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LOVE AND FEAR.

THE beliefs and actions of mankind are produced and controlled largely by those two potent emotions, love and fear; and upon the predominating influence of either of these depends the value of human conduct, and the usefulness of faith. One of the most pleasing indications of modern progress is that to-day love, to a large extent, supplants that fear which in former times dominated the mind of man. A striking instance of this is shown in the dawn and development of religious thought, and particularly so in the rise and progress of Christianity. The adherents to the popular faith frequently boast that love was the magic charm which at first captivated its converts and subsequently guided and regulated the Christian propaganda. The records of history, however, proclaim the very opposite to be the fact. From the very inception of orthodoxy down even to the present decade, fear has been the prominent motive power of Christian theology. Fortunately, however, a change is now taking place, and love is beginning to exert its sublime influence even among the followers of Christ. But why is this? Simply because the force of theology has to yield to the power of a humanity that has lost all faith in a personal Devil, all dread of hell-fire, and all hope of heavenly rewards for allegiance to stereotyped creeds and dogmas. Still, it must not be forgotten that there are, in the Churches of the present time, many members whose minds are not emancipated from the fears engendered by the orthodox faith. With such persons love is a minor factor; it is the fear of God, and the dread of hell, that exercise an unbounded sway in inducing them to believe in the "one thing needful" as being necessary to secure their eternal happiness.

The history of Christianity reveals the melancholy fact that through a degrading submission to fear upon the part of the masses, Christian advocacy owed its success in early times. In the New Testament Christ is made to indulge in such terror-striking phrases as "hell fire," "unquenchable fire," "weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth," "outer darkness," and "everlasting punishment." He also pictured the then immediate approach of the end of the world, when he was to come "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." While it is true that such fiery language as this would have but little effect upon the intellect of the nineteenth century, it is also true that its use struck terror into the hearts of the ignorant and credulous populace eighteen hundred years ago. Hence we find it recorded in Acts ii., that when Peter had been preaching about "blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke," when "the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood," "fear came upon every soul," and there were "added unto them about three thousand souls." As E. P. Meredith aptly remarks: "Let any one imagine himself firmly believing that, positively within his lifetime, this world is to become one mass of flaming fire—that he does not know but that the

next moment this will take place—when the judge of all the earth appears in the clouds of heaven, with an innumerable company of angels rending the air with the terrible sound of trumpets, and calling the living and the dead unto judgment—when he, with the rest of the human race, is ushered before the heavenly tribunal—when all the secrets of his life are laid open and his final doom is fixed. Let him further imagine that before this judge thus makes his appearance there is offered to him a guarantee of entrance into a kingdom to be established hereafter, in which there is to be enjoyed an endless life of perfect bliss, on the single and simple condition that he will now join those who proclaim the promise of such a felicity; but that to all those who refuse his offer there are prepared eternal torments in a lake of ever-burning fire and brimstone, where the vials of the wrath of the indignant prince of the kingdom to be established are poured down upon his enemies, without any intermission, for ever and ever! What terror! what consternation! must such a belief strike into the stoutest heart! What horror any man, laboring under such a belief, must feel coming upon him! What shivering dread overwhelms him! He must shudder and stand aghast at the idea of dwelling for ever in an ocean of fire, and of being fed with ever-burning but unconsumed sulphur."

To make fear the incentive to belief, and the promise of rewards an inducement to perform good actions, is to pander to the lowest forms of selfishness. The Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; then if so, it is useless to tell us to love God, for according to St. John "there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear." Fully believing in the truth of this latter sentiment, we cannot accept Christianity, inasmuch as its claims rest on fear; and therefore, upon the authority of scripture, in it there is no love. Gibbon, in chap. xv. of his *Decline and Fall*, remarks: "The careless polytheist, assailed by new and unexpected terrors, against which neither his priests nor his philosophers could afford him any protection, was very frequently terrified and subdued by the menace of eternal tortures. . . . When the promise of eternal happiness was proposed to mankind on condition of adopting the faith and observing the precepts of the gospel, it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion, of every rank, and of every province in the Roman empire. The ancient Christians were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by a just confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages cannot give us any adequate notion." The Christian historian Mosheim, too, writing of the fourth century, says: "Multitudes were drawn into the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain and the fear of punishment."

Now what is the nature of this orthodox system of bribes and terror which has been so extensively used to "keep the world in awe"? According to modern

ideas the true object of rewards and punishment should be to encourage virtue and prevent vice. But this result has not been attained through the theological theory, inasmuch as the bestowal of the one or the infliction of the other has been made to depend upon the profession or otherwise of arbitrary creeds and of cruel and absurd dogmas. This is palpably unjust because many persons are unable to believe that which is supposed to secure the reward hereafter. Moreover, according to this system the same kind of encouragement is held out to the criminal who after a life of crime repents and acknowledges his faith in Christ as to the philanthropist whose career has been one of excellence and goodness.

It is, therefore, clear that as a reforming agency the Christian system of punishment has been proved to be impotent either to reform the wrongdoer or to protect society, which are the only legitimate objects of punishment. Even Christians have more faith in the policeman, assisted by locks, and bolts, for protection than they have in any hell-fire or threatened condemnation. Is it not true that the great criminals of our country have been hell-believing subjects? And is it not also correct, as proved by our law courts, that those who profess the strongest faith in future retribution have frequently been remarkable for savage brutality and uncontrolled cruelty?

CHARLES WATTS.

ANCIENT MYSTERIES.

[CONTINUED.]

GREEK.

"The ancient science of nature among both the Greeks and the Barbarians, consists in opinions on natural things hidden under the veil of myths. Of this we may assure ourselves by means of the Orphic verses, and of the Egyptian and Phrygian traditions; but it is more especially the orgiastic rites of the mysteries, and the symbolic acts performed in the sacred ceremonies, which bring to light the thought of the ancients."—EUSEBIUS, *Evangelical Preparation*, iii. 1.

"If anyone thinks proper to call the sea Neptune, and corn Ceres, and chooses rather to misuse the name of Bacchus than to utter the term that belongs to that liquor, let us allow him to declare that the earth is mother of the gods, if he only forbear in earnest to stain his mind with foul religion."—LUCÆTUS, *De Rerum Natura*, ii. 652-657; H. A. J. Munro's trans.

THE best known, though still among the most mysterious of the ancient mysteries, were the Eleusinia. Held yearly at Eleusis, opposite the Isle of Salamis, Attica, in honor of Demeter (Ceres), they formed the most splendid and sacred religious institution of Greece. All Greeks, men and women, guiltless of unexpiated crimes, were eligible as initiates, and a sacred truce prevailed during their celebration. The Eleusinian mysteries lasted from pre-Homeric days till "Greece was living Greece no more." Passing through Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism, they at length merged in the mysteries of Christianity, which still perpetuate the bread of Ceres, whose body is meat indeed, and the wine of Bacchus, whose blood is drink indeed. The last stages may be seen depicted in the Roman catacombs.

To fully describe and explain the Eleusinian mysteries would take me from my present purpose.* Suffice it to say, their groundwork, as of other mysteries, was the worship of the spirits of the earth and of reproduction. They chiefly turned on the mourning of Demeter, the Earth Mother, for Koro or Persophone, her daughter, vegetation, who has

descended to Hades, to return, however, with rejoicings in spring, when Christ rises from the dead. During winter Demeter is desolate, the Mater Dolorosa. She is moved at length to rejoice by what we should call an indecent exhibition by Iambe or Banbo, the said exhibition being sculptured on some old Irish churches where it is known as *Sheelah na gig*. This was an emblem of fertility and of renewed life. Like the cross, it was a sign of the resurrection.

In his *New Chapters in Greek History* Mr. Percy Gardner says: "If prayer and sacrifices were the ordinary ritual of the Greeks, and purifications and the like their special services, the Mysteries were their sacraments; and in fact . . . they bore in many respects a rather close likeness to the most solemn rites of the Latin and Greek Churches." This is fully borne out by what is known of the proceedings, which lasted nine days. Initiates were first purified by fasting and baptism.* In the lesser mysteries, celebrated after sowing time, the baptism took place in the river Ilissos; but in the greater, celebrated after harvest, in the open sea. They sacrificed a sow and barley to Demeter. The initiation took place in the *sekos* or mystical temple—a vast illuminated building, entered through dark corridors. As they entered they purified themselves by dipping their hands in holy water, and were admonished that a purified mind was as necessary as purity of body. The holy mysteries were read to them from the *petroma*, or holy stones, by the hierophant (hence known in later times as Peter, or the *interpreter*), who was bound to be a celibate, and who represented in himself the revealing divinity. Various terrific exhibitions were shown, and the initiates partook of a sacrament known as drinking the *kykeon*—a flour made of the first grain—diluted with water, and took sacred cakes. F. Lenormant says: "The act of drinking the *kykeon* had in the Eleusinia the character of a real sacrament." This communion linked the initiates in a common life and equality. So much was this recognised that a heavy fine was imposed on any woman who rode to Eleusis in a chariot. Hymns and sacred dances formed part of the Eleusinia. But their crown and culmination was the dramatic representation of the mysteries or miracle-plays, representing the rape of Persephone, the mourning of Demeter, the message from Zeus by Iris, the birth of Iacchus or Bacchus, and various charms and ceremonies.

It was from the dramatic representation of these mysteries, a representation which in its origin was a charm to ensure the return of vegetation and harvest, that there grew up the belief in a Mater Dolorosa, first suffering and finally glorified. The story of Demeter, as Grote justly remarks, was regarded as genuine and sacred history. "They believed in the visit of Demeter to Eleusis, and in the mysteries as a revelation from her as implicitly as they believed in her existence and power as a goddess." The great freethinking historian seems to have had an eye to the Christian masses in this and the following passage. "Neither discrepancies nor want of evidence, in reference to alleged antiquities, shocked the faith of a non-historical public. What they wanted was a picture of the past, impressive to their feelings and plausible to their imagination; and it is important to the reader to remember, while he reads either of the divine legends which we are now illustrating, that he is dealing with a past which never was present, a region essentially mythical, neither approachable by the critic nor measurable by the chronologer." This observation is applicable to the divine legends of Christianity as well as to those of ancient Greece.

The Greeks, who endeavored to elevate and import reason into their ancient inherited faith

* The curious reader may consult Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, ch. ii.; Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles*, bk. v.; Ouyaroff, *Essai sur les Mysteres d'Eleusis*; Lobeck's *Aglaophamus*; T. Taylor's *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*; R. Brown's *Great Dionysiac Myth*; Lang's *Myth Ritual and Religion*, and article "Demeter and the Pig," *Nineteenth-Century*, April, 1887; J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*; Mackenzie's *Manual Cyclopaedia*; Maury, *Religion de la Grèce*; Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, articles Cabeiria, Eleusinia, Dionysia, Mystera, and Thesmophoria; W. M. Ramsey's article "Mysteries" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; Lenormant's *Monographie de la Voie Sacree Eleusinienne*, and articles in *Contemporary Review*, May, July, and Sept., 1880, and article "Ceres" in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dictionnaire des Antiquites*.

* Possibly some form of confession was also used. See L. C. Purser's article "Cabeiria" in Smith's *Dictionary*.

and superstitions had an esoteric doctrine for those found worthy to receive it. Persephone, the seed, became a type of the soul. The destiny of the human race beyond the grave was assimilated to that of the grain, which deposited in the earth, produces a new plant. When Paul politely said "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," his botanical knowledge may have been inaccurate, but he was correctly expounding the mythos of the mysteries. Hippolytus (bk. v. chap. 8), says that the central mystery revealed to the initiated was a reaped ear of corn. This was a symbol of the resurrection.

The Dionysia or Bacchic mysteries were of a more orgiastic nature, like the vintage feasts of Christian countries.* As secret nocturnal assemblies leading to debauchery, they were prohibited by the Roman Senate (B.C. 186).† Bacchus was far more than the jolly wine-god; like Osiris, he represented the warm humidity which engenders life and vegetation, and was even conceived as the soul of the world. The higher conception may be seen in the statue of the bearded Bacchus (in the first Græco-Roman Saloon, British Museum), which unites the benign tenderness of the ideal Christ with the majesty of Olympian Jove.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

SOME ADVANTAGES OF A "CHRISTIAN CIVILISATION."

"The only existing basis of morals in this country is Christianity. Until the Atheists have discovered some better ethical foundation we must insist upon retaining that to which England owes everything."—*Methodist Times*, May 19, 1892.

CHRISTIANS are very fond of boasting that our present civilisation is a Christian civilisation; that all the blessings and advantages we enjoy are an outcome of Christianity; that every political and social reform secured is but an unfolding of the divine teachings of Christ and the more perfect development and realisation of his kingdom on earth.

Those who make it their business to interpret the "mind of Christ" know at a glance what he would think, say, or do on every public question or occasion, from Home Rule to pitch-and-toss. Whatever measure of amelioration is successfully carried, though it be in the teeth of the Churches, is afterwards assimilated by them and shown to be exactly in accordance with the "mind of Christ," and Jesus gets all the glory.

The abolition of slavery, for example, in spite of the fact that the Christian Church was almost wholly on the side of the slaveowners, is now seen to have been an eminently Christian and Christ-like movement, and a practical manifestation of the "mind of Christ." Although Jesus, of course, never said a word against slavery as such, well he preached a lot of abstract morality about doing unto others as they would be done by, etc. The imaginations of his followers will do the rest. The temperance movement too, although denounced as "infidel" in its early days, now enjoys the special patronage of the Churches; and Christian apologists who are well up in the "mind of Christ" have no doubt whatever that if Christ lived to-day, he would be a staunch teetotaler and vote for local option and the direct veto. Of course if Christ, when on earth, never positively condemned drunkenness, but rather manufactured a considerable quantity of wine for a wedding spree, we have negative proof that he disapproved of it in the fact that there is no evidence that he ever took a drop too much himself, although his disciples were said to have done so on one occasion.

Let us admit, for the sake of argument, that ours is a Christian civilisation, that, as the *Methodist Times* says, "England owes everything to Christianity." It is evident, if such be the case, that there are elements in our civilisation which do not add much to the credit of Christianity. For, let it be remembered, that we cannot allow Christians to take credit for all the good that exists and reject the bad. The evils which afflict society to-day exist either in spite of Christianity or because of it: If in spite of it, it shows us that Christianity is incapable of grappling with and destroying the forces of evil after a trial of eighteen hundred years, and that we had better try something else. If because of Christianity it is equally incumbent on us to destroy it.

It is too much the fashion of Christian apologists, when glorifying the beneficent influences of their faith on the world, to dwell only on the best features of our civilisation, and, ostrich-like, bury their heads as to the defects. The shortcomings of other civilisations whereon the Sun of Righteousness never shone are, on the other hand, enlarged upon to their disparagement and our advantage. But if some future historian wished to draw a disparaging picture of our "Christian civilisation," he would have plenty of material to work on. Whatever other civilisations might have been in the past or are to-day, there are some aspects of modern life the blackest shades of past times would fail to eclipse. Ancient Egypt or pagan Greece or Rome were not so hideous and revolting in some of their features as we are in the present so-called "year of grace." Drunkenness, prostitution, sweating, militaryism, pauperism, and the existence of reeking, fever-breeding slums in our greatest cities are some among the many blessings of a Christian civilisation to which we "owe everything." "The peace of Europe to-day," says the Rev. Frank Ballard,* "is a strange and treacherous spectacle. It really means that hundreds of thousands of men are ready any moment to spring at each other's throats; that thousands besides are spending their whole lives in devising and manufacturing the most fearful means whereby men may wound and destroy their fellow men: that the air only waits—like firedamp for a naked light—for a few incautious words, or a petty outrage, or a passing 'insult,' to be transformed into a sheet of flames and become thick with a deadly rain of bullets." A strange commentary on the gospel of peace and goodwill! If the Christian objects that it is a violation of the spirit of that gospel, then where is its divine power and what is it good for? Is it not a failure?

The Rev. E. R. Barrett, at a meeting of the Peace Society in Liverpool some time ago, "referred to the tremendous amount . . . of three hundred million pounds (£300,000,000) annually spent on the accursed war system, and thirty million men armed to the teeth, ready to fly at each other's throat."

But let us come to Christian England, where we "owe everything" to Christianity, which is "the only basis of morals."

Drunkenness, a vice inseparable from a Christian civilisation, rendering it a truism that Christian countries are drunken countries, prevails to such an extent that, according to the best authorities, it is responsible for nine-tenths of the crime of the country. English Christians spend over 140 millions annually on intoxicating drink. As a passage in *Darkest England* says: "Still the mighty torrent of alcohol, fed by ten thousand manufactories, sweeps on, bearing with it, I have no hesitation in saying, the foulest, bloodiest tide that ever flowed from earth to eternity . . . nine-tenths of our poverty, squalor, vice and crime spring from this poisonous tap-root." In this relation Christianity is much inferior to Mohammedanism, which has successfully banished

* Even Plato thought it permissible to get drunk during the Dionysia. See Legg. vi., 775.

† Similar charges were made against the Christian love-feasts.

intemperance from Mohammedan countries, whilst Christianity has signally failed to make any impression on it where the Sun of Righteousness is supposed to shine. Mohammed was in this respect at least a much safer guide than Christ, and the question forcibly suggests itself whether the Bible, which countenances the use of intoxicating drink in certain passages, and contains the example of Christ making wine, and sanctions its use in the Lord's Supper, has not had a great deal to do with the prevalence of intemperance in Christian countries? It is impossible to calculate the enormous mischief of Christ's example as a wine drinker. Wherever two or three Christians are gathered together in his name, there is the beer-barrel in the midst of them.

Prostitution, too, which is unknown in Mohammedan countries, eats like a cancer into the social life of Christian England, and thousands of women and girls are annually offered as a sacrifice on the altar of Christian lust. If we "owe everything" to Christianity, do we owe this? Illegitimacy is another feature which distinguished our Christian civilisation. There are, according to a recent authority, forty-two thousand illegitimate children born in Christian England every year, and ten thousand as regularly in godly whiskey-drinking Sawboth-keeping Scotland. Must we credit Christianity with this also? A civilisation which is co-existent with the vice, squalor, poverty, and degradation of a large proportion of the population, be it Christian or otherwise, is hardly a thing to boast of, but rather a thing to execrate and uproot. A civilisation which does not mean the general welfare and prosperity of the mass of the people is a fraud and a sham, and is not to be compensated for by gilded palaces for gouty bishops, and magnificent churches with stained glass windows and golden candlesticks. If the "lower orders" of other civilisations were any worse than, or as bad as, some sections of our own Christian community, they were in a very deplorable state. The Rev. Mr. Tuckwell, a clergyman of the Church of England, in a recent speech, said that "out of the four and a half millions of the people of London, one million was in a state of want. They might read in the School Board reports how in London every day four thousand children went to school too hungry to work or play. They might read in the Poor Law reports how in London one human being out of every five went to his or her grave through the doors of the workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum. He had been down some of the slums of London, with their filth, and had been ankle deep in sewage in the dark alleys and along the ricketty stairs; into the rooms with no fire in the grate, with little glass in the windows, the only furniture a board laid upon two bricks for a table, and a heap of rags in the one corner, which took the place of a bed upon which one family, and sometimes two families, spent much of the day and all the night. There were poor shirtmakers, who had to work for 5½d. a day and find their own thread; women making 154 match-boxes for 2½d. and find their own fire to dry them; women who made a thousand paper bags for 4½d. and find their own paste. . . . There were cottages in the country containing only one bedroom, sometimes two, in which seven or eight inmates, some of adult years and of different sexes, slept together overnight, making immorality inevitable." This is Christian England, enjoying the blessings of a "Christian civilisation," to which we "owe everything."

Meanwhile, Christian England keeps on spending thirty millions annually on implements of war for the destruction of her fellow Christians; the Wesleyans boast of having spent nine millions within the last thirty years on chapels and other ecclesiastical buildings, and Atheists are asked to find some "better ethical foundation" than Christianity.

H. J.

IMMORTALITY.

"If a man dies, shall he live again?"—Job.

MOST assuredly. Nature knows no such thing as annihilation. No particle of matter is ever lost. Everything is in constant change. Matter, by its own energy—the force which is inherent in every atom under all circumstances—takes forms according to its chemical combinations, and these forms work out their destiny while the chemical action continues; then the forms pass away, the atoms fall apart, and the matter proceeds to form new combinations, to take new forms in accordance with the same law of chemical affinity.

That wonderful machine, man, with its stomach furnace for generating heat from the combustion of the food that is put into it; its force-pump heart, with its long distributing system of pipes to carry building material to repair the wear and tear of every part of the machine; its telegraph nerves to keep the whole in rapid communication with the brain, the regulator of the whole; this machine wears itself out and dies. At once every atom of matter that composed it seeks new combinations, and new forms are the results. The man will live again in a thousand forms. He will live in the grass that springs up from the sod that covers his grave. He will live in the ox that eats the grass, and the men and women who eat the ox. To all eternity he will live in new and ever-changing forms.

But what will become of his personal consciousness of individual existence? asks the metaphysician. The formula of Kant, "I think, therefore I am," expresses the cart-before-the-horse way of the metaphysical reasoning. A more correct expression would be, "I think, because I am." When I cease to be, I shall cease to think.

What is this consciousness of personal identity? The child, just born, has none of it; he knows no difference between himself and the objects around him. As his senses awake he begins to experiment, and find that certain things, his hands, limbs, and body, respond to sensations that outside things do not. He finds that he has limitations, and that his existence is separate from others, and so by experiment and memory he gets the idea of a personal identity. It grows up in his mind from impressions, exciting molecular action in his brain, by the action of his senses. His material organisation has not come to him as the result of his consciousness or his mind, but his mind and consciousness of personal existence have come to him as the result of his physical organisation. In other words, they are but manifestations of that universal force that is a property of all matter, the particular form or manifestation of which depends upon the chemical combination of the matter with which it is associated, as in light, heat, motion, electricity, thought, or what we call vital force, or consciousness.

Force is as indestructible as matter, but all its different forms of manifestation are convertible into each other; and so the manifestation of force that we call consciousness, resulting from the chemical constitution of the brain, will, when that constitution is dissolved by death, follow the disintegrated atoms of the brain into new combinations, and may manifest itself in the electric light over the front door of a saloon, the heat that boils your neighbor's pot, or the power that runs the street cars.

Thus we see that all which constitutes the personality of man, the identity of the individual, passes away, comes to an end like the candle that is burned out, its substance resolved into gases, to rebuild itself into new forms, while the force that was manifested in its light, follows the matter into new forms, to be manifested in new ways according to its chemical combinations.

But aside from this resurrection of the body, this

immortality of matter and force, there is another sense in which man is immortal.

The universal law of cause and effect governs all things, all matter and force; and all that exists and all that is done, becomes the cause of effects that follow in the endless chain. Every act of our lives, every motion we make, every word we speak, every thought we think, becomes the cause of some change in the persons and things around us. A pebble dropped into a pool of water will set the whole in motion, and though the water will finally come to a rest, all the particles of which it is composed, will have changed their positions relatively to each other, and will never be the same as before. Every leaf that flutters in the passing wind, every bird that cuts the air in its flight, changes the arrangement of the particles of air, and all these changes, trifling as they are, become the causes of other changes in their surroundings, and so the change goes on for ever. A strain of music vibrates on the drum of our ears, and awakens consciousness in our brain; it is there stamped as a memory, changing not only the whole molecular arrangement of the brain itself, but our character as well, and influencing our future actions; and through us, the character and actions of those with whom we come in contact; and the influence of that strain of music becomes immortal and goes on for ever.

The friends we love and cherish, mould our characters, and we theirs, by daily intercourse; and when they die we have not to wait for an imaginary reunion in some far away uncertainty as to time and place; they are with us always, not merely in memory, but literally in body and spirit, in the influence they have had upon our habits and thoughts. The mother who has lost the little child, that in its brief existence has thrown its tendrils around her heart, till it has become a part of her own existence, is no longer the same as she was before. The child is with her; not in memory alone, but always a living presence in its influence, which has modified her whole character and disposition, and that changed character she will transmit to others, both by inheritance and daily intercourse.

We are what we are, through the influence of the countless generations that have lived before us; and countless generations after us will be moulded and modified by our influence. Everything that lives, and everything that ever lived, is immortal in the effect of its having lived. Each individual has flitted through its brief existence and passed away, but each one has formed a link in the endless chain of cause and effect that stretches from eternity on one hand, to eternity on the other; and this is all there is of that immortal part of man that religion makers call the soul.

Out of the fact that the influence of a man's life is eternal in its consequences, the priests of the far east formulated the doctrine of an immortal soul; that there was a part of every human being, separate from his material part, that should live for ever after the death of the body. This invention of an immortal soul proved to be a profitable one, more so than all the inventions that have ever been patented by all the patent offices of the world since. The priests taught it to the common people, and found it useful in keeping them under their thumb. As long as people believed that death would relieve them from the grinding tyranny of the priests, they would risk opposition to it; but when they were persuaded that the priestly grip was never to be relaxed; that its power extended to the control of their destiny for ever in another life, then they resigned themselves to fate and bowed their necks to any yoke that the priests chose to put upon them.

Meanwhile the priests kept the real truth about it, as a secret, to be taught only among themselves and to such of the wise as they chose to initiate into their

so-called mysteries. They called it the esoteric philosophy. It was pure Materialism, including the fact that all gods are but personifications of the powers of nature, and that all stories about their actions were but allegories of natural phenomena. That which they taught to the common people they called the exoteric doctrine.

The Mongol invasion destroyed the priests, they being the governing class, and broke up their sacerdotal colleges; and with their destruction went all knowledge of the real truth about religion. The new sacerdotal class came from the common people, knowing but the exoteric doctrine which they taught as literally true, believing in it themselves. Thus the truth was lost and the shadow retained. Men held fast to the husks while they let the grain escape them.

Christianity did for Greece and Rome what the Tartars have done for India; it wiped out their civilisation, and destroyed all knowledge of the truth as to religion and its origin. It substituted a superstition, of which the priesthood was ignorant as the people whom they pretended to teach. These blind leaders of the blind suppressed, by force, all true learning, and a thousand years of mental darkness ensued, appropriately called the dark ages. This condition might have been ours to-day, had not the sciences and arts of civilisation been forced upon Europe, on the points of Arab lances. Even now we are but just emerging from the shadow that has hung over the world so long. Priests still teach the allegorical fiction for real truth, and persecute, as far as they have the power to do so, all who know more than they do, and have the courage and honesty to make it known.

The theory of the dual nature of man, that he was endowed with an immortal soul in addition to his material body, that was to live for ever after the death and disintegration of his body, retaining his personal identity and consciousness, was never anything but a hypothesis, invented to account for the phenomena of life.

It was supposed that matter was inert, passive, unable to do anything by itself, and therefore there must be something more than matter in the living and thinking man. They named that something more, spirit or soul, without investigating the properties of matter, and on that hypothesis they built their theory.

But now, in the progress of scientific investigation, all the facts that served to furnish a basis for the soul theory, have been explained by natural laws pertaining to matter alone, there is no longer a shadow of a reason for adhering to the old hypothesis of a soul in man separate from the matter of his body. The whole phenomena of life has been shown to be perfectly analogous to the light resulting from a burning candle. When the candle has burnt out, the chemical action, which resulted in the phenomenon of light, ceases; the candle has ceased to exist, and the material of which it was composed, with its properties of force, has passed into other forms, to form new combinations and manifest its living force in other ways.

And now, why do men cling to the old hypothesis so long, after the whole basis, upon which it was built, has been demonstrated to be false? It is because the hypothesis was worked into the form of a revelation from God; and men who have an interest in maintaining it, teach their credulous hearers that it is a sin to investigate the facts that would show the truth. It is the old struggle of science against religion; of reason against dogmas; of truth against superstition, that has been going on for the last four hundred years.

The Church often fancied that it had triumphed over its opponent, when it had silenced a man, as in the case of Galileo, or burnt him at the stake like

Bruno; but truth has a vitality that the Church cannot crush out, and sooner or later the Church will be forced to give up the doctrine of an immortal soul, and priests will brag that Christianity has done it all.
—*Independent Pulpit.* J. P. RICHARDSON.

ROME OR REASON.

THERE has come down to modern times
From days of Roman glory,
Related both in prose and rhymes
A thought-compelling story.

The traveller *en route* from home
In by-ways strange and lonely,
On asking for the road to Rome
Received this answer only:

"To or from Rome each road will lead,
Whate'er be your selection,
There's but one fact for you to heed,
And that is your direction."

To-day upon our planet-home,
Though you may cry out treason!
The roads one way still lead to Rome,
The other lead to Reason.

MYRON H. GOODWIN.

WORDS OF CONSOLATION.

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL'S LETTER TO A SAN FRANCISCO
MOTHER—HER REPLY.

NOT long ago, a lady of San Francisco was suddenly overwhelmed by a great, crushing affliction, that, coming like a thunderbolt upon her, for a time threatened her life. Her son, and only child, had gone on a short business journey, expecting soon to return. Sudden and fatal illness overtook him, and a brief telegram announced the dreadful tidings to his heart-broken mother. The terrors of the Calvinistic creed, in which she had been brought up, and according to which, as she well knew, there was no hope of future happiness for the unconverted young man, added greatly to her agonising grief over his death, until her friends feared that her reason, if not her life, would be destroyed.

A lady friend, who had sympathised deeply with and vainly sought to console her, informed Col. Ingersoll, and begged him, if possible, to write something which might at least relieve in a measure the terrible apprehension as to the fate of her son under which she was suffering. The following is his letter, which, as will be seen by the subjoined grateful reply, was in a good measure effective. It was only upon the representation that, like Col. Ingersoll's widely-published remarks at the funeral of his brother in Washington, some years ago, these words also might "comfort other hearts which mourn," that a San Francisco reporter succeeded in obtaining a copy for publication, with the condition that the name of the recipient should not be mentioned:—

My Dear Madam,—Mrs. C. has told me the sad story of your almost infinite sorrow. I am not foolish enough to suppose that I can say or do anything to lessen your great grief, your anguish for his loss; but maybe I can say something to drive from your poor heart the fiend of fear—fear for him. If there is a God, let us believe that he is good; and if he is good, the good have nothing to fear. I have been told that your son was kind and generous; that he was filled with charity and sympathy. Now, we know that in this world like begets like, kindness produces kindness, and all good bears the fruit of joy; belief is nothing—deeds are everything; and if your son was kind, he will naturally find kindness wherever he may be. You would not inflict endless pain upon your worst enemy. Is God worse than you? You could not bear to see a viper suffer for ever. Is it possible that God will doom a kind and generous boy to everlasting pain? Nothing can be more monstrously absurd and cruel.

The truth is that no human being knows anything of what is beyond the grave. If nothing is known, then it is not honest for anyone to pretend that he does know. If nothing is known, then we can only hope for the good. If

there be a God, your boy is no more in his power now than he was before his death—no more than you are at this moment. Why should we fear God more after death than before? Does the feeling of God toward his children change the moment they die? While we are alive they say God loves us; when will he cease to love us? True love never changes. I beg of you to throw away all fear. Take counsel of your own heart. If God exists, your heart is the best revelation of him, and your heart could never send your boy to endless pain. After all, no one knows. The ministers know nothing. And all the Churches in the world know no more on this subject than the ants on the anthills. Creeds are good for nothing except to break the hearts of the loving.

Let us have courage. Under the seven-hued arch of hope let the dead sleep. I do not pretend to know, but I do know that others do not know. Listen to your heart, believe what it says, and wait with patience and without fear for what the future has for all. If we can get no comfort from what people know, let us avoid being driven to despair by what they do not know. I wish I could say something that would put a star in your night of grief—a little flower in your lonely path—and if an unbeliever has such a wish, surely an infinitely good being never made a soul to be the food of pain through countless years.—
Sincerely yours, R. G. INGERSOLL.

Dear Col. Ingersoll,—I found your letter enclosed with one from ——— at my door on the way to this hotel to see a friend. I broke the seal here, and, through blinding tears—letting it fall from my hands between each sentence to sob my heart out—read it. The first peace I have known, real peace, since the terrible blow, has come to me now. While I will not doubt the existence of a God, I felt that I can rest my grief-stricken heart on his goodness and mercy; and you have helped me to do this. Why, you have helped me to believe in an all-merciful and loving Creator, who has gathered (I will try to believe) my poor little boy—my kind, large-hearted child—into his tender and sheltering arms. There is a genuine ring in your words that lifts me up.

Your belief, so clear and logical, so filled with common sense, corresponds, so far back as I can remember, with my own matter-of-fact ideas; and I was the child of good and praying parents, and my great, wondering eyes, questioning silently when they talked to me, my strange ways, while I tried to be good, caused them often great anxiety and many a pang—God forgive me! I am writing, while people are talking about me, just a line to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for the comfort you have given me to-day. You great, good man, I see the traces of tears all over your letter, and I could clasp your hand and bless you for this comfort you have given my poor heart.

—*Boston Investigator.*

THE ALMIGHTY.

"I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai; but as to my name Jahveh, I was not known to them."

—EXOD. VI. 3.

The Revisers of the Bible did well in leaving such terms as *Asherah* mistranslated "groves," and *Sheol* mistranslated "hell," in the original. They thus forced readers to look into the real meaning of these words. It is a pity they did not follow this plan with the names of the various gods mentioned, and let them stand as *Jahveh*, *Adonai*, *Elohim*, *Jahveh-Sabaoth*, or *El Shaddai*, as the case may be. The last, for instance, shows the savage character of Jewish worship; for, though some have erroneously derived it from *shadin* (breasts), it is rightly derived by Gesenius from the root *Shadal*—to practice violence, to oppress, destroy, lay waste, desolate. The Almighty of the Jews was the counterpart of the Hindu Siva: the god of storm, plague, and desolation.

LUCIANUS.

SUN WORSHIP.—The idea of a young hero, whether he is called Baldr, or Sigurd, or Sujret, or Achilles, or Meleager, or Kephelos, dying in the fulness of youth, a story so frequently told, localised, and individualised, was first suggested by the sun, dying in all his youthful vigor either at the end of a day, conquered by the powers of darkness, or at the end of the sunny season, stung by the thorn of winter.—*Max Muller*, "Chips from a German Workshop," vol. ii., p. 107.

ACID DROPS.

The temporal sovereignty of the Pope is gone but he still hankers for its return. This is apparent from his secretary's letter to Father Tynan, of Manchester, on the death of Sergeant-Major M'Corry, of the Irish Brigade of the Papal Army, who "fought for the rights of the Holy See," and "did some brilliant fighting" in that sacred cause. By this time, we presume, M'Corry has had an interviewer with Peter, the old sword-swinger, who cut ears off eighteen hundred years ago.

Under the head of "Anti-Clerical Fury in the Chamber" the *Catholic Times* denounces the priest-haters among the French Deputies who moved against the Syndicate of Employers of the North for forcing religion upon its employees. Catholics always cry out against the intolerance of those who give them nothing but fair play.

Dr. Pierson, who has been occupying Spurgeon's pulpit for many months, has returned to America, and may or may not come back to the Tabernacle. His farewell sermon contained a warm attack on the Down Grade gentlemen. They were said to be wolves in sheep's clothing—"German rationalists clothed in a sheepskin, the sheepskin of university degrees, the parchment certificate of a high scholarship; rationalistic critics from across the German Ocean coming in among us, among the very flock of God, tearing the flock in pieces, destroying faith, by destroying the foundations of faith." But this was not all. Christians actually came to the house of God, and displaced simple, primitive, apostolic song, putting an "unsanctified man" at the organ to play "profane music borrowed from corrupt and debauched musical composers."

Poor Dr. Pierson! He's in a very bad temper. Let us hope the Atlantic air will put him in a better frame of mind. Music soothes the savage breast, but it makes Dr. Pierson savage.

At most churches and chapels the music is really a greater attraction than the preaching. Some few are beginning to recognise this, and to give more prominence in advertising to the singers engaged than to the preacher.

The piety of the Y.M.C.A. of Bradford takes the shape of an endeavor to compel other people's tastes to conform to their own. They petitioned the Library Committee of the town to prohibit papers with sporting news in the public reading room. The Committee, however, being of opinion that no difficulty was caused by those interested in sporting news frequenting the reading room, declined to accede to this modest request.

The German and Italian ecclesiastics in the United States are much disappointed that the Pope has not acceded to their wish for bishops of their own nationality, and have sent a new memorial to the Pecci on the subject. Cardinal Gibbons, however, knows what is what, and puts his foot firm down against non-English speaking bishops.

In reply to Mr. J. K. Sykes, of Southend, Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's secretary, has again denied that her Majesty told some foreign prince that the Bible was the secret of England's greatness. This story has, however, got "monumental evidence" in the shape of an engraving—far better evidence, by the way, than can be adduced for any of the Bible miracles. It is now being used on election circulars, and will probably continue to serve the glory of God for years to come, and at the same time illustrate the longevity of a lie.

At Holcombe Hill, near Bury, is a building known as Uncle Tom's Cabin, which is used as a dancing hall. Some members of the Holcombe Church Sunday-school were found to attend, and the Rev. H. Dowsett stalked in without paying the entrance fee and ordered them out. They, however, elected to stay, and the doorkeeper, Mr. Booth, requested the vicar to leave. Mr. Dowsett declined to do so. Mr. Booth, finding persuasion useless, caught hold of the intruder and bodily carried him outside. With the rev. gentleman's removal dancing was resumed.

Mr. Mark Oldroyd, Liberal candidate for Dewsbury, should be supplied with a copy of the N.S.S.'s Statement on the

Blasphemy Laws. His notions seem a little hazy. Asked if he was in favor of the Blasphemy Laws being repealed, he said he did not know; he was against blasphemy. Question: "What does our member think of the New Version of the Gospel According to St. Mark?" (laughter). Mr. Oldroyd: "I think it is blasphemy." Some think the Authorised Version, which makes God damn all unbelievers (Mark xvi. 16), rank blasphemy.

The churches have not been spared by the late cyclone at Mauritius. Out of sixty-two churches and chapels only twelve are standing, and these are more or less damaged.

Russia seems out of favor with the Almighty. A large district is afflicted with drought. Day after day (says the *Daily News* correspondent) may be seen the mournful spectacle of the village priests, with the sacred icons, crosses, and bannerets, and surrounded by kneeling groups of wretched and sun-browned peasants, out in the fields praying for the rain which never comes. Sheep and cattle are famishing for want of green fodder.

Some time ago a lady at Brighton left £1,000 for the Gee-street Mission, Goswell-road, and the workers of the mission last week held a meeting to inquire what had become of the money. The responsible official declared he would only give an account to the trustees, who, it was stated, were dead. A committee was appointed to see what action could be taken to compel the official to render an account of the mission money.

Complaints being continually made of the smallness of clerical salaries, we copy from a publication by the Additional Curates Society a list of a few London and suburban livings, with their net value:—Norwood, St. Mark, £600; Bloomsbury, St. George, £520; Hammersmith, St. Paul, £593; Westminster, St. Mary, £525; East India Docks, All Hallows, £436; Hackney, St. John, £545; Holborn, St. John, £590; Clapham, £874; Stepney, St. Dunstan, £402; Woolwich, Holy Trinity, £450; Battersea, St. John, £520; Barking, £548. As with most of these livings rectories, etc., are attached, we should say their average gross value is about a thousand a year, which is pretty good pay for followers of the carpenter.

Tithes in the Isle of Man produce £3,733, of which the bishop takes £1,119 18s., and the archdeacon £522 12s. 4½d.—the remainder going in small lots to the inferior clergy. A large proportion of the islanders are Dissenters.

A freak of nature has for some time attracted attention in Orissa, where two little girls, joined as one, have been living for the last five years. With the exception of an abnormal ligature, which binds them together, both have a separate existence in mental faculties and speech; but when one of them is fed both are as satisfied as if each had had a hearty meal. This provision of nature was a distinct advantage to the parents, who were once very poor people. They were regarded with much dislike by their neighbors, who taunted them with the remarks that their offspring were "the incarnation of the devil." The father decided to leave the district and exhibit the wonderful freak of nature for payment. He is now said to be "steadily growing rich."

The *Christian Commonwealth* does not seem to have a very high opinion of the intellect of Sunday-schools. It allows Lizzie Mace Matthews to talk as follows in a "Sunday School Lesson" on the Ascension: "Our lesson tells of some one who walked in the air up to Heaven." If this be true, Christian artists have all been mistaken. J. O. is depicted as floating up to glory, but according to Lizzie Mace Matthews he should be depicted going up a sort of invisible Jacob's ladder, as though he were treading water. This is a fresh view of the situation, but of course we live and learn.

M. Paul Barbier, French lecturer at the University College, Cardiff, thinks he must be the original of Auguste Barbier, the French master in *David Grieve*, and he is indignant, for this character hates England and is an Atheist, and M. Paul Barbier does not hate England and is not an Atheist. This rejoices the heart of the *Christian Commonwealth*, especially as some members of the Welsh College have not "deemed it expedient to vindicate their reputation when freely charged with Atheistic tendencies."

Two of the American Messiahs have been in hot water lately. Christ Schweinfurth has had to acknowledge or pay for the paternity of certain Holy Ghost children, and Christ Teed was arrested for adultery; but in the latter case the prosecution failed, and has given the Koreshan Messiah the crown of martyrdom.

George Ransom, who wore a red guernsey, was arrested at the S. A. barracks, Almeida-street, Islington, for being £10 in arrears on a bastardy order. He was committed to prison for two months.

The wife of John Robert Metcalf, of Bromley by Bow, described as a street preacher who made his living by collections at the mission, has got a *decree nisi* for divorce on account of her husband's cruelty and adultery.

The Rev. George Mackey, of 22 Devonshire-road, Forest Hill, was charged with abusing his wife, Agnes Kate Mackey, of 94 Devonshire-road. He complained of the lady going out with a lodger, and was bound over to keep the peace.

It is stated that five French bishops will be prosecuted for interference in the elections.

A dispute between the Rev. Llewellyn Davies and the Rev. James Eagles, vicar of St. Bartholomew's, Birmingham, as to the right of the former to preach in the church, culminated in "unseemly proceedings" last Sunday. Mr. Davies, finding the church locked against him, had one of the vestry windows smashed, and a small boy pushed through, who opened the doors, and he conducted service. At the close he was served with a notice from the Bishop of Worcester inhibiting him from further service in the church. Mr. Davies at once announced that as Sunday was a *dies non*, the inhibition was illegal and he should continue his ministrations. Accordingly he conducted service in the afternoon and spoke in the evening, his discourse being received with plaudits, laughter, etc. He said "they might find fault with him for calling the bishop a liar—(a voice, "So he is")—but if they had been in his boots they would have been a little more pugilistic than he was." (Hear, hear.) He then read the inhibition, remarking, "What a lot of rot; I am sick of it," and closed with the benediction.

Letters from Captains Lugard and Williams, make out that the fighting in Uganda originated in the murder of a Protestant chief by the Roman Catholics. Any way the feuds of these rival Christians should act as an eye opener to the heathen natives.

The *Westmeath Independent* editor has been threatened by the Rev. Dr. Langan, of St. Mary's, Athlone, for inserting something "offensive to the priests." The man of God said he would call at the office and break every bone in the editor's body. The editor says he is ready to defend himself, and "if it comes to a question of broken bones, probably there will be more than the editor's lying about." We hope so.

Miss Margaret Lloyd, a well-to-do lady of Rhydymwym, has been fined £5 and costs for cruelly ill-treating a little girl in her service, whom she whipped till her face was lacerated and bleeding profusely. The "lady" was accompanied to the court by the village parson, who was indignant at her being forced to "spare the rod and spoil the child."

An old Scotchman, dying, was visited by two young men, whose father had died some years back, leaving their house heavily mortgaged. These lads, by great economy, had managed to clear off the mortgage, and were very proud indeed. They asked the old Scotchman when he got to heaven would he tell their father the good news. "Yes," said he; "if I see him I will; but mind, I've no gaun clanking about heaven looking for him."

Although venomous snakes destroy some thirty thousand or more people annually in India, the Government find great difficulty in their efforts to exterminate them. Under the present system a reward is given for every dead serpent brought before the magistrate or civil authority of the district. A cobra lays from eighteen to twenty eggs at a time, so that, for every one captured, a large number remain at liberty. Mr. Francis proposes that the eggs of snakes,

which are to be found in the neighborhood of old walls and where the sun can reach them, should be secured. Unfortunately, there is an obstacle in the attitude of the people themselves. Supposed to be associated with Deity, snakes are, in some parts, well cared for, and even worshipped.

A landslip at Monte Sasso, on the Bologna-Florence railway, buried several houses and their inhabitants, some thirty persons. The cholera in Samarcand, blight in West Russia, floods in Chicago, earthquake in Mexico, fatal fires in Paris, and the usual hot-weather deaths through sunstroke, make up the tale of divine beneficence.

One of the most curious arguments for design is the theory of Stoltzmann—that the conspicuous colors of male birds are not due to sexual selection, but to providential foresight to lessen their numbers by causing them to be killed more frequently. Those who object to soldiers wearing red coats on the same ground do not venture to suppose that the coats are used for that specific purpose.

The missionaries in China are again in hot water, their houses at Shumking being partially destroyed and the occupants being expelled from the town. They say the movement was inspired by Viceroy Lin, but do not say how it is they have drawn upon themselves the hatred of all classes from the highest to the lowest in China.

It is said that Pope Pecci will canonise Columbus on the ground that his discovery was the result of inspiration. He is preparing an Encyclical letter on the subject. But how about the earlier Norwegian discoveries of America, and other discoveries like Vasco de Gama, Magellan, Hudson, Van Dieman, etc.? Were their voyages the result of inspiration? Anyway, it is a surprize for a discoverer to be enrolled among the saints, even though he was like Columbus, an institutor of slavery.

Mary Ann Jagers, a domestic servant at Ipswich, is another victim of religious mania, and committed suicide last Sunday.

The poet Cowper was an instance of the consolations of religion. He believed that it was the will of God that he should kill himself, and that as he failed to do so, he was damned everlastingly. What a blessed faith is Christianity!

The dates given in the Old Testament, including the abnormally long lives assigned to the patriarchs, make about four thousand years from Adam to Christ. The British Museum has recently acquired a cast of a fine statue of Khafra, the builder of the Second Pyramid of Egypt, who was king about B.C. 3666. It also has the sarcophagus of Khufu-Ankh, a high official under Khufu, or Cheops, who built the Great Pyramid about 3733 B.C. This sarcophagus has the *crux ansata* as a sign of life among its hieroglyphs.

As in consequence of the pressure on the railways on Bank Monday in August, the companies will have to convey volunteers to Aldershot on Sunday, the pious Duke of Cambridge has given orders that the Sabbath must be broken very carefully "to avoid any interference with divine worship."

Miss Weston's goody goody *Afloat and Ashore* for June has a story of a man cut out of a whale, which some time ago went the round of the papers. Evidently the editress has no suspicion that she has inserted a skit on the story of Jonah.

Captain Carter is another American crank who is given much space in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* to ventilate his belief that the millennium will come in 1899. It will be heralded by great meteoric showers, which come every thirty-three years. Then human life will be prolonged to a great age, etc. "As to daylight, it will be very much as it was before the Flood." Ye gods, what fools these mortals be!

The sky-pilots of Barry and Cadoxton have presented a memorial to the Glamorgan County Council against Sunday trading and illicit drinking in the district. The memorial seems entirely professional. We are not surprised at the Cardiff *Evening Express* denouncing the "namby-pamby Sabbatarians" who play into the hands of these black gentry.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

[Acting on medical advice, Mr. Foote will not lecture again for some weeks. He hopes to be at the Hall of Science, London, on July 21].

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—July 3, Hall of Science; 4 and 5, public debate at Camberwell with the Rev. P. F. Duffy; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Birmingham; 24, South Shields; 30, Oxhill; 31, Newcastle. August 7, Birmingham; 14, Liverpool; 21, Manchester; 28, Grimsby. Sept. 3 and 4, Rushden; 11, Town Hall, Birmingham; 18, Birmingham; 25, Hall of Science. October 2, Hall of Science; 9 and 16, Birmingham; 23, Glasgow; 25 and 26, Belfast; 30, Edinburgh. Nov. 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20, Sheffield; 27, Hall of Science. Dec. 4, Hall of Science; 11, Manchester; 18 and 25, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

A. VINCENT.—The Chinese are a very ancient people, but none of their records appear to be quite as old as those of Egypt, which go back thousands of years before the time of Christ.

W. PERRY AND E. PANKHURST.—Pleased to hear from two old members of the West Ham Branch now living under the Stars and Stripes. We envy your opportunity of hearing Ingersoll discourse on Shakespeare. You say "his language is beautiful, but he lacks elocutionary force." We have heard others say the same—and others the very opposite. Perhaps the American platform style is quieter than the English. Thanks for the papers you kindly send us.

H. R. CLIFTON, sec. Finsbury Park Branch, has changed his address, which is now 27 Enkel-street, Holloway, N.

SILENT ADMIRER.—See paragraph. We are pleased to hear that you have "prevailed upon four persons this year, who were brought up as Catholics, to read the *Freethinker* weekly."

MILE END.—The *Ironclad Age* is a Freethought journal published at Indianapolis, U.S.A. Dr. W. C. Smith is editor of *Good Words*, and a letter to the office of that magazine will find him.

J. S. O.—The *Freethinker* is not "the acknowledged organ of the N.S.S." It is owned, published, and edited by Mr. Foote. The N.S.S. never had an "organ" in any proper sense of the word. It never controlled any journal. Its notices appear in the *Freethinker* when they are forwarded, and we devote a good deal of our space in "Sugar Plums" to reporting the Society's work in our own way. Your letter came too late for a reply in our last issue.

MONKS.—Lotteries are often under sanction of religion, and lotteries are a species of gambling. Thanks for your letter.

TOLEMAN-GARNER has changed his address to Glendale, Alexandra-road, Selhurst, Surrey. He has also become a Benedict, in which condition we wish him all happiness.

A. JOHNSON.—We hope the local Freethinkers will support the open-air platform in Victoria Park. The Christians must not be allowed to triumph by sheer rowdiness. We note your statement that Mr. Cohen's lecture was admirable and gave no provocation. Unfortunately it is not possible for Mr. Foote to come to the Park himself. He is under orders from the doctor to be very careful for some time to come.

W. BALCK.—Sorry we cannot print it in full. See "Sugar Plums."

W. PAYNE.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums." The extract appeared eight or nine years ago.

S. HOLMES.—Received with thanks.

J. M. WALKER.—The Newcastle Branch no doubt thinks it voted right at the Conference. The majority, however, thought otherwise, and it is useless to prolong the discussion.

W. B. NICHOLS.—You are quite right. It will be best to get a definite answer from Mr. Oldroyd after he has read the N.S.S. statement on the Blasphemy Laws.

P. KAVANAGH.—Pleased to receive your cheery letter.

W. DALRYMPLE.—Our readers do not deserve to have your foolish, impudent letter inflicted upon them. Try some religious journal.

J. FORBES.—We are not good at conundrums.

H. TOWNSEND.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. J. DUNHAM.—We are much obliged for your letter and good wishes.

J. KEAST.—Mr. Foote will write you as soon as he is able. Surely we have given fair space to the Bristol Branch. It is not our editorial policy to insert long letters from Branch secretaries; we stew them down into paragraphs.

T. HOLSTEAD.—Handed to Mr. Forder.

R. DOWDING, 11 Daisy-villas, Manor-road, Leyton, will be happy to distribute any parcels of Freethought literature that may be sent to him.

R. CHAPMAN.—Our compliments to the South Shields friends. We hope they will have "a good day" at Holywell Dene.

E. SMEDLEY.—Your questions would take longer answers than can be given in this column. Read some good books on the subject—say Büchner's *Force and Matter*, and Darwin's *Descent of Man*.

W. HEARD.—Pleased to hear of the successful lecture by Mr. A. Lewis for the Wood Green Branch.

A. T. TAYLOR.—We know Mr. T. Lough personally, to a limited extent it is true, but enough to know that he is a gentleman.

H. P. WARD.—Your registered letter, dated Saturday, was delivered at our office on Tuesday with *sixpence to pay*. We note the only point in your letter, namely, that you had no "friends" at your lecture for the Hull Branch. And now please forward the sixpence, charged to us through your informal way of registering your letter; and in future send commonplace letters by the common penny post.

W. B. COPPOCK.—All right.

CAN any of our readers oblige Mr. Forder with the loan of Austin Holyoake's *Large and Small Families*?

ATHEIST.—Portraits of Colonel Ingercoll can be obtained from R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street. Cabinet photo, 1s.; litho, 9d.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Leeds Daily News—Age we Live in—Queen Bee—Rocky Mountain News—Modern Thought—Dewsbury District News—Western Daily Press—Christian Herald—Auckland Times and Herald—Liberator—Ashore and Afloat—Middlesex Standard—Miss Weston's Monthly Letter—Moralist—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Suffolk Chronicle—Clarion—Echo—Manchester Evening News—Liberty—Bradford Daily Telegraph—Boston Investigator—St. Louis Republican.

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.

SPECIAL FROM MR. FOOTE.

I AM writing this in bed on Wednesday morning. Since Sunday morning I have been really ill; Mr. Forder had to lecture for me in the evening. Something was creeping over me on Friday; on Saturday it developed into an unpleasant influenza, and on Sunday into serious congestion of the lungs, which the doctor feared was the first stage of inflammation. Fortunately it was not so serious as that. My condition is much improved, but I have been heavily hit, and as soon as I can get away the doctor recommends a long holiday at the seaside—if possible on the Mediterranean. A very nice prescription, if it were not like the pint of port wine daily for the old lady who had two-and-six weekly from the relieving officer.

One thing is fortunate. I shall not have (I hope) to break any lecturing engagements. I had left the next three Sundays open, partly to give my voice a rest, and partly to plough through large arrears of literary work—to say nothing of correspondence. Nor will there, I believe, be any break in my *Freethinker* work. This is the first week for a very long time that no article has come from my pen; but I sat up in bed on Tuesday and did some "Sugar Plums" and correspondence. This sort of work knocks at the door whether you are well or ill, and the President of the N.S.S. is never free from calls upon his attention.

Before I drop the pen, I have two things to say. The first is this. We have paid the first £1,000 to Mr. R. O. Smith on account of the Hall of Science, and are virtually in possession unless the lessors raise an objection at the last moment. I may add, in passing, that the Committee of Enquiry, appointed by the N.S.S. Executive, presented its Report on Wednesday evening, and it will probably be published next week.

The second thing is this. I have recently had some fresh notices of withdrawal of deposits from my publishing business, and I shall be glad to hear from others who will take their places, as I cannot very well work with a smaller capital. Deposits bear five per cent interest, and are withdrawable on six months' notice. Legal scrip is given for every deposit.

My friends may take it that I shall try to avoid overwork, that I have still a strong constitution, and that as N.S.S. worries diminish I shall doubtless feel better in every way.

G. W. FOOTE

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. R. Forder lectured at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, Mr. Foote being too unwell to fulfil his engagement. Mr. Forder deserves thanks for taking Mr. Foote's place at such short notice.

Laws Against Religious Liberty: a Statement and an Appeal, is the title of the eight-page pamphlet drawn up by Mr. Foote for the National Secular Society. It contains a clear account of the Blasphemy Laws, and how they hinder and oppress the Freethought party. It also prints the text of the draft Liberty of Bequest Bill, and a series of questions for parliamentary candidates. Ten thousand copies have been struck off, and more will be done if necessary. Mr. Jones or Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., will send large or small quantities as required, gratis and post free, to any part of the kingdom. Freethinkers are earnestly requested to make the utmost possible use of this pamphlet during the general elections.

Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience last Sunday evening at Birmingham, many strangers being present. There is no doubt that the sales of the *Freethinker* at Baskerville Hall have largely increased of late; every copy on hand was sold last Sunday before the lecture commenced. This evening (Sunday, July 3) Mr. Watts lectures at the Hall of Science, London. Before the lecture Mrs. Charles Watts will give a dramatic recital.

We remind our London readers that next Monday and Tuesday (July 4 and 5), at 8 p.m., Mr. Charles Watts debates with the Rev. P. F. Duffy at Camberwell on "Bible and Science." We hope our friends will muster in force on both evenings. On July 4 the debate will be held at Trinity Court Hall, Addington-square; on July 5 at North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road. Admission 3d., 6d., and 1s.

There was another row at Victoria Park last Sunday afternoon in consequence of the resolution of the Branch not to hear a certain person who uses no argument but only foul abuse. This person and others incited a disturbance which resulted in a complete smash-up of the platform. A collection was, however, made, and a new platform will be ready for use next Sunday, when Mr. Cohen lectures. We hope he will be well supported by as many sturdy Freethinkers as can make it convenient to attend. The station at Bethnal Green-road also asks for support.

One of the ringleaders was arrested, and the park-keepers being anxious for a conviction to prevent future disorder, Mr. Cohen attended to prosecute. The magistrate demanded to know what *locus standi* he had, and he was fortunately able to produce a written permission to lecture from the London County Council. It seems desirable that all lecturers should obtain such written permission, as it will place them at an advantage in case of a squabble.

Mr. Sam Stranding reports: "Shocking time at Chester on Sunday morning. Platform wrecked in ten minutes. Chairman knocked about considerably. I escaped under police protection. Mob, led on by volunteers emerging from church parade at cathedral, acted like maniacs. No further lectures possible on Sunday, and outdoor work out of question for present. Held business meeting in evening. More active propaganda to be commenced forthwith."

Mr. Arthur B. Moss's summer holidays commence on Saturday, July 23 and end on Sunday, August 14. Mr. Moss would like to take a lecturing tour as follows:—Saturday, 23, Swindon; Sunday, 24, Bristol; Monday and during week, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydvil, Swansea, etc.; Sunday, 31, Plymouth or Portsmouth, etc. Mr. Moss will be glad to hear from secretaries.

The Battersea Branch held its quarterly meeting last Sunday afternoon, a fair number of members being present. Mr. G. Shambrook was re-elected president, Mr. Potter vice-president and delegate to N.S.S. Executive; Mr. W. Hicks as delegate to London Secular Federation; Mr. Mullins was elected treasurer, and the secretary was re-elected. Nine new members had joined during the quarter, four being ladies. After the meeting a large number of members and friends sat down to a good tea. While the tables were being cleared

Mr. A. Guest gave a brief lecture at the Battersea Park Gates, close by. The audience re-assembled in the hall at 7.30, and a good entertainment was provided, including a dramatic sketch. Dancing terminated the proceedings.

Mr. Pownceby, the indefatigable secretary of the London Secular Federation, is reported to have made special arrangements with the celestial cloud-controller for a bright day at Worthing on Sunday, July 17. Train starts from London Bridge punctually at 9.45.

London Freethinkers who intend to go by the Secular Federation's special excursion train to Worthing on Sunday, July 17, should lose no time in providing themselves with tickets, which can be obtained of any London Branch secretary, at the Hall of Science, and at 28 Stonecutter-street.

Freethinkers in every division should be heckling parliamentary candidates on the subject of the Blasphemy Laws. Even if the answers given are unsatisfactory there is something gained in calling public attention to unjust and oppressive laws. Mr. Walter Payne sends us a lively account of what took place at one of Sir Henry Roscoe's meetings in Manchester. Sir Henry is reputed to be a Unitarian, and perhaps that is the reason why he pretended such ignorance as to the Blasphemy Laws. He read the Liberty of Bequest Bill, scratched his head, and said he did not understand it—which is a poor compliment to his own intelligence. Mr. Walter Payne's father, Mr. George Payne, has written to Sir Henry Roscoe a pungent letter.

Sir Henry, we just learn on going to press, has replied to Mr. Payne's letter, stating that he would certainly vote in favor of any motion to remove the Blasphemy Laws, and would give his hearty support to all measures tending to favor freedom of thought on religious as well as other matters. We are glad to see that Sir Henry Roscoe has come to his senses.

Among the candidates who have declared themselves in favor of the Liberty of Bequest Bill and repeal of the Blasphemy Laws are Messrs. Whittingham (Walthamstow), Frye (North Kensington), Terrell (North Paddington), Smith (Hammersmith), McKenna (Clapham), Montagu (Whitechapel), Lough (West Islington), and Bayley (North Camberwell). Mr. J. R. Kelly, the Conservative candidate for North Camberwell, is the gentleman who endeavored to get Mr. A. B. Moss discharged from his employment because he was an avowed Freethinker.

Many candidates show an inclination to sit on the fence on these questions. Thus Messrs. Cohen and Bunting, candidates for East Islington, are in favor of full toleration, but will not promise their votes. Mr. Dixon, of Birmingham, says the matter, when brought before the House, shall have his full consideration. Mr. French (Whitechapel) supports Sunday opening of museums, but will not pledge himself further.

The South Essex Secular Society have issued a list of adopted candidates in the interest of civil and religious liberty:—North West Ham, A. Grove; South West Ham, Joseph Leicester; Romford division, H. H. Raphael; Walthamstow division, W. B. Whittingham. Major Banes, M.P., and J. Keir Hardie also promise to vote for Liberty of Bequest if elected; and Forrest Fulton, M.P., expresses the opinion that the Bill appears unobjectionable.

Mr. James Hill, Liberal and Radical candidate for North Islington, in reply to Mr. William Balek, promises to vote for the Liberty of Bequest Bill. Freethinkers in this division will please note.

Mr. Whittingham, Radical candidate for Walthamstow, speaking at a meeting on Leyton Green, said that the Secularists would have his hearty support in obtaining their rights. "Nothing displeased him more than Christian bigotry."

Mr. Alfred Billson, Liberal candidate for the Barnstaple division of Devonshire, writing to Mr. H. Townsend, says—"I am in favor of entire civil and religious equality and freedom, and do not fear any inquiry. I should therefore be

quite disposed to support such a Bill as you have been good enough to send me."

Sir Charles Russell, writing to one of his old constituents, Mr. W. J. Dunham, says—"Looking to the course I publicly pursued in the Bradlaugh controversy, I should have thought your question was unnecessary. Of course 'I am' in favor of fair play to all religious opinions."

Mr. Thomas Lough, Liberal candidate for West Islington, declares himself in favor of abolishing the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. Foote has a vote in this division, and if he had twenty votes he would give them all to Mr. Lough.

The vegetarian banquet in commemoration of Shelley's centenary, held at the Wheatsheaf Restaurant on Saturday, June 25, was a very successful gathering, and should be the prelude to others on his birthday, Aug. 4. Mr. W. E. A. Axon, who presided, read a thoughtful and able speech on Shelley as the poet of liberty and altruistic endeavor. Addresses were given by Dr. Furnivall, Mr. G. B. Shaw (who counselled Agnostics to follow Shelley in avowing themselves Atheists), and by Messrs Buxton Forman, H. S. Salt and Edward Maitland. Songs and readings by Mr. Gordon and Mrs. Macdonald contributed to make the evening a very enjoyable one to lovers of the great Freethought poet.

Mr. Symes has been having a set debate with the Rev. Miles Grant, a Second Adventist, whose courteous behavior he contrasts, in a note in the *Liberator*, with that of the orthodox Rev. Brewin Grant, with whom he debated in 1880.

The North-Eastern Secular Federation holds its annual meeting to-day (July 3), at 3 p.m., in the Eldon Hall, Clayton-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Delegates are requested to say by what train they expect to arrive, and they will be met at the station. Some very important matters of business have to be discussed, and a full attendance is most desirable.

Mr. Joseph Brown, the N.E.S. Federation's secretary, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—Hubert Richardson, £2 2s.; John Proctor, 10s.; South Shields Branch, 10s.

The Finsbury Park Branch got £17 11s. in its collection boxes for the Hospital Sunday Fund. Mr. George Ward and Mr. F. Gardiner helped to congregate the coppers (not declining silver), but the chief work was done by the ladies—Mrs. Miller, Miss Lizzy Ward, Miss Kate Ward, Mrs. Hancock, Miss E. Robins, and Miss M. A. Robins. The Branch gave up its own collections for the day.

The report of the Sunday Society records that art galleries and museums are now opened on the first day of the week in thirty-three towns, and that good order and a beneficial improvement are found as the result.

Open Court (Chicago) of June 9 gives an unpublished letter of Col. Ethan Allen, author of *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* (1784), the first American book openly attacking Christianity. The letter is dated 1788, and addressed to the Hon. John Wheelock, president of Dartmouth College. Allen says: "We are told by enthusiasts and lunatics that they hold a correspondence with mere spirits, particularly with the Holy Ghost; weak minds make their silly imaginations pass for reality, though sensible and learned persons cannot thus impose on themselves nor be imposed on by others. A competency of knowledge in the sciences is therefore our only bulwark against superstition and idolatry. The superstitious part of mankind, which by one means or other are far the most numerous, are but the dupes of Church and State; at their command they cut one another's throats, as they suppose for God's sake, and commit all manner of cruelty and outrage."

The New South Wales census shows the number of 29,894 persons who are unspecified or non-Christians. There are over 10,000 Buddhists, mostly Chinese.

The *Moralist*, of Byron, Illinois, gives a portrait of F. H. Rau, the founder of the Agnostic Society of Moralists, whose headquarters are at Hannibal, Missouri.

In the fine Loan Exhibition of Pictures on view at the Guildhall the portraits of Dr. Martineau and Algernon Swin-

burne, by G. F. Watts, R.A., deserve attention for their artistic merits as well as for the interesting personalities portrayed.

At Mr. Rowney's lectures in Regent's Park, morning and evening, collections will be made on behalf of the Bethnal Green Branch, who are carrying on several stations in the East End under great difficulties.

The Pendlebury Branch have secured the Co-operative Hall for Sunday afternoon meetings, where they will gladly welcome Secularists from the surrounding districts.

The Newcastle Branch held its eighteenth annual meeting last Sunday. The secretary's report showed increased activity during the past twelve months. Debt had been cleared off and the new year opened with a balance on the right side. During the year, 40 indoor and 24 outdoor lectures had been delivered; 58 new members had been made as against 15 in the preceding year; and the income had risen from £48 to £90. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—President, G. Selkirk; treasurer, Thos. Elliott; secretary, J. M. Walker, whose address is 98 Tynemouth-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

The South Shields Branch has its annual excursion next Sunday (July 10) to Holywell Dene. In a climate like this, it has to be added, "weather permitting." The South Shields friends will cross the river by the 12.45 ferry, and the brakes will leave North Shields at one o'clock—the return fare being 1s. Good teas can be obtained at the Dene at 1s. Freethinkers in the neighborhood are cordially invited to join this pleasure party.

At Birmingham a good muster attended a special meeting on Sunday last, when Mr. Watts, our delegate, gave his report of the Conference. It was received with every sign of pleasure, containing as it did, statements favorable to the progress the Society was making, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Watts. Mr. B. A. Millichamp was again elected corresponding member of council for this Branch for the ensuing twelve months. The preliminary arrangements for Mr. Watts' lecture in the Town Hall, Sunday evening Sept. 11, occupied considerable time. Many valuable suggestions were made, and it was soon seen that a large amount of work would be required to obtain a successful meeting. A vote of condolence to Mr. H. Jakeman, an old and esteemed member of our Branch, for the loss he had lately sustained in the death of his wife, was unanimously agreed to with every mark of sympathy. Our annual picnic takes place to-day (Sunday, July 3) at the Fountain Inn, Clent, and promises to be very successful. Friends from the district are earnestly invited to join us.—J. PARTRIDGE, Sec.

IN NATURE'S HAUNTS.

I LOVE to wander in the shade,
And revel 'mid some sylvan scene,
Where Nature wears a face serene,
And Flora's gifts are all arrayed.

Where twining tendrils interweaves,
Where tiny bud unfolds its wings,
Where woodland's sweetest songster sings
On stately bough, 'neath verdant leaves.

Where gentle breezes linger 'round,
And waft sweet odors from the flowers;
Where noontide sun peeps through the bowers,
And kisses earth with beauty crowned.

I love to sit beside the brook,
And watch its crystal waters leap
O'er mossy stone and rugged steep,
From sunny pool to shady nook.

Though others look beyond the skies
For future happiness and bliss,
I think I am content with this,—
Sweet Nature's radiant Paradise.

G. J. REMSBURG.

Tottie (in church): "Is that the new minister, mamma?"
Mamma: "Yes, dear." Tottie: "Why, he isn't any newer than grandpa, and I guess he's about sixty. Why do they call him new?"

PROFESSOR HÆCKEL ON GERMAN RELIGION.

PROTESTANTISM of whatever color it may be lacks entirely, and necessarily must lack, that great hierarchic organisation which has given power to the Roman Catholic Church for more than a millennium, and which gives her an unparalleled power in our civilisation at the present day. Therefore Roman Catholicism, or briefly, Papism, will conquer in the struggle for dominion any other Church that stands with it on equal rights, and as it pretends to be the only saving Church, will also claim absolute control over the State. We need only compare the triumphant rejoicings of Ultramontane journals with the heavy anxiety of all independent papers in order to know what grave meaning has the new public school bill.

"Christianity or Atheism," that is the surprising alternative which the new world-conception proposes. What Christianity was meant to be can be learned from the explanation subsequently made. The new Prussian Christianity, which it is hoped will save her present civilisation and protect her from the dangers of Social Democracy, is not that purified morality which has greatly developed in the course of nineteen centuries from the simple doctrines of original Christianity. On the contrary, it is the naked belief in miracles, its stubborn dogmatism, and its blind faith in traditional legends and in supernatural events of so-called holy history, the historical reality of which has been long disproved by an impartial scientific criticism.

The remarkable progress of natural philosophy has led the intellectual and spiritual life of civilised nations into entirely new paths. Shall now the fanaticism of different colliding dogmas be reintroduced into our public schools? It almost appears as though the Crusades and the Thirty Years' War were to reappear in a new Prussian edition. But among all these confusions there is a widely separate opinion propounded with noteworthy ingenuousness, that Christian faith will be the best weapon against Social Democracy. The pure original and unadulterated Christianity, however, is most ominously interwoven with Socialistic doctrines, and its first congregations cultivated pure Communism. The fathers have developed those communistic ideas so clearly, that we are only astonished that the Social Democracy of to-day does not claim the authority and sanction of these primitive Christian institutions. The true and really useful weapons in the struggle against the errors of Social Democracy are not found in Christian dogmas but in rational science, and especially its latest and most promising offspring, the modern doctrine of evolution. If the Socialistic leaders attempt to base their Utopian theories upon the doctrine of evolution, and especially upon Darwinism, the theory of selection appears in the light of impartial criticism as an aristocratic principle. It is based upon the selection of the best. The division of labor, upon which more than upon anything else the progressive development of the organised world rests, necessarily produces a constantly increasing diversity of character, a constantly increasing inequality of the individuals, of their education, their activities, and their conditions. Human civilisation the higher it rises makes the various classes of workers which co-operate in the complex machinery of society appear the more different and diversified. Communism and that equality of conditions and of work which is aimed at by Social Democracy, would be equivalent to a return of barbarism and the brutal primordial state of rude savages. The strange views which Caprivi's cabinet have propounded, stand in decided opposition to the results of modern science; they found their strongest expression in the surprising alternative of Christianity or Atheism. The late chancellor confesses in childlike simplicity to embrace the "Christian" world-conception of the papistic leaders of the centre with whom "he feels in perfect agreement." He has the conviction that religion cannot be taught without dogma; even more, he says, we can have no other dogmas than those which exist.

What shall philosophy, the queen among the sciences, say concerning this confession! According to the theory of the new course all the serious labor performed by the greatest minds of three thousand years has been done in vain. According to that all the philosophy which ought to be allowed to be taught, is that of the Christian fathers, yet it will be difficult for the government to say which of the many conflicting and irrational opinions shall in the future be considered as the only canon of philosophy.

All the great results of modern science are therewith doomed. Doomed are also all the miserable men who attempted to solve the great problems of existence, not through blind faith, but with the assistance of that divine goddess, reason. We should feel disconsolate over the loss of our temporal and eternal salvation if we had not fortunately come into good company. Goethe, Lessing, Kant, Spinoza, Shakspeare, Newton, Humboldt, Darwin, Frederick the II. of the Hohenzollerns, and Frederick the II. of the Hohenstauffens, they all roast eternally in the hell of helpless Atheism. And here we pass over in silence all those non-Christian philosophers and scientists of other civilised nations to whom we look up with reverence as stars of the first magnitude. But more still, even Moses and the prophets, and also Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mohammed, in brief all the God-inspired founders of non-Christian religions, they also are all miserable Atheists, for the historical phrase of Caprivi, "Either Christians or Atheists," applies to them also.

—Ernest Hæckel, in "Open Court."

NORTHERN RELIGION.

In the interest of Freethought I should like to give a little information to your readers concerning the island of Lewis, where I am at present located. It almost goes without saying that it is like most other isolated Scotch places, "God-ruled," the result being a tremendous amount of hypocrisy, cant, bigotry, and sadness. It contains eighteen well-fed sky-pilots (independent of "itinerants"), with a like amount of gospel-shop. The Free Church predominates, and for power has a sway comparatively equal to Rome. The sky-pilots congregate together in Stornoway, the capital of the island almost every evening to sing hymns and preach the gospel to the fishermen on a vacant piece of land adjoining the post office. I have listened to these edifying discourses on several occasions, and found them to be on a level with the pervading theological mind.

Praises of Christianity, exhortations to imitate Jesus, death, sin, and misery are the principal ingredients of the sermons preached to the "toilers of the deep." On one occasion the minister, after working himself up to a fanatical pitch, beseeched his hearers to "thank God for all the goodness of the world"—not a word being uttered with regard to all "the misery of the world."

This island is so God-ruled that there are only three licensed houses on it, and desperate efforts are being made to sweep these away altogether. It is a sight to see these fishermen at about seven o'clock in the evening rushing in batches for drink; it's like the pit door at the Lyceum on a "first night," though a more appropriate comparison would be, like swine rushing to wallow in a trough. The sky-pilots and intemperate bigots have prevented the fishermen from taking their refreshment in a decent and comfortable manner; hence drinking has become reduced to rowdy bestiality.

The island abounds in filth and wretchedness. In the fishing season (now at its height) there are some two or three thousand girls employed in the herring industry, whose appearance and mode of living would disgrace any era in the history of mankind. They live in batches, any number sleeping together in small, dirty bedrooms, the dimensions and condition of the houses being unfit for harboring a "proud pig," and oftentimes zymotic diseases are the consequences.

No effort is made by the sky-pilots to effect social and sanitary reforms, they work for the "glorious hereafter," and the only decent habitations the "kipper" girls may expect are "mansions in the skies." The people have no healthy amusements and Sabbatarianism prevails. A sadder-looking race I've never seen—the sunshine of a smile or a hearty laugh never appears to dispel the gloom on their countenances. What this island requires is strong Freethought advocacy. But who is there so bold to venture on an anti-Christ crusade? Martyrdom would be his lot; the "fanatics" would tear him "limb from limb," and if he would reason with the "Christians," let him first engage a battalion of infantry.

When the curse of priestcraft rules, the voice of tolerance and reason is stifled; and, to alter a line of Cowper,

I am no preacher, let this hint suffice;

The cross once seen, there follows every vice.

Such is the island of Lewis!

J. P. HYNAN.

JOSEPH RITSON.

JOSEPH RITSON (1752-1803) is chiefly known as an antiquarian collector of songs and ballads. His Robin Hood Ballads, English Anthology, Ancient Songs, Garlands, and other collections, are well known to bibliophiles, as are also his bad-tempered criticisms of Warton and Malone. He appears to have been a singular man, given to Freethinking. Alex. Chalmers, in his *Biographical Dictionary*, says: "His wretched temper seems to have been exasperated by the state of public affairs, his hatred of the reigning family, and his attachment to Republicanism." Thompson Cooper speaks of his merits as being counterbalanced by pride and impiety, and W. L. R. Cates says, "his morbid singularities of temper and his avowed contempt for religion were great drawbacks to the merit of his services." Ritson suffered from infirmity of body and temper, and was never mealy-mouthed in his expressions. Thus he says: "There is this distinction, indeed, between the heathen deities and the Christian saints—that the former were indebted for their existence to the flowery imagination of the sublime poet, and the legends of the latter to the gloomy fanaticism of a lazy monk or stinking priest."

In 1802 Ritson published *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty*. This curious little book should be reprinted by the vegetarians, though it is too outspoken for that stupid section who seek to found their doctrine on a book which reeks of bloody sacrifices. Ritson, who takes a motto from Diderot, protests against sport in the name of humanity. Sacrifices he regarded with abomination. He says:—"Superstition is the mother of ignorance and barbarity. Priests began by persuading people of the existence of certain invisible beings, which they pretended to be the creators of the world and the dispensers of good and evil; and of whose wills, in fine, they were the sole interpreters. Hence arose the necessity of sacrifices to appease the wrath or procure the favor of imaginary gods, but, in reality, to gratify the glutinous and unnatural appetites of real demons." One might have fancied that Ritson's vegetarianism was derived from his fellow Pagan, Thomas Taylor, the Platonist. But, unless I am mistaken, Ritson was first in the field. He says he adopted the diet from a perusal of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, at the age of 19, in 1772. In *St. James's Chronicle*, of June 3, 1783, this is skit on Ritson and his severe "slating" of the editors of Shakespeare appeared.

By wise Pythagoras taught, young Ritson's meals
With bloody viands never are defiled.
For quadruped, for bird, for fish he feels;
His board ne'er smokes with roast meat, or with boiled.
In this one instance pious, mild, and tame,
He's surely in another a great sinner:
For man, cries Ritson, man's alone my game!
On him I make a most delicious dinner.
To venison and to partridge I've no gout;
To Warton Tom such dainties I resign.
Give me plump Stevens and large Johnson too,
And take your turkey and your savory chine.

J. M. W.

BOOK CHAT.

Mohammedanism is still so much misunderstood and misrepresented by Christian advocates, who see in it the hereditary foe of their faith, the owner of their sacred places, and the great hindrance to the spread of Christianity in Africa and Asia, that an authoritative sketch of *The Faith of Islam*, like that of Mr. W. H. Quilliam, at the popular price of sixpence supplies a real want.

Since Carlyle delivered his lectures on Heroes, the once popular "impostor" theory of the founder of Islam has faded. Scholars like Emanuel, Deutsch, and Mr. Bosworth Smith, have done much to dispel the notion that the only good in Mohammedanism has been derived from Christianity. While, however, the last named religion claims to be the sole exclusive divine revelation, it is bound to look with favor, if not with hatred, on a faith which dislodged Christianity from its birthplace, and holds its own against this one infallible religion.

Mr. Quilliam brings to his task peculiar advantages. He has been a Christian, and he is now a Mohammedan, welcomed and brought into contact with the heads of the faith. His work has been perused and commended by the Caliph of

the Faithful, and is now being translated into Turkish, German, Bengalee, and Tamil. For Islam is as much a missionary faith as Christianity, and is profiting fully as largely from the break-up of more barbarous faiths both in India and Africa. On the subject of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ Mr. Quilliam carries the war very effectively into the enemy's camp. But it is his exposition of Islam which will interest most, and it is interesting to note that he adopts the description given in 1839 by David Urquhart: "Islam, as a religion, teaches no new dogmas, establishes no new revelation, no new precepts; has no priesthood, and no church government. It gives a code to the people, and a constitution to the State, enforced by the sanction of religion."

Messrs. Chapman and Hall announce as nearly ready a new work by Samuel Laing on *Human Origins: Evidences from History and Science*. The work will be uniform with *Modern Science and Modern Thought*.

Mr. Malthus Questell Holyoake, who, by the way, was, we believe, named after Malthus Questell Ryall, a worthy coadjutor of Mr. G. J. Holyoake in the days of the *Oracle of Reason*, half a century ago, is preparing for the press a work on *Garibaldi and England*. The book will be published by subscription through Messrs. Swann, Sonnenschien and Co. at the price of a guinea, and will contain many unpublished documents and much original information about the English Garibaldian Legion, an explanation of the abrupt departure of Garibaldi from London, etc. Mr. G. J. Holyoake was secretary to the English Legion, sent out to aid Garibaldi, and his son is fully informed on all matters connected with that interesting episode of modern history.

The Poetical Works of Shelley, edited by Mr. Forman Buxton, are to appear in the Aldine Poets in five volumes. This will be a worthy centenary edition of the great Freethought poet.

Great praise for patient industry must be accorded to Mr. F. S. Ellis, whose *Lyrical Concordance to the Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* is now issued in a big volume of 818 pages, with double columns, by Mr. Quaritch, the famous bookseller of Piccadilly. This Concordance is the result of six years' labor, carried on with zeal and knowledge. Mr. Ellis has erected his own monument for Shelley's centenary and may be proud of his achievement.

New Holidays in Essex, edited by Percy Lindley, is the title of a neat sixpenny guide to the picturesque parts of Essex. The book is full of information and excellently illustrated.

Prof. Huxley has written a short introduction to Miss J. D. Hunting's translation of F. Rocquain's book on *The Revolutionary Spirit Preceding the French Revolution*.

Mr. Leslie Stephen has recovered from his indisposition, and is said to be occupied upon a history of Unitarianism.

The Catholic *Germania* complains that Hæckel's *Anthropogenie* (1891) which is used as a text-book, contains a coarse allusion to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (p. 132) and (p. 852) a cynical reference to the veneration of the Holy Coat last year at Trèves.

A translation of Lotze's *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion* has at last appeared, edited by F. O. Conybeare. The work may be termed an attempt to establish Theism and with it Christianity on the idealist philosophy. With Kant, he gives up the design argument, and splits on the rock of ascribing personality to an infinite being. He asserts the right of philosophy to discuss and control religious questions. The result is an attenuated Theism and still more refined Christianity.

OBITUARY.

I regret to announce the death, by accident, of John Richardson, Sunderland, on the 22nd ult. He was a very active member of the local Branch, a kind father, good husband, and was highly respected. His funeral took place on Sunday, the 26th ult., in the presence of a large concourse of people.—R. WEIGHTMAN, sec.

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.]

Secretaries may send in a month's list of lectures in advance.

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): Saturday, Sunday, and Tuesday at 8.15, social gatherings. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 8, T. Thurlow, "Secular Polity apart from Anti-theological Propaganda."

Camberwell: Debate between Charles Watts and Rev. Dr. Duffy on "Are Bible Teachings and Modern Science Antagonistic?"; first night, Monday at 8, in Trinity Court Hall, Addington-square; second night, Tuesday at 8, in North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 5.30, debating class, debate between Mr. Vogel and R. G. L.; 7.30, G. H. Martin, "Christian Infidelity: a Vindication of Freethought."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Devil and Eternal Torment"; preceded by dramatic recital by Mrs. Watts.

West London—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Notting-Hill Gate; Friday at 8.30, adjourned general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, H. Snell, "Is there a Moral Governor of the Universe?"; 7, G. Shambrook, "Has Man a Soul?"

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

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Death and the Judgment."

Columbia-road (near Columbia Market), Hackney-road: 11.15, S. H. Alison will lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed"; 3.30, C. Cohen, "Missionaries."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8, a lecture. Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, W. Heaford, "Why did Christ Die?"

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Faith."

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 7, H. Courtney, "Peace on Earth."

Kingsland Green (near Ball's Pond-road): 11.30, T. Thurlow, "History of the Bible."

Lambeth—New Cut (corner of Short-street): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery, and is it Woman's Friend?"

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, H. Courtney will lecture.

Midland Arches (near Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, C. J. Steinberg will lecture.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, H. Courtney, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "St. John's Dream."

Plaistow Green: 7, R. Rosetti, "Bible Blunders."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, C. J. Hunt, "Christianity and Science."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

Walthamstow—Markhouse Common: 6.30, F. Haslam, "Revelation and Modern Science." Thursday at 7.45, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: Brakes start at 10 for picnic at Fountain Inn, Clent.

Bradford—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate: 3, members' quarterly meeting.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 6.30, business; 7, Mr. Matthews, "Some Probabilities of a God."

Derby—44 Howard-street: 7, a meeting.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11.30, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Small, B.Sc., "The Birth and Death of Worlds."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: 6.30, James Hooper, "How I became an Atheist, and why I remain one" (free).

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, G. Selkirk, "Faith or Reason—III."

Pendlebury—Co-operative Hall: 2, John Lee, "Socialism: what it Means and how to Attain it."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.

Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, members' meeting.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, a Local Gentleman will read an original drama, "Can Purity be Won by Suffering?"

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, debate on "Have the Tories become more Radical than the Liberals?"; opened by Mr. Bow.

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, music, etc.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Blackburn—Market-square: Sam Standing, 3.30, "Christ on the Labor Question"; 7, "How Men Made Gods."

Bradford—Sackville-street (the top), Westgate: 6.30, John Grange, "Does Man Survive Death?"

Leeds—Woodhouse Moor (near the band-stand): 7, J. Greevz-Fisher will lecture; 8.30, members' meeting, picnic, etc.

Manchester—Stevenson-square: 11, James Hooper, "Secularists' Duty at the coming Election." Denmark-road at 3, James Hooper, "Twenty Years' Experience of Christian Charity." Monday at 8, Denmark-road, Sam Standing, "The Dawn of the French Revolution."

Rochdale—Town Hall-square: Thursday, Sam Standing, "The Benefits and Truth of Christianity."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—July 3, m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; 10, m., Lambeth; e., Hammersmith; 17 to 31, Holidays. Aug. 7, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 14, m., Westminster; a., Regent's Park; 21, m., Camberwell; 28, e., Camberwell.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—All mornings booked to September.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—July 3, m., Camberwell; 10, Clerkenwell; 17, m., Westminster 24 to 31, Annual Tour. Aug. 7, Camberwell; 14, Southampton; 21, Westminster.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—July 3, m., Bethnal Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Edmonton; 7, Walthamstow; 10, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 14, Walthamstow; 17, m., Mile End Waste; a., Tottenham; e., Edmonton; 21, Walthamstow; 24, m., Lambeth; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow; 28, Walthamstow; 31, m., Clerkenwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

SAM STANDRING, 106 Oxford-road, All Saints' Manchester.—July 3, Blackburn; 7, Rochdale; 10, Salford; 13, Chester; 14, Pendlebury; 16, Huddersfield; 17, Bradford; 31, Manchester. Aug. 7, Rochdale; 14, Hull.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—July 10, m., Columbia-road; 17, m., Lambeth; 24, m., Bethnal Green; 31, a., Finsbury Park.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Chant-street, Stratford, E.—July, all mornings booked; July 10, e., West Ham; 24, e., Battersea. Aug. 7, m. and e., Chatham; 14, m., Bethnal Green; e., Walthamstow; 21, m., Victoria Park; 28, m., Wood Green.

T. THURLOW, 34 Wetherell-road, South Hackney.—July 3, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, mornings, Kingsland Green.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon-street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—July 3, Manchester; 10, Hull; 11, Grimsby.

J. GREEVZ-FISHER, 78 Harrogate-road, Leeds.—July 3, Leeds; 17, Leeds.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—July 3, m., Victoria Park; 17, m., Kingsland Green; 24, m., Plaistow Green; 31, e., Battersea. Aug. 7, e., Hammersmith; 14, a., Tottenham; 21, Halstead; 28, m., Lambeth.

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