

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

TENNYSON AND THE BIBLE.

WE owe no apology for speaking of the dead poet as "Tennyson." This is how he will be known by posterity. The rank is but the guinea's stamp, and in this case it was not requisite. A true poet's gold can neither be made more precious nor more current by empty titles. In our opinion, it is a degradation, instead of an honor, for one of nature's aristocrats to herd with the artificial nobility of an hereditary peerage. We also take the opportunity of regretting that Tennyson ever became Poet Laureate. The court poet should not survive the court dwarf and the court jester. It is painful to see a great writer grinding out professional odes, and bestowing the excrements of his genius on royal nonentities. The preposterous office of Poet Laureate should now be abolished. No poet should write for a clique or a coterie; he should appeal directly to the heart of the nation.

Tennyson's funeral took place at Westminster Abbey. The heads of that establishment, following the example set by Dean Stanley, now act as body-snatchers. They appropriate the corpses of distinguished men, whether they believed or disbelieved the doctrines of the service read over their coffins. Charles Darwin's body is buried there—the great Agnostic, who repudiated Christianity; Robert Browning's too—the poet who said "I am no Christian" to Robert Buchanan. Carlyle took care that his corpse should not join the museum. Tennyson's, however, is now in the catalogue; and, it must be admitted, with more plausibility than in the case of Browning—with far more than in the case of Darwin.

Christian pulpiteers, all over the country, have been shouting their praises of Tennyson as a Christian poet. They are justified in making the most of a man of genius when they possess one. We do not quarrel with them. We only beg to remark that they have overdone it. The Christianity of Tennyson is a very different thing from the Christianity they vend to the credulous multitude.

There is no real evidence that Tennyson accepted the legendary part of Christianity. Even in "In Memoriam," which was published forty-three years ago, the thought is often extremely Pantheistic. It is nearly always so in the later poems. God, not Christ, became more and more the object of the poet's adoration. "Strong Son of God, immortal Love"—the first line of the earlier poem—does not necessarily mean Christ; while the exclamation, "Ring in the Christ that is to be," is more symbolic than personal. There is also a strong hope, rather than the certitude, of a future life. No thoroughly convinced Christian could have written of

The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds.

Nay, the very deity of Christ is held loosely, if at all, in the thirty-third section, where he

Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

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is bidden to leave his sister undisturbed when she prays; the poet exclaiming

Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

In the last line of the next stanza this "sacred flesh and blood" of Christ (it is to be presumed) is called "a type"—which is a wide departure from orthodox Christianity. And what shall we say of the final lines of the whole poem?

One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

Like other passages of "In Memoriam," it is a distinct anticipation of the thought of "The Higher Pantheism," "Flower in the Crannied Wall," "De Profundis," and "The Ancient Sage."

Much has been made of the "Pilot" in one of Tennyson's last poems, "Crossing the Bar."

I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

This has been treated as a reference to Christ; but a friend of Tennyson's, writing in the *Athenæum*, says that the reference was really to the poet's son, Lionel Tennyson, who "crossed the bar" of death some years previously. How much more natural and human is the reference in the light of this explanation!

Tennyson most assuredly revolted against the brutalities of Christianity; which, by the way, are countenanced by very explicit texts in the New Testament. He did not approve the text, "Great is your reward in heaven." He was above such huckstering. He sang of Virtue—

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky.
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

A noble petition! though in the teeth of a too patent destiny.

The doctrine of eternal Hell he first turned from, then denounced, and finally despised. It was for wavering as to this hideous dogma that the Rev. F. D. Maurice got into trouble with his College. He was godfather to Tennyson's little boy, and the poet invited him, in exquisitely charming verse, to share his hospitality.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty-thousand college-councils
Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight.

Tennyson had already, in "In Memoriam," proclaimed himself a Universalist, as Browning did afterwards in his powerful lines on the old Morgue at Paris. He had expressed the hope

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Such a poet could never see the divinity of the wicked, awful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." He denounced it in "Despair," a poem of his old age. Well does he make the Agnostic cry out to the minister—

What! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so well?
Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting Hell,
Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what he will with his own;
Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan!

This is fierce denunciation, but it pales before the attack on Hell in "Rizpah"; that splendid poem, which is perhaps the very noblest effort of Tennyson's genius; outweighing hundreds of Balaclava charges and sea-fights; outshining the flawless perfection of "Maud":—a poem written in heart's blood and immortal tears, with a wondrously potent and subtle imagination, and a fire of humanity to burn up whole mountains of brutal superstitions.

The passionate words of the poor old dying mother, full of a deathless love for her boy who was hung, go straight as an arrow to its mark, through all the conventions of society and all the teachings of the Church.

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.

And if he be lost—but to save my soul, that is all your desire;
Do you think that I care for my soul if my boy be gone to the fire?

Tennyson gives the very essence of the moral revolt against Hell. Human nature has so developed in sympathy that the sufferings of others, though out of sight, afflict our imaginations. We loathe the spectacle of Abraham and Lazarus gazing complacently on the torture of Dives. Once it was not so. Those who were "saved" had little or no care for the "damned." But the best men and women of to-day do not want to be saved alone. They want a common salvation or none. And the mother's heart, which the creeds have trampled upon, hates the thought of any happiness in Heaven while son or daughter is agonising in Hell.

It is perfectly clear that Tennyson was far from an orthodox Christian. Quite as certainly he was not a Bibliolator. He read the Bible, of course; and so did Shelley. There are fine things in it, amidst its falsehoods and barbarities; and the English version is a monument of our literature. We regard as apocryphal, however, the story of Tennyson's telling a boy, "Read the Bible and Shakespeare; the one will teach you how to speak to God, the other how to speak to your fellow-men." Anyhow, when the poet came to die, he did not ask for the Bible and he did ask for Shakespeare. The copy he habitually used was handed to him; he opened it at "Cymbeline," one of the most pagan of Shakespeare's plays; he read a little, and then held the book until Death came with the fall of "tired eyelids upon tired eyes."

It was a poetic death, and a pagan death. There lay the aged, world-weary poet; artificial light was withdrawn, and the moonlight streamed through the window upon his noble figure. Wife and son, doctors and nurses, were silent around him. And as Death put the last cold touch on the once passionate heart, it found him still clasping the book of the mighty magician. Let it also be noted that no Christian priest was at his bedside. He needed not the mumbings of a smaller soul to aid him in his last extremity. Hope he may have had, but no fear. His life ended like a long summer day, slowly dying into night.

G. W. FOOTE.

HELL: AS DESCRIBED BY THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN IT.

BEING, my much-to-be-commiserated readers, on the road to hell, from the mere fact of holding in your hands such a paper as the *Freethinker*, it may be of interest to know what awaits you, even though the knowledge can in no way avert the doom. Although you have not visited hell, as yet, there are those, like Dante, who have, and who, like Dante, have left their visions on record. Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism* (vol. i., p. 317; 1870) remarks:

"The saint was often permitted in visions to behold the agonies of the lost, and to recount the spectacle he had witnessed. He loved to tell how, by the lurid glare of the eternal flames, he had seen millions writhing in every form of ghastly suffering, their eyeballs rolling with unspeakable anguish, their limbs gashed and mutilated and quivering with pain, tortured by pangs that seemed ever keener by the recurrence, and shrieking in vain for mercy to an un pitying heaven. Hideous beings of dreadful aspect and of fantastic forms hovered around, mocking them amid their torments, casting them into cauldrons of boiling brimstone, or inventing new tortures more subtle and more refined. Amid all this a sulphur stream was ever seething, feeding and intensifying the waves of fire. There was no respite, no alleviation, no hope. The tortures were ever varied in their character, and they never palled for a moment upon the sense. Sometimes, it was said, the flames, while retaining their intensity, withheld their light. A shroud of darkness covered the scene, but a ceaseless shriek of anguish attested the agonies that were below."

Imagine the madness and misery produced by actual belief in these horrors. In my *Christian Doctrine of Hell* I have shown that a belief in the literal material character of hell-fire and in the eternity of its torments was inculcated by all the most prominent fathers and doctors of the Christian Church down to modern times. My present object is to supplement my pamphlet with the accounts of those who are said to have visited hell.

Gregory, the great Pope and Saint, is said to have written of hell, and in the works attributed to him, it is related a certain Stephen, whom he personally knew, went there. Stephen had, to all appearance died in Constantinople, but as the embalmer could not be found, he was left unburied the whole night. During that time he went to hell, where he saw many things he had not believed. When he came before the judge of hell, the judge said: "I did not send for this man, but for Stephen the smith." Gregory's friend Stephen was happy to get back, and on his return found Stephen the smith dead. Gregory describes how a monk, apparently a man of piety, who had been accustomed secretly to eat meat, saw on his death-bed a fearful dragon twining its tail round his body, and with open jaws sucking his breath; and how a little boy of five years old, who had learnt from his father to repeat blasphemous words, saw, as he lay dying, exulting demons, who were waiting to carry him to hell.

The ecclesiastical history ascribed to the Venerable Bede, related how one, Furseus, an Irish monk, was shown in a vision four furnaces of fire, the first for liars, the second for those who preferred the riches of this world to those of heaven, the third for those who sowed dissension and hatred, and the fourth for the fraudulent and infidels. The monk Wettin relates, that being taken in a vision to hell, he was horrorstruck to find the great King Charlemagne there, horribly tormented for his sins of the flesh. He saw, too, numerous ecclesiastics chained in the fire with their women, while demons whipped them incessantly. Cæsarius, a Cestercian monk, tells how one, Walter, when sick, saw Satan and inquired about the fate of his late master, Count William of Julian. "You know," said Satan, "the mountainous district between Wolkenburg and

Drachenfels; well, if all those mountains were of iron and were set in the place where your master now is, they would be molten ere you could lift an eyebrow." Labitte and Ozanam have shown that Dante, in his descriptions of hell, which should be too well known to dilate upon here, mainly followed the ideas of his time, and previous relations of visits to hell.

Dean Milman, in his *History of Latin Christianity* (bk. xiv., c. ii.), says: "Hell had admitted, according to legend, more than one visitant from this upper world, who returned to relate his fearful journey to wondering man: St. Furcy, St. Velta, a layman, Bernild." "There is," he adds in a note, "a strange book, written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, *De Inferno*, by Antonio Rusea (Milan: 1621). It is dedicated, with fearful simplicity, to our Savior. It settles gravely, logically, and, as it would be supposed, authoritatively [Milman means scripturally], and not without erudition, every question relating to hell and its inhabitants, its place, extent, divisions, torments."

If anyone wants to know something of his future quarters and of the real beauty of religion, let him spend a penny on *The Sight of Hell*, written by the Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.S.R., and published "permissu superiorum" among "Books for Children and Young Persons" by Duffy of Dublin and London. Here is a specimen of what the religionist may revel in: "The fifth dungeon is the red-hot oven. . . The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor! You can see on the face of the little child what you see on the faces of all in hell—despair, desperate and horrible!" (p. 21).

Father Furniss informs us that "millions of millions are in hell." So long ago as the time of St. Theresa it was inconveniently crowded. She found it "impossible to sit or lie down, for there was no room." From each inmate is emitted such a dreadful odor that if but one of hell's denizens returned to earth the stench would be so great that "in that same moment every living creature on earth would die." Father Furniss holds that the bad smell is increasing.

Another work that has gone through numerous editions and been translated into many languages, is *Hell Opened to Christians*, by Father Pinamonti, S.J. This little book is illustrated with terrible pictures of men and women attacked by serpents and writhing in the torments of hell. But then, it is only "opened to Christians." These works are by Catholics, who have doubtless preserved the true tradition of the Christian Church. As this, however, shows their creed in its worst aspect, it is right to mention the story of a Catholic saint, Catherine of Sienna, she who kissed the head of an executed criminal. She is said to have prayed that she could place herself in the mouth of hell to shut up the passage, at her own cost, that no more souls might enter it. The very moment such an aspiration entered the human heart, God, the author of hell, ought in very shame to have abdicated his throne and given it over to his superior creature.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded).

HOW TO HELP US.

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

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

I.

Two events have recently occurred in this country which indicate the imbecility of the Church when dealing with the affairs of the world. In many parts of the United Kingdom "harvest thanksgiving services" have been held. The one which took place at Douglas, Isle of Man, was attended by some amusing and yet pitiable incidents. While Churchmen were thanking God for the "ingathering of the harvest and a prosperous season," the people on the island were anxiously waiting for sunshine and the cessation of almost continuous rain to enable them to cut and gather in the crops. What a farce and bitter satire! What a hollow mockery! The shopkeepers, too, were complaining in unmistakable language of the state of trade, and the local press announced the failure of business men in consequence of the bad season. It is difficult to imagine what an intelligent God could think of his servants thus publicly thanking him for a harvest that had not been garnered, and for a season which ended in tradesmen becoming bankrupts.

The Church Congress, which closed last week at Folkestone, was another case that showed a fair sample of the ordinary mental calibre of theologians. From beginning to end the gathering was remarkable principally for meaningless talk, and an entire absence of any real practical reformatory work. The evils that now afflict society were deplored, but no efficient remedy was even suggested by which they could be removed. The dangers that threaten the Church were recognised, but most of the speakers appeared unable to devise any plan by which such dangers could be averted. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, who presided, seemed about as comfortable in his position as a fish does when it is out of water. His speeches were vague, indefinite, and could be made to mean anything or nothing. The whole proceedings showed how thoroughly incompetent the "lights" of the Church are to deal sensibly with mundane affairs. Possibly they belong to that class of believers alluded to by Christ when he said, "Ye are not of the world," for their statements in reference to man were as foolish as their speculations about God were absurd.

It is only of late years that such free criticism has been permitted as that which was indulged in by some of the speakers at the Congress. The first time it was made clear that divines of the Church by law established could publicly discuss its doctrines and policy, without fear of a penalty being enforced, was in the year 1864. It was then that the writers of the famous *Essays and Reviews* appealed to the Lords of the Privy Council and obtained "a solemn judgment" in their favor. Since that decision the clergy have been so free and varied in their criticisms that it is now extremely difficult to know what is really to be understood as the essentials of the "only genuine religion of England." The "higher criticism," as it is termed, has proved that the Bible, the foundation of the Church, must be estimated from the same standpoint as ordinary secular literature is judged. The many works written within the last quarter of a century by bishops and clergy against "barren destructive criticism" have failed to stem the tide of that scepticism which has so rapidly increased of late, and which is still increasing as secular knowledge advances. The Colenso's of the Church are becoming more and more numerous, while most clergymen fight shy of the Bible account of the Fall of Man, the stories of the Creation and of the Flood; giving up doctrines that were once thought to be absolutely necessary to the faith, and clinging only to "essentials," but what these essentials are, like the peace of God, passeth all understanding.

It is amusing to read the account of a deputation of Nonconformists which attended the Congress with congratulations on the brilliant condition of the scholars of the Church; they professed their eternal friendship for the upholders of the Establishment, and hoped that henceforth they may all be as one, working in harmony for their Master's sake. The barriers which now separate the State clergy from their dissenting brothers were said to be only "hedges" over which they could "shake hands." If this be so it is certain that the "hedges" will have to be cut every season, and even then, judging by what took place soon after this confession of "brotherly love," the handshaking will not be very cordial or extensive. Still, the Archbishop of Canterbury believed they were "all marching together to fight under one banner against sin, the world, and the Devil." Of course the Archbishop will keep on his side of the "hedge" when the Nonconformists commence in earnest to do battle against the perpetuation of the Union of Church and State, which Professor Huxley calls "a branch of the civil service." As to fighting the poor Devil, that is a very old conflict, and the clergy should consider what would become of their profession if his Majesty were defeated. Besides, some of the Nonconformists cannot march against him, inasmuch as they have deposed him many years ago; and even the "New Version" has reduced him to simply an "evil one." But no doubt the brave and self-denying Prelate will keep marching on, though it be to slay the slain, so long as he gets £15,000 a year and two palaces, for marching. The comforting assurance, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God," can have no application to the Archbishop. A text far more consistent with his "living" would be, "Blessed be ye rich, for yours is the palace of man," supported by the money of a nation wherein thousands wake every morning tortured with anxiety as to how they are to obtain food for the day, and when the hour of sleep returns, they know not where to lay their heads. Oh orthodox consistency, where is thy blush?

As a suggestive commentary on this proclamation of unity and brotherhood among Christians, we may refer to a report that has appeared in the public press, of a rector who refused the use of his school-room to the Methodists. True the report does not say there was no "hand shaking" over the "hedge," but it is clear that if there were, the rector let his Christian brethren know that he was on the other side, and that they must not leap over. Dr. Lawson Tait, of Birmingham, also received a taste of the love of the new brotherhood. He had been invited to speak upon a scientific question, but as it was said that he was not a member of the Church of England, he was not allowed to be on either side of the "hedge" on that occasion. As if to give force to this new-born orthodox desire for unity, Alderman Phillips suggested at the Congress, that the church offer working men "parish rooms or institutions to meet in on Sunday afternoons, instead of handing them over to a pleasant Sunday afternoon in the nearest chapel, which meeting was always anti-Church." But one of the most striking instances of the peculiar harmony existing in this Christian happy family is, that not only were some of the pious dignitaries of the Church who were present accused of falsehood, but they were asked to "apologise for having broken the ninth commandment, 'thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.'" Still, "worse remains behind." No sooner had the Archbishop proclaimed that they were all of "one army," than two armies of his own Church appeared upon the scene and had a pitched battle in the open street "as the procession was marching to church." One army carried a banner bearing the inscription, "Protestant Churchmen,

stand fast in the Truth." This banner was seized by the other Christian army, "torn down, and some serious fighting took place," and the processionists were "too strong for the police." This was a rough beginning of the "reign of peace and goodwill among all Christians," but it seems that "the crowd was composed largely of fishermen," who might perhaps have been allowed to know which of the two rival factions had the true faith that was originally delivered to the saints, who were, we are told, also fishermen. The climax of the harmony among these loving Christians was reached when Major Edwards was forcibly expelled from the Congress for following a prayer and hymn by singing "at the top of his voice" "Ta-ra-ra boom-de-ay."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE MODERN BISHOP.

THE bells give warning for the hour of pray'er,
When rigid formalists to church repair;
The poor Plebeian o'er the gutter strides,
While in his gilded coach the Prelate rides;
That modest monarch of a good, fat See,
Unknown upon the shores of Galilee;
Unlike the ancient, barefooted Apostles,
To pomp and power the modern Bishop jostles;
Declaims in senates, rules with iron rod
The fawning sycophants who court his nod;
Denounces, as heretical and base,
All plans to socialise the human race,
To ease the fetters that enslave mankind,
To break the film that so enshrouds the mind.
Rome, in her darkest history, never saw
A truer tyrant than the one we draw.

GEORGE LINLEY.

THE MUST-BE ARGUMENT.

THE late Mr. Thomas Cooper was once a Freethinker of some eminence. Mr. Holyoake, who perhaps knew him better than any other prominent Freethought advocate, considered that Mr. Cooper, while a Freethinker, was an extremely able man. Irritable and irascible at times, he was nevertheless a clever lecturer, a good reasoner, and a competent debater. This was the view which many Freethinkers formed of Mr. Cooper, after having heard him lecture from the Freethought platform several times. Unfortunately I had not the advantage of hearing the author of *The Purgatory of Suicides* as a Freethought lecturer and therefore I am not in a position to offer an opinion respecting Mr. Cooper's platform qualifications when estimated by that standard by which all men who speak from the point of view of the rationalist are necessarily judged; but I heard Mr. Cooper when he was a Christian, and came to the conclusion either that he had been very much over-estimated while on our platform, or that the effect of his conversion to Christianity had weakened his reasoning powers, and reduced him to a common-place, orthodox sort of preacher, capable only of repeating stale arguments that had served the turn of Christian controversialists for years; or that the best arguments that could be used in support of Theism had been used by theologians hundreds of years ago, and could not be improved even by "converted Infidels."

It is now nearly fifteen years ago since I heard Mr. Cooper lecture on "God and the Soul"; but I retain a vivid recollection of the striking appearance of the man and as strong a recollection of his extremely weak arguments. At the outset I was astonished that Mr. Cooper in this lecture used precisely the same arguments and expressed them in precisely the same words as he did years before in his debate with Mr. Bradlaugh; and this notwithstanding the fact that the great "Iconoclast" had, in the course of

the debate, smashed and pulverised these arguments, and placed Mr. Cooper in such an unfortunate position that his own friends could only pity him.

Some Theists rely upon what John Stuart Mill has characterised as an altogether "unscientific mode of reasoning," namely, the *à priori* method; others believe in the method, *à posteriori*. Mr. Cooper, however, believed in both. Taken singly, he did not think that either of them was conclusive, but taken together, he considered that they formed a complete chain of evidence that led irresistibly up to God, the Creator of all things.

Let us take a sample of Mr. Cooper's reasoning. There was arrogance in every line of it. He did not say that he *believed* there was a God; he took a much bolder position, and proceeded on the assumption that he could demonstrate the existence of his God to the understanding of all intelligent men.

Despite the affirmation of Sir William Hamilton to the effect that all thought is conditioned, and that man can only think of things that can be brought under the cognition of the brain, Mr. Cooper attempted to convert his infinite God into finite form, and demonstrate the existence of Deity, as a teacher of mathematics would the absolute certainty of the problems of Euclid. Here are Mr. Cooper's words: "I am. I know that I exist; I am conscious of it—I, a reasoning, conscious, intelligent personal existence. But I have not had this personal existence for long. I have not long existed, but something must have existed before me. Something must have always have existed, for if there had never been anything in existence, there must have been nothing still, and because nothing cannot make something—something alone makes, originates, causes, something to exist." Mr. Cooper went on to declare that he was intelligent, and that some intelligence must have produced him; that something exists everywhere, and that that something was "an eternal conscious, underived, uncreated, uncaused Being, whom men worshipped and called God."

This, I find, is about the substance of the arguments of all *à priori* reasoners. But the fallacy of such reasoning ought to be obvious to all thoughtful men. Something, it is true, must have always existed, but it does not follow that that something "must have been God." Dr. Sexton is more accurate when he says that the Atheist and the Theist are agreed that something must have been eternal, and that the only difference between them is as to the nature of this something—God? Mr. Cooper said it was God. But who told him so? Unless he had specially vouchsafed to him a divine revelation to that effect I cannot understand how he could know it. Moreover, Mr. Cooper believed in an infinite God who created the universe. Out of what did God create it? He must have produced it out of something, because *ex nihilo, nihil fit*. What then was that something? Either it was something having qualities in common with Deity, or something differing in such qualities. But it could not be something differing in qualities from himself, because, as Spinoza puts it, "Two things having nothing in common cannot be the cause of, or effect one another"; and if the qualities of the universe did not differ from those of God, you could not distinguish between God and universe; in other words, God and the universe would be identical—which is a Pantheistic rather than a Theistic position. If God created the universe, did he produce it out of himself? If so, then there was no creation, but merely a prolongation of himself to some place which he did not previously occupy; and if God were infinite, there could be nothing else in existence from which to create the universe. Thus Mr. Cooper and such reasoners are driven to this position—that they must

either have a finite God and a finite universe, or an infinite universe and no God; or an infinite God and no universe. The theist is welcome to either of these alternatives, but each of them invalidates his argument.

Mr. Cooper went on to affirm that he was intelligent and that such intelligence as he possessed could only have been produced by an infinitely intelligent being. Such an argument is manifestly fallacious. There are hundreds of idiots born into this world year by year—who produced them? An infinitely idiotic God? This is not blasphemy; for he who says that because man is intelligent God "must be" intelligent provokes this retort.

But is God intelligent? Does he perceive, recollect, compare and judge? Does he add to his stock of information day by day? Has he a brain? Is he the recipient of pleasurable and painful sensations? If so he is not the God of the Christian Theist, for his God is all-wise and immutable, whereas a God who was perpetually gaining fresh knowledge would be constantly changing and could never be said to be "all wise."

In another article I will examine some arguments in support of Theism from another convert from the ranks of Freethought, viz., Dr. George Sexton; and endeavor to show that the learned doctor, though a better reasoner and more skilful dialectician than his late friend Thomas Cooper is no more successful than his friend was in his attempts to demonstrate the existence of an eternal and an infinitely wise and good being whom men worship and call "God."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

NOAH'S ARK.

NOAH'S ARK, which once contained the most complete menagerie on record, is said by the Bible to have "rested upon the mountains of Ararat," after the subsidence of that wonderful Flood. In the present age, Christian apologists, like Mr. Gladstone and Professor Dawson, try to make out that the Flood was a local affair; that when we read that the highest hills under heaven were covered, we must understand it to mean the highest hills the writer could see; and that, as he wrote in a very flat country, the water did not reach a great altitude after all. This is one way of meeting scepticism. On the other hand, there are other Christians who prefer the good old story, and strain their faculties to prove it true. Some of them hanker after Noah's Ark. They feel that its discovery would be a splendid piece of Christian Evidence.

Eighteen hundred years ago, Josephus declared that the remains of the Ark were then to be seen in a fine state of preservation. The Christian fathers told the same fine story. Benjamin of Tudela, a mediæval writer, said that the wood was all carried away by the Caliph Omar, in A.D. 640, and placed in a mosque he erected on an island in the Tigris. Johann Strauss, however, in 1670, said he saw the ark grounded on the snow. One of the beams was brought away anyhow, for it is exhibited in the Lateran at Rome; and no one can doubt its genuineness, since it is guaranteed by the Pope.

Dr. Cumming had no doubt that the Ark would sooner or later be discovered snowed up in some hollow of Mount Ararat. He did not go there to find it, and for several reasons. First, he was more comfortable at home; second, he was not used to mountaineering; third, he wanted his money for other purposes; fourth, he was prophesying the end of the world, and that was a large business, more than sufficient to exhaust one man's energies.

There is now a gentleman who swears he has seen the Ark on Mount Ararat. This gentleman is the Rev. John Joseph Nouri, D.D., LL.D., the Chaldean archdeacon of Babylon and Jerusalem. He says he

succeeded with "some friends" in climbing 14,000 feet, which is only 2,000 feet from the summit. Owing to the inclement weather they were then obliged to descend. During the descent the enterprising Dr. Nouri caught sight of the Ark through a field-glass. Afterwards he got close enough to see it with the naked eye. It stood more than 100 feet high, and more than 300 yards long. It was dark-reddish, almost iron-colored, and seemed very thick. Of course there was plenty of snow upon it, and the thing might have been rocks. But this is a theory that Dr. Nouri cannot entertain. He informs the editor of *Science Siftings* that he is sure it was Noah's Ark, and he thinks the snow will preserve it for twenty or thirty thousand years.

Here, then, is a splendid chance for the Christian Evidence Society. Surely it might make a successful appeal for funds to excavate the Ark, bring it down in pieces, and have them put together again at Olympia, or some other place of public resort in London. Should the C.E.S. fail in the attempt, it might be undertaken by the Palestine Exploration Society. Something should be done by somebody. In a scientific age like this, capable of almost any engineering feat, and provided with almost unlimited capital, it would be infamous to leave Noah's Ark in a hollow of Mount Ararat. Barnum, alas, is dead, and Buffalo Bill is retiring from business; otherwise the Ark might be brought to London by private enterprise. As it is, the task must devolve upon some Society, unless it is carried out by a Syndicate. It seems to us that the Archbishop of Canterbury should bestir himself. Nothing that was discussed at the Church Congress is so important as the recovery of Noah's Ark. Let it, we say—oh let it!—be brought to London, since it is too late for the Chicago Exhibition. Let it strike infidelity dumb. Let it confirm the truth of the Bible. Let it stand in the greatest city in the world as the greatest monument of faith. Let pilgrims from all parts of the world, where the Bible is read, kneel before it, and thank Providence for this supreme witness to the truth of Holy Writ. No one need then say, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Noah's Ark will do the business for the liveliest incredulity, and Colonel Ingersoll will publicly burn his *Mistakes of Moses*.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE VIRGIN MARY BAFFLED.

The people of Salces, a small town in the Pyrenées-Orientales, are keenly disappointed, a miracle which had been announced there for yesterday, and would have made their place a rival of Lourdes, did not take place. For some weeks past, Virginie Fabre, a young girl of ten, went every day to the top of a hill called Courtalet, a small way out of the town, where she said the Virgin Mary had appeared and spoken to her. The Virgin having promised to perform a miracle on October 5, 10,000 persons assembled on the hill at the appointed time. Virginie Fabre fell on her knees, and after praying for an hour she said that the miracle was put off for a week as the Virgin Mary would not appear before so large a crowd. A second effort was made on Wednesday, but unsuccessfully. There were still too many people, said Virginie, but the Virgin Mary would appear on Thursday, and perform the miracle. On Thursday, however, the crowd was larger than ever, many coming by rail from long distances, and a number of reporters and photographers were on the spot. Virginie was accompanied by her father, mother, sisters, and four fervent believers. After a short prayer, she said the Virgin could do no miracle before such a large crowd. The assembly broke up greatly disappointed. A couple of hours later she returned, very few persons being present; but still there was no miracle, and general disappointment is the result.—*Daily News*, October 15.

An American paper says briefly of a man who didn't know it was loaded—"He handled his gun carelessly and put on his angel plumage."

THE INTERNATIONAL FREETHOUGHT CONGRESS.

LAST Saturday's *Pall Mall Gazette* contained the following paragraph:—"At yesterday's meeting of the Congress of Freethinkers which was opened in Madrid on Wednesday in the Circus Principe Alfonso, the subjects on the order of the day were:—1. The effect of the discovery of America on the emancipation of thought. 2. The incompatibility of modern life with Catholicism and the means of getting rid of its baneful influence. During the discussion very violent language was resorted to by the numerous speakers, among whom several women made themselves conspicuous. The audience numbered over 800. The public prosecutor has notified the Government that the Congress infringes one of the articles of the Penal Code. The authorities have consequently ordered the suspension of its sittings, and probably proceedings will be taken against the executive."

We have seen no confirmation of this report, but we fear it is true nevertheless. Probably we shall receive official information in time for the next issue of the *Freethinker*.

ACID DROPS.

Considering that Tennyson was "a Christian poet," and also Poet Laureate; considering too that the Queen and her family are also Christians, and that Tennyson wrote several odes about their insignificant persons; it is rather astonishing that not one of the Christian royal tribe turned up at his funeral. The Prince of Wales was at Newmarket races while the Poet Laureate was being buried in Westminster Abbey. He went where his taste led him, and so far it was honest and straightforward; but what a comment on our glorious Monarchy! Statesmen, soldiers, men of science, artists, and men of literature, assembled to pay the last homage to a great poet. The Prince of Wales went to Newmarket, to see horses gallop and hear the applause of racing men, jockeys, and stable boys. It is almost worse than when George the Third received the second volume of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. "What," said the king, "another big book, Mr. Gibbon?"

John Burns went to Westminster Abbey. The Prince of Wales went to Newmarket. Yet they say the democracy is "vulgar."

A London parson, writing to the *Star*, says that the Prince of Wales does well not to go to scenes of mourning. He has his own private grief, and is very properly seeking relief in amusement. Some people might think this parson is sarcastic; but he is not; he is in deadly earnest; in fact, he is in a temper with the *Star* for criticising the Prince. Perhaps, as the parson dates from Dover-street, he is looking out for preferment.

A correspondent of the *Christian World* says that Tennyson complained of the want of agreement between the belief and the preaching of many of the clergy. "If," he said in conversation, "they do not believe in the dogma of everlasting torments, why do they profess to do so; and if they do not believe it, why do they preach it as though they did?" Tennyson went to hear a preacher who preached of hell and judgment in a way to make him quake in his shoes. "If it is true," the poet said, "that is how it should be preached." Yes, if it is true; but Tennyson did not believe it; witness his noble poem entitled "Rizpah."

A handbill is being circulated at Folkestone, offering a reward of £5 for a diamond and gold brooch, lost at the conversazione at the Royal Pavilion Hotel, October 7, 1892. "Will the clerical looking gentleman who was seen to pick it up," says the circular, "please return it to the proprietor of the Pavilion Hotel at once." This is rather rough on the Church Congress.

At the recent meeting of the Congregational Union at Bradford the Rev. J. M. Gibbon preached a sermon on Unbelief. It just suited the assembly, who were all believers. Mr. Gibbon was free to lay it on thick. And he did. He said that men in millions were missing blessedness through unbelief. That, he said, was a tragedy. Then he described unbelief as the sin of all sins and the source of all sorrows. Of course he meant unbelief in his own creed. Unbelief in

other creeds is all right and proper. After all, Mr. Gibbon is like the gentleman in the besieged city, who said there was nothing like leather.

The same Congregational Union witnessed a pretty shindy. Dr. Leach got up and stated that on the previous Sunday he had visited the Labor Church at Bradford, and heard a Member of Parliament tell a crowded audience that "Christianity is dead and I am glad of it." The speaker referred to was Mr. Keir Hardie, who happened to be present and demanded a hearing. After some altercation he was allowed to speak. He declared that he had not used the words attributed to him. What he did say was that "the Christianity of the schools is dead, and the Christianity of Christ is coming to the front, and I am glad of that." Dr. Leach, however, would not accept the correction; he stuck to his guns, and said he would stake his reputation that Mr. Hardie did say what was alleged. The scene was an animated one; it almost seemed as though the cleaners would have to come in and pick up the pieces. (Dr. Leach has since apologised.)

Mr. Keir Hardie is a worthy man in his way. He evidently means well. But he must be a little soft to talk so much about the Christianity of Christ. If the English working classes cannot be saved without the assistance of a dead Jew, their condition is hopeless. Mr. Hardie should remember that the Primrose League also swears by a dead Jew—not Jesus Christ, but Earl Beaconsfield, who was said by Daniel O'Connell to be the lineal descendant of the impenitent thief on the cross.

An article on "The Future of Islam" by Ibn Ishak, in the *American Arena*, shows how Christianity is regarded by an enlightened Moslem. He says: "The God of the Christian is a remote being, having but little to do with the ordinary affairs of life—he is a theological idea and nothing more. Religion seems to be with the Englishman a loose fitting mantle which sets somewhat awkwardly upon his shoulders. . . . But if we want to find a genuine specimen of the failure of modern Christianity, we can undoubtedly find it in the British soldier in India, for whom a paternal government provides a corps of native prostitutes, within convenient and easy walk from his barracks, and for whom thousands of camels journey along the dusty plains of India, laden with rum barrels and beer casks, intended to sustain the courage of the English conqueror."

Ibn Ishak contends that Islam makes drunkenness a crime and prevents the social evil. As to polygamy, Jesus did not condemn it, and Paul's injunction that bishops should have one wife implied that ordinary Christians practised it. Moses did not limit the number of wives, but Mohammed did, and enjoined monogamy on those who could not "deal reputably" with more than one. Ibn Ishak boasts that poor Moslems can always demand a meal and obtain it in the "guest chamber," not in misnamed "workhouses." In short, he declares: "A revival of Islam and the universal spread of the Moslem system of ethics in a civilised age like the present, with such adaptations as are necessary for the age, would probably do more to bring the conditions of modern life into harmony with democratic ideas than anything else which could possibly happen in the world." He looks forward to the conversion of Christians to the better faith.

Professor Jowett, the Master of Balliol and the translator of Plato, is a clergyman, but he is impregnated with the "humanities." He is reported to have asked a young man at a recent dinner, "What was the saddest event in history?" Taken aback, the young man fatuously stammered out, "Robert Elsmere." "No," said the Master, "it was the death of Falstaff."

An announcement that at a fancy dress ball at the Tuilleries the Marchioness de Gallifet appeared in a resplendent costume as the Archangel Gabriel, makes the *British Weekly* quote the text, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14). But the Archangel had no Virgin Mary, or there might have been the devil to pay.

By the way, if Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, how did Mary know it was Gabriel and not Satan she had to deal with?

The Bishop of Ely says: "As Satan can transform himself

into an angel of light, so it is possible that what seems the guidance of God's spirit may, if not proved, be really the suggestion of evil spirits." In what a delightful state of uncertainty religion leaves the religionist.

Accidentally picking up a back-number of a certain Christian paper, we glanced at one of the advertisement pages, and saw that a Christian lady wanted a nurse to look after seven children. This was a pretty kettle of fish for one poor girl, and it might be thought that the "lady" would not be too particular. But no; the girl would have to be "a believer" before she could slave for those seven "kids." Verily, yea verily, the Christian lady wanted a lot for her money.

A Christian lady, says a religious journal, prayed thusly:—"O Lord, give me a competency, and if, O Lord, thou knowest not what a competency is, make it £300 a year."

A wretched bigot called Hillman is forcing a sickening discussion into the pages of the *Bristol Mercury*. Eight months have elapsed since the Logan-Foote debate, and it now suits this Hillman to pretend that Mr. Foote made a lot of money out of it. He has been told that the proceeds of the two nights' debate, amounting to over £40, were paid over to the Children's Hospital; and that Mr. Foote received £5 to pay for his travelling expences, hotel bill, loss of time, and expenses incurred in London through his absence. Very well then, says Bigot Hillman, didn't Mr. Foote receive payment also from the Bristol Secularists? Yes, he says, and until the contrary is proved he shall hold it to be true. Mr. Hillman's logic is only equalled by his charity. Mr. Foote did not receive a farthing from the Bristol Secularists. He would not have taken anything if they had offered it. All he took at Bristol, in addition to the £5, was a bad cold, which laid him up for a fortnight, deprived him of a fortnight's income, and caused him besides an out of pocket loss of nearly £10. Mr. Foote has stated this in the *Bristol Mercury*.

Bigot Hillman quotes from a letter by Mr. Logan. Now if Mr. Logan permitted the publication of the extract he has acted in a most ungentlemanly manner. It is mean and contemptible to let another man do for you what you are afraid to do for yourself. If Mr. Logan thought that Mr. Foote realised a handsome profit out of that £5 he should have said so at the time. Mr. Foote made no specific charge. He left the matter entirely to the joint committee, consisting equally of the friends of both debaters. They thought £5 a fair compensation, and Mr. Foote took what they gave. Surely, then, as the £5 was the joint committee's estimate, Mr. Logan is displaying more Christian than human charity in sneering at the Atheist's "earnings." We don't know Mr. Logan's stipend, but we are prepared at a venture to bet the amount of a week's loss on the *Freethinker* that it exceeds Mr. Foote's earnings.

A freethinking writer was meandering along the Green Lanes with his young lady the other Sunday when a tract-distributor came forward and made the lady blush by handing a leaflet headed, "Is the Matter Settled?"

Prophet Baxter has begun to locate the 144,000 watchful Christians who are to ascend with him on March 5, 1896, to meet the Lord in the air. At a meeting at Greenock he promised that one-horse town, devoted to shipping and sugar refinery, that it should contribute eighty of the elect. The Glasgow believers think Greenock will have more than its fair proportion, and some of them may be expected to take a cheap train for Greenock just before that date.

Remnants of Pagan superstition have shown themselves to exist in full force in Siberia. On hearing of the cholera, the elders and wise men of a village, after much deliberation, selected twelve maidens and ordered them to march round the village at midnight twelve times with torches in their hands. The girls were accompanied by twelve men, who, on the completion of each of the circuits of the village, fired off guns, while the girls sang some sort of incantation. In the villages along the Volga similar ceremonies have taken place, accompanied by even more heathenish rites. The idea was that the cholera would be frightened away by these performances. In some instances, however, the cholera appeared a few days

afterwards. A priest who countenanced the practices is now doing penance in one of the monasteries.

So far from Booth's panacea having elevated the "submerged tenth," his methods have rather enhanced than diminished poverty. His competition has sent many firewood-cutters and others to the workhouse. He has tempted those to London who would have been at least as well off in the country, and the number of people out of work and destitute in the metropolis, are already greater than last winter.

How they love one another! Says the Rev. J. Kerr, D.D., of Glasgow, "If the features of the Mystery of Iniquity outlined by Paul to the Thessalonians were inserted in the *Hue and Cry*, the detectives would handcuff the Papacy."

The likeness between the antichrist of the New Testament and the Papacy has often been put forward by Protestants as an instance of prophecy. But the matter is easily explained. The New Testament writers denounced the idolatrous system of Pagan Rome, and this system was taken over almost entirely by the Christian Church. In denouncing the Papacy, Protestants after all are only reviling their parent.

Although the World's Fair is not to be opened on Sunday, they are yet working hard and fast every Sunday on the buildings and other necessary preparations, pleading they cannot otherwise have it ready in time.

In the dearth of news the *Times* has been discussing the authorship of the lines—

Went a pious missionary
To the town of Timbuctoo,
Met a hungry cosswary
Eat him, Bible, hymn-book too.

They have usually been ascribed to Sydney Smith, but some correspondents say the lines are much earlier.

Punch last week had two profane jokes. Here they are:

A PIS-ALLER.—"Are there any niggers on the beach this morning, mammie?" "No, dear; it's Sunday morning." "Oh, then I may as well go to church with you."

PROBABLE DEDUCTION.—A pertinacious Salvation Army captain was worrying a Scotch farmer, whom he had met in the train, with perpetual inquiries as to whether "he had been born again of water and the Spirit?" At last M'Sandy replied, "Aweel, I dinna reetly ken how that may be, but my good old feyther and mither took their toddy reelegiously every nicht, the noo."

A correspondent of *Truth* relates that near Durlston Head he saw a slab inscribed, "The Sea is HIS and HE made it," but two larger slabs on either side limit the Almighty's rights by declaring that Durlstone Head and Durlstone Park are private property.

The vicar of a parish at Nantes eloped with Madame Mangni, a young married lady, and bonds representing £1,600. They visited Lourdes together, and were arrested at Tarbes, where they were about to set up in business.

Mr. A. P. Clarkson, H.R.S., of The Woodlands, Wimbledon, writes as follows to the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—"The following summary might be edifying to your readers concerning the Establishment. From October 1, 1891, to October 10, 1892, I have kept a record of convictions, etc., of the clergy. They are as follows: Breach of promises, 14; cruelty to animals, 11; bankrupts, 254; elopements, 17; suicides, 12; drunkenness, 121; assaults, 109; various other charges, 84. I quite think some one should ask for an official return in Parliament; the above are taken simply by scanning the daily papers."

Mr. Beerbohm Tree has been playing "Hamlet" at Glasgow. In his farewell speech he took occasion to reply to the Rev. Dr. Rainey, who had just said that "there are three things that stick to the theatre; orange-peel, sawdust, and vice." After a few humorous remarks on the first and second items, Mr. Tree spoke as follows on the "vice": "As for the third objection, I hope that the plays which we have had the honor of presenting to you, including Shakespeare's

masterpiece 'Hamlet,' do not come under this category; and so long as we count among our ranks such men as John Lawrence Toole, of whom we are all proud, and who has been fulfilling an engagement at the Royalty Theatre this week, I do not think we need fear the condemnation even of such men as Dr. Rainey. As an instance of the strange hallucinations about the drama to which some dwellers in these northern latitudes are prone, I may tell you that I last year found myself in the Highlands, and was escorted up a mountain by a singularly pleasant but plain-spoken guide. With the familiarity bred of solitude he inquired 'What might you do for your living?' 'Oh,' I replied, 'I am on the stage.' 'Oh, ay'; he paused, examined me again, and asked, 'Is it the circus or the handbell ringers?' You see, his range, too, was limited. Sawdust again. I sought to enlighten him. 'No,' I said, 'ours is a much more serious business; we educate the classes and elevate the masses—Shakespeare and all that.' 'Oh, ay,' he answered, in that dialect which it has been the vain endeavor of my life to attain, 'oh, ay, it seems to me ye'r little better than a minister.'" (Laughter and cheers.)

The *Illustrated Church News* has some wonderful biblical criticism. It speaks of Jude 14, 15, as containing poetry "older than Genesis." It is true the passage says "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesies of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." But the Book of Enoch, with this passage, has been found, in Ethiopia, and instead of being by the seventh from Adam, it only dates from about the beginning of the Christian era. So that the passage shows the uncritical ignorance of Jude as much as its citation shows the like uncritical ignorance in the pious writer in the *I. C. N.*

According to the *Flaming Sword*, the organ of Koreshanity, the birth of Jesus was on this wise:—"The pneumatic energy of Joseph, carried from his mind, free from the taint of sensual desire, quickened the Virgin into gestative possibility, and the man Jesus was produced. There was no ordinary sex-contact. He was the beginning of the fulfilment of the command: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth,' not according to the sensual, perverted desire, but according to the new and living way—regeneration from God the Lord by the operation of spiritual power." This is quite as clear as the usual expositions of occultism. We hope no one will ask any disturbing questions after so satisfactory an explanation.

The *Cosmopolitan* reports that at Fyzabad the missionaries were in ecstasies over the conversion of an educated Mussulman of some distinction. To avoid any disturbance he was removed to another place, where he was duly baptised. But the joy in the camp of the Lord was not of long duration; for the pervert is now publicly declaring that he has no faith in Christianity, and only consented to be baptised on promise of a pecuniary grant.

F. W. Reitz, President of the Orange Free State, has covered himself with ridicule by ordering Sunday, Sept. 25, to be kept as a day of fasting, prayer, and humiliation, in order to secure rain and stamp out the locusts. There is a good share of the Freethought element in South Africa, and Sunday excursion trains are run from all parts to Kimberley Exhibition, which is kept open on that day. A correspondent of a Kimberley paper complained that at the opening banquet there was no thanksgiving offered. Two days after the letter appeared another banquet took place, and grace was said; and directly afterwards the building was struck by lightning.

The *Christian Life*, a Unitarian paper, has a most preposterous article on Renan. It makes the bright-witted Frenchman stand up for judgment, and tries him by the rules of dulness that prevail in English religious journals. Here is an instance. Renan said that, if he were sent to hell, he would reason against his Creator's severity in a way that would make him smile. Whereupon the *Christian Life* remarks that "Only a man of essentially frivolous nature could pen such a sentence." This is the rhinoceros judging the leopard; the hedgehog judging the skylark.

The *Christian Life* is severe on Renan, the "wit and literary conjuror," for "criticising the Savior of mankind." How rich this is in a Unitarian paper! The editor should really join the Methodists.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, October 23, Grainger Theatre (above old Lecture Room), Nelson-street:—at 11, "Who Wrote the Bible?"; at 3, "John Morley: Statesman, Writer and Freethinker"; at 7, "The Doom of the Gods."

Wednesday, Oct. 26, Central Hall, Dundas-street, Spenny-moor; at 8, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

Thursday, Oct. 27, Tudor's Circus, Blyth; at 7.15, "The Religion of this Life."

Friday, Oct. 28, Co-operative Hall, Low Westwood, Ebbw-valley; "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

Saturday, Oct. 29, Bolden Colliery, Tyne Dock, "Science and Miracles."

October 30, South Shields.

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

Dec. 4, Grimsby; 11 and 18, Hall of Science, London.

January 1, Birmingham; 8, Leicester; 15 and 22, Hall of Science; 29, Bristol.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Oct. 21, Aberdeen; 23, Glasgow; 25 and 26, Belfast; 30, Edinburgh. Nov. 8, Chester; 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20, Sheffield; 27, Hall of Science, London. Dec. 4, Hall of Science; 11, Manchester; 18, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

G. PARR (Paris).—Received with thanks.

G. BROWN.—Will try to find room for the verses.

W. ULENBURGH.—The "transference of sensibility" is a sort of thing that savages would express no surprise at. Such things crop up periodically in civilised countries, where numbers of people still have the bump of wonder in a high state of development. Theosophists make no contribution to useful knowledge; they only trade in mystery. Thanks. See paragraph.

W. HOLLAND.—Not a bad ending. The rest of the joke is feeble. We will work it up afresh.

R. E. MCVICKER.—See "Acid Drops."

C. T. S.—Always pleased to receive reports of sermons against "infidelity."

A. ASPINALL.—The black champion will do anything but debate. He must be very ignorant not to know that the text in Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" is a false translation. Even a reference to the Revised Version would show him his mistake. The word *Goel* doesn't mean Redeemer, or anything like it. It means *Blood-Avenger*. Job simply says in substance, "My innocence will be vindicated." For the rest, we do not intend to waste time on Christian Evidence writers who only policy is libellous personal attacks on Freethinkers. We have better work to do.

J. NICHOLSON.—Thomas Paine had to give his mind to Bible-smashing. That was the work before him. Nearly all the English Freethinkers up to his time were Deists. We have no doubt that if Paine were living now he would be the first opponent of all forms of theology.

A. W. WOHLGEMUTH.—The extracts you send us from Rider Haggard sound very irreligious. But are they not put into the mouths of some of his characters? Do you mean that they are his own sentiments?

H. ROWDEN.—Contributors speak for themselves, when they sign their writings. The sentence you refer to is open to exception, but it is hardly worth a discussion.

W. H. OSBORNE (Melbourne).—Thanks for the *Bulletin*. Some of the bits may be useful. Shall always be pleased to hear from you.

SKERTOMAI.—You seem to think that one who does not deny the existence of any intelligence in the universe superior to man's, affirms it. But this is a mistake. We do not deny the existence of inhabitants in Mars, but we do not affirm it. Disbelief and non-belief are quite different. Atheists themselves do not generally say, "There is no God." You have been misled by their enemies.

P. KAUL.—The man who wrote that paragraph in the *Evening News* is a practical joker. The French Republic does not persecute Frenchmen for being religious. The fact is, the Christians are so used to rule the roost that they cry out "Persecution!" when they are forced to take fair-play.

W. H. MORRIS.—Thanks for your gallant letters in the *Bristol Mercury*.

S. HUNT writes from one of our warships thanking Mr. George Anderson for his present of Freethought literature. He says the books and pamphlets are eagerly read by the ship's company; so much so that "I have scarcely got a chance to read them myself."

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, hon. treasurer, acknowledges:—John Samson, £1 11s. 6d.; A. A., 5s.—London Freethinkers should really wake up, and send Mr. Smith their subscriptions for the winter's work.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTION FUND:—A Friend, £1; S. Hunt, 1s.

FREED FROM SUPERSTITION.—Pleased to hear that Mr. George Anderson's parcel of literature has been so serviceable on board your ship. Mr. Foote is in good health at present.

JOHN YOUNG.—Cyclists have many opportunities of scattering Freethought seed in the rural districts. No doubt your conversations and distribution of tracts have done good. You may not have saved a soul from hell, but you may have saved persons from the fear of hell—which is more important.

W. GRIFFIN.—That such lines on Renan should appear in *Fun* is a sign of the wide progress of Rationalism.

T. PHILLIPS.—Mr. Foote wrote you by return. Please write again at earliest convenience.

T. MAX.—We have already noted that the Edmonton Branch is in active existence. Such vulgar brawlers as the Christian Evidence persons you mention are not worth the space you bestow upon them. We wish Mr. Cohen better opponents.

R. FORDER, we regret to say, has been laid up for some days with a severe cold. Two or three lecturing engagements he had made have to be cancelled. He is happily improving.

J. ROUTH.—Shall appear. No room this week.

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—Correspondens blatt des Deutschen Freidenker Bundes—Fur Unsere Jugend—Freethinker's Magazine—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Clarion—Church Reformer—Ironclad Age—Independent Pulpit—La Vérité Philosophique—Echo—Watts's Literary Guide—Freedom—Cosmopolitan—Star—De Express—Friend of the Free State—Glasgow Evening Times—Bristol Mercury—Hull Critic—Beverly Independent—Illustrated Church News—Christian Life—Moralist—Eastern Province Herald—Johannesburg Star—West Auckland Times—Eastern Daily Press.

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.

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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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's lecture on "Lord Tennyson: his Poetry and his Message to the Age" drew another fine audience to the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. The meeting seemed delighted with the change in the program, and there was quite an ovation at the finish. The selections from Tennyson were much appreciated. While "Rizpah" was being read the audience was deeply moved, and the rapturous applause on its conclusion was a sincere tribute to the poet's genius. Swinburne has called this poem "divine," and, without quarrelling about the adjective, the Hall of Science audience substantially agreed with him.

The Sunday morning audiences at the Hall of Science are improving. As the admission is free to these morning lectures, it may be hoped that the place will be well filled as the winter season advances. The Wednesday evening meetings are also generally (not always) free. Mr. George Stranding occupies the platform next Wednesday (Oct. 26). Mr. Dunn, of the Christian Evidence Society, will come to oppose, and it is arranged that he shall half time. Admission is free, and the discussion should attract a good audience.

Mr. Touzeau Parris occupies the London Hall of Science platform to-day (Oct. 23), both morning and evening. His subjects are interesting, he is sure to treat them ably, and no doubt he will have good audiences.

Mr. Charles Watts had a large audience at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, last Sunday evening, when he lectured on "Theosophy: from a Secular Standpoint." There was a good sale of *Freethinkers* and of general Freethought litera-

ture. Mr. Watts has also been giving a series of Sunday morning lectures on historical subjects, which have been highly appreciated.

On Tuesday and Wednesday next Mr. Charles Watts delivers his first lectures in Belfast. We need not ask the local readers of this journal to give him an Irish welcome. What we do ask them is to induce as many Christians as possible to attend the meetings.

The National Secular Society's *Almanack* for 1893 will be published about the middle of November. In addition to the ordinary features it will contain some portraits, executed by Mrs. Louisa Samson, who has kindly volunteered her services. There is still room for more advertisements in the *Almanack*. Freethinkers in business miss a good opportunity by neglecting to advertise in this publication. It is not one that is glanced at and cast aside; it is kept for use, and the advertisements in it are nearly sure to be read by every purchaser. Applications for space should be made to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Mr. C. Cohen's Friday evening lectures at Battersea on Evolution have been very fairly attended. He is quite a master of his subject, laying bare the facts of evolution in a very plain and simple manner. Freethinkers should attend the two remaining lectures as they cannot fail to learn much to their advantage. The Battersea Branch heartily recommends Mr. Cohen to other London Branches for courses of lectures on scientific subjects.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectures to-day (Oct. 23) at Barnsley for the first time. It is a long while since Sunday lectures were delivered at Barnsley. We hope the local "saints" will do their best to get Mr. Moss good audiences.

The Secularists of Blackburn have engaged the Spinners' Institute for a course lectures. Mr. S. Standing opens on Sunday; his subjects will be found in our Lecture Notices. The Blackburn friends appear to have an energetic secretary in Mr. H. Jones.

Mr. Stanley Jones gave what is described as the first Freethought lecture in the old town of Beverley, Yorkshire. It was noticed by the *Beverley Independent*, with the remark that though quite an innovation, no harm was done to the feelings of any one. The *Critic* also notices Mr. Jones's lectures in Hull.

The Camberwell Branch held its quarterly meeting on Sunday, and received a good report from the officers, who were re-elected. The president then presented a handsome set of Scott's works to Mr. R. G. Lees, late corresponding secretary, in recognition of his very valuable services to the Branch. Afterwards came a tea, a concert, and a dramatic entertainment by the Milton Hall Club.

The Sunderland anti-Sabbatarians have followed up their victory, and it is arranged that the museum, art gallery, and free library will be opened on Sunday afternoons and evenings, commencing with Sunday, Nov. 6.

At Saint Sulpice, the famous seminary in which Renan was trained for that priesthood it was destined he should never enter, there is a sort of *Libro d'Oro*, containing the names of all those who have passed through the establishment, and attached to each the subsequent career of the pupil resumed in a sentence. Opposite the name of Ernest Renan the record has been carefully effaced, and at the end there is simply written, "*Membre de l'Institut.*"

Watson Heston's latest cartoon in the *Truthseeker* depicts the Pope on a highly comparisoned rocking-horse, which makes a great parade but no progress. The Protestant parson is mounted on a stick labelled Proteatantism; he moves along a bit, but it is due to his own legs and not to his religion, while the Freethinker on the steed of Freethought is galloping gaily ahead.

Mr. Gladstone, in a letter to an Austrian lady, who has written a book on the Woman Question, speaks of John Stuart Mill as having "perhaps the clearest mind in all his generation."

The good old *Boston Investigator* is one of our most welcome exchanges. The last number to hand, we notice, reprints the whole of Mr. Foote's two articles on "Shelley's Atheism."

For very obvious reasons, the Rev. J. M. Logan, of Bristol, positively refuses to discuss the question "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" He consents to a written debate on how the belief in the Resurrected originated. It is rather a farcical discussion, but Mr. Foote enters into it in order that he may say what he very much wishes Christians to hear. Mr. Logan is a gentleman with a good development of the bump of self-esteem. In one of his long-winded letters to the *Bristol Mercury* he claims to have "whipped" Mr. Foote in the platform debate. This is hardly the language a gentleman would permit himself to use. Unfortunately, a report of the platform debate could not be obtained; but when the written debate is published both Christians and Freethinkers will have an opportunity of checking Mr. Logan's self-estimate. Owing to the Bristol minister's engagements the debate cannot be commenced until March.

The *Bristol Mercury* has acted with perfect fairness in the controversy raging over the Logan-Foote debate. It has given both sides an impartial hearing. Mr. Foote tenders his sincere thanks to the *Mercury*. He has made his letters as short as he could. Mr. Logan's have been longer.

The *Auckland Times* states that a public debate is arranged between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. W. Howard. This is a premature announcement. Negotiations have been going on, but nothing is decided. Had the debate been arranged to take place during Mr. Foote's visit to the North, it would have suited his convenience. As it is, however, he cannot go North again, even for a debate, until after Christmas. His time is all mapped out till then, and it isn't enough for the work to be done in it.

There may be a hitch in the negotiations. Mr. Foote was a loser by the Bristol debate, and the Christians have only recompensed him with dirty slander. In future he does not intend to let them have so much of their own way. They are too fond of dictating, and too fond of libelling afterwards. Freethinkers must meet them on terms of equality or decline meeting them altogether.

Some day or other, when all burning controversies are ended, and society is settled on a fraternal basis, nobody may get, or even want, more than an artisan's wages. Meanwhile, however, it is clearly impossible for the President of the National Secular Society to meet his obligations on such resources. His office is an unpaid one; it takes up a deal of his time, and costs him no light sum in out of pocket expenses. He has also, as it happens, to sustain a paper on which there is a weekly loss. Other burdens of his position, which are real enough, need not be recited at present. Perhaps some one versed in occult arithmetic will explain how Mr. Foote is to meet his obligations at the rate proposed by Mr. Howard's friends; who, by the way, talk as committees are apt to talk, as though they brought the audience together, and the debaters were persons in their employment; whereas the committee are only like seconds in a duel, to act as buffers between the principals. Mr. Howard's friends expect Mr. Foote to travel from London to Spennymoor, which is a day's work, and a nasty one; to put two days into the debate, besides all the time involved in preparation for it; and then to do another day's nasty work in riding back to London. And for this loss of time, and dreadful wear and tear, they propose that Mr. Foote shall receive the magnificent compensation of £2. Mr. Foote has replied that, if this is their ultimatum, the negotiations must be closed at once. He has plenty of wear and tear already, and would rather do four days' quiet literary work at home.

Mr. Foote has offered to let a local charity—if unsectarian, not otherwise—receive one half the net proceeds of the debate; the other half to be divided between the disputants, in addition to their out-of-pocket expenses. Charities are excellent things—sometimes; but Mr. Foote objects to kill himself for them; or to starve his wife and children. Further, he doesn't mean again to take a certain payment from the committee, as though they employed him. They don't, and they had better understand it plainly. The persons who pay him are the

people who pay at the door. If they didn't think it worth paying for they would never come.

There is a great deal of cant in circulation about advocating principles for nothing; *vile* cant when it comes from Christian lips for the benefit of Freethinkers. Surely a religion of popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops; a religion whose ministers, outside State Churches, often get monstrous salaries; a religion that costs England alone some £20,000,000 a year; surely, we say, such a religion deserves spitting upon when it babbles about the mercenary motives of poor Freethought lecturers. Why, all the Freethought lecturers in England don't earn *collectively* the salary of a Spurgeon, a Parker, or a Berry—to say nothing of the salary of an average Bishop.

People who will pay for beer, and expect a man's brains and tongue for nothing, are too low to be argued with. George Jacob Holyoake (we beg his pardon for telling the story) was once informed that people wouldn't pay to hear lectures; they expected to hear them for nothing, never mind who bore the expense. "Well," he jocularly replied, "if people won't pay to be saved, let them stop away and be damned." Shocking! Oh yes; and so is a shower-bath.

Mr. Foote spent two hours with the West Ham Branch members on Friday evening, Oct. 14. There was a good attendance, and a majority were in favor of reconsideration. In the circumstances it was best to act with all possible forbearance. A meeting of members to reconsider the unconstitutional resolution of September 18 is to be held at the same place—Mr. Foulcher's room, 33 High-street, Plaistow—on Saturday, October 22, at eight o'clock. Mr. Foote will not be present, but Miss Vance will probably attend on behalf of the Executive. It is to be hoped that the Branch will agree to sink disputes and go on with the work of Freethought in the district. If it does not so agree, the members who adhere to the N.S.S. will be immediately re-organised, with a view to replacing the Branch on the footing it occupied a few years ago.

Mr. Foote will be on a lecturing tour in the north of England next week. During his absence he must beg the indulgence of correspondents. Lecture notices for the Sunday Guide in the *Freethinker* must be marked on the envelope as such; otherwise they will be sent on to Mr. Foote as private letters, and will therefore be too late for insertion.

THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM'S VISIT TO EGYPT.

THE patriarch Abraham, we are told, was chosen of God. He is shown to us as a type of morality which we would do well to imitate. Yet we are sure, after reading his history, that he was not by far the model of purity he is represented to be. We intend now to deal with an incident in his life which takes off a considerable amount of the gloss with which the defects in his character have been obscured. The prevalence of a "grievous famine" causes him to go to Egypt.

"And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abraham well for her sake: and he had sheep, oxen, he-asses, men-servants, maid-servants, she-asses, and camels. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abraham's wife. And Pharaoh called Abraham, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way" (Gen. xii. 9-19).

To offer this ancient Hebrew's conduct as fitting and worthy of our following is grossly insulting to our

civilisation. Moreover, God appears to have aided Abraham in this affair; letting him take gifts of Pharaoh, then plaguing Pharaoh and his house "with great plagues," thus causing Pharaoh somehow or other to discover that he was holding improper views regarding another man's wife, and that man Abraham.

Righteously indignant, Pharaoh remonstrates with Abraham, telling him, by his assertion that Sarai was his sister, he had all but caused him to commit a sacrilegious crime; and commands him to leave his kingdom.

Now, had Abraham acted as a true man should, and in the light of our morality, he would not have debased himself by the practice of such vile artifice. But perhaps he was inspired by his God, and was thus prompted to do so. However, the greedy acquisition of gain seemed far more important to him than the good character of his wife; and this should make him in our eyes a person whom we cannot but regard with abhorrence.

Moreover, if Abraham was under the protection of God—who, we are told, is the omnipotent Creator and ruler of all things—what need had he thus to deceive Pharaoh? Surely an all-wise, all-powerful God would not permit harm to him—and certainly would not countenance his immoral behavior. Indeed, we can hardly conceive that an all-wise God should have brought about such a happening.

But, I hear the Christian apologist say, these accounts of the conduct of Bible personages are offered to us that we may know how to avoid their indiscretions.

Then that would justify murder, immorality, in fact, crime in general: for, unless the many forms of crimes were shown us, we should not learn to avoid them: thus making the existence of evil an imperative necessity, which is saying very little for the all-wisdom and all-goodness of God.

That from evil we learn to appreciate good is indisputable. But that appreciation has been learnt only by enormous human suffering, and, moreover, has been gained by human effort alone.

The morality of Abraham belongs to a state of savagery, and while, from one point of view, it was justified by his circumstances, it has nothing in it worthy of our imitation. To claim for it the character of exaltedness, so unreasonably claimed for the Bible as a whole, is preposterous. Whereas, but for this absurd claim, we should study the Bible for the information it gives of one period of man's existence, we come to regard it with feelings of hostility through having its revolting morality forced down our throats as that sanctioned by God, whom, if he be that which is said he is, can hardly be gratified at the honor (?) ascribed him.

JAMES H. WATERS.

RENAN TO HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

MORE and more I believe we know very little of what we would know the most. In philosophy we should trust in infinite goodness and guard against vain enthusiasm. We gain nothing by importuning truth, by always soliciting her. Truth is deaf and cold; our ardors do not affect her. *The New Philosophy! The Newer Philosophy! The Newest Philosophy!* Heavens! how simple are these competitions. Why dispute thus the priority in error? Let us learn to wait; perhaps there is nothing at the finish; at least, who knows if the truth is not saddening? Do not let us be in such a hurry to learn it.

I am pained by the sort of agitation I see in youths, who, by the privilege of their age, should be so serene. One would think these young fellows had read neither history nor philosophy, nor the text of Ecclesiastes, "that which has been is that which shall be." My dear children, it is useless to give yourselves such headaches, merely to change your errors. Amuse yourselves, since you are twenty; and work too. If we find nothing in metaphysics, on the other hand, physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, and history are full of revelations. What things you will know in forty or fifty years, which I shall never know! What problems you will see resolved! What will be the development of the interior germ of the Emperor William II.? What will be the issue of the conflict of European nationalities? What turn will

social questions take? Will anything come of the Socialist movement? What will be the immediate fate of the Papacy? Alas! I shall die without seeing anything of all this, except in anticipation; and you will behold these enigmas as accomplished facts! . . . It is said that in the Lebanon there are old Arabian wills in which the testator stipulates as a condition of his bequests that he shall be apprised in his tomb when the French are masters of the country. I say to myself, at times, that there is such a piece of news which, if whispered in my ear in my tomb, would thrill me to the point of resuscitation. But I have so often read in the Bible that in *Sheol* one knows nothing of what passes on the earth, that one hears nothing, that one remembers nothing! . . . No, I shall not put a clause of that kind at the bottom of my will.

Why revolt against truths as old as the world? Was it only yesterday we discovered that man is fragile and perishable? I am not of those spoken of by that very ancient prophet, *qui nihil patiebantur super contritione Joseph*. Poor Joseph, I pity him. I pity the young, eaten away by an inconsolable pessimism. We often read on antique tombs: "Courage, dear such an one; no one is immortal; Hercules himself is dead." The consolation may be slender; it is nevertheless real. Marcus Aurelius, dear friends, was superior to all of us in goodness, and it satisfied *him*. Have we ever thought we should never die? Let us die calmly, in the communion of humanity and the religion of the future. . . . Let us not dispute over the quantity nor the formulas of religion; let us be satisfied not to deny it; let us preserve the category of the unknown, and the possibility of dreaming. The inevitable ruin of the religions of pretended revelation need not involve the disappearance of the religious sentiment. Christianity has made us too hard to please, too exacting. We want heaven, nothing less, and we want it for certain. Let us be satisfied with small profits. Some years ago M. Rothschild maintained with vivacity, at the Hebrew consistory, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. A learned Israelite of the old school, who told me of it, added this observation—"How strange! Such a rich man . . . wants paradise into the bargain! . . . He should leave that to poor devils like me."—*From the Preface to "Feuilles Détachées"* (1892).

THE PARSON.

Who points us over Jordan's wave?
Who shouts of death beyond the grave?
Who has "a charge to keep," and *save*?
The Parson.

Who says he swallows Noah's flood?
Who fancies people think him good?
Who smacks his lips at Jesus' blood?
The Parson.

Who still repeats the fable old,
Salvation's neither bought nor sold?
Who likes his pay in solid gold?
The Parson.

Whose wife is deck'd in costly lace?
Whose daughters dress and dance with grace?
Whose thoughts are of "a better place"?
The Parson's.

Who raises up to heaven his eyes,
And says the Bible tells no lies?
Who swallows camels, strains at flies?
The Parson.

Who longs to pass through heaven's gates?
More longing for preferment waits?
Who oft his congregation hates?
The Parson.

Who 's sometimes fined for drunken sprees?
Who loves to pray with ancient "shes"?
Who loves collections, tithes and fees?
The Parson.

Who serves God Mammon day by day?
Who bates no farthing of his pay?
Who takes good care to "watch and prey"?
The Parson.

HARRY SMITH.

PAINE'S "AGE OF REASON."

BELIEVING that his life was near its close, he made up his mind to give to the world his thoughts concerning "revealed religion." This he had for some time intended to do, but other matters had claimed his attention. Feeling that there was no time to be lost, he wrote the first part of the *Age of Reason*, and gave the manuscript to Joel Barlow. Six hours after, he was arrested. The second part was written in prison while he was waiting for death.

Paine clearly saw that men could not be free, or defend the freedom they had, unless they were free to think and speak. He knew that the Church was the enemy of liberty, that the altar and throne were in partnership, that they helped each other and divided the spoils.

He felt that, being a man, he had a right to examine the creeds and the Scriptures for himself, and that, being an honest man, it was his duty and his privilege to tell his fellow-men the conclusions at which he arrived.

He found that the creeds of all orthodox churches were absurd and cruel, and that the Bible was no better. Of course he found that there were some good things in the creeds and in the Bible. These he defended, but the infamous, the inhuman, he attacked.

In matters of religion he pursued the same course that he had in things political. He depended upon experience, and above all on reason. He refused to extinguish the light in his own soul. He was true to himself, and gave to others his honest thoughts. He did not seek wealth, or place, or fame. He sought the truth.

He had felt it to be his duty to attack the institution of slavery in America, to raise his voice against duelling, to plead for the rights of women, to excite pity for the sufferings of domestic animals, the speechless friends of man; to plead the cause of separation, of independence, of American nationality, to attack the abuses and crimes of monarchs, to do what he could to give freedom to the world.

He thought it his duty to take another step. Kings asserted that they derived their power, their right to govern, from God. To this assertion Paine replied with the *Rights of Man*. Priests pretended that they were the authorised agents of God. Paine replied with the *Age of Reason*.

This book is still a power, and will be as long as the absurdities and cruelties of the creeds and the Bible have defenders. The *Age of Reason* affected the priests just as the *Rights of Man* affected nobles and kings. The kings answered the arguments of Paine with laws, the priests with lies. Kings appealed to force, priests to fraud. Mr. Conway has written in regard to the *Age of Reason* the most impressive and the most interesting chapter in his book. Paine contended for the rights of the individual, for the jurisdiction of the soul. Above all religions he placed Reason; above all kings, Men; and above all men, Law.

The first part of the *Age of Reason* was written in the shadow of a prison, the second part in the gloom of death. From that shadow, from that gloom, came a flood of light. This testament, by which the wealth of a marvellous brain, the love of a great and heroic heart were given to the world, was written in the presence of the scaffold, when the writer believed he was giving his last message to his fellow-men.

The *Age of Reason* was his crime.

Franklin, Jefferson, Sumner, and Lincoln, the four greatest statesmen that America has produced, were believers in the creed of Thomas Paine.

The Universalists and Unitarians have found their best weapons, their best arguments, in the *Age of Reason*.

Slowly, but surely, the churches are adopting not only the arguments, but the opinions, of the great Reformer. Theodore Parker attacked the Old Testament and Calvinistic theology with the same weapons and with a bitterness excelled by no man who has expressed his thoughts in our language.

Paine was a century in advance of his time. If he were living now his sympathy would be with Savage, Chadwick, Professor Biggs and the "advanced theologians." He, too, would talk about the "higher criticism" and the latest definition of "inspiration." These advanced thinkers substantially are repeating the *Age of Reason*. They still wear the old uniform—clinging to the toggery of theology—but inside of their religious rags they agree with Thomas Paine.—R. G. Ingersoll, "*Paine the Pioneer*."

Storms and floods have been displaying the Almighty's handiwork in many parts, while a blizzard in Colorado has frozen seven men to death, and also many sheep and cattle.

BOOK CHAT.

The Jewish Religion, by M. Friedlander (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.), reminds us of those expositions of Christianity in which all the distinctive dogmas are glossed over, and we are given all treacle and no brimstone. M. Friedlander believes both in revelation and tradition, yet he will allow no conflict between faith and reason. Judaism, according to him, is just what right reason dictates, and he trots out the time-worn arguments for the existence and attributes of Deity. Like Christians, he occasionally takes shelter in the dark cave of mystery. Thus he says (p. 46): "The real process of revelation, by what means and in what manner the infinite and incorporeal Being makes his will known to man, and how the latter becomes conscious and convinced of the fact that a divine communication has been made to him, remains a mystery to all but those privileged persons who have been addressed by the Almighty." A good deal of stress is laid on the ethical duties as proving Judaism is a moral religion, and the ceremonial law with its signs of superstitious savagery is somewhat glossed over.

Population and Social Reform, by Harry Roberts (Forder, London), is an extremely thoughtful and well-written pamphlet. The author writes as a Socialist, but as a temperate Socialist. The subject he deals with is one that cannot be discussed in the *Freethinker*; his essay may nevertheless be recommended to those who are interested in Malthusian propaganda.

The *Athenæum* has an hereditary feud against all upholders of the Sir Philip Francis theory of the authorship of Junius. For nearly two generations it has poured the vials of its wrath on all who had a word to say for this theory; and in reviewing Mr. Conway's *Life of Thomas Paine* it seizes principally on this point. It says: "If it were not almost certain that Paine never wrote a line of the letters signed 'Junius,' it would be easy to prove by quotations from his writings that he was the great unknown, as it is easy to prove in the same manner that Sir Philip Francis was the man." Yes, but it is not only a question of style but of handwriting. The caligraphy of Junius is known, so is that of Francis and that of Paine. Experts hold that the two first are identical. The writing of Junius is nothing like those specimens of Paine with which we are acquainted.

In concluding its notice of Mr. Conway's book the *Athenæum* says: "Paine was a better man than is commonly supposed, and a better writer than any contemporary in his adopted country. He deserved the eternal gratitude of Americans; he received from them contumely during life and deunciation after death."

The *Monist* for October (London agents: Watts and Co.) opens with an article by O. S. Pierce on "Man's Glassy Essence." It is a laborious piece of writing, and will repay perusal by those who are interested in very abstract speculations on "mind and matter." Professor E. D. Cope writes on "The Future of Thought in America," in a brave, outspoken way. He tells his countrymen some unpalatable truths, which they will do well to ponder. "Mental Mummies" is also an excellent article by Dr. Felix Oswald. Dr. Alfred Binet writes learnedly on "The Nervous Ganglia of Insects"; Professor Garbe on "Hindu Monism"; and Dr. Carus on "The Idea of Necessity." The number includes some minor papers of varied interest and ability. The *Monist* may be recommended to lovers of stiff reading.

We propose progressive improvement, association, transformation of the corrupted medium in which we are now living; the overthrow of all idolatries, shams, lies, and conventionalities. We want man to be not the poor, passive, cowardly, phantasmagoric unreality of the actual time; thinking in one way and acting in another, bending to power which he hates or despises, carrying empty Popish or Thirty-nine Article formularies on his breast, and none within. We would make man a fragment of the living truth—a real individual being linked to collective humanity, the bold seeker of things to come: the gentle, mild, loving yet firm, uncompromising, inexorable apostle of all that is just and heroic.—*Joseph Mazzini.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

"WHY REVERENT?"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your friendly critique of *The Agnostic Annual* (1893) you are good enough, in connection with my own contribution, to query "Why Reverent"? Will you permit a brief word of comment by way of answer?

I respectfully submit that not only Agnosticism but all grades of Rationalism are necessarily reverent, in the exact proportions maintained of serious study of the beginnings of old theologies, and care for the future of mankind, which is inevitably affected by the beliefs of mankind. I submit further, that the profound truths rescued by the comparative neo-mythologists from the antique fables, and the profound truths enthroned by physical science on the dissolving wrecks of theological super-growths, demand equally a tone of acceptance essentially religious in the highest sense of that slandered word.

Once more; just in so far as Rationalism is reverent in spirit and exposition is it permanently abiding and victorious. Need I ask you to contrast the steady growth of mental liberalism in literature with the propagandist achievements of platform scoffing and lampooning? Need I ask you whether the rationalising and the humanising influences silently but potently leavening the press, the pulpit, and the cultured public, are informed by the inexpensive derision and the perfervid denunciation that alternatively convulse with mirth and enthusiasm the crowds that flock to a "destructive" lecture, and of whose sequential indifference you justly complain?

Beyond the grave difference between reverent temper and the distemper of ridicule, there remains an austere necessity of good manners in speculation as in all intercourse. Is not this law of good manners subject to infraction at times in popular Freethought advocacy? After all, religious beliefs are as dear to the hearts of many people as are the reputations of their sisters, their wives, and their mothers; and delicacy and tact are well in either instance, if it be insistent to reveal a disagreeable truth to the end of removing a mischievous evil. In any case we are all combating unreason in our own way, and with our own weapons; and it is gratifying to note that you do not (as some of your colleagues) disparage Agnostics as timid panderers to mere "respectability."—Yours truly,

AMOS WATERS.

"IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?"

A CANDID CHRISTIAN'S OPINION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Many instances of the crisp and expeditious manner in which some of our "good, kind, Christian friends" dispose of important philosophical questions have come under my notice, and the following is one of the most recent.

A few days ago I happened to meet outside a suburban railway station a gentleman whom I knew to be a member of a local church choir, and, having in my hand a copy of William Hurrell Mallock's book, entitled *Is Life Worth Living?* I asked the saintly gent if he had read it. "Read that?" said he; "I should think not indeed. A more blasphemous question than 'Is life worth living?' couldn't possibly be asked. As a matter of fact, it's one of the greatest sins man could commit to think of discussing such a subject. What the D—— has it to do with Mallock or anyone else whether 'life is worth living.' Whether it is or not, he'll have to put up with it until the Almighty takes it from him. The man who propounds such a trashy question as that is simply a d—— fool." By this time we had reached the station platform, and this not uncommon specimen of modern Christianity rushed to the book-stall and purchased a copy of the *Sporting Times*, in order, as he afterwards informed me, to look up the latest prices of La Fleche and other horses about to run in the Cambridgeshire. Further comment is needless.—Yours, etc.,

TOLEMAN-GARNER.

MIND AND BRAIN.—Modern physiology has not only fully established the connexion between the brain and mental activity, but is has gone some way to make it probable that it is the highest centres in the cortex of the cerebral hemispheres which form the immediate physical basis of our mental life, so far at least as this involves clear consciousness.—*Dr. James Sully, "The Human Mind,"* vol i., p. 49; 1892.

PROFANE JOKES.

The animals had to enter the ark in pairs all through Eve eating an apple.

Who were the first martyrs to the truth of Christian miracles?—The Gadarene swine?

Was it the pigs that drowned the devils or the devils who drowned the pigs?—Which you please, only you must believe it was in fulfilment of the prophecy that Christ should "show wonders in the land of Ham."

Rev. Mr. Extempore—"My hearers, I shall have to ask your indulgence for a few minutes. I forgot my manuscript and have sent my little boy for it." His son (mounting pulpit, in loud tone)—"Mamma couldn't find the writin', but here's the book you copied it from."

A school teacher who had just been telling the story of David, winds up with, "And all this happened over three thousand years ago." A little cherub, its blue eyes dilated with wonder, after a few moments' thought, exclaims, "Oh, dear, marm, what a memory you must have!"

Teacher—"What are the names of the seven days of the week?" Pupil—"Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday." Teacher—"That's only six days! You've missed one. Now, come, think. When does your mother go to church?" Pupil—"Whenever Pa buys her a new bonnet."

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, Toleman-Garner, "Christian and Secular Salvation" (2d. and 4d.); 9.15, social gathering. Tuesday at 8, dancing. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class. Thursday at 8, committee. Friday at 8, C. Cohen, "The Pedigree of Man" (2d. and 4d.)

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Meaning of Secularism." Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class (astronomy). Wednesday at 9, C. Cohen's class on "Spencer's Ethics."

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, T. O. Bonsor, M.A., "Too Many Babies"

Edmonton—Angel Hotel Assembly Room (corner of Silver-street): 8.30, music; 7, T. Crisfield, "Hypnotism: what is it?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.O.: 11.15, Touzeau Parris, "Science and Religion: why Antagonistic?" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Sacramental Superstitions." (3d., 6d., and 1s)

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday at 8, C. J. Hunt, "History of the Inquisition."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, J. C., "Panegyrics on Christ." Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, B. Hyatt, "A little time and ye shall not see me."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, S. H. Alison, "The Bible and Modern Criticism"; 3.30, A. Guest, "Taking Things for Granted."

Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, J. Fagan will lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

Kilburn—High-road (corner of High-road and Victoria-road): 7, H. Courtney, "Blessed be ye poor."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Ladies."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "After Death—What?"

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

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: Mrs. Thornton Smith, 11, "Shelley as Poet, Atheist, and Republican"; 3, "Immortality"; 7, "Forgiveness of Sins."

Blackburn—Spinners' Institute, Peter-street: Sam Standing, 3, "All about the Angels"; 6.30, "St. Augustine, the Victim of Christianity."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: A. B. Wakefield, 3, "Thomas Paine: his Life and Times"; 6.30, "The Legal Eight Hours Agitation: what does it Mean?"

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: Stanley Jones, 11, "Was Christ the Son of God?"; 3, "Creation and the Fall of Man"; 7, "Is there Evidence for the Existence of God?"

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: H. Snell, 11, "Is Civilisation Due to the Cross?"; 7, "Is there a Moral Governor of the Universe?"; Sunday-school at 2.45.

Derby—Temperance Hall: Friday, Oct. 21, at 8, debate between W. H. Whitney and W. Powell on "I Christianity of Divine Origin?" Sunday at 7, at 20 Newland-street, members' meeting.

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: Charles Watts, 11.30, "Man: his Origin, Nature, and Destiny"; 3, "The Blight of Superstition"; 6.30, "What Christians have to Defend" (a recitation by Mrs. Watts will precede this lecture).

Glasgow—St. Rollox Eclectic Society, Toynbee Hall, Parson-street: Tuesday at 8, N. McLennan, "Progress."

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "The Marvels of Hypnotism and Mesmerism"; 3, "What is Theosophy?"; 7, "Hell: does anyone Believe in it?"

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Secularism and Progress."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Charles Doeg, 3, "Wanted: Christian Evidences"; 6.30, "The Conflict of Religion and Morality."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Grainger Theatre (above old Lecture Room), Nelson-street: G. W. Foote, 11, "Who Wrote the Bible?"; 3, "John Morley: Statesman, Writer, and Freethinker"; 7, "The Doom of the Gods."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 3, children's meeting; 7, Mr. Jackson, "Natural Morality." Tuesday at 8, debating society.

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting. Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Eight Hours Question"; 3, "The Morality of Neo-Malthusianism"; 7, "The Bible Fetish."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rookingham-street: Dr. Hardwicke, "Rome and other Oriental Cities" (lime light illustrations).

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, W. Cook, "The Independent Labor Party."

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas-street: 6.30, special meeting of members vs Foote and Howard debate. Central Hall, Dundas-street: Wednesday at 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

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

Swindon—Liberal and Radical Hall, Commercial-road: Monday at 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Creation and the Fall of Man." Tuesday at 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Is there a Hell?"

Wolverhampton—People's Coffee Tavern, 48 Bilston-street: 7, general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Blackburn—Market-square: 11, Sam Standing, "The Church and Labor Organisations."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—23, Hall of Science; 30, Sheffield. Nov. 6, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Oct. 23, Chatham; 30, e., Camberwell. Nov. 13, e., Camberwell; 20, e., Lambeth; 27, e., Libra Hall. Dec. 11, Camberwell; 18 Libra Hall.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 23, Barnsley. Dec. 6, Bermondsey Institute; 18, New Brompton.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Oct. 23, m., Westminster; e., Lambeth; 30, m., Mile End Waste; a., Finsbury Park; e., Edmonton. Nov. 13, e., Edmonton; 20, Manchester; 27, Lambeth.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Oct. 20, Walthamstow; 21, Battersea; 23, m., Hyde Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Libra Hall; 27, Walthamstow; 28, Battersea; 30, m., Camberwell; e., Libra Hall.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—Oct. 23, m., Finsbury Park; 30, m., Bethnal Green.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Oct. 23, Bristol; 30, Cardiff. Nov. 3, Swansea; 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester; 14, Pendlebury.

J. GREEVY-FISHER, 78 Harrogate-road, Leeds.—Oct. 30, Bradford.

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