

# The Freethinker

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## THEOLOGY AN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS.

THE British Association has just held its annual gathering at Edinburgh, a city proudly termed the "Modern Athens." It is surrounded by a charming mountainous country that must strike even the untrained eye with its many beauties; and its numerous historical features must prove to all to be of a most interesting and instructive character. The observant traveller cannot fail to recognise in and around Edinburgh the effects of the mighty forces of nature which mark a geological period of a bygone age. The Association holding its meeting in such a place, it was appropriate for the presidential chair to be occupied by a native geologist, and one to the manner born. The selection, therefore, of Sir Archibald Geikie as president was deemed highly satisfactory, inasmuch as he has given considerable study to the various formations of the earth, and is regarded as being one of Scotland's foremost scientists.

To the Freethinker who has abandoned the old methods of theological speculation, the proceedings of these peripatetic philosophers afford considerable interest. For apart from the pretence, fashion, and patronage which are apparent at most of their gatherings, they undoubtedly perform a useful work, and the reports of their sayings and doings are circulated among classes where, as a rule, only the orthodox currency is employed in the interchange of ideas. Turning from the critical to the positive aspect of thought, the Freethinker necessarily seeks the aid and light of science, which Mr. George Jacob Holyoake so aptly described as being "the only available providence of man." Among the greatest charms of this Association are the almost endless variety of themes selected by its members to discourse upon, and also the freedom of discussion observed in the consideration of the various theories entertained of the earth and man. The Freethought poet, Akenside, in his *Pleasures of Imagination*, has truly said:

But not alike to every mortal eye,  
Is this great scene unveil'd  
The hand of nature on peculiar minds  
Imprints a different bias.

This is so, for while looking up at the starry heavens with their orbs of night shining from infinite space, the poet's mind is filled with rapture, it has a very different effect upon other minds. It is said that Thomas Carlyle was once walking with a friend who asked him to look at the beauty and splendor of the vault of heaven, to which the sage replied, "Ah! its a sorry sight."

Sir A. Geikie, in giving a very lucid and comprehensive sketch of the theory of Hutton, which was put forward a hundred years ago, remarked how very little notice it had received from men of science, and how bitterly it was opposed by orthodox theologians. In our Secular advocacy we have always contended that theology must be removed, restrained, or ignored, before any great progress from crude and primitive ideas could be affected.

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This has again and again been denied, and only recently in a public debate which we had with a clergyman of the Church of England, our opponent emphatically affirmed that no antagonism existed between the Bible and Science. The President of the British Association, however, in recalling what took place in the case of Hutton when he attempted to explain the then present appearance of the earth by *natural* causes, unmistakably showed that in the opinion of theologians, modern science is in direct opposition to the teachings of the Bible. He pointed out that some of the earliest critics who were imbued with theological notions, fiercely assailed Hutton's explanation on account of "its irreligious tendency." The President said: "There was then a widespread belief that this world came into existence some six thousand years ago, and that any attempt to greatly increase its antiquity was meant as a blow to the authority of Holy Writ." Evidently this is a reference to "the sneer of Cowper," which is given in full by our friend, C. C. Cattell, in his useful little work, "*The Man of the Past*." It reads thus:

Some drill and bore  
The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register, by which we learn  
That He who made it, and revealed its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.

We are informed that Hutton regarded his theory as "an important contribution to natural religion." It does not seem to have occurred to the learned president that "a contribution to *natural* religion" in no way disposes of the objection raised against *revealed* religion. "Holy Writ" has very little in common with a religion of nature. Discordance between natural science and natural religion is not so likely to arise, as they are both natural. The real ground of opposition to inquiry into the origin and causes of the features of the earth's surface is stated in the following extract from the president's address: "But for many long centuries the advance of inquiry into such matters was arrested by the paramount influence of orthodox theology. It was not merely that the Church opposed itself to the simple and obvious interpretation of these natural phenomena. So implicit had faith become in the accepted views of the earth's age, and the history of creation, that even laymen of intelligence and learning set themselves unbidden and in good faith to explain away the difficulties which nature so persistently raised up, and to reconcile her teachings with those of the theologians." No less a person than Sir William Jones expressed his sorrow that many persons of intelligence and virtue in his time doubted the age of the earth as assigned in the word of God by his servant Moses. Sir A. Geikie thus cleverly describes the intellectual state of "the reconcilers" of science and theology. "In the various theories thus originating, the amount of knowledge of natural law usually stood in inverse ratio to the share played in them by an uncontrolled imagination." Burnet, Whiston, Whitehurst, and others cannot now be read without a

smile; their researches "can only be looked upon as exertions of learned ignorance."

One of the earliest suggestions made with a view of disposing of the antagonism existing between Moses and science, in the case of astronomy and geology, was that the Bible was not given to teach science, but only to explain the way of salvation. The main objection, however, to this is that the Bible does teach something about the phenomena with which science deals; and the evident discrepancy between the two was the origin of the suggestion made to account for the difficulty. If we take the Bible theory of life on the globe, it is that of fixed, unalterable forms, while the theory of evolution, built up during the course of ages, is that this globe is a theatre of active life and matter—the scene of continuous and incessant change. The theological conception may be well expressed in the words of the Prayer-book, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."

Another favorite expression taken up by the defenders and would-be reconcilers of the Bible with science in the early part of the second half of the present century was that the Bible was only concerned with the age of man, his sorrows, and his sins. But the same chapter which states that man was made by God, relates that "he made the stars also." Therefore, according to the book itself, the attempt to confine its records to the human period, its traditions and its history utterly fails. The book, however, records not only the first appearance of man, but that of rain also. Now the results of rain furnish the basis of geology as a science in its formation of deposits, from which estimates of the age of the earth and man are made. Giving a summary of the efforts put forward by theologians upon these subjects, Sir A. Giekie says: "Springing mainly from a laudable desire to promote what was believed to be the cause of true religion, they helped to retard inquiry, and exercised in that respect a baneful influence, on intellectual progress. It is the special glory of the Edinburgh school of geology to have cast aside all this fanciful trifling." Brave and outspoken words these, but what effect will their utterance have upon the pious orthodox occupants of the Kirk pulpits? The declaration is, indeed, a heavy blow at the foundation upon which the orthodox Christian builds his faith. If the creation and fall can only be defended by a theory that is "fanciful trifling," Scotland may yet become the home of Freethought. Here is indisputable evidence that if there is no antagonism between the Bible and science, there is much between the teachers of science and the preachers of the Bible. The important fact for us to remember is that, as Secularists, we rely on discovered facts, and we welcome their accumulation through all time, while theology must necessarily recede from view and cease to occupy intelligent minds, if the discoveries made through scientific investigation are true.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

#### A PRAYER.

A crowned caprice is god of the world:  
On his stony breast are his cold wings furled.  
No tongue to speak, no eye to see,  
No heart to feel for a man hath he.

But his pitiless hands are swift to smite,  
And his mute lips utter one word of might  
In the clang of gentler souls on rougher:  
"Wrong must thou do—or wrong must suffer."

Then grant, O dumb blind god, at least that we  
Rather the sufferers than the doers be!

—Academy.

GRANT ALLEN.

#### CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

GREAT have been the controversies among Christians as to whether baptism should be performed by immersion or sprinkling, and whether infants or only adults should participate. In the early Christian records we only read of adult baptism, that being a rite already in use for Jewish proselytes. But the Pagan custom of infant baptism soon came into favor in the Church.

The Oriental Christians and the orthodox Greek and Russian Churches require a *threefold* baptism. The believer must be first dipped in the name of the old one, then "ducked" in the name of the Son, and finally soused in the name of the Holy Ghost. Those who have not undergone this ceremony are no true Christians. Hence they speak even of the Pope as an unbaptised heretic. Here is another obstacle to that blessed consummation, Christian reunion. Smith and Cheetham, in their standard *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, say (vol. i., p. 161): "Triple immersion—that is thrice dipping the head while standing in the water—was the all but universal rule of the Church in ancient times," and quote Tertullian, Cyril, Chrysostom, Jerome, etc.

A feature of the Mithraic initiation is preserved in the Catholic Church, where the parents have to wait at the door of the church for the priest, who exorcises the devil out of the child, saying, "Come out of this child, thou evil spirit, and make room for the Holy Ghost." Then he makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead, and puts a little blessed salt in the child's mouth. All this is done before admission is allowed to the church. Arrived at the font, the priest again exorcises the evil spirit, and taking some of his own spittle with the thumb of his right hand, rubs it on the child's ears and nostrils, saying when he touches the ear, "Ephphatha. Be thou opened." Then he sprinkles the child thrice, first in the name of the Father, then of the Son, and finally of the Holy Ghost.

The dogmas of Christianity have not only been followed by strife and bloodshed, but by sighs and tears. Consider only the agony caused to mothers by the thought that their unbaptised children would go to hell. Jesus had said, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5), and placed baptism with belief as a condition of salvation (Mark xvi. 16). The whole body of the Christian Fathers, without a single exception, declared that all infants, born or unborn, who died unbaptised, were excluded from heaven—some sent them to hell, others to limbo. The Council of Trent categorically declared that unbaptised children were damned. St. Fulgentius, in his *De Fide*, says eternal fire will be their lot. "Be assured," writes this holy saint (whose work, written in the beginning of the sixth century, was down till the time of Erasmus received as the production of St. Augustino, and a standard of Catholic doctrine); "Be assured, and doubt not, that not only men who have obtained the use of their reason, but also little children who have begun to live in their mother's womb and have there died; or who, having been just born, have passed away from the world without the sacrament of holy baptism, administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be punished by the eternal torture of undying fire; for although they have committed no sin by their own will, they have nevertheless drawn with them the condemnation of original sin by their carnal conception and nativity."

In the Lutheran Confession of Augsburg, the teaching of Fulgentius was endorsed without qualification. Terrible is it to read, as the student of ecclesiastical history must, the struggle between theologians and mothers, who sought by every possible device to

confer on their unborn offspring the passport which was indispensable to secure their admission to heaven.

Mr. Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism in Europe* (vol. i., p. 364), says:

"Nothing, indeed, can be more curious, nothing can be more deeply pathetic, than the record of the many ways by which the terror-stricken mothers attempted to evade the awful sentence of their Church. Sometimes the baptismal water was sprinkled upon the womb; sometimes the stillborn child was baptised, in hopes that the Almighty would antedate the ceremony; sometimes the mother invoked the Holy Spirit to purify, by his immediate power, the infant that was to be born; sometimes she received the Host, or obtained absolution, and applied them to the benefit of her child. These and many similar practices continued all through the Middle Ages, in spite of every effort to extirpate them, and the severest censures were unable to persuade the people that they were entirely ineffectual. For the doctrine of the Church had wrung the mother's heart with an agony that was too poignant even for that submissive age to bear. Weak and superstitious women, who never dreamed of rebelling against the teaching of their clergy, could not acquiesce in the perdition of their offspring, and they vainly attempted to escape from the dilemma by multiplying superstitious practices, or by attributing to them a more than orthodox efficacy. But the vigilance of the theologians was untiring. All the methods by which these unhappy mothers endeavored to persuade themselves that their children might have been saved are preserved in the decrees of the Councils that anathematised them."

Many readers have smiled over the twentieth chapter of *Tristram Shandy*, in which the Rev. Lawrence Sterne gives the permission of the doctors of the Sorbonne to baptise before birth, without knowing that this was a late concession of a long sought privilege. I confess I cannot think without a shudder of the dreadful beliefs which made casuistry upon the subject a momentous question.

J. M. WHEELER.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THOMAS COOPER.

### IV.

SOME who know Mr. Cooper well, as Mr. Anthony Collins, expressed the opinion that he was never properly a Freethinker. No man ever gave clearer proof that he was. In *Thomas Cooper Delineated*—a pamphlet I wrote—I gave the titles of "Orations" I published in the *Reasoner* for him. One was, "Disproof of the Argument of Design as the Proof of the Existence of Deity"; another was, "The Morality of Material Influences." Others were entitled "Miracles Inefficacious on Morals," "The Stupidity of the Devil," "Refutation of Miracles," "Revelation Not a Guide," "Nature Furnishes her Own Revelation," "The Wonderful Devil of Capernaum," "The Wickedness of Miracles as the Condition of Salvation."

The arguments by which these propositions were sustained were expressed with a force which no man could have used who was not thoroughly persuaded of the truth of what he was saying. They would make excellent tracts published to-day. No lecturer has been more thorough than Mr. Cooper was. It is no mean proof of his candor that in his *Life* he quoted from the *Reasoner* some striking passages from himself. The wonder is that he never produced any arguments at all against the conclusions he advanced when he was with us. When he refused to debate with me I invited him to debate with himself, and published a collection of his chief arguments. He never refuted them, but asked me to withdraw the book, which I did. I do not justify the act except that I thought it might appear to his friends that I wished to disparage him because he had become a convert and left us. It has always been a rule with me to never treat a man who once stood on our side and rendered us great service, worse than one who never did anything in our interest. Otherwise it

was sacrificing the interest of the public to personal friendship.

It appears from a report in Lincoln papers of his burial that they put upon the plate on his coffin, "Thos. Cooper. Born 1806. Died 1892." If anything could make him turn in his grave, it would be that "Thos. Cooper" was engraved on a brass plate over him. He not only remonstrated, but was indignant and abusive to anyone who wrote him without putting *Thomas Cooper* upon his letter. He would even complain of them upon the platform, and would tell the audience his name was not "Thos. Cooper," but *Thomas Cooper*. Had I been in Lincoln at the time of his burial I would have protected him from this outrage.

His public merits were that he set the example of self-help to working men. He acquired great knowledge under great privation, and he had zeal in imparting it to others. As he said in his *Dedication to the Purgatory of Suicides* to Thomas Carlyle:

The free in mind ever glow  
To spread the truth their own minds know.

In his *Purgatory of Suicides* there are vigorous lines against the immorality of the Atonement. He exclaimed:

Love God; or he will magnify  
His glory by consigning thee to die  
In ceaseless flames an ever-living death!  
O Christ how can I love what doth outvie  
All tyrannies in horribleness of wrath;  
This monstrous thing derived from an old monster  
Faith?

Then he adds the resolute words:

I cannot worship what I cannot love.

Mr. Cooper, in his Secularist days, had a divine discontent of all doctrines of moral error. He had the "divine discontent" which constitutes intelligent Free-thought. It was the spirit of truth prompting him to inquire without rest and without fear. At last this left him.

When he relapsed again to orthodoxy, a noble nature was demoralised. His great services to reason and truth were extinguished. When Mr. Allsop visited Feargus O'Connor in his last days at Dr. Tuke's Asylum, he regained for a moment glimmerings of reason, and the Titan Chartist sang again the lines written in his honor.

The lion of Freedom has come from his den,  
We'll rally around him again and again.

My parting words upon Thomas Cooper shall be—

The lion of Freedom went back to his den,  
Which we have regretted again and again.

For Thomas Cooper with wider knowledge, vastly superior capacity of thought and fiery intrepidity, was a greater lion than Feargus O'Connor.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

### A MAN'S CREED.

AND this, in humbleness, I would declare,  
And yet with courage, is my only Faith—  
Goodness alone, with its blest, yearning care,  
Is worshipful—for Goodness only hath  
Power to make good and happy things of breath  
And thought. If Man can be transformed  
Wholly to virtue,—punishment and wrath,—  
Taught by all priests that on the earth hath swarmed,—  
Must be untaught and man by Love to Right be charmed.

Goodness alone is worshipful. Not what  
Gives life, but what gives happiness is good.  
I cannot worship what I own to be a blot  
To be in my own nature—hasty flood  
Of feeling that with ireful hardihood  
Would rush to do what I would soon regret:  
Nor can I worship priestly thy Shapes of Blood,  
Or Nature's cause of Pain. If to beget  
Love in the soul these fail—shall worship there be met?

THOMAS COOPER.

—*Purgatory of Suicides*, bk. vi., 28, 29.

## WILL CHRIST SAVE US?

*(Continued from page 500.)*

It is, of course, impossible to prove that Jesus Christ did *not* work miracles; nor is it incumbent upon the unbeliever to attempt such an undertaking. He who asserts must prove; other persons have only to try his arguments and weigh his evidence. Is not every prisoner in the dock presumed to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty? And should not the career of every being in the form of humanity be presumed to be natural until it is proved to be supernatural?

This much, however, may be safely asserted by the unbeliever—that whatever miracles *were* wrought by Jesus Christ were only useful to his contemporaries; that he does not posthumously save their successors from pain and hunger, and disease and death; and that he certainly has not—through the Religion he came to promulgate, and the Church he came to establish—in the least degree succeeded in saving the world, or any part of it, from evil and misery.

Let us expatiate a little upon each of these assertions; so that, if they are disputed, they may first be understood.

There is no suggestion in the Gospels, or elsewhere in the New Testament, that Jesus wrought any miracle on an extensive scale, except the feeding of some thousands of people at a religious picnic, by supernaturally multiplying a few loaves and fishes, so that they served as an ample repast for the hungry multitude. This was very convenient—for that particular assembly. But of what service was it afterwards to the rest of mankind? Has it ever filled out the pinched cheek of want, put fresh blood in the blue lips of famine, or new fire in the dull eyes of despair? Babes have died at the drained and flaccid breasts of their mothers, and strong men have withered into shadows, for whom a little of the miraculous food of Christ would have meant a real and blessed salvation.

The other alleged miracles of Jesus Christ were entirely personal. A blind man has his sight restored and a deaf person his hearing; a dumb man is made to speak, who might, perhaps, as usefully have remained silent; a cripple is enabled to walk, a diseased person is healed, a widow's dead son and a sister's dead brother are restored to their loving embraces. All this was very interesting—at the time; though it seems to have had a marvellously feeble effect upon the Jews. But of what interest is it now? Jesus did, indeed, promise that his *faithful* disciples should work miracles even greater than his own, and for a while they are said to have done so; but their powers in this direction very curiously declined as they came into contact with the educated classes, and except in the most ignorant parts of Catholic countries it is impossible to find a trace of the miraculous virtue that was to be the "sign of them that believed."

Accordingly, the apologists of Christianity seek refuge in an arbitrary assertion, and a vague, unsustainable, and irrefutable argument. The arbitrary assertion is (not in Catholic, but in Protestant countries) that the miraculous powers of the disciples of Christ *ceased* at some time after his Ascension. They do not say *when*; and it is easy to prove that the miracles of the Church *since* the days of Constantine (for instance) are better substantiated than the miracles of the primitive ages. Still more extravagant, if possible, is the argument that, whatever may be said as to individual cases of miracle, the establishment of Christianity and its perpetual maintenance is a miracle of miracles, a colossal and permanent proof of the ceaseless care of Christ for the salvation of mankind. Logic, indeed, is powerless against the assumption of something supernatural behind the Christian Church—proof and disproof being alike impossible; but so far as its history can be traced, its growth and progress are entirely

natural, like the growth and progress of Buddhism, Mohammedanism, or any other system that has arisen within the historic period.

In any case the Christian Church has not saved the world. Christianity lives upon the falsification of history in the past, and irredeemable promises in the future. Its apologists have systematically blackened the ancient civilisations; they have taken credit for such improvement in human society as was inevitable in the progress of two thousand years; and against the objection that the world is still in a very wretched condition, they have replied that Christianity has not had time enough to produce all its beneficial fruits. Give it *another* two thousand years, and it will turn the wilderness into a paradise, and make the desert bloom with roses!

Now no one *can* give Christianity another two thousand years; and if prophecy is easy, it is also unprofitable. What will be will be, at the end of two thousand years as to-morrow, but none of us will live to see it. Let us, therefore, take a more practical course. We will take a few broad characteristics of progress, and see what has been the effect of Christianity upon European civilisation. In other words, we shall ask whether Christ *has* saved the world; and the result will help us to answer—as far as it can be answered—the further question whether he *will* save the world.

There is one indispensable condition of all progress—Liberty of Thought. Truth is the highest interest of mankind; it cannot be found unless we are free to search for it, and even if it were found we could never be sure of it without examination. And it is impossible to say which of us will find the next truth that may revolutionise the belief and practice of society. Wise man was he, wrote Carlyle, who said that thought should be free at every point of the compass. The wider the area of selection the greater the variety; and he who seems one of the most insignificant of men may link his name with a great discovery, a splendid invention, or a sublime principle. You cannot tell where your Arkwright, Watt, or Stephenson will come from; your Edison may be a street-arab selling newspapers; your Shakespeare and Burns are born in unknown poor men's houses; your philosopher of the century may be unknown, or half contemptible, until he flashes his truth upon the minds of the few, who become his apostles to the many; your social regenerator may live and die despised, or perish in the prison or on the scaffold, and only earn fame and gratitude when his ashes cannot be gathered from the general dust of death.

Let thought be free then; free as the air, free as the sunshine. Set it no limits. Let its only limit be its power and opportunity. Let genius contribute its wealth, and mediocrity its mite, to the treasure-house of humanity.

This priceless freedom of thought has always been hated by Christianity. No religion has ever equalled it in steady, relentless oppression. In every age and in every nation, it has called unbelief a crime. It has punished honest thinkers with imprisonment, torture, and death; and threatened them with everlasting hell when beyond the reach of its malice. It has blessed ignorant faith and damned earnest inquiry; it has prejudiced the child and terrorised the man; it has protected its dogmas with penal laws after usurping authority in the schools; it has excluded Freethinkers from universities, parliament, and public offices, when it could not murder them; and even in the most civilised countries it still clings to enactments against blasphemy and heresy. It has fought Science, trampled upon Freethought, and opposed every step of Progress in the name of God.

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be continued.)*

## PAINE THE PIONEER.\*

THE long announced Life of Thomas Paine by Moncure D. Conway has at length appeared, and, it may be said at once, is a credit both to the author and the publishers. There have been numerous lives of Paine, mostly of a controversial character. One of the best of these, "By the Editor of the *National*" [W. J. Linton, wrongly ascribed to G. J. Holyoake in the American Cushing's *Book of Anonyms*] Mr. Conway but briefly mentions, with Richman's and Sherwin's, as containing "valuable citations from contemporary papers." The hostile accounts of Paine, which have found their way into so many Christian tracts, are repetitions from two scurrilous works by George Chalmers and James Cheetham. Under the pseudonym of "Francis Oldys," A.M., of the University of Pennsylvania, Chalmers wrote what in his first edition he called *The Life of Thomas Paine: Author of the "Rights of Man"*; with a *Defence of his Writings*, which he afterwards changed to a *Review of his Writings*. Chalmers was a clerk in a government office, and, Sherwin states, received £500 from Lord Hawkebury for writing the work, which Cobbett's biographer, Edward Smith, describes as "one of the most horrible collections of abuse which even that venal day produced." The second "authority" to which Christian charity has had recourse was a Life of Paine, written soon after his death, by his virulent enemy, James Cheetham, editor of the *American Citizen*, whom Paine exposed as betraying the Jeffersonian party while his paper was enjoying its official patronage. Mr. Conway gives several instances of Cheetham's ingenuity in falsehood. He says, for instance, that Mme. de Bonneville accompanied Paine on his return from France 1802; she did not arrive till a year later. He says that when Paine was near his end Monroe wrote asking him to acknowledge a debt for money loaned in Paris, and that Paine made no reply. "But before me is Monroe's statement (while President), that for his advances to Paine, 'no claim was ever presented on my part, nor is any indemnity now desired.'" Mr. Conway adds: "Cheetham's book is one of the most malicious ever written, and nothing in it can be trusted." That Christian Evidence mongers should go to such sources is natural; any stick is good enough to beat an infidel. It is more surprising that Mr. Leslie Stephen should have been content with such material.

Mr. Conway says, "The truest delineation of Paine is the biographical sketch by his friend Rickman," and he begins the preface to his work by referring to the table whereon Paine wrote his works, formerly in the possession of Thomas Clio Rickman, now in that of Mr. Truelore, an interesting relic Mr. Conway would like to see in America, where he thinks Paine is best appreciated. It is with the American portion of Paine's varied career that Mr. Conway deals in a far fuller manner than even his American biographer, Gilbert Vale. His share—a primary one—in making the United States an independent nation is well brought out by Mr. Conway, who endorses Joel Barlow's assertion that the American cause owed as much to the pen of Paine as to the sword of Washington. About half a million copies of *Common Sense* were sold. Paine donated the copyright to the States for the cause of independence, which it precipitated. It was sold at two shillings, and the author thus gave away a fortune in that pamphlet alone. It never brought him a penny; he even had to pay for copies himself. Notwithstanding this, Paine also gave to the States the copyright of his *Crisis*. Previously to this he had written against slavery, and Mr. Conway holds that the anti-slavery clause struck out of the Declaration of Independence was written by Paine, or by some one who had Paine's anti-slavery essay before him. Indeed he says: "Paine had no reason to suppose that the Declaration of human freedom and equality, passed July 4, could fail eventually to include the African slaves. The Declaration embodied every principle he had been asserting, and indeed Cobbett is correct in saying that, whoever may have written the Declaration, Paine was its author."

Paine served his adopted country not only as author, but as soldier and secretary to the Committee for Foreign

Affairs, and Mr. Conway has gathered many documents illustrating this part of Paine's career. A plan of obtaining aid from France was conceived and mainly executed by Paine. He gave up his clerkship to the Assembly and went personally to France, bringing back with him a sum of 2,500,000 livres at a critical time. For this hazardous service he never received any pay or public acknowledgment. One who had nearly upset the business got both honor and pay. Mr. Conway entitles one of his chapters "The Muzzled Ox Treading Out the Grain," and says of his hero: "He fairly pointed the moral of Solomon's fable: By his wisdom he had saved the besieged land, yet none remembered the poor man so far as his needs were concerned." One cannot read this part of Mr. Conway's narrative without feeling that the new Republic acted very meanly and ungratefully to the man who was its founder and defender. Paine was before all things anxious the States should form a United nation, while each was mainly concerned about its own sovereignty. This seems to have been at the bottom of the opposition to Paine. Although his claims were repeatedly urged by Washington, it was not till 1784 that the State of New York, in consideration of his eminent services, granted him a forfeited estate of 277 acres at New Rochelle. This was afterwards supplemented by a grant of £500 from the State of Pennsylvania. The money Paine devoted to his experiments in building iron bridges. It was this which brought him again to England and to France just before the outbreak of the great revolution. Paine's mechanical genius was recognised in England, and a bridge—the first of its kind—made under his direction spanned the Wear at Sunderland. This was not his only invention. A planing machine, a smokeless candle, and a scheme for using gunpowder as a motor were among the fruits of his active ingenuity.

Among the letters of Paine unearthed by Mr. Conway is one to Washington, dated May 1, 1790, announcing that "Our very good friend, the Marquis de La Fayette, has entrusted to my care the key of the Bastille, and a drawing handsomely framed, representing the demolition of that detestable prison." There was a peculiar appropriateness in giving Paine, the Liberator, custody of the key of a fortress so often used for the confinement of the writers on behalf of emancipation, which makes this little incident gratifying to students of history.

It was Paine's intention to return to his adopted country where business in connection with his iron bridge was finished. But he found a greater cause commanding his stay. Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published at the end of 1790 was a powerful plea on the side of reaction, and Paine, who had previously been a friend and admirer of Burke, undertook to answer him. This he did, and something more, in his *Rights of Man*. Mr. Conway remarks: "Burke was indeed already answered by the government established in America, presided over by a man to whom the world paid homage. To Washington, Paine's work was dedicated. His real design was to write a Constitution for the English nation. And to-day the student of political history may find in Burke's pamphlet the fossilised and in Paine's (potentially) the living Constitution of Great Britain."

Mr. Conway does not fail to notice the important contemporary evidence as to the progress of events in the French Revolution found in the *Rights of Man*. He remarks: "The majority of histories of the French Revolution, Carlyle's especially, are vitiated by reason of their inadequate attention to Paine's narrative." Paine himself was an eye-witness of many of the events; and having obtained his information from men like La Fayette, Danton, Brissot, and others, and by mingling with the masses, his history, says his biographer, "constitutes the most fresh and important contribution to our knowledge of the movement in its early stages."

(To be concluded).

Mrs. Flanigan (shaking her fist): "'Tis all very well for you to talk, Mrs. Brady, knowing I'm just from confession, and in a state of grace; but just you wait till to-morrow, when, plaze Heaven, I'll blacken the two eyes o' ye!

"Why do you stand with your hat off, Jones?" "Well, you see, I have been on the Continent a good deal, and it is the custom there to stand bareheaded when a funeral is passing." "That isn't a funeral; that's the South-Western express!"

\* *The Life of Thomas Paine*. With a history of his literary, political, and religious career in America, France, and England. By Moncure Daniel Conway. To which is added a Sketch of Paine by William Cobbett (hitherto unpublished). G. P. Putnam and Sons, New York; London: 24 Bedford-street, Strand, 1892. 2 vols.

## ACID DROPS.

During Mr. Bradlaugh's last illness some of the Christians took to praying for his recovery. According to the *Times*, a daily prayer-meeting is being held at Newcastle for the success of Mr. John Morley at the poll. Remembering the result in Mr. Bradlaugh's case, we may well exclaim *absit omen!*

Since writing the above paragraph we have been favored with a copy of the Newcastle *Daily Leader* containing a long advertisement of these "Election Prayer Meetings." Intending visitors are told to "Pray for the presence and power of the Holy Ghost before coming, or you had better stay away." John Morley and the Holy Ghost! It is a queer partnership.

Christians praying for a Freethinker's political success is a curious sign of the times. Twenty years ago the Christians of any constituency would have prayed for Mr. Morley's failure:—not his damnation, for they would have reckoned on that as certain.

Christians still talk about "judgments," and their goody-goody stories abound with "providential" incidents. Well now, in the light of this philosophy, we should like them to consider the burning down of the Bär Hotel, at Grindelwald. It was the headquarters of the Reunion Conference, which consists of a number of sky-pilots who are enjoying a good holiday under the pretence of discussing how to bring about Christian unity. The organiser of this picnic is the Rev. Dr. Lunn, editor of the *Review of the Churches*, and we see that Dr. Lunn's chalet is burnt down as well as the big hotel. Does not the disaster seem to show, therefore, that Providence is opposed to Dr. Lunn's scheme? And would it not be well for the Conference to take warning lest a worse thing befall them?

Two articles appear opposite each other in last week's *Christian World*—"Rome in London" and "Mad American Strikers." Our pious contemporary does not appear to entertain the slightest suspicion that the two things are in any way connected with each other. It denounces the American strikers in most righteous language, but sympathetically describes the tomfoolery of Cardinal Vaughan's investiture with the pallium of "pure white sheep's wool, adorned with purple crosses, with two lappets hanging before and behind, and fastened with jewelled pins." Now it is our very decided opinion that while men of learning and ability are devoting their time to such absurdities, there is likely to be plenty of folly and savagery in the relations between capital and labor. We are no apologists for murder or any kind of brutal violence; but we say deliberately that the pride of churches, and the religious care about the hypothetical interests of the next life, are largely, if not wholly, responsible for the deplorable condition of whole masses of the people in the so-called civilised world. Jewelled pins in cardinal's trappings are one side of the picture; the other side is want and misery, degradation and barbarism. Look on this picture, and on this! Both painted by the same artist—whose name is Superstition, and his father and mother Ignorance and Stupidity.

This great Labor Question will either wreck the churches or wreck civilisation. Fine talk about "the bread of life" is all very well—if one has time and taste for such luxury. But what the people really want—and will have, or know the reason why—is bread made out of corn grown on this side of the Black Sea of death; decent shelter and raiment for husband, wife and children; and leisure enough from toil to live a human life. If the upper classes will help the people to this, it will be well for the people and for themselves. If they will not, or cannot (it comes to the same thing), we shall have trouble on trouble, and perhaps revolution on revolution. And the first thing to do is to reject the priest's anodyne, keep our faculties alert, and face the problems of this world, not in the spirit of religion, but in the spirit of science and humanity.

The workers themselves don't see this yet, though they will see it by and bye. They also—just as foolishly as their "betters"—fancy that good fruit can be got by shaking the rotten old tree of theology. We notice that the Carlisle Trades Council has requested the ministers of the town to

hold special services and preach special sermons on the Labor Question. Very likely the ministers will oblige; but it is to be hoped that at least some members of the Carlisle Trades Council are above the absurdity of the request.

*Home Words* for August has an article on "The Gospel in Japan," by the Lord Bishop of Exeter. He begins by referring to the terrible earthquake, "when in two minutes and a quarter some 9,000 to 10,000 souls in Japan were called to appear before God." His lordship was in Japan at the time, but escaped with a wound in hand and foot—"just the sign manual of God's mercy"—a mercy pretty careful of his lordship, but totally disregarding the 9,000 odd Japanese who, from his plea for missions to them, he must surely think were doomed to eternal torment.

The Bishop of Exeter went on to say "There is a great land to be possessed, but we are able to overcome it, and, God helping us, we will." Oh, yes; you will possess Japan if possible. There is nothing in the way of *possessing* which the clergy will not attempt. And if Japan is "possessed" what a nice dumping-ground it will be for the surplus clerical population of Great Britain.

A correspondent from Yokohama writes: "Japan is the paradise of missionaries; they live in palaces, loll in carriages, the males generally with a cigar stuck out of one side of the mouth and the females dressed to kill. Christ rode on an ass, but here the man pulls the Christian ass in a imricksha to his braying place. They are of all denominations, from the Greek Archbishop Nikolai, in his fortified castle and cathedral; the Roman and Anglican bishops, United States Down-Easters, Canadian Congregationalists, school marmes, and Primitive Christians—all have a good time. And why shouldn't they? It's an easy social life, and they are well paid for it. No wonder there are so many of 'em, and so few perverts amongst the Japanese. We must circulate the *Freethinker* here and show them up; though, so long as the supplies come from *outside*, they rather enjoy a good exposure once in a while—it creates publicity, and they can spout in the papers."

Two thousand Mohammedans of Delhi have sent a memorial to the Indian Government complaining of a pamphlet in Urdu and Hindi, by the Rev. T. Williams, of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in which he asperses the character of their prophet Mohammed, and accuses him of various crimes such as dacoity, in plain terms robbery.

Protestant Christians sometimes complain of the way in which Freethinkers inveigh against their fetish, the Bible. Let them consider Luther's treatment of the Koran. He published at Wittenberg in 1540 a German translation of Richard's *Confutatio Alcorani*, with racy notes, to show "what a shameful, lying, abominable book the Alcoran is." He called Mohammed "a devil and firstborn child of Satan," and prayed, "God grant us his grace and punish both the Pope and Mohammed together with their devils." Even the mild Melancthon identifies Mohammed with the Gog and Magog of cranky John of Patmos, and charges his sect with being a compound of "blasphemy, robbery, and sensuality."

C. Wesley, in one of his hymns, shows he entertained a similar opinion of the great Arabian religious reformer. One stanza runs:—

The smoke of the infernal cave  
Which half the Christian world o'erspread  
Disperse, thou heavenly Light, and save  
The souls by that impostor led—  
That Arab thief, as Satan bold,  
Who quite destroyed thy Asian fold.

The *Clarion* has an exposure of the Salvation Army shelter. It seems Booth has learnt that something can be made even out of dossers. At the Blackfriars shelter, when "not so full as usual," there were 142 twopenny visitors, and 238 penny ones, a nightly income of £2 3s. 6d., or £800 a year. And the shelter has no fumigators or bath, and only six towels. Says the *Clarion* man: "It is high time the Government stepped in and closed these foul loathsome dens, which are simply harbors for the propagation of disease and vermin. These are not idle or irresponsible words. There are scores of witnesses to prove the truth of this allegation,

and we fearlessly challenge the Salvation Army on the issue. There are only two courses open; drastic reform or abolition."

The Rev. F. O. Morris, of Nunburnholm Rectory, is one of the good old sort of sky-pilots who still live in the last century. He has the idea that he has exploded Darwinism, which, he gravely announces in the *Church Times*, is as dead as the dodo. Good old fossil!

Says Bishop Ryle, the recent judgment of the Privy Council in the case of the Bishop of Lincoln is a long step towards Disestablishment and Disendowment. We hope it may prove so, but we keep our eye on facts, and the fact is the Low Church is played out and the Ritualists are now the strongest party in the Church of England, and likely to remain so. By the way, what does the Bishop of Liverpool think of Professor Huxley being a member of the Privy Council?

State as well as Church used to get something out of christenings, on which, in 1783, there was a government tax of 3d., which had to be paid by the parson out of his fee. No wonder the unbaptised were counted as among the unredeemed.

Brother Prince, of the Agapemone, near Bridgewater, is still living, and his sect is flourishing, like a green bay tree. In 1839 he was Church of England curate of Charlwich in that district, and drew round himself many female admirers, to whom he set up as an incarnation of the Holy Ghost. He even converted his vicar. His community went on the early Christian principle of the boss having all things in common, including the women. The sect has crawled along for fifty years, and has made some wealthy converts from the Salvation Army. They have a place at Stamford Hill, also at Reading, and a settlement in Norway. A temple is to be built in London at the cost of £8,000.

Archbishop Vaughan's investiture with the pallium has revived the controversy on the continuity of the English Church. Does the Anglican Church or the Catholic Church most represent the old Church of England? Here, we think, the Catholics have it. The Anglicans say they are the original; the Reformation was only like a man's washing his face—he is still the same. But the Catholics reply that they excommunicated the Reformers; and when a man cuts off his limbs the severed member is no longer the original man, but only a dead and corrupt thing. One fact is certain; before the time of Henry VIII. the appointment of all bishops was confirmed at Rome. In altering the Church's headship Henry altered the character of the Church itself.

In consequence of the cholera the authorities in Western Galicia wisely prohibited the pilgrimage to Kalevaar customary at this season. In face of this, however, the clergy announced that it was to be celebrated, and many processions of peasants who had set out for Kalevaar have had to be driven back by the gendarmes.

It appears the mortality from cholera in Russia is about 3,700 daily. The disease is assuming terrible proportions among the poor and famine-debilitated people in many of the Volga provinces. Throughout many districts of the continent something like a panic exists in fear of the approach of the epidemic. Wars, after all, slay fewer than divinely-sent disease.

The Rev. Walter Beeston Coyte, of Stonham Parva, seems to appreciate the text about not laboring for the meat that perisheth. He goes tick for it. But his butcher has stopped credit, and got a committal order against him for the bill. If the reverend gentleman doesn't pay up within a month, he will appreciate the prayer for "all prisoners and captives."

The Rev. Joseph Curry, of North Kelsey, Lincolnshire, had a difference with Mr. W. Ralphs, the schoolmaster. Accordingly he crushed the said schoolmaster's arm in the doorway, seized him by the throat, and otherwise maltreated him. For which exercises in Muscular Christianity the man of God has been fined £3, with £2 7s. costs, and the prosecuting solicitor's fees.

Person Abraham, vicar of Torksey, near Gainsborough, told Dr. O'Connor a mare as aged eight and sound. She

turned out to be seventeen and broken-winded. A jury has awarded Dr. O'Connor £22 2s. damages.

Colored Baptists held a Sunday-school convention at Chappal Hill, Bolton, Missouri, on August 7. A difficulty occurred over the riding of a "flying machine," and there was a riot, in which one man was killed and seven persons wounded, including two women and a child. Pistol shots were the arguments employed in this discussion.

Deacon J. Y. Smith, of the Broadway Christian Church, Lexington, Kentucky, was director of a woman's college and treasurer of a "Christian Educational Fund." His father left him 40,000 dollars. Most of this fortune he spent on women. He has left his wife and five children, and is living with a widow.

An old man of ninety died recently at a certain English asylum. His son, who is a Baptist minister in fairly flourishing circumstances, was communicated with, and asked to assist in defraying the cost of the funeral. Mr. Sky-Pilot replied that he did not care what became of his father's body, so long as his soul was all right. The corpse, therefore, had to be buried by the parish.

The heat on the Continent has resulted in many cases of sunstroke and sudden deaths in Germany, Austria and Italy. Above one hundred soldiers, on a march from Venice to Montselice, succumbed and had to be left lying at the roadside.

The fire at Grindelwald has been followed by another accident in Switzerland, the heat having caused the fall of an ice glacier, which nearly destroyed the village of Tasch, near Zermatt.

The Spookical Research Society had a good showing recently in the *Daily News* by a writer who stigmatises their methods of investigation as beneath contempt. He points out that out of the four hundred instances of *Phantasms of the Living* given in the two volumes with that title, they were not able to produce a single instance where the alleged phantasm was certified by an entry in a diary written at the time, or in a genuine contemporaneous letter. Not one. Were, then, the story-tellers hallucinated, or, plainly, liars?

"Mrs. Besant, in lecturing last night on 'The Miracles of Modern Science,' apologised for her choice of a title. The apology was certainly due, for nothing tends to greater confusion of thought than the loose use, which Mrs. Besant in this case adopts, of the word 'miracle.' Everybody knows the stock argument (if such it may be called) which runs somewhat as follows: 'The greatest 'miracles' are the miracles of science; therefore why not swallow the miraculous gnats of non-science?' In one form or another one meets the question everywhere; but of course it only passes muster by the equivocation between 'miracle' as meaning anything calculated to excite admiration or astonishment and 'miracle' in its theological sense of some manifestation of Power outside the laws of nature. 'You accept the laws of nature, which are wonderful; therefore why not accept wonderful things contrary to those laws?' The argument would not be very impressive if put thus correctly."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Is it true that a certain Liverpool church is in debt? Is it true that Talmage was engaged for a Sunday's services to diminish the burden? Is it true that the collections realised £60? Is it true that Talmage was offered the whole amount? Is it true that he declined to take less than £100? Is it true that the church doesn't want Talmage again? Is it true that Talmage is related to a famous Hebrew gentleman who lived in Venice?

Talmage is not treated very cordially by some of the leading Christian papers in England. A week or two ago we printed a story at his expense from the *Christian Commonwealth*; now we see the *Christian World* twits him with preaching very old sermons, and suggests that his recent engagements with crowned heads have prevented him from working up new ones.

The German Sunday law, which the pious emperor was instrumental in getting carried, is causing much discontent. Pedlars profit by the loss to shopkeepers. The milk stalls,

which were a boon and a blessing to nursemaids and their charges in the parks, and such places as Unter den Linden, have been swept away. The Germans don't go to church any the more for the new regulations; but one result of the emperor's puritanic methods is that the prisons are fuller than ever.

At a religious festival at Cesa, Naples, held in honor of an alleged miracle there, a shell, intended to explode in the air and cast abroad a shower of colored fireworks, suddenly burst on the ground and killed six persons, besides wounding many others.

Johann Most, the editor of the Communist *Freiheit*, has, it is said, been converted to the Salvation Army through the fascination of a female captain. We do not know if this is true, or if true, how far it will affect his future movements. But Mr. B. Tucker, the editor of *Liberty*, who has a keen eye for character, long since denounced Most as not being of true grit.

Clerical fees are still the subject of discussion in the Church papers. A Welsh parson gives a bill showing that when he was inducted he was mulcted to the tune of £73 12s. 2d. Meanwhile Mr. Charlwood, the secretary to Bishop Moorhouse, has brought an action for libel against the Rev. J. P. Foster, the secretary of the Clergy Fees Reform Association. Some think the action has only been brought to try and stifle the scandal as being *sub judice*.

The Wesleyan Conference, in its Pastoral Letter to the Methodist societies in Great Britain, expresses great anxiety about the "sacrament" of Baptism, and advises some adult members of the Methodist Church who have never been baptised to comply with the ordinance of the Lord, and qualify themselves for receiving the special blessing of obedient faith. At the same time, the Conference "protests against the superstition which connects regeneration with the mere performance of the rite." What is this, however, but an admission that the rite is a farce—at any rate when performed on children? If baptism doesn't "regenerate" them, what the Devil *does* it do to them? We pause for a reply.

Consecration of cemeteries—or rather of half of them—is getting played out. In many cases the towns or parishes won't have the job done; in other cases, they go in for a compromise, and have what they call a "dedication" of the whole cemetery. But, of course, Bishops cannot take part in such a performance. They justly argue that "Consecration is consecration, but what on earth is dedication?" On this ground the Bishop of Southwell has just refused to take part in the "dedication" of a cemetery at Ilkeston. His lordship's refusal is perfectly logical, both on Church of England and on general religious principles. Nevertheless the Dissenters will look upon him as a "proud prelate."

It is the living who quarrel about "consecration" of cemeteries. (Pity they haven't something better to do!) The dead take it very quietly. They don't seem to care where they lie—or how the living lie about them.

Those who fancy the good old creeds and hell-fire doctrines will expire of themselves if only left alone, should notice that in 1890 the Church of England had left it the sum of £1,608,829, irrespective of its usual income.

The only thing that appears to flourish in Ireland is the sky-pilot profession. In 1881 the census showed a population of 5,174,836. The 1891 census showed a population of 4,704,750. This is a decrease of 470,086. The number of the Roman Catholic clergy, however, has increased by 139. Thus the shepherds multiply while the sheep diminish. Presently there won't be fleece enough to go round.

"Sweet Jesus, receive my soul," were the last words of Patrick Gibbons, the matricide, immediately before being jerked Jesusward. And straightway the bolt was drawn and his soul flew up to heaven, where they had already killed the fatted calf. And there was more joy among the saints over this repentant murderer than over ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance.

There are some nice pickings made out of the missionary societies. No wonder the heathen rage. In the Church Missionary Society the proportion of working expenses to total expenditure is as high as one-eleventh. In the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, it is one-eighth; in the Wesleyan Missionary Society, it is one-eighteenth; while the canny Presbyterians manage it for one twenty-fifth.

We are trembling on the eve of a discovery which may revolutionise the whole thought of the world. The almost universal opinion of scientific men is that the planet Mars is inhabited by beings like, or superior to, ourselves. Already they have discovered great canals cut on its face in geometrical form, which can only be the work of reasoning creatures. They have seen its snowfields, and it only requires a telescope a little stronger than those already in existence to reveal the mystery as to whether sentient beings exist on that planet. If it be found that this is the case, the whole Christian religion will tumble to pieces. The story of the Creation has already become an old wife's tale. Hell is never mentioned in any well-informed society of clergymen; the devil has become a myth. If Mars is inhabited, the irresistible deduction will be that all the other planets are inhabited. This will put an end to the fable prompted by the vanity of humanity that the Son of God came on earth and suffered for creatures who are the lineal descendants of monkeys. It is not to be supposed that the Hebrew carpenter Jesus went about as a kind of theosophical missionary to all the planets in the solar system, reincarnate, and suffering for the sins of various pigmies or giants, as the case may be, who dwell there. The astronomers would do well to make haste to reveal to us the magnificent secret which the world impatiently awaits.—*Reynolds's*.

As the Church declines from want of men of ability in its ranks, we may expect further demands for lay help. We are not surprised to see the proposal of the Rev. Mr. Hutchinson, vicar of Christ Church, Penge, to form a National Church Brotherhood, with vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience, endorsed by the Church papers. But we shall be surprised if any considerable number of able lay helpers come forward to found this new monkery, or if the visits of these celibate churchmen are welcomed by the husbands at the houses where they are to go on their mission of conversation.

The *Rock* points to the Jews, and their deplorable treatment by the Christians of Russia, as a striking instance of the fulfilment of prophecy. Yes, this is an instance where Christians have done their best to bring about a fulfilment of prophecy. But they forget to notice that the Jews were to become a byword, not in consequence of their rejecting their Messiah, for there is nothing about that in the Old Testament, but in consequence of not keeping the commandments (see Deut. xviii. 15, 1 Kings ix. 6). "I came not to send peace but a sword" is another saying Christians have been ever ready to fulfil.

Church property in the United States is set down by the Government as worth 43,500,000 dollars. All of it is exempt from taxation. Yet they say that religion is not supported by the State in America.

The Catholics hope to win by urging in confession the good old Bible doctrine "increase and multiply." In Prussia, in December 1890, they had 11,217 members, and at the end of last year they had 12,152, the increase being much greater than the corresponding increase of the population.

The famous monastery of Montserrat, near Barcelona, Spain, which attracted yearly over 60,000 pilgrims, has been destroyed by fire. It owes its renown to an ancient image of the Virgin, supposed to have several times escaped destruction.

We are always ready to give our friends the clergy a tip how to turn a honest penny. We therefore call their attention to the advertisement of a Dakota clergyman, "Religious doubts and difficulties answered by private letter. State your difficulty and enclose one dollar for reply." The poor clergy are interdicted by law from following any trade or profession. But there is nothing to hinder putting up a sign-board, "Doubts removed and difficulties solved." We should fancy there was a fine opening for a brisk business by an enterprising man.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 28, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. : at 7.30, "John Morley; Statesman, Writer, and Freethinker."

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

October 2, Liverpool; 9 and 16, Hall of Science, London; 23, Newcastle; 30, South Shields.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—August 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; 19, 20 and 21, Aberdeen; 23, Glasgow; 25 and 26, Belfast; 30, Edinburgh. Nov. 1, Chester; 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20, Sheffield; 27, Hall of Science, London. 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.

C. E. SMITH.—Many thanks.

O. H. BROWNSWORTH, 4 Cottenham-street, Ardwick, Manchester, is the new corresponding secretary of the Manchester Branch, in place of J. Gough, resigned.

O. WRIGHT.—We are glad to hear the C.E.S. agents push the Sunday sale of papers. Every little helps.

J. W. WITTERING.—The date is booked.

J. H. W.—Pleased to hear from you, and hope you will continue to make headway with your studies, though the circumstances are so unfavorable. Life is very much like English weather; the prospect often brightens as suddenly as it darkened.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.—Your previous letter must have miscarried. "A Homeless Deity" appears.

W. CARTER.—Accept our thanks. We have placed the subscription to the credit of the Sustentation Fund.

W. GRANT (Manchester).—We have seen so many of these Christian Evidence papers come and go. The new one will probably share the fate of its predecessors. Gross personalities amuse the baser sort of Christians for a time, but the novelty wears off, and the end comes all the sooner if Freethinkers leave such journals severely alone.

EQUITY.—There is a good deal in your view of the case; namely, that the readers of a paper should pay a proper price for it. But, on the other hand, there are poor people, even among Freethinkers, with whom every single penny is a serious consideration; and, further, human nature has to be taken as it is. You may wish it were otherwise, and labor to make it so; but it is very unpractical to base actual plans upon suppositions instead of facts. Of course, if we did raise the price, we should print on better paper.

H. E. GOUGH.—See "Acid Drops." We are obliged to conceal the name.

J. F. HENLEY, of West London Branch, begs local Freethinkers to support the open-air lecture station at Salisbury-road this evening (Aug. 28), as an organised attempt has been threatened to break up the meeting.

JAMES MARSHALL and B. HYATT are desired to forward their present addresses to James Neate, treasurer Bethnal-green Branch.

J. WILSON.—No doubt there are many who, like yourself, met with the *Freethinker* accidentally. Advertising is a good thing, but relatively very expensive in the case of a special paper like the *Freethinker*. We have tried it from time to time, with no commensurate result. Perhaps we shall make another attempt when the winter begins.

JOHN PAYNE.—Pleased to hear they do not demur to your leaving the *Freethinker* on the table at the Horwich Reform Club. Subscription handed to the N.S.S. secretary.

W. HEAFORD.—See "Sugar Plume." Delighted to hear of your successful meetings.

W. NELSON.—The Sheffield notice was not "excluded." It is idle to use such an expression after the explanation in our last issue. We know nothing of what is posted at Sheffield; we only know what arrives at our office in London. Yours is not the first letter, by many a thousand, that never reached its destination.

E. J. C.—We do not know the book you mention. Our Tracts, very suitable for distribution, are issued at 6d. per hundred. Glad to hear that the parcel of literature sent you nine months ago has been eagerly read by your ship's company, and that many readers intend to join the N.S.S. when they return to England.

D. J. LUCE.—There is no better book on the subject of Free Will and Necessity than the one we publish under the title, by Anthony Collins, an English Freethinker of last century. The price is 1s. or 2s. bound in cloth. Jonathan Edwards's book on the Will is also powerful. It can often be got second-hand for a shilling or so.

A. B. MESS asks us to say it was not Basingstoke he lectured at, but Bishopstoke. We regret the blunder.

W. T. LEEKEY.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. EDMONDS.—Yes, we hope to keep the price at one penny.

ANTI-CLERICAL.—You must have been ill-grounded in elementary science to be staggered by such objections to the earth's rotundity.

G. SHAMBROOK, president of the Battersea Branch, and an old Freethinker, is going out to New Mexico. He has a quantity of books to dispose of, including some from Charles Bradlaugh's library. They can be seen at his address, 20 Crampton-street, Newington Butts, S.E.

R. ROSETTI.—It was certainly infamous for the C.E.S. lecturer to tell such a lie about your family; but as a rule the C.E.S. lecturers will say anything.

F. MURRAY.—Pleased to hear that reading the Bishop of Exeter's article has decided you to become a subscriber to the *Freethinker*. His lordship is like other "humble" Christians in fancying that Providence looks after his safety while other people are perishing. Poor little insect! What a mighty conceit he has of his own importance in the universe!

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—Liberator—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Secular Thought—Modern Thought—Twentieth Century—Chat—Clarion—Clifton Church Parish Magazine—Auckland Chronicle—Home Words—Newcastle Daily Leader—Natal Mercury—Medium—Midland Evening News—Echo—Leyton Express and Independent.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. E. 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.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the tropical weather a very good audience assembled at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Did We Live Before We Were Born?" Mr. R. O. Smith presided. There was no discussion, which was a great mercy, for at the end of the lecture the hall was like a Turkish bath.

"John Morley; Statesman, Writer, and Freethinker," is subject of Mr. Foote's lecture from the same platform this evening (Aug. 28). In view of the Newcastle election the lecture should be interesting enough to attract a good meeting. Freethinkers in London should try to bring some of their orthodox friends.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Mrs. S (Cornwall), 11s. 8d.; A. G. K. (2d. per week for year), 8s. 8d.; R. Waller, 2s. 6d.; E. Holland, £1; K. J. (quarterly while necessary), 2s. 6d.; Alpha, 1s.; F. W. Donaldson, 10s.; W. Carter, £2 2s.; Edward Stiebel, £2; John Payne, 6s.; E. Cruttenden, 2s.; J. Edmonds, 1s.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Manchester, where the heat was most oppressive, it being by far the hottest day of the season in that city. Of course such weather affected the morning and afternoon audiences, but in the evening the hall was filled, standing room to the very doors being occupied. Friends were present from surrounding districts, and one gentleman travelled over a hundred miles to hear Mr. Watts, who never lectured better.

Mr. Watts lectures at Grimsby to-day (Aug. 28) after twelve years' absence. During that time many persons in the town have joined the Freethought party who never saw Mr. Watts on the platform. In order to whet their curiosity we may remark that, on the occasion of his last lectures at South Shields, the local *Free Press* described him as "possessed of great oratorical powers" and "one of the best men on the Freethought platform." He was also referred to in an editorial note as a "clear, forcible, eloquent, and thoroughly conscientious speaker."

Mr. Heaford lectures to-day (Aug. 28) at Belfast. We hope the members of the Ulster Branch will give him a hearty reception, and induce as many as possible of their friends to attend his meetings.

Mr. W. Heaford sends us the following "Northern Notes":—"A few words on the results, up to date, of my present tour may be of interest to the readers of the *Freethinker*. At Huddersfield on Aug. 13 a huge and sympathetic crowd attended my open-air lecture. On the following day I visited Manchester and gave three lectures there. On Aug. 15 Farsley was roused by an open-air address, and on the following evening a large gathering at Bradford, where the bigots resented with groans and interruptions the arguments they could not overturn. Bradford Secularism must peg away and live down the religious ruffianism of the baser sort of Christians. I visited Huddersfield on Aug. 20, and there a very large audience again assembled, but unhappily the rowdy element indulged occasionally in exhibitions more pulmonary than intellectual. This Branch is doing right good work at the Market Cross, and deserves every encouragement from the local Freethinkers. At Sheffield the experiment was tried, on Aug. 21, of a morning outdoor address with striking success—a vast meeting, most orderly and attentive, was the result. The fine weather, however, somewhat marred the indoor attendance in the afternoon and evening."

The Ulster Branch on last Sunday invaded Carrickfergus. A large party of members and friends enjoyed the beautiful day, and were well entertained by Mr. W. J. Morrison, one of the saints resident in the ancient town. Mr. Morrison cares not for anathemas, and has provided a fine ballroom where Sunday dancing may be enjoyed. Boating, singing, and other amusements were liberally indulged in. The castle was inspected and discussed, and the party returned to Belfast late in the evening with the satisfaction of a well-spent day.

A handbill has reached us of the Freethought demonstration at Sydney on Sunday, July 31. Mr. W. W. Collins opened the new Lyceum in the morning, and in the evening Mr. Joseph Symes lectured on "The Conquests and Prospects of Freethought." The handbill, we notice, was printed by Christian and Son—which is curious.

*Paine the Pioneer*, the new essay by Colonel Ingersoll, is one of the best that ever came from his pen. It gives a brilliant summary of Paine's public career, and of his political and religious principles, and intermixes it with passages of characteristic reflection and splendid eulogy. We should like to see this pamphlet extensively circulated among Christians, especially among those who have been taught to hate a bogus Paine, bearing no likeness whatever to the man who was indeed "a soldier in the war of the liberation of humanity."

Mr. Joseph Brown, secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, sends us a copy of its third annual report. The Federation has done a good year's work. More lectures than ever have been delivered in the district. The income has been £142 15s. 4d., and the expenditure £143 15s. 4d.—leaving a deficit of only £1, which by a printer's error, we presume, appears in the report as 10s. We are glad to see the Federation's income is improving. It would have been just, however, to mention that grants from the N.S.S. central Executive have critically assisted the Federation's propaganda. Probably the omission is an inadvertence. Mr. Brown is a hardworking man, with many engagements, and the Federation is greatly indebted to his zeal and ability.

It is so difficult to get men of God to come to the scratch in debate at Leyton that the Leyton Branch of the N.S.S. insert a public advertisement in the local papers, challenging any minister or representative Christian to debate "The Moral Value of Christianity," "Is there a God?" "Secularism v. Christianity," or any other appropriate subject.

We are pleased to note, in the *Natal Mercury* for July 22, that Shelley has his admirers in South Africa. That paper has an excellent leading article on the poet, but makes the little mistake of placing his centenary on Aug. 11.

"Quinbus Flestrin," of our gallant contemporary, the *Clarion*, has been narrating his experience in Victoria-Park.

He got sick of the Christian Evidence Society in a few minutes, but he was lucky enough to find G. B. Shaw orating on Socialism. With the said G. B. Shaw "Quinbus" had a racy conversation. That it *was* racy you may bet your bottom dollar; for G. B. Shaw is a fellow who "believes in nothing"—except making the world a bit happier (that's his little weakness), and can talk about himself without being egotistical. Our only regret is that "Quinbus Flestrin" didn't tackle G. B. Shaw about his religious views, for he calls himself an Atheist—and what is more, is one.

A granite monument has been put over the grave of Dr. Caspar Schmidt (1806—1856), a Freethinker and Individualist, who in 1845, under the pseudonym of "Max Stirner," published a remarkable work, *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*, which may be roughly rendered "The One and his Property," or "The Individual and his Individuality." A tablet to his memory has also been placed on the house where he lived, 19 Philippstrasse, Berlin. Stirner's work has not been translated, but he is regarded by German Anarchists as the equal of Schopenhauer and Proudhon.

The Congress of the American Secular Union takes place this year at Chicago, and lasts for three days from Oct. 23.

As an instance of the decline of Sabbatarianism in Scotland, it may be mentioned that the vehicular competition on Sunday between Glasgow and Paisley has this summer become keener than ever, and there are no fewer than twenty 'busses and brakes plying for hire.

#### THE FAITH-PRISON.

THERE dwelt a powerful wizard in a cave,  
A fearful residence where newts and toads  
And many other creatures born in mud  
And filth and slime—bred loathsomely. He lived  
To manufacture spectacles which—placed  
Before one's eyes—so tortured heaven's light  
That newts and leeches, serpents and the like  
Seemed angels, glorious beings; while the slime  
That hung about the cave seemed changed to gold  
And silver essence. He—deformed and cruel—  
Shone like a messenger of truth and love.  
These glasses are the Spectacles of Faith  
Through which the parson wishes to view  
And only thus—the laws of his Religion,  
Its hell, its heaven, its tale of Man defiled,  
Its superstitions born of Ignorance;  
That we may see and not perceive; while he  
Shines like a messenger of truth and love!

RON MAHON.

#### IMMORTALITY.

ON no subject, perhaps, has so much weak reasoning been permitted to pass current as on this of the immortality of the soul; partly because men had already a faith secured to them on quite other authority, on quite other grounds, than those reasonings which served very pleasingly and eloquently to fill up the page. In old woodcuts one sometimes sees a vessel in full sail upon the ocean, and perched aloft upon the clouds are a number of infant cherubs, with puffed-out cheeks, blowing at the sails. The swelling canvas is evidently filled by a stronger wind than these infant cherubs, sitting in the clouds, could supply. They do not fill the sail, but they were thought to fill up the picture prettily enough.

Most of these arguments resolve themselves into passionate wishes to prolong some experienced delight, or to gratify some thwarted desire. A fragment of this present life is torn from all its necessary conditions, and perpetuated in the future world. Sometimes the action of the drama, broken off on earth, is to be carried on elsewhere; the revenge is to be completed, the calamity to be redressed. Sometimes the happiest scene of all the drama, alas! so transitory here, is represented as stationary and eternal there. Loving souls love on for ever. They see themselves like a group of beautiful sculpture, placed, safe and changeless, in Elysian bowers. Beautiful sculpture it must be; for *life*, as we know it—the very life they would transfer into eternity—is perpetual change—is growth and decay, extinction and reproduction; and our *present human consciousness* is built on, or interlaced with, the incessant movements of a vital form, that grows, blossoms, and dies like any other flower of the earth.

WILLIAM SMITH, *Thorndike*.

## WHY SHOULD A FREETHINKER FEAR TO DIE?

(CONCLUDED.)

SHAKESPEARE makes many allusions to death. He deems it wonderful that men should fear it:

Seeing that death, a necessary end,  
Will come, when it will come.

He thinks, as most writers do, that the feeling about it lies chiefly in the apprehension of it. It has been illustrated by the feeling of children going to bed in the dark. As Dryden says:

Death in itself is nothing; but we fear  
To be we know not what, we know not where.

Shakespeare says that the poor beetle we tread upon feels a pang as great as when a giant dies. From what I have witnessed, I doubt if there is finally any pang at all; I believe it all lies in the apprehension. My view is well expressed by Garth:

To die is landing on some silent shore,  
Where billows never break, nor tempests roar;  
Ere we feel the friendly stroke 'tis o'er.

The last experience I had confirms this. During some hours preceding death the patient desired an increased supply of fuel, when a roaring fire made the room insufferably hot, and requested more gas in broad daylight. This reminded me of Goethe's "More Light," which I noticed recently in his biography is transformed into an instruction to his servant to raise the window blinds. It is an affecting sight to witness a fellow mortal losing one sense after another, till the lungs finally give up their functions and the pulse ceases to beat.

An old friend and Freethinker made several allusions as to the best way of dying, and promised us an example of how best to do it. What he did was, after breakfast, cover his face with his handkerchief and go to sleep, as was his custom during many years. But in the last instance there was this difference, he did not waken for dinner or tea, and, on examination, he was found to be in that sleep from which some of us never expect to awake. I never heard if the Christians described his last hours struggling with the King of Terrors, and declaring what a different life he would lead if allowed another chance! Instead of contemplating our final end as one of terror, of tragedy, of desolation or despair, I think it wiser we should think of death

As a safe inn, where weary travellers  
When they have journey'd through a world of cares,  
May put off life, and be at rest for ever.

The most affecting scenes are those in which the young are cut off before experiencing either the pleasures or pains of existence. Death is inevitable, and for that reason Socrates refused to fly from Athens. "Is there any place outside Athens where men do not die?" he asked. But one cannot be indifferent to the unexpected happening of an event that must occur some time. Sudden death, and calm, peaceful, unconscious fading away, seem preferable; but we cannot choose our own end without executing the decree ourselves, which men call suicide. That act pays but a sorry compliment to human nature, and seems a kind of cowardice. It may be often true that he who dispatches himself does so under the impression that that was the best thing to do at the time. It sometimes savors a world of trouble. But I like the act best when the enemy is in front, and death at his hands certain; yet even then it seems to the onlooker inferior to falling sword in hand.

Imagine a soldier, whatever his religion, living in fear of death; yet even the path of glory leads but to the grave. But the soldier is thinking of glory, of victory, and not of death. So the mind of the Freethinker dwells on the present—its duties, its cares, its prospects; a future is thereby excluded—does not

absorb his thoughts—and he has therefore no dread of it. To fill the hour, that is happiness which leaves no space for apprehension or fear. Look at the animal kingdom. You will see that those are happiest which have no present cares or future apprehensions. Who has never envied the lambs and kittens?

Taking the popular opinion as possibly true, that death is but the opening of a new passage to another and a better world, he will be best prepared who strives to do his best here. Burns put his friend Aiken on the highest pedestal when he said—

If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there's none, he made the best of this.

It is clear common sense that we should make the best of this life whether there is or is not any bliss to follow. Plausible as the popular theory may appear to some, when plainly stated it appears to me that the ultimate state of things will be a marvellous transformation. At the consummation wished for by Christians there will be a *soul* without a body, a *heaven* without an earth, a *God* without a world!

There is one thing certain: if there is another life, the Freethinker cannot prevent it—he will have to swim with the stream, and sing with the mariner, "If my bark sinks 'tis to another sea." It is useless Christians putting on airs and assuming to decide the destiny of the Freethinker. Happily it is not in their power, prate as they may. Their assumption that there is a judge of all the universe as narrow-minded and as bigoted as themselves is monstrous. Omnipotent wisdom is not made up of their puny dogmas, creeds, and ceremonies, about which they think so much. Omniscience does not consist of such trifles as vex their little souls.

Sitting on the throne of heaven, a personification of ignorance and superstition has no terrors for a well-informed Freethinker. His ideal of perfection transcends all such petty nonsense. The fertile brain of man peoples the heavens and earth with monsters and monstrosities, which the cultivated reason extinguishes; one by one they vanish. Civilised man may believe in something higher than himself; but to worship anything lower than himself would be to revert to this early barbarism, already relegated to deserved oblivion. At the same time, it is well known that in certain cases of disease the dying man has visions as hideous as a living and healthy savage. It is not the facts we deny, but the interpretation of them, the causes to which they are assigned by the ignorant and superstitious. Some one has written that there is pleasure enough in life to make us desire to live, and pain enough to reconcile us to death when we can live no longer. Is not the pain, suffering, and sickness which precede death sufficient without adding imaginary phantoms? Is not parting with our friends forever, the leaving a world of wonder and beauty; taking the last view of the flowers, the sunshine, and the landscape that has charmed our lives, enough, without adding the prospect of endless misery? May we not legitimately borrow a text? Surely enough for the day of parting is the evil thereof.

If there is one thing more than another desirable in the day of darkness and gloom, it is an effort on the part of our friends not to increase their intensity. Avoid, above all, piling upon the agonies inflicted by nature, the agonies occasioned by the splutterings of theologians. As to theologians themselves and their messengers—keep them *outside the door*—leave them to revel in the lies and slander of their own manufacture. The hour of death is not the time for preaching or arguing. Of course there are persons to whom, at such a time, such visits would give pleasure. By all means let every thing be done that may possibly relieve, but not inflict pain. Do anything that will dispel the gloom or cheer the parting hours. In a word, do as nearly as possible the opposite of what it is the custom

to do. It was with exceeding pleasure I read some time ago of a scheme to supply sweet music to soothe the sufferers. This is a vast improvement on the preachings, prayers, and lamentations. There appears nothing so awful in the sick room as a man dressed in black, wearing india rubber slippers, pulling a long face, muttering in whispers some wailing tale about something he knows nothing about. It is enough to make a poor creature feel dead before his time.

The story of Gods, partial and unjust, tyrants reigning in the heavens—by which kings and priests have misgoverned and misguided an uninstructed world—is a terrible imposture. I think it among the glories of the past hundred years that this imposture has been exposed, and the arm of the impostor paralysed. Countless thousands now have ceased to dread the story, and treat such malicious inventions with the contempt they deserve. The Freethinker, whether living or dying, is no longer influenced by such Popish stuff as this. Such ideas have no influence whatever over minds accustomed to think and reason.

A diabolical God gains no reverence or awe from the Freethinker, and he can only despise the agent who seeks to alarm him with such a wretched spectre.

In the present day there are not a few ministers of religion who take off the hideous robes with which their forefathers clothed the Deity and substitute the apparel suggested by a more humane modern philosophy. But all this is vain; it can no more be sustained by logic and facts than the old view. He will have to be divested of his modern attributes also. The modern invention may have its advantages and be a welcome change, but it is still an invention. I fancy some reader saying—"All this is very well, but you are writing it in good health and not under the circumstances about which you give an opinion. It is written that

When the Devil was sick, the Devil a saint would be;  
When the Devil got well, the Devil a saint was he."

But, as a matter of fact, the thoughts now penned by me occupied my mind at a time when life was uncertain, and on more than one occasion. How even great minds must suffer who are under the influence of popular views may be seen by their utterances in the day of affliction. As an illustration, take the lines written by Burns in the prospect of death (although elsewhere he has said it has no terrors for the brave):

O thou unknown, Almighty Cause  
Of all my hope and fear!  
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,  
Perhaps I must appear!

He pleads in extenuation of having sometimes gone wrong—

Thou know'st that thou hast formed me  
With passions wild and strong.

And concludes—

But thou art good; and goodness still  
Delighteth to forgive.

Notwithstanding the "dread presence," he endows it with the generosity of his own heart.

An all-knowing, just God would be above taking offence at the doings of his ill-informed and erring creatures, whose capacities are the opposite of his own, and the exercise of forgiveness could only be possible in a God weak enough to be offended at his creatures not being, like himself, free from all imperfections. Whatever theories we assume about things beyond our knowledge, we should be careful to avoid all that in any way may interfere with our tranquillity either in life or death.

As to the time and manner of our departure, no man can foresee; hence it seems only ordinary prudence that we should, while alive and well, make such provision for it as may occasion the least trouble

and anxiety to those we leave behind us. This was made clear to my mind by reading of one who had fought in several battles, travelled over the civilised globe in safety, and was knocked down and killed on his return by a cab crossing a London street. This is not a matter that can affect the dead; but sometimes, in case of property, the neglect of it may cause endless strife, litigation, and even ruin to the parties concerned in its administration and distribution. It appears a wise course, where practicable, to settle our affairs ourselves, leaving as little as possible to those only partially acquainted with our intentions and wishes.

Emerson points out a modern improvement in inscriptions in churchyards, supposed to express the sentiments of those buried under them; it is "Think on living." The old ones read, "Keep death and judgment always in your eye." Another is very explicit:

Farewell, my children dear,  
I am not dead, but sleeping here.  
When Jesus Christ for us doth call  
I hope in heaven to meet you all.

Some, again, are merely historical, as—

"He read the *Morning Herald* daily."

Or—

"He was clerk of this church forty years, and if you want to know any more you must wait till the Judgment Day."

There is an old Latin sentence which, being translated, means—The dead only survive in the memory of the living. That being so, it seems desirable that we should make the survival worthy of the living memory. If nothing but good should be uttered of the dead, we shall do well in leaving a large supply of that.

I sometimes think it would be well if we could remain here for an indefinite period, but am reminded that Socrates, Shakespeare and Darwin have left us—given up their earthly inheritance—and why should I claim or desire exemption from the lot of all?

Longfellow has left some lines of an inspiring character to those who, by following the example of the wise, may leave "footprints on the sands of time"—

Footprints that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Whatever may be, this world is, and he who serves it to the best of his ability does not fear to leave it. He does well who does his best, and deserves well both here and hereafter. To the good and true we bid farewell, and, if for ever, still farewell.

C. C. CATTELL.

#### OBITUARY.

I regret to have to record the death of Mr. Abram Fitchett, one of the oldest members of the Leicester Secular Society, and a constant worker with us up to the time of his last illness, only a few weeks before his death. He died on August 14, and was buried in the Leicester Cemetery on the 18th, in the presence of a large number of friends. The service (purely Secular) was conducted by Mr. Thos. Slater. Mr. Fitchett was for many years a member of our Society. He was one of the original shareholders in the Leicester Secular Hall Company, and was a director of the company at the time of his death. He had reached the ripe age of 75, and died respected by all of us who knew him. His familiar figure will be sadly missed at all our meetings. The principles which he had cherished in life sustained him as death drew near; he died a honest, straightforward Secularist, with no kind of misgiving.—SYDNEY A. GIMSON.

The spring of 1586 was tardy in the Rhineland, and the cold was prolonged to June. This could only be the result of witchcraft, and the Archbishop of Treves burned at Pfalz a hundred and eighteen women and two men, from whom confessions had been extorted that their incantations had prolonged the winter.—H. C. Lea, "History of the Inquisition," vol. iii., p. 549.

## BOOK CHAT.

Only a person of extensive knowledge could compress within the compass of a lecture something like a full and trustworthy guide to so complex a subject as the Religion of India. And this Sir Alfred Lyall, by seizing the root ideas, has done. His little book, *Natural Religion in India*, the Rede Lecture for 1891, while showing what a comprehensive faith Hinduism is, finds its sources in the same primitive animistic beliefs which are traced by Dr. E. B. Tylor at the root of other religions.

Long ago, the old Freethinker Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, quaintly observed: "And in these Four Things: Opinion of Ghosts, Ignorance of Second Causes, Devotion toward what men fear and Taking of Things casual for Prognostiques, consisteth the Natural Seed of Religion, which by reason of the different Fancies, Judgments, and Passions of severall men, hath grown up into ceremonies so different that those which are used by one man are for the most part ridiculous to another." These words seem to Sir A. Lyall to cover most of the ground out of which Polytheism in India has grown up, and, what is more, can be still seen growing.

The most exalted devotional Pantheism and the most debasing fetishism (both of which have long co-existed in Hinduism) may be traced to the same roots. Fear of the spirits of the dead is a chief factor. Madame de Stael said she did not believe in ghosts, but she was afraid of them; and this lingering fear is the faint shadow still left even on cultured imaginations by the universal dream-founded belief of primitive folk that they were haunted by the spirits of the dead. The notion of the survival, re-appearance, and transmission of the soul or spirit, says Sir A. Lyall, "runs like a spinal cord through the whole connected series of the beliefs that are comprised in Hinduism." Its loftiest ceremonial liturgy can, he thinks, be traced back "to primitive obsequies, to methods for laying the ghost, for feeding, comforting, and conciliating him." Some evidence of this purpose may be discerned in almost every stage of funeral services among the Hindoos, from the offerings made to the dead and the wailing prayers of the rude tribes up to the formal oblations prescribed by the Brahmanic High Church. Even the right to inherit property is by Hindu law co-extensive with the duty of making certain periodical offerings to the ancestral spirits.

It is because in India may be clearly traced the origin and growth of those features which underlie all religions—Christianity no less than Brahmanism—that the study of its faiths is so important and the present unpretending little book so valuable. It will be found an excellent introduction both to the fuller exposition of early beliefs in Dr. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* as well as to a special knowledge of the religions of India.

The first part of an important work on *The Religious System of China*, its Ancient Forms, Evolution, History, and Present Aspect, by Dr. J. J. M. de Groot, has been published in English at Leyden, with a subvention from the Dutch Colonial Government. The first book deals with the Disposal of the Dead; Pt. 1, Funeral Rites; Pt. 2, The Idea of Resurrection. Dr. de Groot finds the prevalence of similar ideas at the root of religion in China to those found by Sir A. Lyall in India.

The energetic advertisement given to the *Elements of Social Science* by the agents of the Christian Evidence Society has contributed to keep that volume well before the public. That a new edition, the twenty-ninth, enlarged (Truelove, 256 High Holborn), represents the issue of seventy-seven thousand copies, speaks doubtless for the interest and intrinsic importance of the medical and social subjects dealt with in the volume, as well as for its kind friends of the C.E.S., to some of whom this book and its supposed complete endorsement by Secularists constitutes their principal stock in trade. This new edition has an appendix on the important question "Can War be Suppressed?"

*The Secrets of the South* (Australian Poems), by Sydney Jephcott, is published in London by Reeves, 185 Fleet-street. Mr. Jephcott, we believe, enjoys a considerable reputation in Australia, which will hardly be sustained by the present volume in England. He is sometimes slipshod and ungram-

matical, and often affects very awkward inversion. Frequently his style is harsh and inflated, as though he meant something but had not disciplined himself to say it with accuracy and perspicuity; and he is apt to mistake a succession of views for a true picture. Nevertheless there are some good pieces in the volume—notably "England Imperatrix" and "Sesame," and a straightforward, earnest poem on "Matthew Arnold."

## A HOMELESS DEITY.

I ALWAYS thought it wasn't fair,  
When I the story read,  
How God Almighty had not where  
That he could lay his head.

When even foxes holes have got  
And birds possess a nest,  
The wretched God who made the lot  
Could find no place of rest.

That he who made the feather'd swan  
And downy Eider duck  
Had nothing soft to lie upon  
Seems most atrocious luck.

Why even I, a worthless wight,  
Who has to toil for bread,  
When I my lodging seek at night  
Have got a humble bed.

Poor God! the contrast gives me pain,  
And tears my eyes bedew;  
But if you come to earth again  
I'll share my bed with you.

'Tis true the stuffing gets in lumps,  
That put me much about—  
To rise at night and give them thumps,  
To beat them nicely out;

'Tis true my palliase is old  
And rises at the edge;  
'Tis true my feather pillow's sold,  
My bolster gone to pledge.

And though my garret needs repair,  
Though chinks its roofing mark,  
'Tis better than Trafalgar-square,  
More sheltered than the park.

But if my couch prove too uncouth,  
And still you're at a loss,  
I'll take you round to Mr. Booth  
And treat you to a doss.

And yet I hope you'll come and sleep  
Whenever you descend;  
And, by the way, I always keep  
A nightshirt for a friend.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

## 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.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

Allie: "Oh, Bobby, you mustn't take those tarts! Suppose some one should find it out?" Bobby: "Pooh, Allie, how's anybody going to find it out? God can't tell, and you wouldn't be so mean."

## 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): Sunday at 10, brake excursion to Riddlesdown (tickets 2s. 6d.) Tuesday at 8, social gatherings. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class. Thursday at 8, W. Hicks, "The Eight Hours Question" (free).

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 8, H. Vining, "The Sign of a Change." Monday at 8.45, C. Cohen's science class (physical geography). Saturday at 7.30, dancing.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, H. Snell, "One Hundred Years of Science and Invention."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "John Morley: Statesman, Writer, and Freethinker."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. Cohen, "Missionaries"; evening lectures discontinued.

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

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, J. B. Coppock, "Scientific Materialism."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture.

Columbia-road (near Columbia Market), Hackney-road: 11.15, R. Rosetti, "The Origin of Man."

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, J. Cook will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): E. Calvert, 11.30, "Miracles and Prophecy as Tests of Truth"; 3.30, "Is the Old Testament a Divine Record?"

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8, a lecture. Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, J. Fagan, "Miracles."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Fast."

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Salvation."

Lambeth—New Cut (corner of Short-street): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Priests and Progress."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, Mr. St. John, "Christianity and Freethought."

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

Mile End Waste: 11.30, F. Haslam, "What did Jesus Teach?"

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "True Salvation."

Plaistow Green: 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, F. Haslam, "Why I am a Secularist."

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

Walthamstow—Markhouse Common: 6.30, C. Cohen, "Ethics and Theology." Thursday at 7.45, C. Cohen will lecture.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, S. H. Alinson, "Soul, Spirit, Ghost."

## COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Secular Hall: 11, W. D. Kirkpatrick, "If the Foundation be Destroyed what shall the Righteous do?"; 7, in Oddfellows' Hall, W. D. Kirkpatrick, "Ancient Babylon."

Belfast—Crown Chambers Hall, Royal Avenue: W. Heaford, 11.30, "A Freethinker's View of Christ"; 3, "The March of Socialism"; 7, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 6.30, business; 7, Mr. Kirwan, "Lord Byron."

Derby—20 Newland-street: 7, important business meeting.

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: Charles Watts, 11, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 3, "Secularism: its Twofold Advantages"; 7, "Christianity and Secularism: what the latter has done for the World."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, James Read, "The Devil and all his Works."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' monthly meeting.

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

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, "Shakespeare and the Authorship of the Plays under his Name" (with illustrative recitals).

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Theosophy and Ethics"; 3, "The Life and Teachings of Giordano Bruno"; 7, "Hell: does anyone Believe in it?"

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Aberdeen—Castle-street: 2.15, W. D. Kirkpatrick, "When Heaven and Earth shall Pass Away—What?"

Bingley—Main-street: 3, John Grange, "Ashamed to be a Christian."

Bradford—Upper Godwin-street: 6.30, A. B. Wakelield, "Some Historic Characters who were Not Christians."

Leeds—Woodhouse Moor (near the band-stand): 7, J. Greevy-Fisher, "Theosophy—a Reply to Mrs. Besant's Leeds lecture."

## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Sept. 4, Birmingham; 11, Hall of Science. Oct. 2, Leicester; 23, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Aug. 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.—Aug. 28, m., Old Pimlico Pier; e., Kilburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Creden-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 4, Camberwell; 11, Clerkenwell; 18, Westminster; 25, Manchester. Oct. 2, Camberwell; 9, Westminster.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Aug. 28 m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow.

SAM STANDBRING, 106 Oxford-road, All Saints' Manchester.—Aug. 28, Manchester. Sept. 4, Barnsley; 11, Grimsby; 18, Leicester; 25, Rochdale.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—Aug. 28, m., Bethnal Green.

S. H. ALINSON, 52 Chant-street, Stratford, E.—Aug. 28, m., Wood Green. Sept. 4, m., Columbia-road; 11, m., Lambeth; e., Swaby's; 18, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 25, m., Bethnal Green. October, all mornings booked.

T. THURLOW, 34 Wetherell-road, South Hackney.—Sept. 11, m., Kingsland Green.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon-street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Aug. 28, Barnsley. Sept. 4, Nottingham.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Aug. 28, m., Lambeth. Aug. 29 to Sept. 5, North Eastern Secular Federation; Sept. 11, Edinburgh; 18, Aberdeen; 25, Glasgow. Oct. 1, Bradford; 2, Grimsby; 9, Hull; 16, Sheffield; 18, Cheltenham; 23, Bristol; 30, Cardiff. Nov. 3, Swansea; 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester; 14, Pendlebury.

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