

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## MR. GLADSTONE'S RELIGIOUS MANIFESTO.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, if he had lived, would certainly have had a post in the Liberal administration. Mr. John Morley, another famous Freethinker, is the Liberal leader's first lieutenant. He will necessarily occupy a high position when the Grand Old Man forms a new government. The appointment will occasion another election at Newcastle, and his enemies say they will turn him out of his seat. But prophecy is a very risky business, and threats often come home to roost. "Honest John" may hold his seat after all. But in any case he will probably find a seat somewhere, and take the place in a Liberal ministry to which his intellectual and moral distinction entitles him.

Let us suppose, for an instant, that Charles Bradlaugh and John Morley were both in the Cabinet. Would it not be a striking phenomenon? Two open, declared, notorious Freethinkers helping to govern the British empire! It is enough to take a Christian's breath away. What a change it implies since the days, only twenty or thirty years ago, when the cry of "Atheist!" was like the cry of "mad dog!" Yes, the world *does* move, and it carries all sorts and conditions of men—even fools and bigots—along with it.

While the great majority of the people, however, are still Christians, at least by profession, it would never do for the Premier to be a Freethinker. That would be an intolerable shock to popular prejudice. And the Grand Old Man is *not* a Freethinker. He is a splendid specimen of the old-fashioned Christian. He believes nearly as much of "the old religion" as any man in the kingdom. He is more orthodox than the average run of ministers under forty; far more orthodox than the principal leaders of Church and Nonconformity. The millions of Christians look up to him with admiration, and also with a sneaking fondness, as "like unto themselves." He is a refreshing spectacle to the multitude of political Liberals, who fancy that Liberalism has no function beyond the caucus, the hustings, and the House of Commons.

These political Liberals know that Mr. Gladstone is an old-fashioned Christian, but they like to be assured of it, from time to time, by an emphatic demonstration. Mr. Gladstone himself seems perfectly aware of this disposition on the part of his followers. His attack on Professor Huxley was timed for the eve of a general election. When Mr. Bradlaugh carried the Oaths Act, Mr. Gladstone showed that toleration had not weakened his orthodoxy by "going for" Colonel Ingersoll—and going away again with still greater celerity. On the eve of the recent general election Mr. Gladstone issued a new edition of his *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. It was a sort of intimation that the Grand Old Man, as far as religion is concerned, is as firm as Marshal MacMahon, who exclaimed *j'y suis, j'y reste*—which being roughly

Englished, means "I am in the mud, and will stick there."

Mr. Gladstone's preface to this second edition of a well-written but worthless book, will be pleasant reading to a large section of his admirers. As Lincoln said, when his opinion was asked of a certain book—"If people like that sort of thing, that's just the sort of thing they'd like." The composition is grave and sonorous; the writer means something, and you follow him easily; but when you have finished and closed the book, you say to yourself, "Hang me if I understand, after all, what he *does* mean." Some people say this is a characteristic of Mr. Gladstone's eloquence.

In the very first sentence the reader is reminded that the "primary purpose" of Mr. Gladstone's book is "to point out that recent controversies stand related rather to the literary form than to the substance of the divine revelation conveyed to us in the Old Testament; and to insist upon some of the arguments which tend to prove that in the main the old belief as to that substance is plainly the right belief." The first part of this sentence is decidedly inaccurate. Professor Huxley, at least, has been very vigorously attacking the *substance* of the Old Testament, and some of the substance of the New Testament. This kind of attack, indeed, has been going on for more than a century, and it shows no sign of abatement; on the contrary, the attack on the substance of the Bible has compelled the "advanced" clergy to revolutionise their theory of inspiration, so as to save the *general* credit of the Bible while acknowledging its scientific, historical, and moral defects. Now let the careful reader note the pawky style of the old Parliamentary hand. The arguments he insists upon "*tend to prove*"—which is not the same thing as *proving*; for the tower of a church *tends* to fall to the ground, but it stands aloft for centuries. Then again, these arguments only tend to prove that the old belief is right "in the main." How much is "in the main"? Is not the phrase a means of reservation; one of those little devices of a practised rhetorician, who leaves a loophole of escape from an overwhelming defeat. If the worst comes to the worst "in the main" can be made elastic, like Falstaff's company of men in buckram.

Mr. Gladstone's preface displays, also, the fossilised method of his criticism. He goes back to Milman, Ewald, and Paley—men who wrote before the flood. He catches hold of Dr. Warring, an American gentleman whose fame is *not* co-extensive with civilisation. Not a word is said about the dozens of books by eminent Christian scholars—to say nothing of "infidels"—that traverse all the chief positions of Mr. Gladstone's volume. Yes, the Grand Old Man is old-fashioned to the end of the chapter. He has even added "a note on the Swine Miracle" in reply to Professor Huxley. As the Americans say, he "goes the whole hog." Devils in pigs are not too much for his credulity. And the Grand Old Man has lived eighty-three years in the century of Darwin. It is a touching spectacle.

G. W. FOOTE.

## JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES.

ALTHOUGH the matter may be disputed, I hold that the Jews had their secret societies and mysteries. It has indeed been contended that the whole race are rather a caste than a nation. However this may be, it is easy to see that in the Levite tribe of *Cohens*, the school of the prophets, and the *sod* of the *Kadeshim*, there were inner circles probably with esoteric rites, and some of which show themselves in the modern Kabbalah. The Kabbalists have always held there was a "hidden doctrine" handed down orally from the time of Moses. It is notable that the word *sod* (the original signification of which was probably a place to recline on, a couch or cushion) came to imply intimacy, mystery, secrecy, and assembly. Thus Israel says of Simeon and Levi, "O my soul come not unto their secret, unto their assembly" (Gen. xlix. 6). The mystic serpent was the sign of the Levites. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints," reads our authorised version of Ps. lxxxix. 7. It should be "El is very terrible in the *sod* of the *Kadeshim*"\*—the holy initiates, whose functions are explained in the first essay of my *Bible Studies*. *Sod* was the name of the mysteries of Baal Adonis.† Adonis became the Adonai—said to be used as a substitute for Jahveh, but really founded on Adon—master or lord.‡

Job, who laments his intimates or fellow-initiates abhor him (xix. 19), though formerly "the secret of God was upon his tent" (xxix. 4), and who says "Here is my tau sign, let Shaddai respond" (xxx. 35), asks "Heardst thou the mystery of El?" (xv. 8)—"his secret" in Authorised Version. "The secret of the Lord," or the mysteries of Jahveh, is with them that fear him, says one Psalmist (xxv. 14). "Hide me from the mysteries of the wicked" says another (Ps. lxiv. 2). Amos (iii. 7) says "he revealeth his mysteries unto his servants the prophets." Jahveh says to Ezekiel the prophets that divine lies shall not enter his people's mysteries (Ezekiel xiii. 9), and Jeremiah (xxiii. 18) asks, "Who hath stood in the mysteries of Jahveh, and hath perceived and heard his word, and marked my word?"

The word Jahveh, the sacred Tetragrammaton I.H.V.H., is one of the mysteries of Judaism § Lev. xxiv. 16 has been interpreted as sentencing to death any who ventured to pronounce it. Maimonides says the word was confined to the sages, who only communicated the true pronunciation and the mysteries connected therewith to their worthiest disciples. It was given by the high priest in a whisper from mouth to ear, like the Mahabon of the master masons, the Jabulon of the R.A., etc., in the holy of holies when entered once a year. Modern secret societies have borrowed largely, generally without understanding it, from the symbology and terminology of the Kabbalists and Gnostics.

The words *mystery* and *mysteries* are found twenty-eight times in the New Testament, in such various ways as these: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xiii. 11, Luke viii. 10); "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. xvi. 25); "we speak the word of God in a mystery" (1 Cor. ii. 7); "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1); "Behold, I show you a mystery" (1 Cor. xv. 51); "Having made

\* The previous verse (Ps. lxxxix. 6) should not be "who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord," but "who of the sons of the gods is equal to Jahveh?" So verse 18 should be "Our shield belongs to Jahveh, Kadosh, Israel, our Moloch."

† *Sodi* appears as a name (Numb. xiii. 10), and Besodejah the confident of Jah (Neh. iii. 6). The term *ish Sodi* is yet applied in Masonry to masters with whom the greatest familiarity is possible.

‡ The Adonia or mysteries of Adonis will be dealt with later on.

§ Further particulars on the *Shemhamphorash* will be found in the notes to the *Jewish Life of Christ*.

known unto us the mystery of his will" (Eph. i. 9, iii. 3 and 4); "Fellowship of the mystery" (Eph. iii. 9); "This is a great mystery," *i.e.*, Christ and Church as husband and wife (Eph. v. 22); "mystery hid from æons" (Col. i. 26); "the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles" (Col. i. 27); "the mystery of Christ" (Col. iv. 3); "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. ii., 7); "great is the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. iii. 16); "The mystery of the seven stars" (Rev. i. 20); "mystery of God" (Rev. x. 7); "Mystery, Babylon" (Rev. xvii. 3); "mystery of the woman" (Rev. xvii. 7). Apart from the word, there are many references to a concealed doctrine. Jesus says to his disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." Yet all Christians flatter themselves they know the true inner doctrines which make them wise unto salvation. Only poor infidels are without, among the profane. The Rev. Robert Taylor, the Devil's Chaplain, who knew a little about Christian mysteries, thought the Epistle to the Hebrews a sort of Masonic document, and certainly it is full of terms best understood by those initiated in the mysteries. See, for instance, Heb. vi. 1, vii. 11, x. 14, xi. 40.

Some of the Christian doctrines were too dark for the many. Thus of the doctrine of castration Jesus says, "All men cannot receive this saying save they to whom it is given" (Matt. xix. 11). Where he said he was the bread that came from heaven, they said, "This is a hard saying who can hear it." The first information we have concerning the gospels is the statement of Papias that Matthew wrote the Logia or sayings of the Hebrew tongue. Dean Alford, in his Prolegomena to the New Testament, observes, sec. v., p. 15, "The sacred books of the Christians were not published to the world in general, but were reserved as precious possessions of the believing societies." The chief accusation against the early Christians was their meeting in secret and by night to celebrate their mysteries.

The most learned of the early Christian Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, says of the ancient mysteries:

"Wherefore, in accordance with the method of concealment, the truly sacred Word, truly divine and most necessary for us, deposited in the shrine of truth, was by the Egyptians indicated by what were called among them the *adyta*, and by the Hebrew by the veil. Only the consecrated were allowed access to them."

He says almost the whole of scripture is spoken in enigmas:

"Now then it is not wished that all things should be exposed indiscriminately to all and sundry, or the benefits of wisdom communicated to those who have not even in a dream been purified in soul (for it is not allowed to hand to every chance-comer what has been procured with such laborious efforts); nor are the mysteries of the word to be expounded to the profane."||

Origen, the Christian Father, contrasts the open teaching of the philosophers with the reserved doctrine of Christianity. "For," says he, "the philosophers who converse in public do not pick and choose their hearers, but he who likes stands and listens." But the Christian he goes on to say, test as far as possible the souls of those who wish to become hearers and instruct them privately. The chief mysteries that have remained in the rites of Christianity are Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and these, as we have seen, are directly taken from the mysteries of the ancients.

J. M. WHEELER.

|| Miscellanies, bk. v., chap. iv., p. 233; and chap. ix., p. 255, vol. xii., Ante-Nicene Christian Library

## QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

MANY Christians suppose that because we, as Free-thinkers, do not accept their explanation of things, we ought to be prepared to answer any question they may put to us in reference to Nature and her mysterious forces. And if we fail to reply to all their interrogations or to remove any difficulty they present, it is thought that our principles are in consequence defective. No one professes to be able to reply to every query that may be proposed in reference to any subject; and certain it is that a religious teacher answers less than most persons. We could ask any clergyman a hundred questions concerning God, the Bible, heaven, hell, predestination, and many other topics in which he professes to have the most implicit faith that he would at once confess were beyond the powers of any theologian to answer. Would it be deemed by Christians reasonable, therefore, for us to condemn their faith on that account? We think not.

Although it is true we do not profess to answer everything that may be submitted to us, we are always ready to do our best in that direction. For instance, the following questions have been sent to us with a special request to reply to them "from the Freethinker's view," which we willingly accede to.

1. "What was the origin of the human race?" We answer: Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the probable origination of man, it is certain that the Bible account of it is in many important respects thoroughly inaccurate. Of course it is not pretended that a full and definite statement can be given as to the precise time and mode in which mankind first appeared on the earth. But the most satisfactory information, in our opinion, that can be acquired upon the subject is to be found in the writings of Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley, Tyndall, and other scientists, who allege that the theory of evolution—which has been reached by an induction which, if not perfect, is yet as nearly so as is possible in the present state of our knowledge of nature—furnishes the best solution to the problem of man's origin. There is no doubt in the minds of those who have studied the question impartially, free from all theological bias, that man, the highest form of animal life, has been evolved by a long series of gradations and transformations from the lowest forms of organic beings. The human family has not descended from one pair of ancestors, as inferred by orthodoxy; but, as indicated by Natural Selection, its development has proceeded from the first until now through several lines of descent. This matter is fully dealt with by Darwin in his *Descent of Man*, and by Haeckel in his *Natural History of Creation*.

2. "What is life and whence did it come?" We answer that we only know what is termed life through its manifestations. Life is not an entity, but a phenomenon which results from the play of certain forces upon inorganic matter. It, therefore, does not come and go like an actual thing. It might as well be asked where the light comes from when a match is struck? Tyndall recognises in matter, "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life." Huxley says, "if it were given me to look beyond the abyss of geological time . . . I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from non-living matter." Mr. Herbert Spencer thinks that life, under all its forms, has arisen by an unbroken evolution, and through natural causes alone; and this view we think accords with reason and philosophy.

3. "Is the same process of evolution by which man was formed still in operation? If so, how will future evolved beings regard those already in existence?" Certainly similar processes to those formerly in operation are now going on only greatly modified by a thousand circumstances which exist to-day, that were absent in the past—the presence of civilised man being one of the most

important. How future man will regard the then existing races of humanity, must be replied to by future man himself, we content ourselves with the present in this particular. We have not the gift of prophecy. But inferior races will probably be looked upon by the superior in the same light that inferior races are to-day, considered fit subjects to be cheated, tyrannised over, taught to drink whiskey or rum, and have the Gospel preached to them by missionaries.

4. If the Anthropomorphite apes are nearest to the confines of humanity, why is it that the ape, whose shape approaches nearest that of man, is as much a brute as any of the other lower animals? The intelligence of the large apes does not differ in so very great a degree from some of the savage races of men. The Tasmanians were so low in the scale of intelligence that they could not be civilised, and they died out before the advances of civilisation, and the aborigines of Australia are rapidly following in their wake. They do not seem to be susceptible of any change for the better, and as they are not left to themselves, as apes are, they become extinct. Dr. Page in his work *Man: Where, Whence and Whither?* asks, "What shall we say of the mental capacity of the now extinct Tasmanian, which could not carry him beyond individual conceptions, or of the monosyllabic click-cluck of the Bushman, as compared with the intellectual grasp and the inflectional languages of modern Europe?"

5. "Where did motion come from?" We answer Motion did not come from anywhere, or indeed come at all. It is eternal. We cannot even conceive of its non-existence. For, in truth, motion, or to put it scientifically, forms of force, constitute our only knowledge of the external world. To create or annihilate energy is as impossible as to create or annihilate matter.

6. "Whence came order and design in Nature?" We answer: There is no evidence that we can discover of design in the universe, but only of adaptation, which is a very different thing. That numerous purposeless things exist in nature no scientist will dispute. Many organs are to be found in the human body of no use whatever, such as the auricular muscles, the mammary glands in the male, etc. As to order, that is the result of the operations of laws inherent in nature.

But what of disorder, of which we see such an abundance on every hand? Did an Infinite Being produce both these conditions? If so, he is inferior in excellence to a good and noble man. If this alleged Infinite Being did not establish disorder, then there is a cause operating in the universe independently of him, which he either cannot counteract, or has not the desire to do so. In the one case he lacks infinite power, and in the other he proves himself destitute of unlimited goodness. We doubt if any human being in his normal condition, who had the power, would hesitate to use it to alleviate the affliction, to cure the wrong, and to destroy the injustice which cast such a gloom over so large a portion of society. To lessen the pain of the afflicted, to assist the needy, to help the oppressed, are characteristics of our nature, of which we are all proud, and to indulge in which affords us no slight pleasure. Shall it be said that a God of infinite goodness would be less solicitous for the happiness of his creatures than is man for the welfare of his kind? Contemplating the success of crime, the triumph of despotism, the prevalence of starvation, the struggles of many to get the means of mere existence, the appalling sights of deformity in children who are born into the world so diseased, so decrepit, that happiness seldom if ever gladdens their lives—remembering these evils and woes, it is difficult to believe in a God who could and would not remedy this lamentable state of things.

CHARLES WATTS.

Wool—"What do you go to church for?" Van Pelt—"To set an example to my children." Wool—"Are they troubled with insomnia?"

## SHALL WE LIVE AGAIN?

I DO not know that we shall, I do not believe that we shall, I do not expect that we shall. I know there is in some persons an instinctive love of life sufficient to account for their belief in and desire for its continuation. But when we speak of continuity of life in a scientific sense, we only refer to what has been observed on this globe in animal and vegetal life. It means a continuation, not of individuals, but of the species. The same applies to man in all his varieties, dating back as far as research can carry us. As a broad statement of a general fact, life, in its manifold manifestations, we may say, dates back to the earliest organisation of which it is a result. Whatever may have been the original method, all forms of life, as known to-day, result from pre-existing organisation. Beyond that, we must wait till science explains the how of nature before that.

Hence, then, so far as our knowledge extends, all *individuals*, whether plants or animals, *begin and end* with their organisations. The matter by which the organisms are built up, and of which they consist, merely undergoes change, never ceases to exist in its ultimate constituents, in so far as experiment and observation assure us. Instances sometimes quoted of certain forms of life, as seen under the microscope, are only instances of latent or suspended life—revivification. That is, when these objects are *really dead* they cannot be revived.

As to the illustration of the caterpillar and the butterfly, they are *one and the same being* throughout, as may be tested by observation and experiment. A butterfly is but a better developed caterpillar. Other creatures undergo still greater changes. Composition, decomposition, and recomposition, are words which roughly, though fairly, represent the order or observed method of nature in all its manifestations of life. This applies to the seed put into the earth, which, under suitable conditions, reproduces its like. But if the conditions are not suitable, the seeds die, and there are no crops. The prevalent idea about this matter is that these instances explain the probable existence of man after death—that is, that the seed and the man both *die* so that they may live again!

A statement of this position ought to be sufficient to make the matter clearly absurd to any ordinary intelligence. You put wheat into the ground, specially prepared, and the result, all going well, is a long stalk, with a group at the top called "an ear of wheat." Now, put a man into the soil—what comes up? Not a group of men. After a quarter of a century, under ordinary circumstances, open the grave—what do you find? Probably a metal coffin plate, the bones of the skull and arms and legs; nothing of which even one single man could be formed by any conceivable means. It is not necessary to enlarge on this view, because all the facts are familiar to most people, and obvious to all except the blind, and those, the blindest of all, that will not see. It may be urged that in putting the man into the earth it is not *expected* that a bunch will come up; in that case the argument based on the grain of wheat put in the ground is of less value than chaff. But Christians *do* expect the man John Brown will come up at the day of resurrection, even if he is cremated, like the bishops were at Oxford. What is clearly meant, however absurd and impossible, is that a man, after death, will appear again alive and well, as he was known among his associates. The best illustration of the meaning of this position that occurs to me is that of a man rescued from drowning, of which we occasionally have instance. By skilful treatment, in some cases, the power to breathe is restored, and all the other functions and faculties resume their former offices. By the side of this restored man, may be another man, on whom the experiment of restoration has failed. What is the difference? In the latter case, the man is pronounced *dead*—that is, he has

ceased to breathe, and, as a *consequence*, has ceased to speak, feel, think, live—ceased to manifest those characteristics which distinguished him as a living unit of our race. But the man in the grave is less capable than this one of resuming his old character, because he does not possess even the *organism* which life, thought, and feeling require for their manifestation. For a really dead man to exhibit the functions of a living man would involve a crowd of miracles too numerous and stupendous to admit of intelligible statement—absolutely inconceivable. The main point involved can only be met by the unsupported assertion that God Almighty will one day perform this stupendous miracle of re-animating *dust*, an unknown event in nature or history. To completely dispose of this assumption, let us suppose the present method of nature is *ordained by God*. The order is that all organised beings are dissolved and become parts of other living organisms, going a round that will only cease in the day of universal destruction. Besides this, we have to consider what man is. He is an organism subject to the law already named, which is chemically true of all existing organised matter. We have seen, in the case of the restored drowning man, that all his functions are connected, related; that when he ceased to use his lungs, all his other functions ceased. Man is a compound being—he is one and not several beings. It is *one and the same being* that feels, thinks, remembers, and by feeding and breathing builds up the organism that he transmits to posterity. We have seen that the power to breathe and think does not reside in some essence different from that which maintains all the functions with which man is endowed. And what is true of man is also true of all creatures below him—the transition is gradual down to the *amæba*.

It is not too much to assert, on the facts within our knowledge, that the popular notion that "we shall meet again" is destitute of any foundation in the nature of things. Any one who has mastered the ancient injunction, "Man, know thyself," cannot be other than fully persuaded that the popular notion is a popular delusion. To the scientific mind, physically speaking, there is no continuation of the flesh and blood, bone and muscle man, as we know him, beyond the grave.

I have already admitted the existing desire for another life, but it is quite another thing to suggest how that desire can be gratified. Beliefs, hopes and desires are not evidences, although some people treat them as though they were objective facts. An *internal conviction*, however sincere, is not proof of an external objective reality. It may be urged that the belief would not exist if not realisable, but many instances occur in life showing that what we desire, hope for, or expect, is subject to *conditions*—compliance with which is necessary to secure the object desired.

Under what conditions could a perishable creature like man exist as a never-ending being? What useful end would be served if he could exist in interminable time? I see no use of transforming man into an eternal, imperishable person, even if it could be done. Any one sitting down seriously to consider the words "live for ever," would turn giddy at the very thought *about* it, for in fact he is incapable of thinking *of* it. Man has no faculties to comprehend time without beginning or end. To think *of* a thing and *about* a thing is very different. Some believe that Jesus rose from the dead, therefore they will also. In the first place, it does not follow if Jesus did rise from the dead, that John Brown will. But Jesus is not a parallel case, for he did not lie in the grave, like John Brown, till there was nothing left but his *dust*. According to the account, Jesus was as complete after death as before; even his appetite for fish and honeycomb was unaffected. Now I submit that the idea of all the human race, past, present and to come, rising out of their graves, and asking for meat, can only be entertained by those to whom arithmetic is a stranger, as well as the amount of the present supply of fish. Is

any man justified in imposing such a story on his less informed neighbor? I believe truth is best for everybody, whether they can accept it or not. The progress of mankind is not promoted by illusions or delusions.

C. C. CATTELL.

(To be concluded.)

### FETISH WORSHIP.

WHEN we remember how much of the savage nature is within us all, how largely we are influenced by feelings of wonder and fear, and how little we actually know of the forces about us, the wise among us naturally pause in their attempts to explain the multifarious phenomena of the universe. And since we are often puzzled in the same way as our ignorant ancestors concerning the wonders of nature, we can appreciate the feelings which led them to the belief that the soul was a kind of breath which came mysteriously into man and departed as mysteriously, that dreams were real, and that good and bad spirits hovered perpetually about us, that were capable either of doing us good or seriously injuring us. Even civilised people have a very vague idea as to what the soul is; many of them think it is an entity of some sort, and in China and India people will keep the window or the door open in the hour of death, so that the soul may not be hindered in its flight to heaven; while in Germany they have a saying that you must not slam a door lest you pinch a soul in it.\*

Civilised man, as well as the savage, stands in awe of the unseen; even highly intelligent men will shudder at the mention of a ghost. Remembering this, it is easy to understand how our ancestors felt when witnessing some of the stupendous phenomena of nature. They were paralysed with fear, and worshipped where they did not understand. They watched the dark clouds rising in the heavens, and presently the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, and the savage fell on his knees and worshipped powers which seemed to be stronger than himself. He saw animals about him that appeared to possess qualities far transcending his own, and these also he worshipped. The very lowest form of worship, however, is that offered to lifeless things, such as wood or stone, a stump of a tree, an old hat, or even a red rag. This is called "fetish" worship. These objects are worshipped because they are supposed to possess a charm. Thus one object may be supposed to contain a good charm, another an evil one. Edward Clodd tells us that the worship of stones, about which we read in the Bible, prevails among some rude tribes to this day; that savages regard stones as living beings, sometimes as husbands and wives, and sometimes as the dwelling-place of spirits.

Further he says: "The confused ideas which cause the savage to look upon dreams as real cause him to confound the lifeless with the living, and to carefully destroy the parings off his nails and cuttings of his hair, lest evils should be worked through them. The New Zealander would thrust pebbles down the throat of a male child to make its heart hard. The Zulu chews wood, that the heart of his foe or the woman whom he loves may soften towards him even as the wood is bruised. The dreadful practice of eating human flesh is supposed to have arisen from the idea that if the flesh of some strong, brave man be eaten it makes the eater strong and brave also. The natives of Borneo will not eat deer lest they should thereby become faint-hearted; and the Malays will give much for the flesh of the tiger to make them brave. If a Tartar doctor has not the medicine which he wants he will write its name on a scrap of paper and make a pill of it for the patient to take."†

In olden times in some countries priests made a good living by writing prayers upon a board, then rubbing them off and selling the water. Fetish worship has formed an important feature in the religions of ancient peoples. In point of fact, it describes the degree of intellectual development reached by various races on the road to civilisation. Let us for a moment consider man before there was a solitary house in the world; when he lived in holes dug out of the earth just big enough for him and his family to creep into; then he moved about in fear and trembling, for he not only had to fight against his fellow creatures, but he went also in fear of animals who sought him as their

prey. Under these circumstances he felt how unspeakably helpless he was, and cried aloud for help. He sought assistance from these poor fetishes, which he thought in his ignorance had power to help him. Sometimes he imagined he received what in his agony he yearned for. Then he thought these gods most kind. Perhaps he wanted food to eat, and had tried in vain to procure it. Presently a poor beast comes across his path, and he slays it and satisfies his hunger. Or perhaps he himself is in danger: a ferocious animal is in pursuit of him, and he sees means of escape; but presently comes in view a narrow stream of water which he can swim across, but which his pursuer cannot. When he is again secure he utters a deep sigh of relief. For hundreds of years these fetishes were worshipped by our ignorant ancestors.

It must be understood, however, that fetish worship and idolatry are not the same thing; for the fetish is regarded as a real god, while an idol is often only treated as an image of the god worshipped, and not as the god himself. It is quite true that in some cases "fools" have been regarded as gods who heard prayers and had the power to answer them, but not always. The fact is, that the masses do not deal in abstractions; they must have concrete ideas, and so in all ages we find them making images of the gods they worship, and that notwithstanding the commandment which tells them to make no graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or earth beneath, or the water under the earth.

All photography is a violation of this commandment, and most of the work of the artist is also. The masses must have images. As Macaulay says,\* "Logicians may reason about abstractions, but the great mass of mankind never feel an interest in them. They must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. . . . The history of the Jews is the record of a struggle between pure Theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception, but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no image to their minds."

Yes, the uncultivated mind must have some tangible object to worship; something that is as palpable to feeling as to sight; and thus arose the great multitude of fetishes and idols before which man has bent the knee and prostrated the intellect for thousands of years, and which even to-day find numerous worshippers among the ignorant and superstitious in most countries of the world.

A. B. MOSS.

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Our Christian critics are wont to discourse much upon the "infidel" "reign of terror" in France. And yet more people were murdered in one day (St. Bartholomew's) by Christian authorities than were murdered during all the terrible reign named. It is estimated that the total number of the victims of the "reign of terror" is 18,603; whilst the lowest number of victims of the Christian massacre of St. Bartholomew's is 25,000, although there is every reason for believing that the number is not less than 30,000. In six weeks' time that religious zealot, the Duke of Alva, instigated the murder for conscience' sake of 18,000 people in the small kingdom of the Netherlands. The Robespierreans, who were at once the actors and the victims of that wild reign in France, were to a man believers in a "supreme being."—*Ironclad Age*.

### HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

\* See *Childhood of the World*, by Edward Clodd; p. 77.

† *Childhood of the World*, p. 80.

\* Essay on Milton.

## BOOK CHAT.

So many Jesuses have been evolved from the scanty materials compiled in the second century, that *The Real Jesus* seems a very pretentious title. It is, however, only fair to Mr. John Vickers, the author of the book before us, to say that he merely intends his title to serve as a contrast to the various idealistic portraits of Jesus which Christian biographies have evolved. He holds that, taking the records as they stand, the character of Jesus has been extravagantly overpraised, and that those who, giving up his godhead, yet place him before the world as a pattern man, occupy a position logically untenable. "The fact is," says Mr. Vickers, "Jesus has more than any other ecclesiastical figure-head an artificial character; he is judged, not by his intrinsic merits, but by the commanding place which he holds in the Church by the fortune of priority. It is the old superstitious worship of origins that has contributed, beyond anything else, to magnify and mystify his personality."

From a professedly Jewish standpoint, Mr. Vickers reviews the career and character of the Christian idol. He considers his Messianic claims; his appeal to miracles; the prophetic evidence; his claims as a reformer and moral teacher; and finds sufficient evidence to detract from his being considered either as a heaven-sent Messiah, or as a moral exemplar. The severity of his judgment may be gathered from the following passage on the relations of Jesus to the masses of the people. "He did nothing with superior wisdom to develop the resources of the country and provide employment for the poor; all his efforts were directed to the unbinging of industry, the diminution of wealth, and the promotion of universal idleness and beggary. It was no part of his endeavor to see the peasant and the artisan better remunerated and more comfortably housed, for he despised domestic comforts as much as Diogenes, and believed their enjoyment would disqualify people for obtaining the everlasting pleasures of paradise."

Mr. Vickers has two chapters on "The Crucifixion Drama," and "The Resurrection Drama," but had he realised how essentially dramatic these features were, in the sense that they were histrionic representations, like those of the death and resurrection of Osiris and Adonis, he would not have needed the extravagant hypothesis of some impostor who personated the dead Jesus, and might have been led to see that the only real Jesus was the ideal Christ.

Mr. Vickers concludes with a chapter on "The Fruits of Christianity." His work is sure to prove very unpalatable to Christians who shut their eyes to all defects in the object of their worship. It is on that account the more necessary. "The criticism which tends to bring down to a human level one ancient Judean who has long been worshipped, and raised to a human level many others who have been unjustly execrated, is not a work of malignity, but of charity."

A society called the Esoteric Christian Union, founded by Edward Maitland, has put forward a shilling booklet called *The New Gospel of Interpretation*. This new gospel seems to deal with the old Bible in a sort of go-as-you-please method. The following revised version of Josh. xv. 16 will illustrate our meaning. In the A. V. it reads, "And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife." The esoteric interpretation reads, "And the good or understanding heart (Caleb) said, he that smiteth the city, or system, of the letter (Kirjath-sepher) and taketh it, to him will I give the Rending of the Veil (Achsah), my daughter for wife." Now if for Caleb we may read the understanding heart, we cannot see why Jehovah may not mean Space, and Jesus Esotericism. The E.C.U. is stoutly opposed to ecclesiasticism, but we are bound to say we consider its new gospel of interpretation will mainly be useful to priests anxious to accommodate the old positions to some conformity with modern thought.

"Ethel," said May, "grandma says God is everywhere, but I don't think so, for I never see him, and if he were everywhere I must see him somewhere." This was rather a poser for Ethel, when a bright thought struck her, and she answered, "Well, May, I guess you don't get up early enough in the morning, for you know he says, 'They that seek me early shall find me.'"

## ACID DROPS.

The Rev. Newman Hall appears to regard Secularists as a political body. "We want," he said, in his valedictory address to his congregation, "we want to see all classes of people at church, Tories and Radicals, Unionists and Home Rulers, and Secularists, and anybody else." Mr. Hall classifies Secularists wrongly. Their relation to "church" is not that of Tories and Radicals, Unionists and Home Rulers, who may all go to the "house of God"—that is, the priest's shop—on Sundays, however they talk, vote, differ, and quarrel on other days in the week. Secularists don't "want to go to church, and ministers like Mr. Hall are likely to "want" them there as long as the mystery business lasts. People who don't believe in the science of guessing are not inclined to waste their time in buildings where it is expounded. The church to hold Secularists is not yet built.

Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the new Radical member for Central Finsbury, is a Parsee. His election will give great satisfaction to a multitude of natives in India. We gave him our own vote, staying in London for the purpose; and we are glad that we did so, for his majority was only three. However, he is in, and one Parsee, living at Cambridge, has sent the Lord Mayor of London a cheque for £105 as a thank-offering. He says that the Creator has enlightened the electors of Central Finsbury. Perhaps so, but he might have done it more effectually. A majority of three is a very narrow squeak.

The *Speaker* suggests that all Parliamentary elections should take place on Sunday, as in France. This arouses the "Nonconformist Conscience" of the *Methodist Times*, which regards it as "trampling on the consciences of Christians." No doubt the *Speaker* will laugh at this outburst. Are there not millions of Christian voters on the continent who see no harm, and nothing irreligious, in fulfilling a citizen's duty on "the Lord's Day"? Mr. Hughes is speaking from the narrow platform of the narrowest sectarianism. Occasionally he talks about the Christianity of Christ. Does he believe that the Jesus of the Gospels would have hesitated to do any "good work" on the Sabbath? On this point, at any rate, the *Speaker* is nearer the "heart of Christ" than the *Methodist Times*.

Bradford Nonconformists have organised and carried out a house-to-house visitation, with the object of finding out if the inhabitants attended any place of worship, if they were connected with any religious denomination, and if their children went to Sunday-school. They pretend to have discovered that the proportion of church-goers is greater among the working classes than among the middle and upper classes—which we take leave to doubt. If it were a fact, it could be proved by the chapel registers without any such investigation. We quite believe, however, that in Bradford, as elsewhere, it is a fact that "Wife goes, husband does not." We can also believe that the poorer parents of Bradford send their children to Sunday-school, even when they themselves are "unmistakably immoral or criminal." As a rule parents send their children to Sunday-school to get them out of the way.

According to these Bradford returns, out of 33,688 houses visited, 230 gave no information, and 242 positively refused to give information; so that there are some sensible, independent people left in Bradford. "Probably not fifty" avowed themselves Atheists or Agnostics or sceptics. But why "probably?" The number in the visitors' returns should be certain. That "probably" throws discredit upon the whole business.

There is another point. Houses don't return themselves as "Atheists or Agnostics or sceptics." It is persons that make up those categories. And an unbeliever might live in a house without being the householder. There are considerably more than fifty subscribers to the *Freethinker* in Bradford. Yes, there are more things in Bradford than are dreamt of in the Nonconformist philosophy.

A "faith curer" in Chicago was recently held responsible by a coroner's jury for the death of a woman whom she had "treated" for a disease which proved fatal. The case went before the grand jury, which has refused to find an indictment on the ground that if people wish to employ disciples of the faith-cure or of Christian science in cases of illness they

do so at their personal risk, and it is nobody's business but their own. This finding will encourage the believers in a popular craze, which has seemed to be on the decline, and to be destined in no long time to take its place with the blue-glass theory and other exploded fallacies.—*Tribune*.

Someone sends us from Nottingham a placard headed "Does Prophecy Ever Come True?" It gives a picture of the Pope being carried on the shoulders of the faithful, and cites the text in 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, which speaks of "the son of perdition who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." The placard for "exalteth" reads "or elevateth himself in a seat?" to make the prophecy apply to the Pope. But the passage more probably refers to the past custom of the Roman emperors being carried shoulder high, and apotheosised as gods.

Many closer prophecies than any found in the Bible are noted in history, for instance the prediction of discovering lands beyond Thule, made by Seneca, and the forecast of the French Revolution by Lord Chesterfield. Early in the year Sir Charles Dilke made a prognostication of the elections which would run some of the Bible prophets close. He said the Liberals would win ten seats in London, a dozen in the English boroughs, two dozen in the English counties, and lose about ten in Ireland.

The Manx correspondent of the *Christian Commonwealth* has curious notions. It appears that the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company bound itself by the deed of association "never to allow its steamers to ply on the Lord's Day." For half a century the Company's steamers have met with no serious accident, and the *C. C.* correspondent seems to regard this as a reward for Sabbatarian observance. Nor is this all. A few years ago the Company did lose a steamer, but it actually gained by the accident, for the craft was well insured, and she was "not adapted to the requirements of the company." It would appear, therefore, that Providence did the Sabbatarian company a good turn at the expense of the insurance agents. This may be excellent religion, but it is very questionable morality.

According to a Reuter telegram a terrible disaster has occurred in the vicinity of the Philippine Islands; the island of Sangir, situated between Celebes and Mindanao, has been destroyed by a volcanic eruption, and its whole population of 12,000 persons have perished. Should the report be confirmed, it will be another striking illustration of "Providence," and we hope it will be duly discussed in religious circles.

The eruption of Mount Etna has laid waste large tracts of country. Villages and habitations have been destroyed, and even churches have suffered largely.

Disaster has followed disaster as instances of the handiwork of God. On the heels of the devastating fire, fanned by the wind of God at St. John's, came the bursting of the "Mont Blanc," followed by the descent of the glacier near Chamounix and the loss of nearly two hundred lives.

In Spain the heat has been so great that many cases of sunstroke have occurred, and birds have been found dying, gasping for breath in the streets. What a consolation to know that not a sparrow falls without being marked by our Father's watchful eye. But they fall all the same.

Cholera, following in the track of famine, is occasioning great mortality in Russia. The epidemic is characterised by extreme virulence. In Moscow the numerous religious communities belonging to the convents and churches are organising processions to implore the divine protection against the scourge. At the same time correspondents say that at Baku the inhabitants wash themselves and clothing in the same water they drink, and have no regard for cleanliness.

The physicians report that the cases of choleraic diarrhoea near Paris exhibit signs of true Asiatic cholera.

A sort of epidemic of hydrophobia has broken out in South Finland, and is spreading alarmingly. Several people have died, and, as the dogs that are mad rush across country, attacking everything in their way, pigs, and cattle, and cats

are sickening, and in their turn becoming dangerous. The authorities are killing every dog without a muzzle.

A miner's cabin near Helena (Montana), in which was stored a large quantity of dynamite, was struck by lightning during a recent storm. The powder exploded, and the cabin and three men who were occupying it were blown to fragments. If any one did this sort of thing deliberately he would be regarded as a vile miscreant. Yet there are persons who do not hesitate to charge all such accidents to God, and indeed if such a being regulates all things, he, she or it must be responsible.

The *Cape Times* reports the following instances of piety in the House of Assembly *apropos* of a discussion on the locust plague: Mr. S. Crobler said he had heard about the making of a locust law, and spoke in solemn terms of the godlessness of such a plan. Mr. I. Greeff said that if they would make a law to destroy locusts, they must take into account which King is their Ruler. Mr. O. Scheepers spoke in the same spirit, whereupon the following motion, by C. Scheepers, seconded by I. Greeff, "Seeing locusts are a plague which cannot be looked upon otherwise than as a punishment sent us from above, this meeting most strongly condemns the proclamation of a law for the eradication of the said plague," was carried. We would bet these gentlemen have not suffered from the plague themselves. Those who believe in judgments always regard them as intended to punish the impiety and wickedness of other people.

English constituencies have returned five Roman Catholics, one Parsee, and seven Jews. It is curious all the Jews are related. Baron Ferdinand Rothschild, Baron Worms, Sir J. Goldsmith, Mr. Stern and Mr. B. L. Cohen are all cousins, while Samuel Montagu and H. S. Leon are also related by marriage to Mr. Cohen.

A writer in the *Church Times* is dreadfully put out at the electors of Central Finsbury choosing "a Parsee fire-worshipper" in preference to a Christian, and wonders how any who hold that there is no salvation outside Christian baptism could reconcile it to their conscience to vote for Naoroji. That gentleman, however, though a Parsee, is not a "fire-worshipper." The Parsees, in fact, do not worship fire, but only regard it as a symbol of the deity. It is the Bible which says, "Our God is a consuming fire."

From the census of Victoria, it appears there are 401,605 adherents of the Church of England in the colony, 240,267 Roman Catholics, 9,269 who refuse to state their religion, 2,668 who say they have no religion, 306 Atheists, 300 Agnostics, and 5,028 Freethinkers. Four honestly enter their religion as £ s. d., but only one was found candid enough to call himself "a go-as-you-please Christian."

Mr. J. Grinstead, editor of the *Bristol Messenger*, has queer notions of justice. He is ready to debate with Mr. Charles Watts provided all the proceeds of the debate are paid over to a local charity, without allowing Mr. Watts anything for out-of-pocket expenses. Mr. Grinstead lives at Bristol, and would be put to no expense; Mr. Watts lives at Birmingham, and would have to leave his home for four or five days, incurring heavy expenses in the shape of travelling and hotel bills. On the whole Mr. Watts would be very foolish to lose money just to advertise Mr. Grinstead.

This is what *Reynolds's* says of Thomas Cooper: "Thomas Cooper, the quondam ex-Atheist and Chartist lecturer, is dead. He died in ignoble obscurity, having renounced all his former opinions and become a canting preacher and Government pensioner. Some 15 [? 40] years back he used to deliver Sunday lectures at John-street, Tottenham-court-road, to good audiences; but he proved himself at last a thorough traitor and renegade, and, to put it mildly, a good man gone wrong."

In *Le Protestant*, a Huguenot who has been visiting Lourdes reports that Jesus there is quite put in the background. In the Holy Church the central figure is that of the Virgin Mother, without any infant in her arms.

The Jews of Moscow, who two years ago built a beautiful synagogue at a cost of 150,000 roubles, have received notice through the police to quit and sell their synagogue by the 1st of January, 1893, as after that date the authorities would

take it from them and devote the place to some charitable purpose. It goes without saying that the authorities will pay nothing for it, nor will the Jews, if they are able to sell it, realise more than the value of the ground. Russia is emphatically a Christian country.

The Catholics in Poland are being subject to the same measures, at the hands of the Holy Synod of Russia, as the Protestants of the Baltic provinces and the Jews of the Pale. The Pope is said to have asked France to intercede on their behalf, but France needs the Russian alliance too much to do anything more than make a mild protest.

It appears from the American census that the returns of church property for about a hundred denominations, with some of the largest not included, make an aggregate of 463 millions of dollars, all of which is exempt from taxation. Although the States have no Established Church, this in itself is a serious burden on Secularists, whose taxes have to make up for church exemption.

The *Globe* reports that a Salvationist in Australia created a sensation by going temporarily mad after "testifying" at a meeting that he was so firm a believer that he was proof against poison, as Jesus promised all believers should be. He displayed his faith by drinking out of a bottle containing strychnine. Fortunately the poison crystals had not dissolved, but stuck to the sides of the bottle, which was taken away by his comrades. The Salvationist was saved. Of course he is now strengthened in his belief in the promises of the blessed Jesus.

A correspondent reports that there has been a lack of "go" at Grindelwald. The most impracticable projects have been put to the fore, and throughout there has been more interest in the elections than in the reunion of Christendom.

The Dean of Rochester, who has been interviewed by "Boulder," of the *Clarion*, expresses himself in favor of Sunday cricket. After service, you know—after attending divine service.

Agnes Walnitz is described as "a Socialist agitator." No doubt that is something awful, but it is hardly bad enough to justify her being treated like a beast. The unfortunate woman is under sentence of ten months' imprisonment for speaking disrespectfully of the Emperor of Germany (Billy Bombastes) and for "insults to religion." She begged the judge to give her time to settle her affairs before going to gaol, but he refused to show any consideration to a woman who had insulted William and his God in one fell breath. Thereupon she declared that she would starve herself to death. For seven days she resolutely adhered to this determination, and the authorities have ordered her to be fed by force. Two strong warders hold her still and force her mouth open, while a third warder "conveys nourishment down her throat by means of a tube."

This is a very pretty sight, and the public should be admitted to witness it. It would immensely strengthen their respect for William and his God. How high and noble must be the character of these two personages if it has to be vindicated in this way against "disrespectful language." Agnes Walnitz, forcibly fed by three strong warders (also, we presume, of the male persuasion), is a splendid object-lesson in the glories of monarchy and religion. Dear, good William! And dear, good William's God!

The Rev. Mr. Ellis, of the Central Presbyterian Church of San Francisco, lost his pulpit last year through a charge of misappropriating funds entrusted to him for the benefit of the church, and deception and falsehood. He now brings a 100,000dol. suit against the presbytery for damages on the grounds of conspiracy and libel.

"Specialist," writing to the *Daily News* on Lord Meath's proposal for an "epileptic" colony on the German model, says "it is admitted that an epileptic is the most afflicted of God's creatures." Perhaps so. But why does God afflict them in this distressing and even disgusting manner? And how is it that humane men and women have to occupy themselves in defeating or mitigating the affliction when God sends it? "Specialist" might devote a few minutes to pondering these questions.

More blasphemy! The *Morning Leader* of July 16 says "Since that remarkable banquet, tablecloth and all, descended from the heavens upon the astonished apostle, there has been no such appetising bill of fare presented to a nation as Lord Salisbury is now preparing with the aid of his Birmingham chef."

The City Council of Philadelphia has refused to place a portrait of Thomas Paine in their council chamber. The friend of Washington and Franklin; the man who was described by Barlow as "one of the most benevolent and disinterested of mankind;" who had been elected by a French constituency as a deputy; for whom Jefferson sent a government ship to bring him back to America; who was one of the principal agents in bringing about American independence, and who was rewarded for his services by Congress with a large grant of both money and land, cannot be disgraced by such a decision as this; but certainly the council will be.

That funny old gentleman, the Pope of Rome, seems to have just discovered that Columbus discovered America. His Holiness has issued an encyclical on the subject, in three languages, Latin, Spanish and Italian—the same number of languages, by the way, that were used by Pontius Pilate to inform the world of the Crucifixion. His Holiness tells Catholics that they ought to think a lot of Columbus. He was a very great man, a benefactor of his species, and something more than a navigator; in fact, his "guiding idea was to lay open to the light of the Gospel new seas and new lands."

That is how it strikes the Pope—at this time of day! But it strikes other people differently. Columbus seemed more anxious about the Slave Trade than the Gospel, and he and his successors were far from "benefactors" to the poor natives, whom they robbed, outraged, and murdered by the million. And in this they were abetted by the Papacy, which decided that the inhabitants of America had no human rights, since they were clearly not descended from Adam—who had lodgings in Central Asia, and never went to sea in his life. Ah, Papa Pecci, you have made a mistake this time. Let Columbus alone, old man, and go on counting Peter's Pence.

Among the buildings destroyed by the great fire at St. John's, Newfoundland, were several churches, including a Church of England Cathedral, which cost £100,000. Surely "Providence" was very careless to let such a handsome edifice—and its own too!—be burnt down. It might easily have kept the flames from playing upon this expensive Bethel, as once upon a time it kept the flames of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace from playing upon Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. "Providence" did not do so, however, and the cathedral will have to be rebuilt. Cadging letters already appear in the English papers for funds for the purpose.

A good story is told relating to Dr. Talmage's visit to England thirteen years ago. He had been engaged to preach in a church in one of the large towns of England. On arriving at the building he found it besieged by a throng of from fifteen to twenty thousand people. Naturally he expected the place would be crowded inside; instead of this he was surprised to find it only comfortably seated. "Why," he demanded of the pastor, "don't you let this crowd of people come in?" "Oh," said he, "each person inside has paid four shillings to get in." Dr. Talmage had intended to preach from the text, "Without money and without price." He changed his subject precipitately.—*Christian Commonwealth*.

An old man, brought rather unwillingly to the altar, could not be induced to repeat the responses. "My good man," at length exclaimed the clergyman, "I really cannot marry you unless you do as you are told." But the man still remained silent. At this unexpected hitch the bride lost all patience with her future spouse, and burst out with, "Go on, you old toot! Say it after him just the same as if you was mockin' him." Upon another occasion it was the woman could not be prevailed upon to speak. When the clergyman remonstrated with her she indignantly replied, "Your father married me twice before, an' he wasn't axin' me any of them imperent questions at all."

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 24, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.; at 7.30, "The Doom of the Gods."

July 31, Hall of Science, London.

August 7, Manchester; 14, Failsworth; 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London.

Sept. 4, Glasgow; 11, Aberdeen; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, Bristol.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—July 24, South Shields; 29, Ebchester; 30, Oxhill; 31, Newcastle. Aug. 7, Birmingham; 14, Liverpool; 21, Manchester; 28, Grimsby. September 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.

F. W. C. B.—It is not a "baptism" exactly, but a formal introduction of the child into human society, two Freethinkers undertaking to see to the child's welfare if its parents should die or become incapacitated.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—"Carving" is, as you suspect, a little too-too. There are Biblical points that will not bear public treatment—at least before mixed audiences.

J. KENNEDY (Coleraine).—The salmon arrived in excellent condition, and was much appreciated. There is *some* good in Ulster anyhow.

J. GARVEN.—Thanks. See paragraph.

E. DE ROME.—See "Sugar Plums."

T. WISE.—(1) It is not "our" pamphlet. *Was Christ Crucified?* is written by an American lawyer; we merely publish it as a good propagandist pamphlet. (2) For the destruction of Jerusalem see Josephus. (3) We fancy Jews are mixed, like other people.

J. HEADLEY.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. H. HEATH.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Cohen gave James Marchant a bad quarter of an hour at Edmonton; also that you sold all copies of the *Freethinker* and intend to have a larger supply. We wish your Branch all success in its uphill fight.

J. KEAST.—See "Sugar Plums."

T. PHILLIPS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

L. FLANAGAN.—Pleased to hear you regard this journal as "worth double the price." If our readers were all of the same opinion (we believe most of them are), and could afford to act upon it, our difficulty would be solved at once.

F. GOODWIN.—It will rest with Mr. Symes, who probably has some discretion in the matter. We note your view and your reasons for it.

ST. MICHAEL'S CEMETERY, BATH.—There is no signature to your letter. The newsagent has deceived you. Mr. Foote's writings are not "stopped." They can all be obtained of Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street. If your newsagent is too bigoted to do business with you, order of Mr. Forder direct. If the gentleman who lent Mr. Foote an umbrella at Worthing will kindly forward his name and address the article shall be returned "with many thanks."

L. SPURGEON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

A. WOLGEMUTH.—The phrase "Ce qui excuse Dieu, c'est qu'il n'existe pas," is attributed to Henri Beyle by his friend Prosper Merimée, and is found in his memoir entitled "H.B."

G. ANDERSON.—Not having your holiday address, we answer here in the hope it will reach you. We note that you have resigned your seat on the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company's board of directors. The rest must wait till we can see you on your return.

E. A.—Mr. Wheeler had already written on Thomas Cooper. From whom did you hear the report that Cooper, in his old age, reverted to his early Freethought views?

C. E. SMITH.—We are obliged for the batch of cuttings.

G. J. WARREN, 20 Rhodeswell-road, E., earnestly thanks M. Christopher, Ex-Ritualist, and others, who have sent him parcels of Freethought literature for distribution.

J. B. N.—It is an unfortunate temper of mind to assume that "no unbiassed person" could differ from you. We leave you to time and the logic of events.

J. HEADLEY, the People's Bookstore, 40 North Howard-street, Yarmouth, keeps this journal on sale, and advertises it on a circular addressed to "the Friends of Freedom and Labor."

E. M. VANCE acknowledges—For Benevolent Fund, surplus of collection for tea at Worthing, N.W. London and Finsbury Park Branch, per G. Ward, 3s.

B. HARRIS.—Is Newcastle-on-Tyne a sufficient address? Your letter is hardly an answer to the article. Why not answer it direct?

H. ROTHERA.—Letter and cuttings both welcome.

W. SIMONS.—Paragraph inserted.

J. B. A. sends £2 10s. for the "*Freethinker* Sustentation Fund" with the following note: "I trust you will raise enough to relieve you from all anxiety on that score. It is appalling, with the spread of Freethought among the wealthy classes, how little money can ever be raised for Freethought purposes. You, by your fearless advocacy of Freethought, have certainly merited the thanks of all who wish to see mankind released from the thralldom of superstition."

W. ROBINSON sends £5 for "Mr. Foote's Holiday Fund," and hopes he will make his health the chief consideration in future.

J. BILLING.—Sorry to hear you are leaving the secretaryship of the Wigan Branch, but wish you success in South America.

W. HOLLAND.—People will not advertise in a Freethought paper. A wrapper for the *Freethinker* would considerably increase the cost without bringing an adequate return. We have not the remotest intention of dropping this journal. Enough copies would be sold at twopence to bring us a fair profit, but we want to stick to the penny if possible, for the reasons already assigned.

MISS ROBINS left her umbrella in the train on Sunday, coming from Worthing. It was a "compactum" with a cherry-wood hoop handle. If it was found by any excursionist, it will of course be forwarded to Miss Robins, at 91 Mildmay Park-road, London, N.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Liberty—Ironclad Age—Progressive Thinker—Independent Pulpit—Secular Thought—Western Figaro—Reading Observer—West Sussex Gazette—Cape Times—Clarion—Twentieth Century—Echo—Freethinker's Magazine—La Vérité Philosophique—Liberator.

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

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

## THE "FREETHINKER."

WEALTHY Freethinkers have not responded in a crowd to my last week's appeal. Perhaps they require a little time to think the matter over. The question is a very simple one. It is next to impossible to let the mass of poorer readers have this journal for a penny unless its well-to-do readers subscribe to a "Sustentation Fund." If they do so they will enable me to continue publishing the *Freethinker* at the people's price. If they do not—and the decision rests with them—I shall be obliged to take other steps to relieve myself of an intolerable burden.

The *Freethinker* is a wonderful pennyworth, and I should like to keep it so. Of course it is unfair to compare it with a daily or weekly newspaper. We do not give "news." We do not make up copy with the scissors. Nearly everything in this journal is written expressly for it. A comparison should be made, if at all, with papers like *Truth*, the *Speaker*, the *Spectator*, the *National Observer*, or the *Saturday Review*, all of which are published at sixpence. Neither of them ever contains three times as much matter as the *Freethinker*; the last number of *Truth* we handled did not contain more than twice as much. And those papers obtain plenty of advertisements, besides appealing to a wider public.

I am pretty liberally sweated myself, but I do not believe in sweating others. My sub-editor and my regular contributors are paid for their work; not as highly as I should like, but still *paid*. My own remuneration has to come out of the deficit, and that is where the difficulty begins. Now I don't want to

get irretrievably into debt, as I shall do if I go on keeping the *Freethinker*, instead of its keeping me. There *must* be a change of some kind. If the Freethinkers who can afford it will subscribe to the "Sustentation Fund" until the circulation, at the old price, increases (as it *will* increase) to the paying point, I shall be satisfied so long as I suffer no absolute pecuniary loss in addition to all the time and labor I put every week into this enterprise. But editing a paper at a loss, and filling the N.S.S. President's chair at a loss, are too much for a poor man to bear: I wait another week, therefore, to see if there are friends able and willing, for a while at least, to take a share of my burden. If there are not, I must adopt my own remedy.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote will lecture at the Hall of Science to-night (July 24), his subject being "The Doom of the Gods." His friends may depend on his fulfilling the engagement, unless something unforeseen happens.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake occupied the London Hall of Science platform last Sunday evening. Although it was excursion day, and the night was wet, a good audience assembled. Mr. Holyoake spoke on "The Foolishness of fearing that Progress could Advance too Fast." He was in excellent vein, and was greeted at the finish with round on round of applause.

This Sunday (July 24), in accordance with a resolution of the London Secular Federation, there will be a collection at all the stations in aid of the Federation. We hope this call will meet with a good response.

Sunday morning brought miserable weather in London. Rain, rain, rain, rain! and a sodden sky that looked as though it might go on raining steadily till the day of judgment or a few days later. Nevertheless nearly three hundred Freethinkers found their way to London Bridge and joined the Secular Federation's excursion to Worthing. Had the weather been fine, or even decent, there would have been a big crowd. As it was the Federation just saved its bacon, for the special train had to be guaranteed to the extent of 250 passengers.

It rained all the way to Worthing, and all the day at Worthing, until a little after four o'clock. Then the sky, which can hardly be said to have brightened, lifted a bit, and the excursionists were able to get a walk upon the pier and along the esplanade. At 7.20 the special train started homeward, and the Freethinkers it carried seemed jolly enough. They had made the best of a bad day, and instead of being "down in the mouth" they all appeared to be feeling, "Well, it might have been worse, after all; never mind, better luck next time!" And yet they say that Freethinkers are fond of committing suicide.

The advent of a Salvation Army band, apparently the liveliest thing in Worthing, led to our party instituting another meeting and to pit brains against brass. Messrs. Guest and Ward mounted a windlass and addressed the crowd, which soon left the Army, and were followed by Messrs. Rowney, Standing, Fagan, Forder and Thurlow, the last two replying to some opposition from a person who was particularly anxious to know "who made the world?" Miss Robins and others energetically distributed literature, and altogether much was done to let the people of Worthing understand the *raison d'être* of Freethought. And it was all done in the rain, you know; all done in the rain.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Charles Watts had a most successful day in Bristol last Sunday. His audiences were even larger than those at his first visit a few weeks ago. On Sunday the hall was filled in the afternoon, and crowded at night, every seat on the platform being occupied by ladies. Mr. Watts was at his best, and elicited enthusiastic applause. Mrs. Watts also met with a warm reception, and her reciting was so well appreciated that she had to give three encores.

Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day (July 24), at South Shields, and on Friday and Saturday July 29 and 30, at Ebchester and Oxhill.

We print in another column a letter from a very influential Committee, which is formed for the purpose of establishing a Shelley Library at the poet's birthplace. The idea is a good one, and we hope it will be realised. It seems to us, however, that a Shelley Library would be much more useful in London. It can hardly be expected that many Shelleyites will be found at Horsham or in its vicinity. Still, local sentiment plays a considerable part in such matters, and it may appeal strongly to the great poet's admirers on this occasion.

In the Royal Academy Exhibition may be seen the magnificent memorial of Shelley by Mr. Onslow Ford. We have to thank Sir Percy and Lady Shelley for this munificence, which has received a national character by its acceptance by the oldest college of the oldest English university.

Thursday, August 4, is the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Shelley, the poet of Atheism and Humanity. We are arranging for a celebration of it at the London Hall of Science. The proceedings will commence at 8 o'clock in the evening. Mr. Foote will take part in them, with, it is hoped, several other members of the Shelley Society, including Mr. H. S. Salt, Mr. G. B. Shaw, and Mr. W. M. Rossetti. We shall give full and final particulars in our next issue. Meanwhile we invite our London readers to note the date and reserve it for attending this important commemoration.

We are pleased to see from the *Liberator* that there is likely to be a celebration of Shelley's centenary at Sydney, New South Wales. Mr. G. Walters, formerly an advanced Unitarian minister at Aberdeen, has written to the papers on the subject.

The new Freethought Hall in Sydney is announced to be shortly opened with all possible *éclat*. The front of the building now presents a very imposing appearance, and the Hall, when completed, will be one of the finest of its kind in Australia. It may be interesting to Freethinkers to know that this edifice has cost upwards of £5,000, while the land has cost over £2,000.

M. Renan, whose health has caused some anxiety to his friends of late, is paying his annual visit to Brittany. His native air has much restored him, and he has resumed his *History of the Jewish People*, now rapidly approaching completion.

Our Unitarian contemporary, the *Inquirer*, has been celebrating its jubilee. It began at sixpence, but has dropped to the popular penny. The jubilee number contains an article from J. R. Robinson, of the *Daily News*, who, so far back as 1847, was sub-editor of the *Inquirer*.

Mr. Cyril Dodd, Liberal member for the Maldon division, in reply to Mr. L. Spurgeon, wrote—"I would vote for a Bill allowing bequests to any purpose not criminal or immoral." This is hardly a satisfactory answer. At present it is criminal to attack Christianity in any way displeasing to Christians. We want the law altered, and we want to know if Mr. Cyril Dodd will help us to alter it.

Mr. Moorson, the successful Liberal candidate for Yarmouth, in answer to a deputation which waited upon him, said that "he would vote for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, and should certainly vote for perfect Liberty of Bequest." He was not aware that such monstrous laws were in existence. Yet he belongs to the legal profession! Charles Bradlaugh was right in saying that Freethinkers must "agitate, agitate," to get their grievances acknowledged before they can be abolished.

Mr. J. Garven, of Paisley, a member of the N.S.S., heckled the Liberal member on the subject of the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. Dunn replied that "this was a free country, and a man should be able to think for himself." He also thought that "the blasphemy laws were inoperative and should be abolished." Mr. Dunn's replies were received with cheers. We shall count upon his support in the new Parliament.

Both the Tory and Radical candidates of the Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth division were written to on the basis of the N.S.S. election tract by Mr. James Leatherbarrow. Colonel Mellor, the Tory candidate, did not reply; but Mr. Robert Leake, the Radical candidate, gave satisfactory answers, which were published in the *Bury Times*. Only on one point was Mr. Leake a little astray. He would give Freethought Societies a legal right to their funds and property, but he thought that, in disseminating their principles, they should "act in a manner suitable to the gravity and high importance of the subject discussed." Does he mean as Elijah acted towards the priests of Baal?

Mr. T. P. Whittaker, Liberal member for the Spen Valley division, has promised to vote for Liberty of Bequest and the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. At every meeting he addressed the N.S.S. statement was handed up to him, and questions were put upon it. "I believe," says our informant, "he got thoroughly tired of answering them." The Tory candidate was inundated with statements and questions. He is a magistrate, but very ignorant of the law. He thought "blasphemy" was swearing in the streets, and did not know that Secular Societies existed.

Mr. Wilson, Liberal and Labor candidate for Mid-Durham, gave Mr. T. Phillips, of Spennymoor, satisfactory answers with respect to the Blasphemy Laws and Liberty of Bequest. Mr. Hunter, the Conservative candidate, would not commit himself in writing. Mr. Paulton, elected for the Bishop Auckland division, is apparently misinformed as to the law. When he finds that the N.S.S. statement is correct he will probably vote the right way. Mr. Waddington, the defeated Conservative candidate, gave perfectly satisfactory replies, and added, "I am fully in favor of free thought and the free expression of it."

Mr. Greeves Fisher spoke on Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, last Sunday, on the Laws Against Religious Liberty. When a show of hands was taken only one was held up against amending the law, so as to put all forms of opinion upon an equality. There was a large and attentive audience.

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* for July gives a picture of the Bruno monument at Rome. Among the contents are a reply to W. E. Coleman on Spiritism, by H. Wettstein; "Orthodox Sorrow," a skit on the priests and Theosophists, by Prof. A. L. Rawson; and "The Religion of Evolution," by J. L. Benwell.

The Young People's Freethought Temperance Society seems to make progress in America. The members pledge themselves for ten years to labor to suppress superstition and intemperance.

All members of the Balls Pond Branch, N.S.S. should attend an important general meeting at the hall to-day (July 24) at 7 prompt.

At the London Hall of Science, henceforth, the minor hall, upstairs, will be set apart on Sunday evenings for the use of Freethinkers who have attended the lecture and wish to stay an hour for a chat with their fellow Freethinkers. The minor hall is a comfortable room, capable of seating about 250 persons. Last Sunday evening Miss Vance and Mr. G. Standing helped to enliven some forty of the Federation excursionists, who went on to the Hall from London Bridge.

"The National Secular Society," says the *Independent Pulpit* (Waco, Texas), "is the best organized and most efficient body of Freethinkers in the world. It took its rise under the leadership of the late Charles Bradlaugh, whose death does not seem to have weakened it in the least, but by the directing hand of Mr. Foote it is all the time increasing in strength."

*La Vérité Philosophique*, of Paris, gives its readers a capital portrait of M. Léon Bourgeois, Minister of Public Instruction, who, we are glad to know, is a good Freethinker.

On Sunday, Aug. 7, the Parisian Freethinkers assemble at the statue of Etienne Dolet, on the Place Maubert. Dolet was strangled and burnt for heresy on Aug. 3, 1546.

A tomb has been erected at the cemetery of St. Ouen to

E. Odin, a leading Parisian Socialist and Freethinker, who was wounded in an Anarchist riot. Speeches were made by Citizens Okecki and Schacre. M. Odin, who was only 34 years of age, left behind a volume of thoughts for children, which will be published.

In Germany they have been celebrating the centenary of Ferdinand Christian Baur, the rationalistic leader of Tübingen, where he was professor of Church history. After Strauss, who was more iconoclastic, Baur was foremost in breaking up the old beliefs about the supernatural origin of Christianity. He lived till 1860, producing an immense variety of works bearing on Christian origins.

#### CHRIST'S WRETCHED DEATH.

CHRIST'S wasted life and wretched death declare,  
That life mis-spent prepares for death and rod:  
His trembling soul expired in dark despair,  
Forsook by hope, his fellows, and his God.

He lived a listless life from hour to hour,  
Of wand'rings, dreams, and pray'rs in place of deeds  
He scarcely used his priceless healing pow'r,  
But thought of self, instead of human needs.

He fostered discord, gave to drunkards wine,  
He cursed a tree for timely yielding figs;  
He snubbed his mother, claimed to be divine,  
Discouraged thrift, and drowned a herd of pigs.

If he for useful work had been inclined—  
To help his father doors to make and mend—  
The sense of duty done had eased his mind,  
And saved him from his sad, despairing end.

His erring life will not have been in vain,  
If by his awful death we're warned to try  
To shun his faults, that so we might retain  
What he had lost:—the pow'r to calmly die.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

#### THE LATE THOMAS COOPER.

A LINK with the past history of progress, which had long since snapped, is wholly removed by the death on July 15 of Thomas Cooper, at the advanced age of eighty-seven. Fifty years ago the self-educated Chartist shoemaker became a man of mark. Tried before Judge Erskine at Stafford for sedition, he defended himself for ten days with ability and eloquence, and during his two years' incarceration wrote a fine epic poem, *The Purgatory of Suicides*. Then and for the next dozen years Thomas Cooper was not only a credit to his order—he was its glory; a working man who had proved himself more than the peer of those endowed with all social advantages. But the Chartist movement collapsed, and his order did not sustain their advocate. Although Thomas Cooper gave no anti-theological lectures, but preferred such subjects as history and the condition of the people, he was virtually with the Freethought party. We shall not attempt to account in a paragraph for his conversion early in 1856. Probably an impetuous and irritable temperament had as much to do with it as "that eternal want of pence which vexes public men." But it is known he was in poor circumstances while a handsome testimonial was then being raised to a younger Socialist and Secularist, Mr. Robert Cooper. His later work shows his once vigorous spirit was broken. He withdrew from circulation his *Purgatory of Suicides*, and replaced it by a far inferior *Paradise of Martyrs*. His *Autobiography*, like that of all self-educated men, is worth reading as an instance of what a poor man can do for self-culture, but his judgment of contemporary men and events was always biased. His lectures on Christian evidences had not the stirring ring of his old Chartist eloquence. He outlived his usefulness, and when recently Mr. Balfour accorded him a pension from the Civil List, no one begrudged this tardy recognition of the literary services of the Chartist shoemaker.

"Have you no home?" asked the magistrate. "Heaven is my home," replied the Salvationist. "Well," remarked his honor, as he gave him ten days, "that shows one of the disadvantages of living in the suburbs."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## SHELLEY CENTENARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field-place, near Horsham, Sussex, on Aug. 4, 1792. The centenary of his birth is, therefore, close at hand. As Shelley was the foremost man Sussex has given to the world of letters, the county has naturally taken the lead in organising a Centenary Celebration. Meetings have been held at Horsham, and the following influential Committee, fully representative of the town and neighborhood, has been appointed:—Mr. R. H. Hurst, J.P., D.L. (Chairman, West Sussex Quarter Sessions), the Rev. C. J. Robinson (Vicar of Horsham), the Rev. R. Bowcott (Vicar of Warnham), the Rev. A. F. Young, the Rev. J. J. Marten the Rev. C. M. Greenway, Mrs. Prewett, Miss Sadler, Mr. E. I. Bostock (Chairman of the Local Board), Mr. Henry Michell, Mr. J. F. A. Cotching, Mr. T. Kirsopp, Mr. A. Agate, Mr. H. Churchman, Mr. J. Harrington, Mr. S. Price, Mr. William Sharp, Mr. J. Stanley Little, and Mr. J. J. Robinson. With these are associated the President and Hon. Secretary of the Shelley Society, Mr. W. M. Rossetti and Mr. T. J. Wise.

At a meeting of this Committee, held on Friday, June 17, it was decided that, both on general and local grounds, the most fitting memorial to the poet would be a "Shelley Library and Museum," to be established at Horsham. It is intended that the institution shall absorb existing libraries, and that it shall be governed in such a manner as to secure the support of all sections of the community. The library will include, in addition to general literature, all such works as may be specially connected with Shelley. In the museum a home will be found for such personal relics of the poet as the Committee may be able to acquire.

The present opportunity of honoring and perpetuating Shelley's memory in the place of his birth, is one of which students and lovers of his poetry in every continent will be eager to take advantage. For this purpose funds are needed, and this appeal is issued in the confident belief that there must be many who would wish to enable the Committee to give complete and substantial expression to an aim, so thoroughly in accord with Shelley's message to the world.

Subscriptions may be sent to the Hon. Secretaries, J. Stanley Little, Buck's Green, Rudgwick, Horsham, Sussex; and J. J. Robinson, *West Sussex Gazette*, Arundel, Sussex. Cheques should be crossed "London and County Bankg. Co., Ltd., Horsham Branch," and made payable to "The Shelley Memorial Fund." We have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servants,—Tennyson, Coleridge, William Morris, Edward Dowden, Stopford A. Brooke, Richard Garnett, W. M. Rossetti, Leslie Stephen, Andrew Lang, Theodore Watts, William Sharp, H. Buxton Forman, Gabriel Sarrazin, Walter Besant, Frederick Leighton, Noel Paton, Oslow Ford, Henry Irving, W. B. Ripon, F. W. Farrar, Walter H. Pollock, Walter Crane, Edmund Clarence Stedman, E. Lynn Linton, Hallam Tennyson, Thomas J. Wise. R. H. Hurst, Chairman; J. J. Robinson, Jas. Stanley Little, Hon. Secs. On behalf of the Shelley Centenary Committee at Horsham.

## A SUGGESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I cannot measure the precise amount of success that attends the advice of "How to Help Us," published from week to week in your pages, but fear it is chiefly profitless, like most of that which is held to be everyone's duty, but which generally finds its truth in a paradox. I certainly think, however, that your little journal deserves to be far more extensively read than it is, and believe it only requires more public advertisement to greatly augment its circulation. To do this would of course entail expense, and more perhaps than you could bear; but would it not be wise to focus the assistance that your friends throughout the country give, and in a simpler and more direct way fructify their help? There are many sympathisers with the Freethought movement who would regularly purchase your paper if it were more easily obtainable, and there is a wide circle who require but little prompting to give it similar encouragement. To facilitate the purchase is therefore of the highest importance, and to this end I suggest that a "Fund to Promote the Circulation of the *Freethinker*" be started, the contributions to which should be used to engage newsvendors one or two days each week for the sale, exclusively, of the *Freethinker* in favorable

spots in the metropolis. This is capable of easy accomplishment if a thousand of your readers, desirous of extending the Freethought cause, would give an assurance to the extent of paying twopence per week for one year for their copy of the *Freethinker*, which would cover the expense of a fair experiment without making a heavy call on any pocket. How can this support be conveniently rendered? By obtaining from the newsvendor a *coupon* in addition to the paper as an acknowledgment of the extra penny paid. Others to whom this plan would be inconvenient might support the experiment in any other direct but more convenient way to themselves. Combined action of all your helpers who guarantee the sale, or who distribute free copies of your paper, might result in such an increase in the circulation as would amply repay with gratification those who contributed any help to the achievement.—Yours, etc., STEPHEN DENNY.

## THE IRISH RELIGIOUS QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. John Kennedy takes exception to my description of the Ulster Convention as Orange and Tory. My reasons for so doing are as follows: I said the delegates coming out of the building and the country delegates were the same type, with trifling exceptions, as may be seen on any twelfth of July marching along with sashes, and whose ideas on any political question are carefully preached to them by the landlords who boss the Orange Society. The facts confirm my observation, for in any districts I actually knew the delegates were Orange, and personal friends have confirmed the same opinion of other sections. Mr. Kennedy is grossly in error in stating that not less than half of the delegates were Liberal Unionists; even the Conservative press differed with Mr. Chamberlain when he said there was a majority of Radicals, and said this was an exaggeration, although, no doubt, the Liberal Unionists composed an important part of the meeting,—a very elastic term, meaning anything from a dozen up.

Take the speakers,—Mr. Thomas Sinclair, the Presbyterian Liberal Unionist, was, prior to 1886, a very lukewarm Liberal, as I can prove, if Mr. Kennedy doubts it. Mr. Doulaghan, the tenant-farmer, is Orange, owns over 150 acres, and gets a good salary as a Unionist lecturer. Mr. Johnson, the misrepresentative of Labor, is also a paid lecturer, and is not, strictly speaking, a working man at all. I merely mention these things to show that I have made myself intimate with the character of the Convention, and that my opinions have not been formed without due consideration.

The other points in Mr. Kennedy's letter are altogether outside the province of this paper, and could not be adequately dealt with without opening up the whole Irish Question. What Mr. Kennedy and the Unionists consider a disaster to Ireland, would, in my estimation be its salvation; the reasons I have given heretofore.

Mr. Kennedy as a Liberal Unionist is, I believe, in favor of extending Local Government to Irish counties. Now such a proceeding would hand the greater proportion of the country into the complete control of the Catholics, and the remainder into the domination of the secret meeting in the Orange Hall. Whether this or Home Rule would be the greater disaster I leave to your readers.

One word in conclusion. I do not for a moment doubt the calmness or resoluteness of the Ulster opponents of Irish Nationalism; but their grandfathers and great grandfathers a hundred years ago were even more calm, more resolute than they in the determination that, come what might, they would never submit to legislative union with England; and at Coleraine, Antrim, Downpatrick, and elsewhere in Ulster they proved their earnestness in a terrible manner—a manner in which I hope, and believe their descendants will not imitate for the opposite reason. W. M. KNOX.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am not sorry to have seen two letters lately in the columns of your paper under the heading of "The Irish Religious Question," as the exchange of ideas may help to clear up matters political. I maintain that a man who is a good citizen can manage his home and affairs better than any outsider can for him, and the same line of reasoning applies to a community of men forming a nation, no matter what their religious ideas may be.

I am an Irishman who was brought up very strictly in the episcopal form of religion (though now a Freethinker by con-

viction and unattached), and lived nineteen years in north and south at various periods. I can honestly affirm that in the north, where there is a great majority of Protestants, there is the utmost intolerance for Catholics on account of their religion. Take, for instance, the salaries now paid by the Belfast Corporation, where out of many thousands of pounds per annum only £300 is paid to Catholic officials. Such discrimination is a sure way to keep up sectarian animosity. In the south no such intolerance is known. Protestants are elected quite impartially to all leading official positions by their Catholic fellow citizens. The late Mr. Parnell was a Unitarian Protestant who was almost worshipped by the majority of his Catholic fellow countrymen.

With reference to the Ulster meeting of the 17th ult., it was promoted by the Duke of Abercorn and other landlords, backed up by a majority of Episcopalian persons, nearly all of whom were Orangemen, or so closely tied to the ascendancy faction that they had to put in an appearance; and the expenses of many of the delegates came, not out of their own pockets, but were paid by the promoters of the meeting. In fact, it was, to a great extent, what is politically known as a ticket meeting.

The Protestant opposition to Home Rule is only that of an ascendancy faction, and inconsistent with the history of Ulster Protestantism. For instance: in 1798, Grattan's volunteers to the number of 116,000 were all Ulstermen and Protestants; while only about 15,000 from the other provinces joined in opposition to the "Act of Union." Again: in 1870-71, at the time of the passing of the Irish Church Disestablishment Act, the Orange leaders denounced England over and over again as unfit to govern Ireland; and one of them would have been glad of the chance to "kick the Queen's crown into the Boyne." This gentleman was W. Johnstone, of Bally Kilbeg. In June, 1870, the Orange Lodge at New Bliss called upon all creeds, classes, and conditions of Irishmen to help in abolishing English rule; and in February, 1871, the Grand Lodge, assembled in Dublin, passed a resolution to expunge the rules compelling Orangemen to support by force of arms English rule in Ireland—thus practically abolishing the Society's oath of allegiance.

Of "Ulsteria" I think we have had more than enough, and when Irishmen get their Parliament I have no doubt that common sense will prevail and the Ulstermen will see that it will be to their advantage to help in developing the old land. In conclusion I may say that I fully agree with Mr. Charles Watts in regard to the "curse of priestcraft," whether Protestant or Catholic, and trust to education in the future, as in the past, to "lighten the darkness." The division in the Nationalist party proves that the priests have not matters all their own way, and they never again shall, as the youth of Ireland is more imbued with freedom of thought than some people imagine.

L. FLANAGAN.

#### COWARDLY CONDUCT OF A PRIEST.

A scene described in the *Independent* will give some idea of the conduct of the priests during the elections in Ireland. Mr. Mahony was visiting the booths on Thursday at Navan, when attention was directed to a priest, who lifted his hand and with considerable force struck an old man named Owen Reilly down on the stones and grass, where he lay insensible. The blow, says the *Times* correspondent, was given by Father Clarke, of Kingscourt, who had been before the door of the booths all the morning. A man stooped down and lifted Reilly's head from the ground, while a number of angry men faced the priest, who stood over the prostrate body. Father Clarke, with hands still clenched, was forced back into the front of his supporters, while cries were raised of "Arrest him." His friends shouted that he would not be taken, and the police, who witnessed the assault, did not seem inclined to interfere. Indeed, all their tact and energy were required to keep the two parties from fighting. Father Clarke now began to offer some excuse for his conduct. He said, "The man offered me a gross insult. I did not mean to kill the man. Poor man, I have no feeling against him at all." This statement was greeted with cries of dissent and comment on his action. Father Clarke added, "I respect the man's conscience, but he insulted me very grossly and in a very offensive spirit. I respect every man's rights." (A voice: "Then you should not raise your hand.") Father Clarke: "Wait, my dear friend; you must understand that a priest has a sacred character to defend, and my character is much more important than yours. Therefore I cannot allow a man to say that it was a shame for me to come here, that I

was outraging decency in coming here and walking up and down without saying a word to any man or offering an insult. I say no man has a right to insult me in that way. That is the reason of the little stroke I gave him. There is no cause for this confusion. I did not say a word which would offer the least insult to any man." A Scotch gentleman who had viewed the scene with astonishment stepped forward and inquired of Father Clarke, "May I ask, sir, if you are a priest?" Father Clarke replied, "I am a priest." The gentleman then said, "I would not have known it but for the clothing you wear." Mr. Mahony, who was standing by, said, "Will you allow me to say, sir, that you know right well that no man would like to strike a man of your cloth, and it is a cowardly thing for you to strike that man." Father Clarke: "I say I will strike you if you don't withdraw that word." Saying this, the clergyman lifted his hand amid cries of "Oh, no, you don't." He was forced back by an inrush of people, and narrowly escaped violence. Mr. Mahony replied, "No, I do not withdraw. I say it is a cowardly thing for a priest to strike a man." The police pushed aside the men in front of the rev. gentleman, who was ultimately taken away by the parish priest. Father Clarke is a strongly-built man, above the medium height, and in the prime of life. Owen Reilly is 73 years old, grey haired, and somewhat bent with age.

#### 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; Sunday at 6.30, important members' meeting. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class. Thursday at 8, committee meeting.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 8, tea (6d. each); 7.30, music; 8, T. Crisfield, "Hypnotism" (with experiments). Saturday at 7.30, dancing.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 5.30, debating class, members' meeting; 7.30, R. Forder, "The Existence of God."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Doom of the Gods."

West Ham—350 Barking-road: 11, members' quarterly meeting.

##### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, J. Rowney, "Prophecy"; 7, S. H. Alison, "Soul, Spirit, Ghost."

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

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, T. Thurlow, "Bible Morality." Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, G. Standing, "Why Christianity has Failed."

Columbia-road (near Columbia Market), Hackney-road: 11.15, J. Fagan will lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "Slavery."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Mrs. L. Samson, "Immortality: from Christian and Secular Standpoints"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity." Collection for London Secular Federation.

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8, C. J. Hunt, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, F. Haslam, "Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, L. Keen, "The Atheism of Christianity."

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 7, C. J. Hunt, "The Morality of Secularism."

Kingsland Green (near Ball's Pond-road): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The Soul."

Lambeth—New Cut (corner of Short-street): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, S. H. Alison, "Atheism or Christianity: which?"

Midland Arches (near Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, a lecture.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Reason and Revelation."

Plaistow Green: 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, J. Rowney, "Gentle Jesus."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Mr. St. John will lecture; 3.15, debate between C. Cohen and the Rev. Brennan on "Does the Universe Afford Evidence of a Personal Deity?"

Walthamstow—Markhouse Common: 6.30, C. Cohen will lecture. Thursday at 7.45, C. Cohen will lecture.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Ladies."

##### COUNTRY.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, meeting.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, J. J. Taylor, "Is Belief the Safe Side?"

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Club, No. 9 Room: Tuesday at 8, important business meeting.

Leeds—Cramp on's Temperance Hotel, Briggate: 7, members' meeting, important business.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Booth, "Moral Teachers Compared."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Mrs. Thornton Smith, 11, "Prophets and Prophecy"; 3, "Immortality"; 6.30, "The Influence of Christianity."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, monthly meeting of members; 7, H. Keppell, "The Necessity for Secular Organisation."

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

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Pinhorn, "Our Winter Program."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, W. A. Goodlad, "Diogenes Teufelsdröckh."

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Charles Watts, 11, "The Throne and the Church"; 3, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"; 7, "What Christians have to Defend."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Bingley; 10.30, J. Trumper, "Labor and Religion."

Bradford—Upper Godwin-street: 6.30, John Grange, "Moses and Darwin; or, the Crumbling of Creeds."

Chatham—New-road (near Waghorn Memorial): 11, F. J. Boorman, "God's Favorites."

Derby—Bass's Monument, Market-place: James Hooper, 11, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; 2.30, "Eighteen Hundred Years of Christianity, Two Hundred Years of Science: a Contrast"; 6.30, "Thirty Years' Experience of Professing Christians' Charity."

Huddersfield—Market Cross; Saturday, July 23, at 8, Sam Standing, "Civil and Religious Liberty."

Manchester—Railway-arch, Oxford-road: Monday at 8, Sam Standing, "Secular Education: its Use and Abuse."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Quayside (near big crane): 11, G. Selkirk, "Secularism: its Principles and Objects."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Aug. 14 and Sept. 11, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—To July 31, Holidays, Aug. 7, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 14, m., Westminster; a., Regent's Park; 21, m., Camberwell; 28, e., Camberwell. Sept. 4, m., Mile End Waste; a., Victoria Park; 11, m., Bethnal Green; a., Regent's Park; 18, m., Wood Green; 25, m. and 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 24 to 31, Annual Tour. Aug. 7, Camberwell; 14, Southampton; 21, Westminster.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—July 24, m., Lambeth; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow; 28, Walthamstow; 31, m., Clerkenwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. Aug. 4, Walthamstow; 7, m., Bethnal Green; e., Edmonton; 11, Walthamstow; 14, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 18, Walthamstow; 21, m., Mile End; a., Regent's Park; e., Edmonton; 25, Walthamstow; 28 m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow.

SAM STANDING, 106 Oxford-road, All Saints' Manchester.—July 24 and 31, Manchester. Aug. 7, Rochdale; 14, Hull; 21, Blackburn; 28, Manchester.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—July 24, m., Bethnal Green; e., Edmonton; 31, m., Camberwell; a., Finsbury Park. Aug. 7, m., Midland Arches; e., Plaistow; 14, m., Columbia-road 28, m., Bethnal Green.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Chant-street, Stratford, E.—July 24, m., Leyton; e., Battersea; 31, m., Victoria Park. 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 24, m., Camberwell. Aug. 14 and Sept. 11, mornings, Kingsland Green.

J. GREYZ-FISHER, 78 Harrogate-road, Leeds.—July 31, L. and Y. S. F., Manchester. Aug. 14, Ilkley.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—July 24 e., Plaistow Green; 31, e., Battersea. Aug. 7, e., Hammer-smith; 14, a., Tottenham; 21, Halstead; 28, m., Lambeth.

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