

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## A LOST SOUL.

Rome, says the proverb, was not built in a day; and Christianity was not built in a century. It took hundreds of years to complete, as it is taking hundreds of years to dissolve. For this reason it is a very complicated structure. There is something in it for all sorts of taste. Those who like metaphysics will find it in Paul's epistles, and such dogmas as that of the Trinity. Those who like a stern creed will find it in the texts that formed the basis of Calvinism. And those who like something milder will find it in such texts as "Love one another" and "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

It must be confessed, however, that the terrible aspects of Christianity have been most in evidence. Religion had its first roots in ignorance and terror, and it must continue to derive sustenance from them or perish. People were never allured by the simple prospect of heaven; they were frightened by the awful prospect of hell. Of course the two things were always more or less mixed. The recipe was brimstone and treacle, but the brimstone predominated, and was the more operative ingredient.

Present-day sermons tell us chiefly of God's goodness; older sermons tell us chiefly of what is called his justice. Puritan discourses, of the seventeenth century, were largely occupied in telling people that most of them *would* be damned, and explaining to them how just and logical it was that they *should* be damned. It was a sort of treatment they should really be thankful for; and, instead of protesting against it, they should take it with folded hands and grateful submission.

How many preachers have depicted the torments of the damned! How many have described the fate of lost souls! They positively delighted in the task, as corrupted organs of smell will sometimes delight in abominable stenches. Even the average Christian has regarded damnation—especially the damnation of other people—with remarkable complacency, as a part of the established economy of the universe. But now and then a superior spirit revolted against it instinctively. Thus we hear of Gregory the Great, in an age when it was devoutly believed that the noblest Pagans were all in hell, being deeply impressed with the splendid virtues of the emperor Trajan, and begging for his release; a prayer which (the legend says) was granted, with a caveat that it should never be repeated. Thus, also, we hear of the great Aquinas kneeling all night on the stone floor of his cell, passionately beseeching God to save the Devil.

This revolt against eternal damnation has mightily increased. Civilised men and women will not—positively *will* not—be damned at the old rate. The clergy are obliged to accommodate their preaching to the altered circumstances; hence we hear of "Eternal Hope," and "Ultimate Salvation," and similar brands on the new bottles in which they seek to pour the diluted old wine of theology.

Archdeacon Farrar is the type of this new school—  
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at least in the Church of England. He is a wealthy pluralist; in addition to which he earns a large income as a writer of sentimental books, that immensely tickle the flabby souls of "respectable" Christians. Not quite illiterate, yet nowise thoughtful, these people are semi-orthodox and temporising. They take the old creed with a faint dash of heresy. Hell, at any rate, they like to see cooled a bit, or at least shortened; and Archdeacon Farrar satisfies them with a Hell which is not everlasting, but only eternal.

We believe that Dr. Farrar expressed a faint hope that Charles Bradlaugh had not gone to hell. It was just possible that he might get a gallery seat in the place where the Archdeacon is booked for a stall. Dr. Farrar is not sure that all the people who were thought to go to hell really go there. He entertains a mild doubt upon the subject. Nor does he believe that hell is simply punitive. He thinks it is purgative. After a billion years or so the ladies and gentlemen in the pit may hope to be promoted to the upper circles. Some of them, however, who are desperate and impenitent, and perfectly impervious to the sulphur treatment, will have to remain in hell for ever. The door will be closed upon them as incorrigible and irredeemable; and the saints in heaven will go on singing, and harping, and jigging, regardless of these obstinate wretches, these ultimate failures, these lost souls, these everlasting inheritors of perdition.

Humanity is growing day by day. So is common sense. Every decently educated person will soon insist on the abolition of hell. The idea of a lost soul will not be tolerated.

A theologian of painful genius (in its way) imagined a lost soul in hell. He had been agonising for ages. At last he asked a gaoler "What hour is it?" and the answer came "Eternity!"

Thoughtful, sensitive men and women, in ever increasing number, loathe such teaching, and turn with disgust from those who offer it to their fellows.

We are not aware that men have souls, but if they have, why should any soul be *lost*? We are not aware that there is a God, but if there is, why should he *let* any soul be lost? Sending souls to hell at all is only punishing his own failures. If he is omnipotent he could have made them as he pleased, and if they do not please him it is not their fault, but his own. Let it be distinctly understood that a creator has no right over his creatures; it is the creatures who have a right to the best assistance of their creator. The contrary doctrine comes down to us from the "good old times" when children had no rights, and parents had absolute power of life and death over them. In the same way, God had absolute power over his creatures; he was the potter and they were the clay; one vessel was made for honor, and one for dishonor; one for heaven, and one for hell. But civilisation has changed our conceptions. We regard the parent as responsible for the child, and God is responsible for the welfare of his creatures. A single "lost soul" would prove the malignity or imbecility of "our father which art in heaven."  
G. W. FOOTE.



## THE WORTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

YOUNG poets excite interest and curiosity, like young lovers. One wonders what will be the practical outcome of their fine emotions. In the verses of the new Socialist poet, Francis Adams, a ring of manly sincerity and tender humanity, despite an equally evident crudeness, waywardness and want of balance, attracted me to try his *Australian Essays*. I find the same qualities with less of originality. For the thoughts of the *Essays* Mr. Adams is mainly indebted to Matthew Arnold. He is, I regret to find, an echo and no voice. In an essay on Culture, in which we are continually reminded of Arnold, he falls foul of the late Professor Clifford, for his antagonism to Christianity, in this style:

"His talent we were all bound to admire, and his sincerity; but how wonderfully inept he was when he came to consider things outside his own immediate sphere! We all remember what he had to say about Christianity. He had the same narrowness towards Christianity that the Christians have towards Science. In them it is excusable, perhaps. Circumstances have been all against them. They have had such little opportunity of attaining to the secret of the purpose and system of Culture. It has taken its rise outside their pale, and has been combatted as a foe, and is still combatted. But in a man who had this secret, how inexcusable the not being able to apply it outside his own immediate sphere! and how doubly inexcusable to apply to his opponents that very method which had made them so! Really he should have known better."

There is a lack of modesty about this passage. This affected air of superiority to scientists when they travel "outside their own immediate sphere" has been altogether overdone. Christianity comes as much within the sphere of Professor Huxley as of Mr. Gladstone. The question is one of the respective competence of their judgments. Prof. Clifford was certainly vastly more competent to deal with the subject of the worth of Christianity than Mr. Adams. He had a strict training in science and history. Mr. Adams's training is evidently purely literary and artistic. His knowledge of science, so far as appears from his writings, is a minus quantity. The same may be said of his knowledge of history. But the question as to the value of Christianity to mankind, as Prof. Clifford well saw, was mainly a historic one. What we see now are but varied shreds and patches of a vast religious system, which once over-awed Europe. Each sect claims to be the real original, yet is continually modifying its positions to accommodate itself to the demands of growing science. If Christianity has been, as I hold it has, on the whole, an evil to mankind, no less pernicious than false, those who bravely antagonise its claims, as Clifford did, are benefactors to mankind. Mr. Adams takes a different view. Having given up all the dogmas of Christianity, all that gave it its life when it was a thriving religion, Mr. Adams now looks on a sort of undogmatic sentimental Christianity as the hope of the world, and thinks the Salvation Army a commendable type of religious Socialism. He is entitled to his opinion. But what he should then do is to show it is well founded, and point out what errors of statement Prof. Clifford was guilty of and wherein his narrowness lay. For a very young person, as I believe Mr. Adams still is, to adopt instead this lofty condescending tone to his superior in every point of culture is doubly inexcusable. Really he should have known better.

The nature of the attitude taken towards Christianity by a sincere man like Clifford must depend on what he conceives to be its essential character and worth. He opposed it because he held it to be false and misleading. He considered it contained the essential virus of intolerance and persecution. And history bears him out.

From the nature of its tenets it was unavoidable that Christianity should be persecuting. It claims

exclusive divinity. There is no salvation under any other name than that of Christ. It inherited a jealous God, whose chief commands were relative to the extirpation of his rivals. It enjoined from the first—"If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2 John, 10). "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 9). It taught that "he that believeth not, shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16); and its doctrine of eternal torment made earthly torture seem a trivial affair. Ortolan, in his *History of Roman Law*, p. 395, affirms that differences in civil rights, as the effect of religious belief, "began with Christianity." This is but a small part of the historic indictment of this divine religion. It overthrew the Roman civilisation and substituted the night of the dark ages of faith. It has given rise to more strife and persecution than any other historic religion. No other faith has been the occasion of so much bloodshed and so much bitter, malicious hatred among men as Christianity. The slaughter of fifty millions of human beings in its religious wars is but one item of the misery it has inflicted. Its track has been left in tears as well as blood. The anxieties, gloom, dissension, intolerance, and insanity which have arisen from its dogmas are incalculable. Who can reckon the anguish of wives, believing their husbands are doomed to a dreadful judgment; of mothers dreading lest their offspring are condemned to eternal fire? Who can tell of the distress of relatives and lovers sundered because of different faiths? The very magnitude of its promises and threats has dwarfed and stunted right human relationships. By referring morals to an extra-human source and placing motives to good conduct in another world, it has only succeeded in turning them upside down. The inducements it offers are essentially base. It is said that for every joy we resign we shall have a hundredfold hereafter. Its dogma of substitutionary atonement has encouraged the criminal to sin in person and suffer by proxy.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
Unto the sinner's ears;  
It soothes his sorrows, cures his wounds,  
And calms his guilty fears.

It has been the historic enemy of science, liberty and progress. It has not to this day ceased barbarously persecuting the Jews, among whom it took its rise, because they repudiate its falsities. It supported slavery because instituted in the Bible. It slew thousands of poor old women because God had said, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." It has kept women in subjection because Paul declared she should be subject in all things. It has stood in the way of divorce because Jesus said, "Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder." It makes, as far as it can, the working man's day of leisure a day of gloom instead of a day of gladness, and debars him from seeing the libraries, museums and art galleries he pays for, because "In six days the Lord created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day, and hallowed it."

What is the state of the world after 1800 years of this divine revelation? To Mr. Adams, the revolutionary singer of *Songs of the Army of the Night*, it is lamentable. The majority of the world's inhabitants are still heathen, and the Christian nations are by no means perfect models. A force of 450,000 sufficed to keep the peace of the world in the days of Pagan Rome. Now in Europe 6,000,000 men, the pick of the most Christian nations, are armed to the teeth out of mutual dread. It is not Christians armed against Buddhists or Confucians, but against fellow Christians, and with a chaplain to each regiment of Christian soldiers. Has it improved the lot of the toilers? But the question scarcely needs asking of a Christian Socialist. What progress has been made has been



won by attention to this world, in opposition to its teachings.

Christianity undoubtedly has been useful to certain classes. It has suited tyrants. Paul, writing to the Romans in the time of Nero, exhorted them. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rev. xiii. 1, 2). It has been useful to priests. They became mediators between God and man, with power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven; awarding penance, granting absolution, and pronouncing the remission of sins. They assumed supremacy over all temporal authority, and claimed immunity from the jurisdiction of ordinary civil tribunals. "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" said Paul (1 Cor. vi. 3), and his followers bettered his instructions. They have done their utmost to acquire the best for themselves below before taking up their mansions above. These caterpillars of the commonwealth have lived on the fat of the lands whereon they have left their slime, by promising the kingdom of heaven to others. No doubt they highly esteem the worth of Christianity. Whether the masses of men, who have to produce what the sky-pilots consume, are benefitted by it is another question. I should be the last to deny that Christianity has done any good in the world. Such an allegation would be absurd in regard to any religion. But the question as between the believer and the sceptic is, Is Christianity divine? Are its effects such as should follow a revelation from an all-wise Deity? I confidently assert that a historic survey shows that whatever commendations may be accorded to Christianity they must be given with grave deductions and qualifications.

Freethinkers war on Christianity because they see it to be a sham. It has never improved the lot of the many, for it has never tried to do so. It aimed only at making them fit for heaven by making them unfit for earth, and to make them regard it as their consolation because deprived of hope, pleasure, and comforts here. It is to human thought and science, not to Christianity, we must look for aid to grapple with the difficulties which beset us, and which are lost sight of in a vain attempt to grasp cloudland. Reformers and all who, like Mr. Francis Adams, sincerely desire and strive for the amelioration of the lot of the many, should guard against the quagmire which has sunk their earthly hopes so long. To them especially is necessary the brave advice addressed by Professor Clifford to well-meaning defenders of Christianity:

"That which you keep in your heart, my brothers, is the slender remnant of a system which has made its red mark on history, and still lives to threaten mankind. The grotesque forms of its intellectual belief have survived the discredit of its moral teaching. Of this what the kings could bear with, the nations have cut down; and what the nations left, the right heart of man by man revolts against day by day. You have stretched out your hands to save the dregs of the sifted sediment of a residuum. Take heed lest you have given soil and shelter to the seed of that awful plague which has destroyed two civilisations, and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live among men."

To Mr. Adams I would say, with less eloquence but no less earnestness—Build not your hopes of human progress and amelioration upon a delusion which has been tried in the past and found wanting.

J. M. WHEELER.

Science has nothing to do with Christianity except so far as the habit of scientific research makes a man cautious in admitting evidence. For myself, I do not believe there ever has been any revelation.—Charles Darwin.

## INGERSOLL AND PAINE.

### II.

WE strongly recommend our readers to study carefully the essay on *Paine the Pioneer*, by Col. R. G. Ingersoll, which is printed in pamphlet form, as advertised in another column. The Colonel does not now come forward for the first time to claim justice for the memory of the author of the *Age of Reason*. In the year 1879 was also published by the Colonel *A Vindication of Thomas Paine*, in which he offered to pay "one thousand dollars in gold" to any minister who could produce the proof of the wicked and libellous reports which Christians had recklessly circulated at revival meetings, in Sunday schools, and from various pulpits as to the "vicious life and horrid death of Paine." It need scarcely be said that the proof was never given, but in the *Vindication* overwhelming evidence was furnished of the utter groundlessness of the shameful orthodox slanders upon the memory of the dead. These pious deceivers evidently took no heed of the Bible injunction "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Neither were they affected by the information given by the same authority that "A false witness shall not be unpunished and he that speaketh lies shall perish" (Proverbs xix. 9). "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. xxi. 8). In publishing the refutation of these foul and oft-repeated theological falsehoods, Colonel Ingersoll did lasting service to the cause of truth and to the character of one of the bravest of the noble army of Freethought pioneers. The Colonel said: "I am anxious that these slanders shall cease; I am desirous of seeing justice done even at this late day, to the dead." Addressing one of the slanderers, he exclaimed in words of unsurpassed force: "You say that Thomas Paine died a drunken, cowardly and beastly death. I pronounce this charge to be a cowardly and beastly falsehood. . . . What did he say or do of a cowardly character just before or at about the time of his death? In what way was his death cowardly? You must answer these questions, and give your proof, or all honest men will hold you in abhorrence. You have made these charges. The man against whom you make them is dead. He cannot answer you. I can. He cannot compel you to produce your testimony, or admit by your silence that you have cruelly slandered the defenceless dead. I can, and I will. You say that his death was cowardly. In what respect? Was it cowardly in him to hold the Thirty-nine Articles in contempt? Was it cowardly not to call on your Lord? Was it cowardly not to be afraid? You say that his death was beastly. Again I ask, in what respect? Was it beastly to submit to the inevitable with tranquillity? Was it beastly to look with composure upon the approach of death? Was it beastly to die without a complaint, without a murmur—to pass from life without a fear?"

It has been truly said that in the age that gave birth to Thomas Paine, a great necessity was felt for some man of gigantic mind, comprehensive intellect, and of firm, unflinching character, who should dare to throw down the gauntlet and avow himself the champion of Freethought. Theology had dogmatized for ages; religion had become firmly seated on a despot's throne, and was exercising a most pernicious influence over the minds of her devotees. The Church hurled her anathemas and curses on all who dared to avow their doubt in the then existing creeds and dogmas. The priesthood had become corrupt, and had sold themselves to the highest bidder. Despotism was felt alike in religion and politics, and in fact, intolerance towards those who differed from them, comprised the whole theological moral code. It was in the midst of these debasing conditions that Paine declared that Freethought was a virtue, intolerance a crime, and investigation the portal



through which lay the paradise of truth. He feared neither the persecutions carried out in this life, nor the perdition threatened in the next—to him duty was the all in all. He struck a blow at priestcraft from which recovery is thoroughly hopeless. Theology quailed before his glance, and her twin sister, bigotry, shrank back in affright when he appeared. He was an honest man in an age of deception, conscientious when surrounded by hypocrites and knaves. He was a patriot, when patriotism was unfashionable and dangerous, and a friend of man when most men were his foes. He was bold and brave amongst cowards and sycophants, and independent amidst the vilest flunkeyism. He was virtuous when interest dictated vice, and honorable in an epoch of dishonor. He risked his life for the good of others, and sacrificed wealth and luxury rather than violate his conscience. His intellect was commensurate with his truthfulness, and his courage with his intellect.

Thomas Paine believed in God and a future state. We do not allege that his belief in these particulars was based on adequate evidence, but it is clear that his conception of Theism was in some respects superior to that of orthodoxy, for he regarded his God as one of justice; as a father who loved all his children, and who received their homage with equal pleasure, whether rendered in poetry or in prose, in silent adoration or in practical work for the public good. Nothing could be more objectionable to God, Paine considered, than to contemplate the human family quarrelling and fighting as to which was the most acceptable mode of manifesting their reverence. He could not believe the monstrous and ridiculous representations given of God in the Bible. He considered that such a belief tended to check human improvement and rendered mental freedom an impossibility. If a God exist, Paine thought that he should be superior to human nature, but he showed the reverse to be the fact if the Bible be true. God is there represented as being a cruel, vindictive, revengeful, and suspicious tyrant; one who knew not how to conduct himself reasonably towards his subjects; who laid snares to entrap them and sent trials and temptations to weary and allure them.

The broadness of Paine's views is expressed by himself in those memorable words, "The world is my country, and to do good is my religion." In a sermon before the Queen some years ago, Dr. Caird described religion as "the art of being and doing good." It will appear strange to a liberal and an enlightened posterity that Paine should ever have been classed among the enemies of true religion. Yet so it is, and so it will be while superstition forms the basis on which religion is founded. Renan contends that religion is necessary; that if it were banished from the world, the result would be moral and probably intellectual degradation. But he also says: "Still religious people live on shadows: we live on the shadow of a shadow. What will people live on after us?" Renan admits that the existence of God and immortality are not capable of rational demonstration; still he thinks they are not absolute impossibilities. These are questions that do not come within the province of Secularism to attempt to decide either *pro* or *con*. As to the use of the term religion, Freethinkers necessarily differ upon the subject; but most of the differences arise through the lack of a clear definition of the word. "To do good is my religion," said Paine, and reason does not revolt at such a principle.

Comparing the Church of the present with that of Paine's time, Col. Ingersoll says: "If one now believes in God and lends a little financial aid, he is considered a good and desirable member." He need not even define what God he believes in—he may talk of a "Power," or the "Unknown," or the "Cosmic Force," provided he begins the word with a capital letter. Such a state of things is not entirely

unknown on this side of the Atlantic, where much folly is spoken and written about the alleged supernatural—a subject on which man, with his limited faculties, knows absolutely nothing.

At a time when Paine's life seemed held by a slender thread, when at any moment he might have fallen a victim to the guillotine, his mighty genius set in motion the thoughts of the people, and this culminated in the inauguration of a great movement in favor of mental freedom by a man without university training, proving unmistakably that wisdom does not speak to her children only in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He clothed his thoughts in plain English, and his logic was that of common sense—not that of the Church and the schools, but the sense of the people.

All honor, then, we say, to Thomas Paine;  
Long will his memory dear to us remain.  
Each may take courage from his noble life,  
And something do to quell the noisy strife  
Of babbling sects; to stem the rolling tide  
Of priestly arrogance; spread far and wide  
The blessings of Freethought; and thus to aid  
The cause of progress, still too long delayed.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

## A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

### XI.—SUNDAY MORNING IN FINSBURY PARK.

THIS pleasant open space in Holloway has, I understand, been of late the scene of determined and malicious attacks upon the propaganda of Freethought. On more than one occasion the Secularist stand has been stormed, and meetings which have commenced like lambs have ended like roaring lions. This is greatly to be regretted, as Finsbury Park is, I believe, the only open space in London in which the existence of the open-air orator is legally recognised. Elsewhere, sufferance is the badge of all his tribe; but the London County Council has laid down certain "regulations" for open-air meetings in the park, and has reserved a space upon which they may be held without let or hindrance.

Now I have heard much of the appalling dangers and hairbreadth escapes of my fellow-advocates; but, with one notable exception (that of a Freethought demonstration at Tunbridge Wells, at the time of Mr. Foote's imprisonment), I have never had the good or bad fortune to be present at any "scenes." One Sunday morning, therefore, having nothing better to do, I made my way to Finsbury Park, not merely to see in what manner the rival clans carried on their work.

At half-past eleven I found three or four sections already engaged in propaganda of various kinds; and in one corner of the ground an "elocutionist" stood ready to open fire. A small group of religionists, with a suggestion of Salvation Army in their garments, were singing—if the word be here taken to signify noise without harmony. A few yards further on a larger body had gathered to listen to a Temperance advocate, who, as I could at once see, was serving as a warming-pan for some more distinguished orator. In close proximity to this was another group, listening to the impassioned rhetoric of Mr. John Tarry, a shining light (out of doors) of the Christian Evidence Society. He was rattling along at his usual rate of three thousand words to the minute, and, as he used up a good deal of raw material, it is not surprising that he repeated himself again and again. Mr. Tarry's painful duty on that Sunday morning was to administer a severe (and no doubt well-deserved) castigation to Professor Huxley, who, I was glad to note, was not present. It would have mortified the Professor greatly to hear Mr. Tarry



demonstrate conclusively that he (Huxley, not Tarry) knew nothing whatever about science, and had made himself the laughing-stock of the civilised world. Mr. Tarry dealt at some length with a recent controversy between Mr. Gladstone and Professor Huxley, and I can venture to transcribe (from memory) with almost literal accuracy, two or three of the Christian orator's sentences. To wit: "Mr. Gladstone said he was content to abide by the decision of Dr. Dana, of New York. The answer came from America: 'Gladstone, you're right; Huxley, you're wrong.' Huxley was carried home on a shutter." In this lucid and convincing style did Mr. Tarry hold up Professor Huxley to the contempt and derision of all right-minded people. I cannot pretend to give a full account of the "lecture" given in defence of Christ and him crucified; for when Mr. Tarry is abroad it behoves me to walk warily, seeing that, when he espies me amongst his audience, he invariably forsakes his subject and fastens upon me, and I forthwith become his text. This, of course, is very embarrassing to a modest and retiring man like myself; and on that Sunday morning, when I saw his eagle-eye roving in my direction, I incontinently fled. Therefore there were (to me) great chasms in his lecture; but no doubt the reader will be able to bear the loss philosophically.

Whilst Mr. Tarry was still engaged in his gruesome work of butchering Professor Huxley, I wandered off to the Freethought stand, where Mr. Calvert had begun, in the quietest and most philosophical manner, to discuss the question, "Is Matter able of itself to Produce its Phenomena?" A fair audience quickly gathered round him, and listened with respect and attention to his discourse. I should have imagined the subject to be an ideal one for *not* attracting in the open air, where audiences are necessarily more casual than at indoor meetings. But I was agreeably surprised to find that Mr. Calvert's clear exposition and genial manner not only attracted, but held attention. On the outskirts of the crowd I noticed a superior person who appeared at first somewhat supercilious and disdainful; but if he went to scoff, he certainly remained to listen, and carefully folded and placed in his pocket a copy of the Secular Federation's lecture-list which had been handed to him.

Close to Mr. Calvert's congregation stood a pale-faced man, with luxuriant whiskers and flowing locks, who, I was informed by my friend Mr. Wheeler, was a "Christian Spiritualist." In default of an audience he had addressed himself to a meek little fellow, to whom had been given up that which was meant for mankind. Spiritualism—Christian or other—is evidently a drug in the Finsbury Park market; and I did not see any inquirers in *that* direction, save the little man, who probably had been taken unawares and was wishing that he was dead.

Before leaving the Park I slowly perambulated round the various groups, catching a few sentences from each speaker as I passed; and the medley thus caused had a very curious effect. With Mr. Calvert's words still ringing in my ears, I caught a few lines from the elocutionist, who, with a view to shekels, was reciting some "poetry" of the G. R. Sims order, whereof little sufficeth for me. Next there was a passing gust of Mr. Tarry's chastened eloquence: "Mr. Bradlaugh says . . . and Mr. G. J. Holyoake says . . . ; which shows that neither of them knows anything about it." Thus died away the evidences of Christianity as the words of the teetotaler gained in strength and volume—"Shun the flowing bowl; drink nothing but cold water, then you will be full of microbes and happiness." His sage advice gradually lost its distinctness as I passed along, and the rich full tones of the Salvation Army man smote my ear: "Wot are they doing? Why, piling up the dirty bits of money and buying creature comforts

'ere, and not thinking about their precious souls, and when they come to die they won't take any of it with 'em, but they'll wake up and find they're got to spend an eternity in 'ell."

Finsbury Park on a Sunday morning is an instructive microcosm of the great world. On that plot of ground, folly, fanaticism and philosophy are warring as in the wider sphere of human life; and we may fairly hope that in the confusion of tongues the Truth will sooner or later come uppermost.

GEORGE STANDRING.

#### THE AXE TO THE ROOT.

ONCE upon a time, so the legend informs us, a very insignificant youth slew a monstrous giant. This fable encourages me—a "tinker" rather than a thinker or scholar—to boldly attack the yet surviving superstitions still upheld by many intelligent laymen and scholars.

It can, I insist, now be logically and philosophically demonstrated to all thinking minds that all theories advanced to explain the existence of the universe, such as "first causes," "beginnings," "designers," "lawgivers," "gods," etc., are untenable and absurd.

When we can prove that time had a beginning, that space has a stopping-place, that twice two can be five, that two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time, that something can spring from nothing; then, but not till then, may we prove that nature began or was created. Until then, to postulate a beginning, a God or gods, etc., is as illogical and unreasonable as to predicate a certain period of time not preceded by an eternity of time.

And this simple dictum of science and logic, that time is eternal, alone is the axe which strikes low the entire system of Theism and all kindred theories ever concocted in a muddled human brain.

A beginning implies eternal non-beginning, preceding such (imaginary) beginning; but which, if a fact, would have absolutely prevented any beginning. Hence, existence to-day positively proves eternal existence.

Time being eternal, all causes in operation now must have been in operation during all time—an eternity of time having preceded any particular period of time—because the contrary implies an eternity when such causes did not exist or operate. But, like causes ever producing like effects, proves beyond cavil that if existing causes would not operate during eternity to produce the universe, such causes would never so operate.

A "first cause" also implies an eternity of time prior to the particular period when this "first cause" is supposed to have produced its first effect. During this infinite period of beginningless time it was no cause, never producing a solitary thing. But if such cause existed during all eternity, not in the capacity of a cause, but as a dead, inert quantity of some undescribable substance or essence, it would of course always have remained in such eternal *statu quo*. Because what effects it would not cause in the eternity of the past, it would never cause.

An eternity of time in the past is ever sufficient time for any cause to cause at any time in the past what it would cause at any time in the future.

An eternity of time in the past, paradoxical though it may appear, represents the same quantity or period of time as all time in the past and all time in the future, because an infinite quantity cannot be changed.

If, then, any existing cause, agent, or factor had existed for ever in the past, without causing the universe, it becomes self-evident that, in the absence of extraneous causes, it would never have caused it.

But if such extraneous causes caused the (imaginary) "first cause" to cause the universe, the question arises—What caused such causes to cause the "first cause" to cause the universe 6,000 but not 60,000 years ago? And if such causes would not cause or influence the "first cause" to act during eternity, is it reasonable to predicate that they would ever have caused it?

But if other causes are absolutely necessary to cause such "first cause" to cause the universe, do we not discover a logical necessity for antecedent causes *ad infinitum* to cause any particular cause to produce an effect? And if



this is so, do not instantly all "first causes" vanish from existence?

A "first cause" implies an eternity of universal standstill, stagnation, death preceding a very limited period of activity, life, phenomena—an absurdity!

A "beginning" likewise implies an eternity of time prior to such beginning, when the universe was not. Then a few paltry years of existence of this superlative glorious, infinite universe of worlds, suns, systems and constellations. Sublime philosophy!

A "design" also implies an eternity of time preceding such design, when never a design was designed. But an infant with a thimbleful of brains would conclude, what a being, wise enough to design a universe, would not design during countless cycles of ages. "He," "she," or it would never design. Because if consistent with an "omniscient designer's" wisdom *not* to design the universe during all the ages of beginningless time—and no objects surrounding him to influence him—it seems, to be consistent, he would never have designed it!

A "law-giver" implies the same infinite eternity before such being "gave" the law. And again, the question arises why such "omniscient law-giver" gave the law but a very short time ago and not an eternity ago? And all rational minds must conclude what such "law-giver" would not give during all the eternity of the past, "he" would never give. Ergo: There can be no "law-giver."

And now it becomes self-evident that the God idea belongs to the same category of absurdities.

A God creating the universe 6,000 years ago, implies also that during the preceding eternity he existed in absolute idleness and vacuum. But if such all-wise being was content so to exist during all eternity would "he," "she," "it" not have ever remained so content and in idleness? Because the contrary implies changeableness, discontentment with his lot, imperfection—all qualities destructive of a God!

Furthermore, a God creating the "heaven and the earth" 6,000 years ago, implies an eternity of time preceding such time when such did not exist. Consequently nothing existed but God; and "he" in Egyptian darkness and vacuum. But if such had been the actual aspect of infinite space during eternity, it would positively be the aspect of all existence now; naught would exist but God.

It is a fact demonstrated by science, that the sum total of all existence cannot be increased or decreased to the amount of a single atom. What exists—its elementary constituents—will exist forever. All forms of matter have no existence *per se*, hence are transient, ever-changing, but their components exist forever. From nothing, nothing can come. So all thinking minds, who have discarded miracles and a blind faith in the traditions and myths of the Dark Ages, must concede that the universe existing to-day is absolute proof in itself—utterly indisputable—that, in its elementary form, it is eternal, *never was not*, never was designed or created, and never was without law, order, harmony, and all-sufficient powers and potencies to produce, unaided by outside agencies (which don't exist) at remotest periods of time, as well as now, precisely the same phenomena it produces and evolves to-day. Also that if at any time in the past it had not existed, it would positively not exist now, as even a God cannot create something from nothing.

The universe is infinite and eternal, here and there and everywhere; hence a God is necessarily crowded out. And such a factor in Nature is superfluous. All we know is natural; nothing supernatural. Ergo: *There is no God and no need of one.* OTTO WETTSTEIN.

—Boston Investigator.

When a child, I calculated that all clergymen would go to heaven. Manhood has taught me other things. It has taught me that a degree of malignity not easily found elsewhere can frequently be found in the occupant of a pulpit. It has taught me that there are people at this moment shouting about liberation and freedom who are steeped to the lips in sacerdotalism. God forbid that either my friends or myself should stand in the same relationship to these gentry as Giordano Bruno stood to the priests in his day. They would infallibly dispose of us like they did him, without shedding blood.—Prof. J. Tyndall.

## ACID DROPS.

Dr. Parker has been interviewed again by the Newcastle *Leader*. The oracle of the City Temple admits that "rationalism has done a great deal towards the expulsion of superstition." "I believe," Dr. Parker says, "that science has driven many delusions out of the human mind. Free-thought, or infidelity, or atheism, or agnosticism, or anything else you please of the same quality, has driven Christian men more deeply into the foundations of their faith." At the same time the enemy "has not taken away one particle of gold or silver, but I believe he has removed a good deal of tinsel and electro-plate."

Dr. Parker puts the matter very pleasantly—for his own side. We should put it, that Free-thought is pressing Christianity like the wolves on the track of a Russian sledge. What is thrown out, it may suit Dr. Parker to call worthless. So it is, from a rational point of view. But it was precisely those worthless things—an infallible Church, an infallible Bible, and future rewards and punishments—that gave the Church a tremendous power over the minds of the people. She may hug as most precious what is left to her, but it will not maintain her power nor perpetuate her existence.

Rev. Mr. Patterson, minister in the North U.P. Church, Perth, has uttered a wail over Sabbath desecration. He is very severe on young men who tire themselves on Saturday with cricket and football, and haven't energy left to go to kirk on Sunday. Ten o'clock was "too early" for them to go to the house of God, but they would get up at five o'clock for a holiday. Alas, we fear they would. Perth really seems in a bad way. We deeply sympathise with poor Mr. Patterson.

The Church of Scotland Book Club has dissolved. Shutters had to be put up. Reason—no business.

Dr. Meurin, Archbishop of Port Louis, Mauritius, is in Ireland begging for his flock, who are suffering from the devastation of the late cyclone. One of his priests, Father McCarthy, wanted to undertake this mission, but the Archbishop couldn't spare him and took the holiday himself.

Dr. Meurin tells a pretty story which goes down with the Irish Catholics. His convent was demolished with the Church of the Immaculate Conception. "When he visited the church," says the Dublin *Evening Herald*, "the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was still on the pinnacle, but her arms were no longer extended towards the people—they were raised towards heaven—a miraculous fact which showed that after all the Blessed Virgin was with them." Of course this miraculous Virgin didn't help the people. She left that to natural agencies.

Talmage says that every stroke of a seraph's wing carries him ten thousand leagues—30,000 miles. Talmage knows. He took a trip that way, and discovered "the furthest outpost of immensity." When he gets to heaven he'll be measuring the long hair of J. C. and the eyebrows of Jahveh. He has evidently a strong turn for holy mensuration.

Talmage praises the famous Earl of Bridgewater. This eccentric nobleman had two dogs seated at his table, and put six dogs in a carriage drawn by four horses and attended by two footmen. After this it was quite natural that he should leave £8,000 for the encouragement of Christian literature.

Prophet Baxter, who has made a good thing out of mountebank Talmage by reprinting his sermons in the *Christian Herald*, invited the Brooklyn orator to a banquet at the Crystal Palace before his departure. Their mutual blarney and common praise of the precious volume, which is the secret of the source of all their power, was highly edifying.

One of the funniest items was Talmage telling of his having found, when in Palestine, a proof of the story of Sodom and Gomorah. He had picked up a piece of the very sulphur that overwhelmed these cities. How he knew it to be a piece of the identical shower he did not explain, and he has no suspicion that the sulphurous character of the soil may have given rise to the story.

The *Daily News*, commenting on Captain Lugard's report of the religious strife in Uganda, says: "Two of the most



prominent persons mentioned by Captain Lugard are the Chief Sekibobo and Monseigneur Candibert, the Romanist bishop. Not to mince matters, but rather to call a spade a spade, we must say that Sekibobo the barbarian was the better Christian of the two."

"Had a Protestant bishop behaved like Monseigneur Candibert we should," continues our contemporary, "without the smallest hesitation, have placed him below Sekibobo's level. It seems impossible to credit Bishop Candibert with a fine sense of honor, or to acquit him of the charge of having, in spite of promises to his host and protector, the British Resident, deliberately hindered a reconciliation between Captain Lugard and the King, who was in the hands of the Catholic party." The *D. N.* laments the influence of these Catholic and Protestant squabbles on the natives. We should think they would tend to open their eyes to the true inwardness of Christianity.

The first locomotive has already run from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and the line will open for ordinary traffic shortly. Bible-bangers are hunting up to find what prophecy there is of this notable event. But God omitted to tell the prophets anything about railways or telegraphy. A safe prophecy would be that the glamor around Jerusalem the golden will soon be gone. When a tavern is set up at the pool of Siloam, and a post-office in the garden of Gethsemane, Jerusalem may write Ichabod over its gates. It will be seen for the dirty one-horse town voracious travellers describe it as being.

The Rev. J. J. Nouri's story of having discovered Noah's ark, is going the round of the provincial press and exciting much pious wonder in Bible believing circles. These good people do not understand evangelical methods of raising cash, or Nouri's yarn would only excite a smile.

Mr. Stead, speaking at the Social Conference at Rochdale, said that when he spoke of the Church and of the "Christian people," he "used that term to include Atheists." Thank you for nothing, Mr. Stead. Your Church of the Future is highly ornate, but we prefer to remain in the fresher air outside.

There was a lively shindy at the meeting of the Centenary Congregational Church, St. Leonardgate, Lancaster, in consequence of Mr. Dawson, one of the deacons, returning to Mr. Williamson, M.P., a cheque for £50 which he donated. The members made it a subject of earnest prayer, but held the most various views, though the meeting ended with the singing of the Doxology.

Religious fanaticism seems to have been at the bottom of the attempt by Zeluiski, a Catholic, to blow up one of the Russian orthodox churches at Warsaw. There is no end to the outcome of religious hatred.

How these Christians love each other! At the banquet given by the Mayor of Carnarvon to the Lord Mayor of London, the Rev. J. Wynne Jones, vicar of Carnarvon, rose and left the table because the Calvinistic Rev. Dr. J. Hughes had been asked to say grace instead of himself.

Moody makes a pathetic appeal. "Are you ready to burn your mother's Bible?" he asks, and some hundreds of yards of cambric are immediately wetted by the audience. We fear we should cry too, if we heard him, but it would be with laughter. Mother's Bible is fetching—to some folk; but, after all, mother's Bible was just the same as any other Bible. She only bought one copy of a big edition. And who talks about burning the Bible except Christians? You never hear an "infidel" talking that way. It is the Christians who do it, and quite naturally. They used to burn Freethinkers, and they fancy Freethinkers would burn the Bible. Well, they wouldn't. It makes too good a stand for a flower-pot.

The men at the Carnegie Company's works—the place where the big row was recently—are provided every Sunday with "the ministry of the Word." On Sunday, August 7, the sky-pilot who filled the pulpit congratulated himself on addressing "the most remarkable congregation in the world." That was true anyhow. Carnegie's locked-out workers call the said congregation "rats," and a congregation of rats is certainly remarkable.

Zola's visit to Lourdes, which is becoming the modern Mecca, and his projected book have directed much attention to the alleged miracles there. An interviewer of the Hon. Evered Feilding saw an opportunity for some copy for the *Daily Chronicle* silly season. They cannot have Mahatma letters every year, and "Miracles To-day" appeals to the same taste for the marvellous. As, however, the Hon. Evered Feilding says, "I went to Lourdes believing miracles there were possible," no one will wonder that the Hon. Evered Feilding came away with the same belief. We are ourselves prepared to admit many are benefited by a visit to the mountainous district and baths, while the effects of suggestion and excitement have often been responsible for "miraculous cures."

A young girl pilgrim at Lourdes was seized with a fit and fell dead almost at the foot of the Virgin's image. In reckoning up the miracles at the shrine these little incidents do not count.

Harvest thanksgivings are coming on. Many of our farmers might imitate the agriculturist in Kent, who, on the Sunday morning of the harvest festival, set up a stock of wheat, black and rotting, with the following notice affixed: "This is what the Almighty has done for me."

Parson, overhearing a parishioner indulging in a little swearing, accosts him and administers a severe reproof. The offender answers apologetically, "Well, you know, zur, it's just heer. You do pray a bit on Zundays, and I do sweer a bit in the week, but lor' bless 'ee, zur, we doan't, neether of us, mean anything by it."

The superstitious Chinese of the North-west Province of Sze-Chuen believed that the Christian missionaries were the cause of the drought, and grievously assaulted Mr. and Mrs. Turner, who were rescued by the officials. Such superstition is deplorable. But after all it is of a piece with the belief that Samuel and Elijah produced rain by their prayers, and that God sent a pestilence because David numbered Israel. Christians are not slow to see the absurdities of other faiths except their own.

A battle has been raging for several months between the Dean and Chapter of Windsor and the Treasury respecting the exorbitant demands of that reverend body in connexion with the funeral of the Duke of Clarence. The fees and charges claimed by the Dean and Chapter amounted to about £220, but Sir Reginald Welby fought them with such vigor and pertinacity that he brought down the bill to £100. The fact is that the Dean and Chapter would have been well paid with a hundred shillings. I understand that the bill included fees for such items as "breaking the ground," and "digging the grave," and "bricking the grave," although not a stone was removed, nor was there any grave!—*Truth*.

Evangelist Mills is deemed worthy of a two-column report in the *San Francisco Morning Call*. Yet he tells all the old discredited stories. "The furies of hell were round the death-bed of Voltaire"; Paine was a Christian when he fought for American independence, and the story of his last years, "as told by Col. Ingersoll and others, showed they were years of indescribable misery." Evangelists usually take the cake for unblushing mendacity.

Pious Emperor William is bravely seconded by his no less pious wife. He stirs up blasphemy prosecutions and she goes in for church building. The people of Berlin won't go to church; the existing gospel-shops are nearly empty, in fact; and to meet the difficulty her Majesty is helping to build more gospel-shops. It is a splendid remedy. Her Majesty is quite a woman of genius.

One thing is clear enough. When emperors and empresses, kings and queens, want to make their subjects tame and dutiful, they fly to religion as their best friend. Altars and thrones are connected by underground passages.

Mr. G. C. Needham, an American, has a comprehensive discourse on "The Plan of the Ages." It consists of a sketch of human history from Adam to Needham, and takes in the Flood and Moses and other ancient nonsense. According to a Christian newspaper, the delivery of this address in North Carolina excited such interest that the judges of the Supreme



Court adjourned their sitting in order to hear it. North Carolina judges seem to be very easy-going gentlemen. It is to be hoped they stood drinks to the parties whose cases were delayed.

The vicar of St. George's parish, Worcester, wants a new gospel-shop. It is estimated to cost £7,500, of which sum he has already secured £4,538 odd. To help make up the deficiency, or for other trade purposes, the reverend gentleman is bidding against the Registrar for marriages. Hitherto his fee has been half-a-crown in excess of the Registrar's, but henceforth he will drop down to the market rate—though he still expects the wealthier bridegrooms to shell out more handsomely. In making this bid for custom, the reverend gentleman censures civil marriages. Those who get married at the Registrar's "cannot expect God's blessing or help in their new life, or look for true and lasting happiness." Why, certainly. God's blessing isn't to be had unless you fee his lackeys.

A certain firm once engaged a German commercial traveller. A couple of days after, the firm received the following telegram: "I haf done nodings to-day, but mit God's help I do better to-morrow." The firm wrote him a word of encouragement, wishing to give him a fair trial; but after they had received three similar telegrams they replied: "With God's help please look for another situation, and with the same help please return the samples."

A quaint American writer in the *Ironclad Age*, named Paxton, has a short and easy method with the spiritists. He says: "I am near fifty years old and have travelled over most parts of the world. I have seen a number of lunatics and a great many liars, but never a ghost." He applies the same method to miracles.

According to the *Christian* the old one keeps himself "up to date" in his scientific arrangements. It says: "Men's lives are being photographed and phonographed, and in the approaching day each word will be spoken from the house-top and each scene of our action be delineated upon the sky." We expect the recording angel employs quite a large number of typewriting machines.

High Churchmen are much grieved to learn that the Archbishop of Canterbury, during his recent visit to the Earl of Aberdeen, attended the Presbyterian Church service. Their organs prate of Christian re-union, but what they mean by the term is re-absorption into their own body.

The Jesuits meet this month to elect a successor to Father Anderledy. It is quite on the cards that out of the rivalry between candidates of different nations, an Englishman will get in. There have been twenty-two generals since Loyola, not one of them either French or English. The last was a Swiss, and the last but one, Father Beckx, a Belgian. The general of the Jesuits has an official residence at Fiesole, above Florence; but wherever he may be, the whole strings of the organisation are always in his hands.

Prof. Hechler, who submitted the new MS. of a portion of the Septuagint to the Oriental Congress, protested against the common view that Rameses II. was the wicked Pharaoh of the Bible who oppressed the Israelites. But the simple truth is that there is no known place in Egyptian history in which to put such remarkable events as the turning of the waters into blood, the slaying of all the firstborn, and the other wonderful doings said to have preceded and accompanied the departure of the Israelites.

The Grindelwald talk of re-union at bottom means little more than an autumn outing for sky-pilots. The most trivial differences in religion become magnified into mountains, for upon them may hinge the awful question of eternal salvation or eternal damnation. It is only the indifferent who really think the differences among Christians do not matter. To serious believers they are very important indeed. Upon one point we can agree with the re-unionists. One Church is as good—or as bad—as another, for all equally strive to take away man's attention from his real evils.

"There was a time when I taught my children the doctrine of a hell," said a mother, "but I was led to doubt the wisdom of it. One day I found my two sons, aged respec-

tively ten and twelve, in a fierce hand-to-hand combat. The younger, badly whipped and livid with rage, shrieked, 'Never mind, Tom I'll get even with you some day—see if I don't.' 'Hush, hush,' I cried, after administering a severe reproof to Tom. 'What an expression, Dick. Get even with Tom; I'm ashamed of you.' When Dick's wrath had somewhat cooled I said to him, 'Never let me hear you say such a thing again. Is that showing Christ's spirit? Did he ever say to anyone who had injured him, 'I'll get even with you'?' 'No,' said Dick humbly. A moment later his face lit up with a sudden gleam of thought as he added, 'No, he never said he would, but he's going to!'"

Albert Tracey, in his recent interesting *Travels through Japan*, says there is "no blacker page in history than the exactions and cruelties practised against Japan by the diplomatic representatives of the nations called Christian."

The latest candidate for canonisation in the Catholic Church is Sister Emmerick. This devout lady wrote a *Life of Our Lord*, in which she endorses the spurious letter to Abgarus, in which Jesus is made to quote the Gospel of John, which probably was not written till a century after his death. Sister Emmerick may make a capital saint, but she would never have made a critic.

The partisans of the revolting "Brigadier" Philpott, late of the S.A., Canada, says that within the last two years 15,000 members have left the Army, and that 200 barrack reserve homes have been abandoned.

The Vicar-General of Madagascar has had to pay a fine of £16 for libel upon a Freemason's lodge in the island. He had accused the Freemasons of practising inhuman rites. The Catholics hate Freemasons for similar reasons to those which animate Christians in their dislike to Freethinkers. They know they enlighten the world to their absurdities.

The death roll in Russia from cholera to the end of August was 128,517 persons. Attila the Hun was called the Scourge of God, and the Russians have given a similar name to the cholera.

In South America they are said to have become disgusted at the bad weather and the failure of God to answer their prayers. However, the people decided to give the Almighty one more chance to vindicate his character as an answerer of prayer, vowing that if better weather did not come by a certain date they would cease to pray and even behead the priests.

At Cahors some sacrilegious thieves broke into the church and stole the Ciborium, and took out six consecrated hosts, which they scattered on the floor. On the true Catholic theory there were six complete Christs with the body, bones and blood of the divinity, in imminent danger of being swallowed up by church mice.

When the shocks of earthquake were felt in California some time ago the inhabitants of a few places naturally became frightened. A daily paper thus describes one scene occurring at an hotel: "Last evening the women of the hotel declined to sleep in the third storey, and demanded quarters on the second floor. This gave Ira Doolittle, the proprietor, a chance to make a little speech. Addressing his wife, who led the rebellion, Mr. Doolittle said: 'Why, I have known you forty-five years, and you have always professed to be and have always been, as far as I know, a Christian, like myself. If you ever did a wrong act, you have more than atoned for it by living with me all these years, and yet you are afraid of a blanked earthquake. And you, girls! You go to church three or four times a day, and say the Lord is yours, and that you are his, and that he will look after you and all that, but here you are a-crying because you are afraid of a double blanked, little measly earthquake. Now, I have been a Christian all my life, and I have been in this blank community a quarter of a century, trying to make men better. If the Lord wants to kill me off with a blanked earthquake, why, let him do it. Now, then, you can take the blanked second floor, including my room. I'll go upstairs and sleep, and the blanked earthquake may come or stay as it double blanked pleases.' Then Mr. Doolittle climbed the stairs, and, as he said this morning, 'slept the sleep of the righteous.'" *Truthseeker.*



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 18, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: at 7, "Men, Women, and Children—the Real Trinity."

Sept. 25, Bristol.

October 2, Liverpool; 7, Chatham; 9 and 16, Hall of Science, London; 23, Newcastle; 30, South Shields.

Nov. 6, Camberwell; 13 and 20, Hall of Science; 27, Manchester.

Dec. 4, Grimsby.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—September 18, Birmingham; 25, Hall of Science, London. 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. WRIGHT.—The published price of the two vols. of Conway's *Life of Paine* is twenty-five shillings.

T. PATEMAN BARRON (Leicester).—Your contemplation of our "agonizing in Hell for ever and ever" is noted as an exhibition of the charity which never faileth.

E. SMEDLEY.—A Christian's "going wrong" does not prove anything against Christianity except that Christianity did not keep him straight.

E. G. BILLINGTON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. KEAST.—List of subjects to hand. Please send copy of poster when printed.

O. KAYE.—That bill has been going the round of the press for the last ten years. We receive a copy about once a month. Sorry you have had your trouble for nothing.

T. WOOLTWELL.—Thanks.

W. HEATH.—Pleased to hear of Mr. Cohen's success at Edmondston. Peg away.

J. DAVIDSON.—Your letter not being marked "notice," was sent on to the editor in Scotland. Hence the paragraph did not appear in last week's *Freethinker*. It is now too late.

E. TIMEWELL.—Carlyle was not a Christian in any proper sense of the word. He did not believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, and he told Mr. Froude it was quite certain that the miracles of the New Testament never happened. Carlyle lived a great many years after the publication of his lectures on Heroes, and he became more sceptical with age.

W. HEARD, on behalf of the Wood Green Branch, reports that Mr. S. E. Easton, of 137 Lower Albert-road, South Norwood, has lectured for the Branch successfully, and is willing to occupy the platform for other Branches. He has just returned from Australia.

MR. S. H. ALISON has removed to 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, London, S.W. Secretaries please note.

H. COURTNEY.—Is not Mr. Donaldson the reverend gentleman who opposed at the Hammersmith indoor lectures? He was gentlemanly then. Has he changed since? See "Sugar Plums."

R. SMITH.—Mr. Forder has shown us your letter. We are sorry, though not surprised, that your husband's successful efforts to increase the circulation of this journal have brought upon him a large amount of "Christian charity."

W. THEOBALD.—Received. Under consideration.

A. WHEKLER.—Christian Evidence lecturers are generally unscrupulous. The one who stated last Sunday on Clerkenwell-green that he had seen a letter from Mr. Foote to J. Marchant, in which are the words "I am an infidel, and I deny the existence of God"—is an impudent liar. Mr. Foote would be surprised if any letter of his to J. Marchant could be produced. The pretended extract from a never-written letter is not even well invented. It is not in Mr. Foote's style.

W. GELDER.—We wish the new Barnsley Branch all success, and shall be glad to assist it in every way possible.

H. S. H.—We do not know the address of any Birmingham newsagent who supplies this journal. You could find one, doubtless, by inquiring of the N.S.S. secretary (Mr. Partidge) at Baskerville Hall. Thanks for your good wishes. It is pleasant to know that you miss the *Freethinker* very much when you cannot obtain it.

P. KAVANAGH.—Glad to hear you say the *Freethinker* is well worth twopence; but we would rather see it pay at a penny. Its circulation is such as no other Freethought journal in England has ever maintained, and we are loth to see it diminished by a single copy. Thanks for cutting. See paragraph.

STANLEY JONES will be in Yorkshire from October 1 to 16, and would like to make some week-night engagements.

A. ARMSTRONG.—Please send orders for papers and pamphlets to Mr. Forder, as below. Birmingham newsagents seem very bigoted. They can easily get the *Freethinker* if they choose.

QUIZ.—Robert Burns wrote "Man's inhumanity to Man makes countless thousands mourn." Not "millions."

J. COLLING.—(1) We are not at liberty to give you the names of members of the N.S.S. If you are a member yourself you can easily put the question to the person you mention; if you are not a member, you have no right to inquire. (2) You can be married without religious ceremony at a Registrar's office, by giving the usual notice. There is no other way.

A. FELLOWS.—The Birmingham Town Hall is let to the local Secularists for a Sunday meeting once a year. No rent is exacted, but a charge is made for gas, cleaning and attendance. A charge is not allowed to be made for admission; all seats have to be free; but a collection is permitted. Mr. Foote occupied the platform last year, and the bigots tried to prevent the Secularists from having it again. Happily they failed.

RON MAHON.—Shall appear.

A. SIMSON.—The apostle was joking in Acts xxvi., 22, 23. There is no such prophecy in the books of Moses. Besides, the Pentateuch was not written by Moses. The apostle was wrong both ways.

JOSEPH BROWN, sec. North-Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges:—John Proctor, 10s.; Sunderland Branch, 4s. 7½d.; Ebchester Branch, 5s.; Bedlington Branch, 12s. 6d.; Mr. Gilhespie, 5s.

CARDIFF FREETHINKER.—The *Yahoo*, etc., have long been out of print. Mr. Forder might be able to get you a copy second-hand, but it would be expensive. Sorry to hear that Cardiff newsagents are so bigoted. Our circulation would soon double if newsagents would only do us justice. We want no favor—only fair-play.

W. CABELL.—Thanks for your promise to pay twopence for your *Freethinker* by remitting the second penny to us quarterly.

WELSH INQUIRER.—We really cannot find space for your queries as to why men don't come from monkeys now. Read Darwin and other Evolutionists, and get at facts, instead of asking conundrums.

J. COLLINSON.—Thanks for cuttings. You will find what you refer to in Mr. Foote's *Prisoner for Blasphemy*. We don't want to rake the matter up again, though we felt it bitterly at the time. "Forgive and forget" is best in such cases.

W. FINEDON.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Mr. Foote expects to finish *Bible Romances* in October.

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—Correspondenz blatt des Deutschen Freidenker Bundes—Für Unsere Jugend—Freethinker's Magazine—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Clarion—Church Reformer—Ironclad Age—Natal Mercury—Notes and Queries—Christian—Star Birmingham Daily Mail—Lancaster Times—San Francisco Morning Call—Derby and South Derbyshire Gazette—Echo—Kansas Lucifer—Manchester Guardian—Sydney Daily Telegraph—L'Abraham Verhoeven—Birmingham Daily Argus.

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

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

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

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

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

## SUGAR PLUMS.

There has been an improvement lately in the circulation of the *Freethinker*. Last week's number ran out of print on Saturday, and a few trade orders could not be executed. The improvement is not great, but it is promising, and we hope it will continue. Our friends throughout the country might assist us in this direction during the next six months. Many who cannot subscribe to the Sustentation Fund could easily take an extra copy and give it to a friend, or get a newsagent to take a copy or two for sale, guaranteeing him against loss on unsold copies.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Hubert Richardson, £5; Sarah Burgon, 5s.; John Helm (Canada), £2; P. Kavanagh, 1s. 6d.; W. Cabell, 1s. 1d.



At Aberdeen on Sunday the weather was charming—too charming, in fact, for indoor meetings. Mr. Foote's audiences were only middling, but they were very enthusiastic. There was some discussion in the evening, in which Mr. Leatham, a leading local Socialist, took part. The Aberdeen Branch is making fair headway. Since Mr. Foote's previous visit the circulation of the *Freethinker* has considerably increased. Miss Calder alone now sells forty copies weekly.

Mr. Foote delivers his new lecture "Men, Women, and Children; the Real Trinity" at the London Hall of Science this evening (Sept. 18).

A Social Gathering, in celebration of Charles Bradlaugh's birthday, takes place at the London Hall of Science on Wednesday evening, Sept. 28. Brief speeches will be delivered by G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, G. J. Holyoake, Touzeau Parris, and G. Standring. Afterwards there will be a concert and a dance. A large gathering is expected. Tickets (1s.) can be obtained at the Hall, at 28 Stonecutter-street, and of any London Branch secretary.

Last Sunday was a great day for the Freethinkers of the Midland counties. More than two thousand persons attended Mr. Charles Watts's lecture in the evening at the Town Hall, Birmingham, quite one-third of whom were ladies. Mr. Watts was at his best; he spoke for over an hour upon "The Religion of the Future." The large audience listened throughout with the greatest attention, applauded enthusiastically, and at the close of the lecture Mr. Watts received such an ovation that must have been exceedingly gratifying to him. Friends mustered in full force from the surrounding districts. Mr. Daniel Baker presided. Previous to the lecture one hour was devoted to an organ recital, which was highly appreciated. Demand for the *Freethinker* was much larger than the supply, although several dozen copies extra were on hand. Mr. Watts lectures to-day (Sept. 18) morning and evening at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham.

Mr. Watts writes us in the highest terms of commendation of the manner in which the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. made the arrangements for the great meeting at the Town Hall last Sunday. The whole of the committee worked hard, and they were assisted by many members of the society. Everything went off, we are informed, smoothly, and the gathering was in every particular a success.

Sunday afternoon in Finsbury Park last Sunday was at least an exciting affair. Because the chairman, Mr. Clifton, insisted upon opposers calling the lecturer, Mr. Heaford, by his proper name, the Christians in the crowd, whose hysteria had possibly been excited by the O.E.S. and the S.A., rushed to the platform, and some roughs went to the length of striking Miss Robins, who, we are sorry to say, was much frightened and had her back severely hurt. We hope there will be a good gathering determined to keep order in the park next Sunday. The Finsbury Park Branch keeps its station going till the end of October.

The quarterly meeting of the Battersea Branch, for the election of officers and other business, will take place at 3.15 next Sunday (Sept. 25), when all members and Freethinkers wishing to join the Branch should attend. A tea and entertainment will follow; tickets (6d. each) can be obtained at the hall, or at the Park Gates on Sunday morning.

A new N.S.S. Branch was started at Barnsley on Friday, Sept. 9. Mr. Sam Standring took the chair, and the following officers were elected:—W. Gelder, secretary; Mr. Parkhurst, treasurer; and Mr. Hunt, president. Every effort will be made to propagate Freethought in the town. Another meeting will be held this evening (Sept. 18) at the Blackmoor's Head Hotel, Sheffield-road. All local Freethinkers are earnestly invited to attend.

The Bethnal Green Branch is determined to be active during the winter. Mr. Cohen conducts a science class on Monday evenings at Libra Hall; there is a reading class in which the best works are taken up and discussed on Fridays; and on Saturdays a dancing class.

The West London Branch fell into financial difficulties some time ago. It made a gallant effort to retrieve its position, and succeeded. At the last N.S.S. Executive meeting its arrears of indebtedness to the Executive were remitted, and

the Branch now goes forward with a clear prospect. It holds four open-air lectures weekly, and on October 6 it resumes its indoor meetings at the Hammersmith Club, when Mr. Touzeau Parris will lecture on "Jesus Christ neither God nor Man."

The Pagan and sanitary custom of cremation is extending. A receptacle for cinerary urns has just been erected at Kensal-green Cemetery, where many Freethinkers lie buried.

The Newcastle *Daily Leader* inserts a long and able letter from Mr. Joseph Brown, secretary of the North Eastern Secular Federation, criticising Dr. Parker's utterances on Freethought and other matters. The insertion of such a letter in a leading journal is a most encouraging sign of the times.

The Sydney *Daily Telegraph* for Aug. 1 has a good account of the opening of a new Freethought Hall at Campbell-street, Sydney. Mr. G. Wood, president of the Australian Secular Association, presided, and addresses were given by Messrs. W. W. Collins, W. Nelson, L. Jones, E. F. Tye, W. Willis, Joseph Symes and others. The hall, which is on freehold land secured for £1,830, and which cost about £3,000, is capable of accommodating over a thousand persons.

The Sydney Freethinkers also celebrated the centenary of Shelley on Aug. 4. The Hon. E. Barton, Q.C., presided, and the program included songs, recitations, and addresses.

A committee has been formed for erecting a monument to Charles Baudelaire, the author of *Fleurs du Mal*. Among them are many distinguished Freethinking men of literature, including Leconte de Lisle, Jules Claretie, Zola and Swinburne.

Mr. Samuel P. Putnam, late President of the American Secular Union, is seeking to form a new organisation to be called "The Freethought Federation of America." It is intended that the action of the federation shall be strictly political in opposition to the "ecclesiasticism which has practically enthroned itself in the State."

The *Freethinker's Magazine* for September contains Mr. Holyoake's address at the grave of Ernestine L. Rose. Another article gives the credit of originating the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston to Mr. B. F. Underwood. We have heard that Mrs. Rose desired to will all her property to the Paine Memorial Hall, but she was persuaded to leave it to her relatives by her man of business, who would not act as executor except on this condition.

Among "Liberal Notes" in the *Twentieth Century* (New York) we read that—"G. W. Foote, of the London *Freethinker*, contemplates a trip to this country next year." Mr. Foote does contemplate a visit to America if the Secular Union organises an International Freethought Congress at Chicago.

The New York *Sun* "sits up" at the notion of a memorial tablet to Shelley in the parish church at Horsham. "Shelley," quoth the *Sun*, "was denounced all through his life as a godless enemy of the faith, and was deprived of the custody of his own children by the court of chancery because of the alleged wickedness of his religious opinions. In view of Shelley's memorial tablet in the parish church at Horsham, what may not Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll look forward to? Ay, what? Perhaps the American Christians will build him a pyramid."

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw has a rattling article in the September number of *The Albemarle* on "Shaming the Devil about Shelley." No man of our time, in England, carries as many heresies as Mr. Shaw, and his article is most refreshingly outspoken. He indulges in some delicious—the Philistines would say indelicate—chaff of Mr. Gosse and the Horsham meeting, and describes the success of the honest meeting at the London Hall of Science. "Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society," says Mr. Shaw, "by his own personal announcement, and a few handbills, got a meeting which beat Horsham hollow." He does not scruple to recall the fact that Mr. Foote "not only talks Shelley but lives him," at least to the extent of getting imprisoned for Blasphemy. For the rest, we advise every Freethinker to read Mr. Shaw's article. It will make some of the most advanced "sit up"; but plain, straightforward speech is invaluable in this age of hypocrisy.



## CERTIFICATED COWARDS.

As a certificated teacher of elementary schools during the past twenty years, I have frequently found from experience that the schoolmaster, notwithstanding his intellectual superiority, is generally a great moral coward. At an early age he is selected from his schoolfellows as the brightest and most intelligent boy in the school, and duly appointed monitor for a few probationary months until he is formally indentured as a pupil teacher for four or five years. During these he toils assiduously on through a weary, monotonous, brain-racking routine of drudgery. At the end of each day's work another hour of agonising instruction is dosed into him by the head-master, who is ever increasing the length and difficulty of exercises in which the persistent youth plods away incessantly night after night in order to pass his annual examinations in English, physical and political geography, history, arithmetic, algebra, mensuration, Euclid, music, drawing, mechanics, electricity, etc., not omitting the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of *Old and New Testament History*, until he completes his last year as P.T. He must now sally forth to college for about two years more, in order to become qualified for the post of acting teacher; and even then he has not acquired his much-coveted *parchments*, as they are termed in scholastic shop. No; before obtaining this valuable document, he has to still further satisfy the inspectors of his tuitional powers by undergoing another lengthy probation in some school, until he has merited two good reports, when, if successful, he finds himself a fully-fledged parchmented pedagogue. There are other exceptional or indirect means of attaining to this eminence, but the curriculum I have briefly described is the only way of developing with any distinction into a teacher of the first class. Now to enter holy mother Church and incubate into a full-blown parson, capable of uttering the words *Howly Ghoust* without the slightest snigger, requires but a moiety of the studious worry and indomitable perseverance of the case above. Yet, ultimately, the schoolmaster whose midnight oil must often have required replenishing, may have to cringe and fawn at the feet of this contemptible, pudding-headed parson. The former toiling six days a week for a miserable pittance of a crown a day: while the latter a lazy, hulking, wine-bibbing, pleasure-seeking Stiggins—needs do little more than read to his stultified congregation a couple of penny sermons a week, and pocket unblushingly an unearned salary of six or eight hundred pounds per annum. I often wonder whether the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he strokes from the banker's counter into his capacious black bag a pile of £5 notes as thick and almost as heavy as a family Bible, ever considers this huge sum of money is the reward of being at the head of the most gigantic fraud in the earth's history. The poor devil of a teacher must not only impart an hour's daily religious instruction to the children—the parson's duty—but on certain nights he must instruct the choir to perform and carry out any whimsical musical program of his reverend boss; while on the blessed Sabbath he must help morning and afternoon in the Sunday-school. At church he must preside on the harmonium or organ, and by way of climax he must actually read the lessons for the day, if his sporting reverence has got a bad cold through fishing or shooting or driving or playing lawn tennis at some brother clergyman's garden party; in short, he must act as general factotum and lickspittle to a capricious poltroon who is inferior by head and shoulders in every literary capacity except Latin and Greek—Pecksniffianism and cheek. And he cannot help himself—his appointment hangs by a precarious thread and he must play the coward, however repugnant to his better nature, and exhibit an ardent desire to further the whims and crochets of this divine ambassador, who is snugly ensconced for life in some fat living; but who would not scruple to render him and his wife and their little ones homeless if he only dared to defy the high-handed father in God or express his honest thoughts if they savored of heterodoxy. It happens that most Church schools have the vicar for manager and correspondent, and it is this fellow's good graces that an applicant must gain ere he obtains the mastership of such a school. He is invariably satisfied with this arrangement, for he has been taught from his youth up that "*the powers that be are ordained of God.*" Space now allows me only to mention that once a year a teacher has to prepare the children to meet the dread Diocesan inspection, an institution calculated to compel an indifferent schoolmaster to dole out what is considered by the Diocesan Board of

Education, a sufficient quantity of Jewish and Christian legend and other fabulous and superstitious humbug, which it may be suspected he might object to. To satisfy the Diocesan inspector and gain a good report for piety and submissiveness, the children are crammed in accordance with the authorised syllabus, embracing outlines of the lives of Bible heroes; repetition of scripture, hymns and catechism; knowledge of catechism and prayer-book, etc., etc. On the day of the appearance of the Lord's messenger or umpire, the school-walls and windows display a liberality of floral decorations; while to see the little devices of the hopeful tutor and his timorous brood to win the approving smile of their unctuous visitor would melt the heart of an eighteen-carat Freethinker. In conclusion, pardon me for the expression that any schoolmaster, who belittles himself before such quasi-divine representatives while other avenues are wide open wherein to earn a more relishable crust, is a certificated coward. Such a predicament, unfortunately, was my lot for nearly fifteen years; when I mustered courage, and at all hazards threw off every allegiance to orthodox rottenness, and am now enjoying better health, better salary and unlimited mental freedom. Selah!

P. W. BALDWIN.

## THE MATRIMONIAL CREED.

WHOEVER will be married; before all things it is necessary that he hold the conjugal faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall be scolded everlastingly. And the conjugal faith is this: that there is diversity in unity: neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance, For there is one person of the man, and another of the woman, and yet not two unities but one unity. As the man is, such is the woman, only different; both equal, yet one subject to the other; the man is head of the woman, yet the woman may govern the man. For as the man is head, so likewise the woman is head. The woman promises to obey the man, and the man ought to obey the woman. And yet there are not two obedients, but one obedient. There is one dominion nominal of the husband and another dominion real of the wife. And yet there are not two dominions but one dominion. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge that wives must submit themselves to their husbands and be subject in all things; so are we compelled by the actual verity to acknowledge that men must submit to their wives and be subject in all things. The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man. Yet the man shall be the slave of the woman, and the woman the tyrant of the man. He therefore that will be married must thus think of the conjugal unity. Furthermore it is necessary to submissive matrimony that he also believe rightly the infallibility of the wife. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lady is fallible and infallible. Perfect fallible and perfect infallible, of an unreasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Fallible as touching her humanity, and infallible as touching her femininity. Who although she be fallible and infallible: yet she is not two, but one woman, who suffers for our delectation; and descended into matrimony that she might rise again the superior and rule her spouse until he is dead. This is the matrimonial faith; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved. Glory to the woman, and to the man, and to all the little kids. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

LUCIANUS.

## HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Got your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Got 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.



## CORRESPONDENCE.

## A NOTE FROM GEORGE ANDERSON.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

On June 27 I met the Directors of the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall at a church, for sale, in the Waterloo-road, which they were anxious to buy at £5,000 to £5,500, and to expend about £3,000 in repairs and alteration. The auction would take place in three days; and, not approving of the project, I resigned my seat on the Board next day (28th). On July 4 Mr. Robertson, the chairman, wrote to know why I resigned. On the 5th I replied to him, sending it by hand by 11 a.m. in case he might wish to publish it in the next issue of *N. R.* I waited till three issues of *N. R.* had appeared, and as my communication had not been acknowledged in any way, I asked the *Freethinker* to publish it, which was done on August 7. On August 14 appeared an article on me in the *N. R.*, because the *Freethinker* had the previous week published the letter the *N. R.* had failed to acknowledge. On August 15 I replied to that attack—this time addressing the editor, and not Mr. Robertson by name. To that I have had no reply beyond a note to correspondents, which is untrue and unsatisfactory.

I now, on Sept. 9, ask the *Freethinker* to publish the attack made on August 14 in the *N. R.*, and my reply to it sent to the *N. R.* on August 15, and burked by that paper. The Secular body will then be able to form their own opinion of John Robertson and George Anderson. Personally I care not a rush whether publication takes place or not; I only seek it on public grounds for the information of the Secular body, who are trying to raise a Hall in memory of Mr. Bradlaugh, and who will more readily do it by union than in disunion.

Sept. 9, 1892.

GEORGE ANDERSON.

[Journalistic etiquette prevents us from complying with Mr. Anderson's request. We think he takes the matter too seriously. His reputation is too high to be affected by such insults, and the Freethought party does not attach any importance to the practical views of those who have treated Charles Bradlaugh's true friend, and best financial supporter, with gross indignity.—EDITOR.]

## THE BLACK CRAFT.

HAIL mystical craft, to the vulgar unknown;  
 Sublime the profession  
 That gives you possession  
 Of other men's minds which you rule with your own.  
 All hail the bright honors you gain from the trade!  
 Though some unbelievers  
 May call you deceivers,  
 The faithful afford you their bountiful aid.  
 Ye pious young Christians, abandon your toil  
 In workshops and fields;  
 For soul-saving yields  
 More fruit to the godly than tilling the soil.  
 Get round the old women with fiddle-de-dee;  
 Teach the children in school  
 By arithmetical rule  
 That three are but one and that one is just three.  
 Or show the poor heathen where wisdom belongs—  
 They'll soon understand  
 Your system so grand,  
 And gain inspiration from Solomon's songs.  
 You'll visit all people now grossly mistaken;  
 The Hindoos you'll teach  
 The right way to preach,  
 And Turks to drink beer and the Jews to eat bacon.  
 To do without work, north, south, west or east,  
 And live gally in clover  
 Your life-time all over,  
 There's nothing like learning the craft of the priest.

ZEPH.

We have received from Cologne the new monthly organ of the German Freethinkers Union. It is entitled *Correspondenzblatt des Deutschen Freidenker Bundes*, and is edited by W. Gerling and published at 12 Herwarthstrasse, Köln.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, held Wednesday, Aug. 31; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. Reynolds, Standring, Hunt, Bater, Quinton, Courtney, Potter, Gorniot, Ivatts, Martin, Hartmann, Brumage, Standring, Moss, Wheeler, and Miss Vance (Secretary). Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Minutes of the Organisation Committee discussed and adopted.

Proposed by Mr. Standring, seconded by Mr. Moss: "That the tenancy of the Hall of Science be renewed on the same conditions as before."

An amendment was moved by Mr. Bater, seconded by Mr. Hartmann: "That the directors of the Hall Co. be asked to reduce the rent to £200 per annum." The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was negatived, and the previous resolution carried.

A recommendation from the Organisation Committee that Mr. Stanley Jones receive a grant of £5, to enable him to commence his lecturing tour, was adopted.

The Secretary was instructed to obtain from the Branches the necessary information for the Society's new Prospectus, and the affiliation fee of £2 to the International Freethought Federation was ordered to be paid.

The President read the program of the International Freethought Congress, and Mr. J. M. Wheeler moved and Mr. Moss seconded: "That the President write M. Leon Fournémont, expressing the N.S.S.'s best wishes for the success of the Madrid Conference, and regretting its inability to be personally represented." Carried.

The President informed the meeting that the National Secular Hall Company had already made some improvements in the Club premises, and that a choir in connection with the N.S.S. was about to be formed, and other new features would be introduced. Mr. Wheeler gave notice "that he should inquire at the next meeting which of the books in the library at the Hall of Science were the property of the N.S.S."

Mr. Hunt made a statement with regard to the financial position of the West London Branch, and it was resolved that all arrears be written off.

Other business was transacted and the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, Sec.

## DR. MONSEY'S EPITAPH ON HIMSELF.

Here lie my old bones, my vexation now ends,  
 For I've lived much too long for myself and my friends;  
 As for churchyards and places which parsons call holy,  
 It's a rank piece of priestcraft, and founded on folly;  
 In short, I despise them: and as for my soul,  
 Which may rise the last day, with my bones, from this hole,  
 I verily think it has nothing to fear  
 From the God of mankind, whom I truly revere.  
 What the next world may be never troubles my pate;  
 If not better than this, I beseech thee, O Fate!  
 When the bodies of millions fly up in a riot  
 To let the old carcase of Monsey lie quiet.

DR. MESSENGER MONSEY was born in Norfolk in 1693. His father was a clergyman. He became a fashionable physician, and lived to be upwards of 94 years old. One of his patients deplored that he had actually spoken with people who believed there was no God. "And I," said he, "know plenty who believe there are three." The patient left suddenly, and never returned. Dr. Monsey was a friend of Garrick, and physician to the Duke of Leeds and to Chelsea Hospital. "Thou, Nature, art my goddess," he used to say should be the physician's motto. He was particularly partial to the works of Bernard Mandeville. He was one of the first in England to direct by will that his body should not suffer any funeral ceremony, but be dissected by an anatomist after death: "after which the remainder of the carcase may be put into a hole, or crammed into a box with holes and thrown into the Thames." He died Dec. 26, 1788. Mr. Forster, the surgeon to whose charge he assigned his body, gave a long discourse thereon in the theatre of Guy's Hospital, which may be found in the 58th vol. of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. J. M. W.

An American journal is responsible for the following. An English bishop querulously remarked to his servant that he was dying. "Well, my lord," said the good fellow, "you are going to a better place." "John," replied the prelate, with an air of conviction, "there's no place like old England."



## LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, held at Hall of Science on Wednesday, Sept. 7. In the absence of the President, the chair was occupied by Mr. J. M. Wheeler. Present: Mr. A. B. Moss (vice-president); Miss Vance; Messrs. Baker, Bartlett, Heath, Krause, Leekey, Renn, Schaller, Steinberg, and Turner. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. Correspondence from Battersea *re* course of lectures was considered; and a letter from Mr. Standing on a business matter occupied the attention of the Council. A vote was taken on the printing account; and, on the proposition of Miss Vance, seconded by Mr. Steinberg, it was resolved that the publication of the monthly lecture list be suspended during the winter months. The secretary reported that he had received notice from the Bethnal Green Branch that the station at Columbia-road had been given up, Mr. Steinberg stating the reasons therefor.

On consideration of the proposed course of free lectures, it was agreed to leave the matter in the hands of the officers for arrangement. In the meantime the secretary would make inquiries as to suitable places; Mr. Renn suggesting one hall in which lectures would be specially useful to the propagation of Freethought.

The financial statement of the excursion, showing a profit of £5 3s. 6d., was presented and accepted.

A question was asked as to the amalgamation of the Ball's Pond and Finsbury Park Branches, and the continuance of the work at their open-air stations; and Mr. Wheeler spoke of the probable formation of a Branch at Islington. Mr. Leekey tendered thanks, on behalf of those who have recently been carrying on a station in that district, for the support received from the members of other Branches, particularly of the Bethnal Green.

Some minor matters were dealt with; and the Council proceeded to discuss, at the instance of Mr. Moss, the position of lecturers in the parks and open spaces under the control of the London County Council. After the chairman, Mr. Steinberg, and others had spoken, it was agreed that Mr. Moss (N.S.S. delegate) should raise the question at the next meeting of the Metropolitan Radical Federation, and take opinion as to the bye laws affecting open-air speaking; reporting thereon to the Council.

E. POWNCEBY, Secretary.

[The secretary received collections from the Camberwell and West London Branches, and Mr. J. Rowney, which will be acknowledged in detail by the treasurer on his return to town.—The secretary would be glad to learn from Branches in whose districts arrangements might be made for lectures during the coming season.]

## A PRAYER.

O God, O God! where is thy dwelling-place?  
Where must I gaze that I may see thy face?  
Where stretch these hands, that grope and search for thee,  
That I may clutch and hold until thou blessest me?

I call, O God, and yet thou wilt not hear,  
I stretch my hands, nor can I feel thee near;  
I gaze intent, but nothing can I see.

O God, thou Heedless One, where canst thou be?

Where must I turn? What can dispel the night?

O if thou livest, Lord, let me have light . . .

No heed! No light! There's no Salvation Plan.

Or if God lives, he lives remote from man.

J. ARTHUR GIBSON.

A certain clergyman was sent for suddenly to go to a cottage, where he found a man in bed. "Well, my friend," said the pastor, "what induced you to send for me?" The patient, who was rather deaf, appealed to his wife. "What does he say?" "He says," shouted the woman, "what the deuce did you send for him for?"

A clergyman, visiting in the parish of St. Ninians, came to a house where he wished to get a Bible for reference. The guide wife told her daughter to "look for the book on the top o' the aumry." The girl searched but could not find it, when the mother said, "Preserve me, I'm sure it maun be thereabouts some way, for we had it at the time o' the flitting." "And when did you flit?" said the minister. To which the wife replied, "Aye, let me see, it will be nineteen years come Beltane."

## GOD AND MORALITY.

What is a Moral Governor? A governor who makes his subjects moral? No, for many men are wicked. Could he prevent their being wicked? If he could and did not, we have no security for his wishing them to be moral. If he did not because he could not, his willing them to be moral will not secure the existence of morality. He can, however, secure the punishment of the wicked; and therefore, if moral government does not mean the immediate morality of the universe, it means the ultimate rule of justice. What, then, is justice? It means, in brief, that punishment should be impartial, and should be proportioned to the offence. Now, if the wicked are to be punished impartially, they must be punished in proportion to their wickedness; that is, for the wickedness due to their own character, not to the accidental circumstance. But their own character means their innate qualities—that is, the qualities with which they were created; or, in other words, the Creator as governor punishes them exactly for being what he has made them.—*Leslie Stephen, "Science of Ethics,"* p. 455.

## 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): 7.30, Mrs. Louisa Samson, "Immortality"; social gathering after the lecture. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class (members wanted).

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, Mr. Campbell, F.T.S., "Astrology." Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class (astronomy). Friday at 9, reading class, "Spencer's Ethics." Saturday at 7.30, dancing.

Camberwell—81 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allison, "Beef, Beer, and 'Bacca."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Men, Women, and Children: the Real Trinity."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road N.W.: 7.30, Herbert Burrows, "The Limits of Authority: Political, Social, and Moral."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, S. H. Alison, "Satan's Pedigree."  
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. J. Hunt will lecture.

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, B. Hyatt will lecture.  
Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Book of Job and its Teaching."

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.  
Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is there Design in Nature"; 3.30, S. H. Alison will lecture.

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8, a lecture.  
Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, F. Haslam, "The Fall of Man and the Atonement."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Mr. St. John, "Christianity and Freethought."

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 6.30, J. Fagan, "The Existence of God."

Lambeth—New Cut (corner of Short-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "Prayer: what and why?"

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, C. J. Steinberg will lecture.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Slavery."  
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Sham Beliefs."

Plaistow Green: 6.30, E. Calvert will lecture.  
Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, W. Heaford will lecture; 3.15, C. J. Hunt will lecture.

Walthamstow—Markhouse Common: 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, H. Snell, "Christianity at the Bar of Science."

## COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: Charles Watts, 11, "The Aristocracy and the People: the Coming Conflict"; 7, "The Blight of Superstition."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, a meeting.  
Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

Derby—20 Newland-street: 7, members' meeting.  
Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: J. M. Robertson, 11.30, "The Heaven Myth"; 3, "The Twelve Apostles"; 6.30, "What do Christians Believe?"

Glasgow—St. Rollox Eclectic Society, Toynbee Hall, Parson-street: 8, R. Laurie, "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

Leeds—Crampton's Temperance Hotel, Briggate: 7, members' meeting, election of new secretary, etc.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: Touzeau Parris, 11, "Science and Religion: why antagonistic?"; 3, "The Mystery of Evil Unveiled"; 7, "Sacramental Superstitions."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 3, half-yearly meeting; 6.30, social gathering.  
Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, G. Selkirk, "Divine Providence."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.  
Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, vocal and instrumental music, etc.



South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street; 7, business meeting; 7.30, entertainment.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Chatham—New-road (near Waghorn Memorial): 11, W. Heaford, "Christ and his Claims Considered."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Sept. 18, Liverpool. Oct. 2, Leicester; 23, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich. — Sept. 18, m., Wood Green; 25, m. and e., Camberwell.

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

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Sept. 18, m., Bethnal Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow; 25, m., Westminster. Oct. 2, m., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 9, m., Camberwell; a., Finsbury Park; 16, a., Hammersmith; 23, m., Westminster; e., Lambeth; 30, m., Mile End Waste; a., Finsbury Park; e., Edmonton.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Sept. 18, m., Mile End; a., Regent's Park; e., Edmonton; 25, m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow. Oct. 2, m., Bethnal Green; e., Edmonton; 6, Walthamstow; 7, Battersea; 9, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 13, Walthamstow; 14, Battersea; 16, m., Mile End; e., Edmonton; 20, Walthamstow; 21, Battersea; 23, m., Hyde Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Libra Hall; 27, Walthamstow; 28, Battersea; 30, m., Camberwell; e., Libra Hall.

SAM STANDRING, 106 Oxford-road, All Saints' Manchester.—Sept. 18, Leicester; 25, Rochdale.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—Sept. 18, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; 25, m. and a., Victoria Park.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—Sept. 18, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 25, m., Bethnal Green. Oct. 9, 16, 23, 30, mornings booked.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Sept. 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.

J. GREEVZ-FISHER, 78 Harrogate-road, Leeds.—Sept. 18, Leeds. Oct. 3, Bradford.

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