying faith of Gautama.

Mr. Tuckerman, who spent four years in China, declares that the missionaries are responsible for the ill-feeling shown to foreigners, and thinks the money spent in mission work abroad could be more usefully employed at home.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM JESUS CHRIST.

DEAR SIR,—You have before now inserted communications permitting me to repudiate the lying legends circulated about me and everything concerning me, from my paternity to the seamless coat in which I was executed. My experience of earth will never lead me to give your planet another visit; so Prophet Baxter and the others who live in expectation of my second coming are cruelly deceived, if not wickedly deceiving. I was persecuted by my own countrymen, and have been lied about by my pretended followers ever since. No stories have been too scandalous. My mother has been accused of deceiving my father and carrying on an intrigue with a pigeon. They have represented me as blasphemously pretending to be God, and as consigning all unbelievers to eternal fire. They are continually writing books about me, making me out to be this, that, and the other, on the strength of four contradictory old legends with which I had nothing to do, and which I never ordered to be written. And now, sir—and this is the last straw which has moved me to appeal to you—some of those who I thought would defend me from the aspersions of orthodox bigots put me forward as a Mahatma, and possibly engaged in a nefarious attempt to defraud the revenue by precipitating communications without paying for their postage. Just fancy comparing me to the bogie-men of Thibet. It is true I am an Asiatic. I was born with a nose as big and as hooked as they make them. My lips were as thick as a negro's, and my complexion the color of a dried haddock. I don't complain of being represented as a Greek in pictures; but to be put forward as a brachycephalic Turanian Thibetan rouses my Semitic blood. Even my most degraded followers, though they did pretend I drove devils into pigs—an animal I always sedulously avoided—never represented me as doing such hanky-panky tricks of legerdemain as those ascribed by Blavatskyites to the Mahatmas. Do pray, Mr. Editor, appeal to the public to give a little rest to the perturbed spirit of—Your ever grateful

JESUS called the CHRIST.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

BOOK CHAT.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward has a new novel in the press. It is said to be like the much extolled *Robert Elsmere* concerned with religious thought and scepticism. If Mr. Gladstone can be induced to review it, Mudie will take a large number of copies.

* * *

Lord Roseberry's long announced Biography of Pitt is not yet ready for publication, but is looked forward to with interest, as it is supposed it will represent Mr. Gladstone's views of his great predecessor, who will be depicted as not quite so opposed to democratic aspirations as it is usually thought.

* * *

Among the numerous opponents of Atheism very few indeed command the respect of Atheists so much as Dr. Ralph Cudworth, author of *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, first published in 1678. He united great learning with philosophical thought, and to him Dr. Samuel Clarke, Bishop Butler, as well as many less known and less deserving theologians, have been much indebted. Like Lardner's *Credibility*, it has been a work whence many more popular orthodox writers have drawn their materials. Cudworth's great work, though he sincerely gave his life to the cause of religion, drew on himself the *odium theologum*. Modern Atheists must feel that he did not apprehend their position. Yet he stated so fairly that of the ancient Atheists and Epicureans that, as Shaftesbury says, he was "accused of giving the upper hand to the Atheists for having only stated their reasons and those of their adversaries fairly together." Dryden, in the dedication of his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, alludes to Cudworth as having "raised such strong objections against the being of a God and providence, that many think he has not answered them."

Cudworth's *Treatise on Immutable Morality* is less known, and, strictly speaking, more out of date than his greatest work, of which it was probably intended as a continuation. It is devoted to a refutation of the views of Protagoras, and though it may be indirectly directed (if we may use such a phrase) against the views of Hobbes, it certainly does not meet the objections of those who treat morals from an historical and evolutionary point of view. None the less it is an acute piece of metaphysical reasoning, and since Cudworth is so little read nowadays, some merit must be accorded to Mr. W. R. Scott, who in *An Introduction to Cudworth's Treatise* (Longmans; 3s) seeks to direct students to his works. The Introduction gives a sketch of Cudworth's Life, with some of his letters and a summary of the *Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, which was a posthumous and possibly unfinished work, first published in 1731, forty-three years after Cudworth's death.

The Human Republic (David Stott; 1s.) is a clever brochure of 196pp., by Dr. Heather Bigg. It bears on the cover the old Greek motto, "Know Thyself," and is concerned with the human body, and incidentally the body politic. The author, by a magical process, easy in these days of Mahatmas, disengages his astral body and slips it in among the corpuscles of his own blood, and tells us how they maintain the human commonwealth by strict subordination of all for the common good. When, for instance, a rent is made in the skin, they rush to repair it like Hollanders repairing their dykes. *The Human Republic* presents many points of interest to students of physiology, and every one ought to know enough of his own structure to follow it. But the author's object is beyond giving an amusing lesson in physiology. He apparently thinks that man is the measure of all things, and that his internal government would form a good model for society. This naturally results in advocating a sort of State Socialism, or benevolent despotism, in which every unit has its assigned duties, and its needs supplied from a common source. The frontispiece to Hobbes's *Leviathan* indicates the idea of *The Human Republic*. But the obvious reply is that the analogy between the life of the human organism and that of society does not run on all-fours. None the less, *The Human Republic* is amusing and ingenious, affording opportunity for many thoughts on educational, political and social problems.

* * *

Sayed Ameer Ali, a Bengal Mussulman judge, who in 1873 published a *Critical Examination of the Life and*

Teachings of Mohammed, a work which showed the existence of a rational school among the followers of the prophet, has published, through W. H. Allen and Co., a new work on *The Life and Teachings of Mohammed; or the Spirit of Islam*. Sayed Ameer Ali contends that Islam, as the last revelation, is as superior to Christianity as that was to Judaism. The reasons for revelation No. 3 were much the same as for No. 2. The world was very corrupt at the time of Mohammed, and therefore God sent the Great Deliverer. He argues that Mohammed's appeal to reason, his ethical faith, his rejection of miracles, and his democratic conception of the divine government, all affiliate him to the modern world. The work lets the reader see a Mohammedan view of Mohammedanism, and may help to explain why Christianity, while succeeding with savage races, is altogether powerless when it comes in contact with this later revelation.

A ROMANCE OF A CHURCH CHOIR.

He was a very pious little preacher,
And dearly loved the lambllets of his fold;
She was a very cunning little creature,
With figure of the Milo Venus mould.
He spent each Sunday morn in sweetly preaching,
His words were full of vigor, force and fire;
She filled up all the intervals with screeching,
For she was first soprano in the choir.
The tenor of the choir, whose leading feature
Was a moustache of lovely golden brown,
Was the detested rival of the preacher,
Whene'er they met they both would scowl and frown.
The preacher when he tried to reach the haven
Of her heart's love, in vain did mash,
The preacher, like most preachers, was close-shaven,
The maid preferred the tenor's big moustache.

THE POET (*Western Figaro*).

OBITUARY.

The Rev. Rudolph Susfield, who died at Reading on Nov. 13, was an ex-Catholic priest, who advanced far on the Free-thought road. Born in Switzerland, Oct. 5, 1821, he devoted himself and his worldly possessions, which were considerable, to the Church, and became a priest of the Dominican order. He gradually emancipated himself from his training, and in 1870 made some stir by renouncing Catholicism. He contributed to Thomas Scott's series of Free-thought pamphlets, and in 1879 accepted a place as pastor of an advanced Unitarian chapel at Reading. This he resigned about five years ago. By the terms of his will he has been cremated at Woking.

It is my painful duty to have to record the death of Mr. V. W. Hardwick, president of the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S., a position which he had filled for a number of years. Some two years ago Mr. Hardwick was stricken with paralysis, and since that time had been unable to follow his occupation at the head office of the Royal Liver Society, in which he held an onerous position. His friends were well aware that his health was completely broken, but were unprepared for the suddenness of his demise, which occurred in Essex, whither he had gone on a lengthened visit, on the 10th inst. Mr. Hardwick was a supporter and a personal friend of Mr. Bradlaugh from a very early period in the latter's career, and was known to almost every prominent Free-thought lecturer. On Sunday evening last, prior to Mrs. Sarah Parker's lecture on "Woman's Position under Eastern and Western Law," a vote of condolence was unanimously passed to the widow and relatives of the deceased, and testimony borne to the geniality and integrity of his character.—C. D.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland appointed a commission to inquire into the religious condition of the people. They have been amazed and dismayed to find the prevalence of irreligion. Family worship is declining, and where it is held the farm servants refuse to attend. Godly Scotland hardly stands where it did in the days of Burns' "Cottar's Saturday Night," not to go back to the times depicted by Buckle, when the parish meenister could say he was monarch of all he surveyed. Another little sign of the times is the motion that laymen should become moderators or presidents over the proceedings of presbyteries.

PREDESTINATION.

"Do you believe in predestination?" asked the captain of a Mississippi steamer of a Calvinistic clergyman who happened to be travelling with him.

"Certainly."

"And you believe that what is to be will be?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it."

"Why?"

"Because I intend to pass that boat ahead in fifteen consecutive minutes, if there be any virtue in pine knots and loaded safety-valves. So don't be alarmed, for if the boilers ain't to burst, they won't."

"Here the divine looked very much like backing out, when the captain remarked:—

"I thought you believed in predestination?"

"So I do," replied the clergyman, "but I prefer being a little nearer the stern when it takes place."

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. H. Snell, "Why should the Atheist Fear to Die?"

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Mr. W. Willis, "A Radical Program." Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, discussion class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "The Descent of Man" (preceded by a musical entertainment). Monday, at 8.30, social meeting of members and friends. Wednesday, at 8, a lecture (London Secular Federation). Saturday, at 8, social evening for members and friends.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, Capt. Pfoundes, "Theosophy, Theology, Sophistry—Dangerous Humbugs."

Deptford—Lecture Hall, High-street: 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "God and Evolution." Preceded by a dramatic recital by Mr. Thomas Overton Blagg (of the Shakespeare Society).

Finsbury Park—Rock-street Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road: Mr. Toleman-Garner, 11.30, "The Lord's Prayer from a Freethought Point of View"; 7, "The Philosophy of Secularism." Wednesday, at 8, Mr. H. Snell, "Atheism and Death." Admission free.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Bakounine, or the Philosophy of Nihilism" (admission free); 6.45, music and reading; 7.15, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Revelations and Inspirations, Ancient and Modern: their Source and Worth." (3d., 6d., and 1s).

Lambeth—New Nelson Hall, Lower Marsh: 7.30, Mr. G. Shambrook, "Why we Attack Christianity."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Prof. S. Chadwick, "Phrenology" (with demonstrations).

Stratford—Enterprise Hall, Great Eastern-road: 7, Mr. C. J. Steinberg, "The Influence of Religion."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture. Thursday, at 8, open debate.

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

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter-street: 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "What we have Gained by Freethought."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "History of the Inquisition."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "How God Keeps his Promises."

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

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. W. Norrish will lecture.

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

Tottenham—Lecture Hall (corner of Seven Sisters'-road): 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "St. Paul the Apostle."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's-hill: 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Jephtha's Daughter."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: Miss Ada Campbell, 11, "The March of the Gods"; 3, "Secularism and Christianity"; 7, "Hereditry."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: noon, debating class, Mr. T. Robertson, "A Talk about Ethics"; 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "Max Müller on Natural Religion, III.—Law, Customs, and Sacred Books."

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7, Mr. P. Radford, "Christianity a Degrading Religion."

Hetton-le-Hole—Committee Room, Miner's Hall: 6, Mr. James E. Menzies, "The Vagrant."

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

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. Gowland, "Nature's Laws and Human Follies."

Luton—Corn Exchange: Mr. Stanley Jones, 3, "Man and his Relations"; 6.30, "The Problem of Life and Mrs. Besant's Theosophy." Admission free.

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Mr. W. Heaford, 11, "Atheism Explained and Vindicated"; 3, "Man's Reason v. God's Revelation"; 6.30, "A Freethinker's View of Christ."

Nelson—Secular Room, Market-square: 2.30, Mr. W. Pickles, "Practical Socialism." Admission free.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, monthly meeting of members; 7, Mr. G. Selkirk, "Morality and the Supernatural."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 7, Mr. A. Lord, "Christian Absurdities."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, Mr. Arthur (of Newcastle), "Bible Myths."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: Mr. Charles Watts, 11, "False Claims for the Bible"; 3, "Secularism and Christianity: which is Superior?"; 7, "Unbelief and Modern Thought."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: Mr. John Grange, 3, "Religion and Scepticism—a Retrospect" 7, "An Analysis of Scientific Theism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Quayside (near big crane): 11, Mr. G. Selkirk, "Faith or Reason?"

South Shields—Market Place: 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Nov. 22, Hall of Science; 29, Camberwell. Dec. 6, Sheffield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 22 and 29, Deptford. Dec. 3, Finsbury Park Branch; 6, 13, 20, and 27, Deptford.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Nov. 22, Woolwich; 29, morning, Battersea; evening, Westminster. Dec. 6, Bethnal Green; 9, Bethnal Green (L.S.F.); 10, Finsbury Park; 13, Woolwich; 20, Chatham. Jan. 3, Lambeth; 10, Bethnal Green; 17, morning and evening, Battersea; 24, Lambeth; 31, Lambeth. Feb. 14, Chatham.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Nov. 22, evening, Ball's Pond; 29, morning, Hall of Science; evening, Finsbury Park Hall. Dec. 20, evening, Camberwell. Jan. 3, evening, Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Nov. 22, Libra Hall, Roman-road, Old Ford; 29, Edmonton. Dec. 6, morning, Battersea; evening, Finsbury Park; 20 and 27, Libra Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth-road, Stratford, London, E.—Nov. 29, evening, Ball's Pond. Dec. 13, evening, Finsbury Park; 20, Woolwich.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Nov. 22, Luton; 29, evening, Woolgreen. Dec. 6, Liverpool; 13, Belfast; 20, morning, Finsbury Park; 27, evening, Westminster. Jan. 10, morning and evening, Battersea; 24, Ball's Pond. Feb. 21, Portsmouth.

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