

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## MARTIN LUTHER.

REFORMATION DAY, as it is called, was celebrated on October 31 throughout the Protestant part of Germany. Three hundred and seventy-five years have rolled by since Martin Luther broke from the Roman Catholic Church. Emperor William went to Wittenberg, with a great array of Evangelical personages; and, as usual, the Emperor made a speech, which for him was excellent. "There is no coercion," he said, "in matters of religion. Here only free conviction of the heart is decisive, and the perception of this fact is the blissful fruit of the Reformation."

This is a fine-sounding declaration, but it has the misfortune to be untrue. Liberty of conscience is not the fruit of the Reformation, but an indirect and unintended result. Nor is liberty of conscience a reality in any part of the German Empire. Christians are allowed to differ among themselves, but Freethinkers are prosecuted for dissenting alike from Catholic and Protestant. Since the present Emperor's accession there have been many blasphemy prosecutions, sometimes for what would be regarded in other countries as very mild expressions of disbelief. Several men and women have been sentenced to severe penalties for exercising the right of free speech, which, in the land of Goethe, Heine, Strauss, and Schopenhauer, is still confined to professed Christians.

The Reformation, in fact, was a superficial movement. Except for its moral revolt against the sale of indulgences, it touched no deep and durable principle. It merely substituted an infallible Bible for an infallible Church. Differences of opinion crept into the Protestant fold, but that was an accident, arising from the varied and discordant nature of the Bible itself. Every new Protestant sect had to fight as strenuously for its right to exist as ever Martin Luther fought against the Catholic Church. Protestantism, in short, was one priesthood saying to another priesthood "We are right and you are wrong." The Catholic Church had an immense advantage in its central organisation; the Protestant Church could only operate from different points; hence it was unable to bring about the same uniformity.

The movement that was not superficial was the scientific and humanist movement, of which the Reformation was in a certain sense an episode. Italy and France did more for the world than Germany. Martin Luther was a great fighter, but not a more heroic one than Giordano Bruno. Melancthon was not so important a man as Galileo. Rabelais even, with all his dirt and jesting, was more in the stream of progress than Luther, and far more than Calvin. In the long run, it is knowledge and ideas that rule the world. Luther was not great in knowledge, and certainly not great in ideas. He was a born fighter and a strong character. His proper place is among the heroic figures of history. He was a man of leading, but scarcely a man of light.

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Luther was violently opposed to the scientific movement. He called Copernicus an old fool. He would hear nothing against the accepted Biblical theory of the universe. Genesis was to him, as well as to the Pope, the beginning and the end of sound science. Nor was he more friendly to philosophy. Draper truly asserts that the leaders of the Reformation "were determined to banish philosophy from the Church." Aristotle was villified by Luther as "truly a devil, a horrid calumniator, a wicked sycophant, a prince of darkness, a real Apollyon, a beast, a most horrid impostor on mankind, a public and professed liar, a goat, a complete epicure, this twice execrable Aristotle." Such was Luther's style in controversy. We commend it to the attention of Protestants who rail at the *Freethinker*.

Liberty of conscience is a principle of which Luther had no conception. He claimed the right to think against the Pope; he denied the right of others to think against himself. His attitude towards the Anabaptists was fiendish. During the Peasants War he urged the authorities to exterminate the rebels, to "stab, kill, and strangle them without mercy." Melancthon taught that heretics "ought to be restrained by the sword." Luther likewise declared that whoever denied even one article of the Protestant faith should be punished severely. Referring to a false teacher, he exclaimed, "Drive him away as an apostle of hell; and if he does not flee, deliver him up as a seditious man to the executioner."

Hallam, Buckle, Lcky, and all reputable historians, agree that the Protestant party held the same principle of persecution as the Catholics. It was not disputed that death was the proper punishment of obstinate heresy. The only dispute was—which were the heretics, and who should die?

Luther's influence was very great in England, as Calvin's was in Scotland, and the leaders of the Reformation in our own country had no doubt as to the justice of killing men for a difference of opinion. Cranmer taught that heretics were first to be excommunicated; if that made no impression on them, they were to suffer death. It satisfies one sense of the fitness of things that Cranmer himself perished at the stake. Becon taught that the duty of magistrates with regard to heretics was to punish them—"yea, and also to take them out of this life." This same Becon called upon the temporal rulers to "be no longer the pope's hangmen." He preferred their being the hangmen of Protestantism. Latimer himself said of the Anabaptists who were executed, "Well, let them go!" Bishop Jewel, the great apologist of the Protestant Church of England, in answering Harding the Jesuit, replies in this way to the charge of being of the brotherhood of Servetus, David George, and Joan of Kent: "We detected their heresies, and not you. We arraigned them; we condemned them. We put them to the execution of the laws. It seemeth very much to call them our brothers, because we burnt them."

Calvin held the same persecuting doctrine. All who opposed him were dealt with ruthlessly. He was a veritable Pope of Geneva. His treatment of Servetus was infamous. But so universal was the principle on which Calvin acted, that even the mild Melancthon called the cruel roasting of Servetus at a slow fire "a pious and memorable example for all posterity."

Protestantism boasts of having asserted the right of private judgment. It never did anything of the kind. Not a single leader of the Reformation ever asserted such a principle. Erasmus did, though not in decisive language; but Erasmus never belonged to the Protestant Church, and his humanity, no less than his philosophy, brought upon him the vituperation of Luther. The hero of Protestantism did not intend the consequences of his revolt against Rome. He would have been appalled at the thought of them. He made a breach, for his own purposes, in the great wall of faith. He did not anticipate that others would widen it, or that the forces of reason would march through and occupy post after post. He simply did his own stroke of work, and we do not judge him by later standards. We only object to the extravagance of Protestant laudation.

G. W. FOOTE.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Lord's supper—not where he eats, but where he is eaten, as Hamlet says—is the central institution of the Christian Church. It is *par excellence* the sacrament, the mystery. Why this is so is sufficiently evident to any student of the old faiths. In my articles on the Ancient Mysteries, I have shown that sacramental rites formed part of the initiation into the old Pagan brotherhoods.\* They were a form of blood-covenants,† serving the same purpose of symbolising unity and brotherhood. As the mixing of blood, or tasting each other's blood—by which, in ancient times, and still in savage countries, two men or two clans formed a sacred bond‡—so sharing a common meal symbolised communion of family. In savage times the only safe alliances were with those who recognised the family bond. To share the meal was to be one of the family. In ancient Greece and Rome, as among all early people, each family was a religious unit of which the paterfamilias was the priest, who offered food to the Penates and Lar, the protective spirits of the household, and the common ancestor. Among agricultural races, regarding the sun as the special source of vegetative life, bread and wine were the natural offerings.

Into bread his heat is turned,  
Into generous wine his light.

The worship of Ceres and of Bacchus are alike perpetuated at the Christian altar. Cicero, who lived in the century before the Christian era, in asking "How can a man be so stupid as to imagine that which he eats to be a god," seems ridiculing the Christian superstition. That the sacrifice was the god was a development of totemism,§ in which the totem represented the ancestor and was only eaten on special occasions.

In Mexico, in May and at the winter solstice, Christmas, the worshippers ate sacramentally paste idols of the god, and were said to partake of his

substance. The ceremony was called *Teoqualo*, or god-eating.\* Prof. W. R. Smith, in his article on "Sacrifice" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 21, p. 137, says: "The Mexican gods are unquestionably developed out of the totems, and these sacraments are on one line with the totem mysteries of the ruder Indian tribes, in which once a year the sacred animal is eaten body and blood." The mystical sacrifices of the old Roman empire were similar, and, continues Dr. Smith, "seem always to have had an atoning efficacy; their special feature is that the victim is not simply slain and burned, or cast away, but that the worshippers partake of the body and blood of the sacred animal, and that so his life passes, as it were, into their lives, and knits them to the deity in living communion." Mystic sacrifices of this sacramental type, says Dr. Smith, prevailed among the heathen Semites, and are alluded to in Isaiah lxxv. 4, lxxvi. 3, 17; Zechariah ix. 7, Leviticus xix. 26, etc., from which passages we gather that the victim was eaten with the blood.

Herrera thus describes the sacrament of the ancient Peruvians:

"An idol made of all the varieties of the seeds and grain of the country was made, and moistened with the blood of children and virgins. This idol was broken into small bits, and given by way of communion to men and women to eat; who, to prepare for that festival, bathed and dressed their heads, and scarce slept all the night. They prayed, and as soon as it was day were all in the temple to receive that communion, with such singular silence and devotion, that though there were an infinite multitude, there seemed to be nobody. If any of the idol was left, the priests ate it."

Mr. Laing says (*Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, vol. i., p. 283): "When they were converted to Christianity the Peruvians detected the analogy between our sacrament and their mysteries, and they kept up as much as possible of the old rite in the new ritual." When we know that savages think they partake of the qualities of what they eat, and will, for instance, eat the flesh of the lion or drink its blood to gain its courage and strength, we can understand why he desires to partake of the flesh of an animal or man whom he regards as divine.† By eating the body of the god he shares in the god's attributes and powers. And when, says Mr. Frazer (*Golden Bough*, p. 89), "the god is a corn-god, the corn is his proper body; when he is a vine-god, the juice of the grape is his blood; and so by eating the bread and drinking the wine the worshipper partakes of the real body and blood of his god. Thus the drinking of wine in the rites of a vine-god like Dionysus is not an act of revolry, it is a solemn sacrament."

Mr. Frazer's excellent work, *The Golden Bough*, casts much light on the old Pagan sacraments. Speaking of the harvest customs of the peasantry of Northern Europe, he says (vol. ii., pp. 31-32):

"These customs bring out clearly the sacramental character of the harvest supper. The corn-spirit is conceived as embodied in an animal; this divine animal is slain, and its flesh and blood are partaken of by the harvesters. Thus, the cock, the goose, the hare, the cat, the goat and the ox are eaten sacramentally by the harvesters, and the pig is eaten sacramentally by ploughmen in spring. Again, as a substitute for the real flesh of the divine being, bread or dumplings are made in his image and eaten sacramentally; thus pig-shaped dumplings are eaten by the harvesters, and loaves made in boar shape (the Yule Boar) are eaten in spring by the ploughman and his cattle."

Again Mr. Frazer says (vol. i., p. 183):

"It has been shown (p. 61 sq.) that plants are considered as human beings, who bleed when cut, the red juice which

\* Lenormant says, "The act of drinking the kykeon had in the Eleusinia the character of a real sacrament."

† See my paper on "Blood Rites" in *Ribia Studies*.

‡ See the *Blood Covenant*, by H. Clay Trumbull, D.D.

§ A totem is a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation.—J. G. Frazer "Totemism."

\* Mr. Andrew Laing, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, vol. ii., p. 73, says: "The custom of god-eating is common among totemic peoples, who, except on this solemn occasion, abstain from their totem."

† Sir John Lubbock says of the cannibal Maories: "The bodies they preferred were not those of plump young men or tender damsels, but of the most celebrated chiefs, however old and dry they might be."

exudes from some plants being regarded as the blood of the plant. The juice of the grape is therefore naturally conceived as the blood of the vine. And since, as we have just seen, the soul is often believed to be in the blood, the juice of the grape is regarded as the soul, or as containing the soul, of the vine. This belief is strengthened by the intoxicating effects of wine."

The early Christians at Corinth realised this, for, speaking of their partaking of the Lord's Supper, Paul said, "For in eating every one taketh before others his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."

This soul-reviving wine,  
Dear Savior, 'tis thy blood;  
We thank that precious flesh of thine  
For this immortal food.

To understand the full significance of the words "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him," they must be regarded in the light of blood-covenanting customs. Such phrases serve to show the mythical character of the narrative. That any person was so insane as to break bread and say, "Take, eat, this is my body," is hardly credible. The story was invented to explain a custom the real origin of which was lost in antiquity. That it is purely a legend should be evident from the fact that John, who is said to have been present, gives no intimation of this solemn institution, although the gospel ascribed to him does give mystical discourses in which the Logos declares himself the true vine and the bread that came down from heaven—discourses which suppose the prior existence of the Eucharist.

To the archæologist, the Protestant notion that the Eucharist is simply the partaking of bread and wine in memory of a person, is absurd. It is no simple memorial: it is a mysterious rite connected with the solemn sacraments of the ancients. But for this, the superstitious magical efficacy assigned to the most holy sacrament is inexplicable. Catholicism indeed, in holding to the doctrine of the Real Presence; in ordering that all of the true communion must attend Mass at least once a year, at Easter; and that in no case must a woman be allowed to assist a priest at the altar, has preserved for us the ideas at the root of the institution. Look at any picture of the institution of the sacrament. Christ, with a halo of glory administering bread and wine to his twelve apostles, is clearly the sun distributing its typical fruits through the twelve months. Such representations were the very foundation of the Christian legends; while the root idea of the sacrament—that of a blood covenant—suggests the savage basis of the Christian superstitions.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### INCENTIVES TO MORAL CONDUCT.

It is an admitted fact that the principal requirement of any system which has for its object the improvement of mankind, is an adequate incentive to moral conduct. The great want of the age is not so much a knowledge of right and wrong—for that to a large extent already obtains—but the desideratum is a power to induce persons to do what is correct, and to avoid that conduct which is unsuitable to establishing and promoting the welfare of society in general. Professed Christians appear to be never tired of urging that they have an incentive which is superior to all others in their endeavor to achieve this result, and that Secularism is deficient for such a purpose. Of course it is essential to any moral system that its code should be not only clear in its injunctions, but also that the motive to obey its precepts should be unmistakable and effectual in its influence in regulating human conduct.

This inducement to right action is termed a moral force, and this impels conduct that promotes truth, honesty, justice, and sincerity. Its operations are valid where we find that immorality and indifference

to the ethical requirements of life are avoided, and where efforts are made to promote the well-being of the commonwealth. Secularists judge of the moral value of conduct from its effects upon the community, alike in its individual and collective capacity. We do not claim perfection for our moral code, but we do allege that it is the best rule of life known to us at the present time, and that it is free from many of the objectionable features which belong to those theories which, as Secularists, we cannot accept. It may be urged, as an objection to the test of actions by results, that it tends to make morality shifting and dependent very much upon the circumstances existing at the time. This is to some extent true; but it is of no value as an argument against the principle of utility. For is not all that we have to do with subject to the same law of variation? Fashions change, customs alter, and even religions become considerably modified by external circumstances.

Secularism recognises as the very essence of moral acts their ability to promote the welfare of the human race. The condition of existence to which Secularists aspire is one where poverty shall be comparatively unknown, where physical health shall be a reality, and where moral instruction and general education shall be sufficient to enable man's character and intellect to be developed to the fullest extent of their capabilities. The realisation of such a condition is, according to Secularism, necessary to proper and useful conduct. If a person cultivate his mental powers; if he shun actions grovelling in their nature and injurious in their influence; if he regulate his emotions by the exercise of his reason and judgment; if he adhere to truth for its own sake and for the confidence it inspires; if he manifest fidelity to convictions that are the outcome of thought and of earnest examination; if a person do this, he will not only be rendering practical service in increasing the ethical power of a nation, but he will also augment the happiness of its people; and he will feel the consolation which accompanies the knowledge that he has adopted a course of conduct noble in itself and beneficial in its results.

We allege that Secular principles when consistently acted upon, are sufficient to supply a motive for the elevation of individual character, and for the promotion of the best interests of society. This is proved both by the nature of the impulse that Secularism provides, and by the actions of those who yield to its influence. Secularists regard the noblest incentive to good deeds to be the knowledge that our actions necessarily tend, either to the improvement, or to the deterioration of the human family. And as the fundamental principle of Secular philosophy is the cultivation of practical morality, with a view of securing the largest amount of the highest happiness—intellectual, ethical, and social—on earth, our first consideration should be so to act that this threefold object shall be achieved as far as possible in all conditions of life, and among all classes of the community. That perfect happiness is not attainable, we, of course, admit. Nothing, however, can be more certain than the fact that very many of the present causes of unhappiness could be removed by well-directed efforts on the part of society, and the result be a state of things of which, at the present time, we can hardly form any conception. Secularism teaches that it is the duty of each of us to do as much as possible towards bringing this about.

The theological incentive lacks this useful and dignified motive to action. It is based either upon the selfish desire for personal reward in some other life, or else upon the supposition that suffering becomes a virtue because it is endured "for the Son of man's sake." The New Testament clearly indicates that the interests and welfare of this world should be deemed subordinate to the claims of a

future state of existence. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "Lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward (in heaven) shall be great." That such incentives to good conduct have failed to produce exalted characters, is proved by the questionable actions of many professed followers of Christ. In politics we have gross hypocrisy manifested; in commercial pursuits the old proverb is reversed, and policy seems to be regarded as the best honesty; in religion theory not practice is the prevailing feature, and in the domain of crime, the dread of human law is more efficacious as a preventive, than are all theological threats of punishment after death.

Even Theism, with all its allurements, fails as an active factor in the promotion of right-doing, for despite all such enticements, we have to rely upon ourselves and to put in force those real agencies whose potency we are assured of by experience. Supposing we were to accept the often-repeated contention, that the existence of man as the highest known intelligence leads us to infer the prior existence of a higher Intelligence, still this could in no respect change the fact that we are largely the arbiters of our own lives upon earth. As Secularists, our *raison d'être* for associating in a body distinct from others is—first, our recognition of the fact that the great essential for man is work, not worship; and, secondly, that the time, energy, and ability hitherto devoted to transcendental pursuits would, if properly used and directed according to sound reason, effect more permanent benefit to the world in one century than have all the theological and metaphysical speculations of thousands of years.

CHARLES WATTS.

### STEADIANITY.

MR. W. T. STEAD has been telling an interviewer in *Black and White* how he is founding the Church of the future. The interview, of course, bristles with that strong egotism which distinguishes the editor of the *Review of Reviews*.

Now Mr. Stead—if we may be pardoned the presumption of saying so—is a man who doubtless means well, but he is, in many respects, extremely foolish and ridiculous. He is a man with great natural energy, which must find an outlet, and hence he has always some "boom" on hand. Last year it was the ghost business. He told the interviewer that he believes a great revolution in human thought will result from the study of ghosts.

But Mr. Stead's "modern Church" is a most extraordinary affair. He thinks the Churches of to-day are not abreast of the times, and so he wants to galvanise them into new life. His Church of the future is to "run a theatre, keep a public-house, and not exclude Atheists from its membership if they are willing to do Christ's work." Mr. Stead has made this remark before, and we may deal with it here. If Mr. Stead intends the phrase "doing Christ's work" to mean merely fulfilling the duties of citizenship and helping to elevate the social condition of the less fortunate of our fellows, most Atheists, probably, would join him and help him. But then will his Church have no doctrines? If it has, he can hardly expect Atheists to accept them. If it has not, and its mission merely consists in trying to forward the secular interests of the people, then we submit that it is a misuse of words to call it a Church at all.

But this is only one example of what, we must say, we regard as a looseness of thinking on Mr. Stead's part. Our readers will remember he claimed Charles Bradlaugh as "a soldier of God" after Charles Brad-

laugh had died. This looseness comes in too in his favorite idea of acting in every case in life as you believe Christ would have acted in a similar case. He says, "Christ, if he were on earth, would open the churches as playgrounds for the little ones, if no other places were available." Now how, in the name of common sense, we may ask, does Mr. Stead know what Christ would do if he were on earth? Is not the fact simply this? Mr. Stead, from his own reason and experience, thinks a certain line of conduct, in a certain case, good, and then goes through the useless mockery of flattering himself that Christ would have done the same in the same circumstances. It is, perhaps, merely an unconscious pandering to his own vanity. Mr. Stead—like, possibly, many an Atheist—acts up to an ideal which he considers high, and then labels this ideal "Christ." But why not "Buddha," or "Krishna," or "Mahomet"—or what the necessity to give it a label at all? Mr. Stead doesn't know how Christ would have acted in any given case; he only forms his opinion of how a high-minded, conscientious man would act. Of course Mr. Stead might answer that Christ was such. But the discussion is an idle one. Surely if a certain line of conduct is good, it is good whether Christ would have approved it or not. But Mr. Stead's Christ is a pure creation of his own fancy. There is no attempt made to get a rational view of the Christ of the Gospels; and we must say this Unitarian conception of Christ as the ideal man is quite as irrational as the old faith out of which it grew, for people would never have believed in Christ as a perfect man if they had not first believed in him as God. The former belief springs from the idea that there was something "unique about Christ's character," as a Unitarian friend once put it to us. But this idea of there being something unique about Christ arose from the belief in his deity.

To show the length of ridiculousness to which Mr. Stead's idea carries him, he says, "I am sure he (Christ) would be very strong on the main drain." Now Jesus never had anything to do with main drains. Such things weren't known in his parts, when he lived. What sublime nonsense it is then to be discussing how a young Jew, alleged to have died eighteen hundred years ago, would have dealt with the questions that face society to-day!

The difficulty, of course, of acting as you think Christ would have acted, is that different people would form different conceptions of what Christ would do. Take an example. Many Radicals might sincerely believe that, if Jesus were alive to-day, he would tax the ground landlords. The landlords might equally sincerely believe that he would not. And thus we see the utter breakdown of the theory that the Christ standard is an infallible guide of conduct.

Of course Mr. Stead thinks the *Review of Reviews* a great factor in bringing about the ideal Church. It is his aim, he says, "to endeavor to bring month by month, at the lowest possible price, the best thoughts of the modern thinkers . . . before the widest possible number of my fellow creatures," though some people think that, if he were to give us these thoughts without sandwiching them between Stead's comments thereon, the result would be more graceful and more profitable. But when has the Church ever tried to bring the best thoughts of the best thinkers before the people? Rather to crush out thought has been its aim. And does Mr. Stead think the Churches will ever be any better in this respect? Does he think they will ever open their pulpits like Freethought platforms? We fear not.

With all his intense belief in an ideal Christ, however, Mr. Stead's Christianity appears to be of an extremely nebulous character. He certainly does

not hold by the abominable Hell doctrine, and he eulogises people of the most opposite views. Cardinal Manning, Charles Bradlaugh, the Pope, Madame Blavatsky, General Booth, Mrs. Besant, the Czar, John Morley, Mr. Balfour, Charles Stewart Parnell—all these people at various times have been the objects of Mr. Stead's lavish praise; and whether one agrees with him or not, one likes this eclecticism, which can appreciate the life-message of men of widely different environments. Certainly we might fairly claim Mr. Stead as a Freethinker, and we write in no unfriendly spirit. He is a man who has probably done some good in his own way; and whatever views one may hold, one cannot but admire the magnificent energy with which Mr. Stead throws himself into anything he takes up. But we must say we believe the "Church of the future" will end where it has begun—on paper.

FREDERICK RYAN.

### FEAR GOD.

CHRISTIANS contend that this scriptural injunction must be accepted as being analogous to its most diametrically opposite term, *Love God*. None but the most bigoted Bibliolater would attempt to distort the word *fear* and clothe it with the grand ideas implied in the word *love*, in the face of this most forcible fact, that, while we cannot discover a solitary inducement to *love* the barbarous God of the Hebrews and Christians, we have a superabundance of reasons for hating, despising, and *fearing* such a fiendish ghoul. We have, like Timotheus, searched the scriptures, and we have long since arrived at the conclusion that man made God in his own Mosaic image; for we have found teeming on every page absurdities, immoralities, atrocities, indecencies, and diabolical outrages—all traceable, directly and indirectly, to the mythological deity whose writings they are supposed to be. Moses created godalmity with a pair of long legs, a roaring voice, a dislike to tropical heat, a capricious temperament, a keen scent for roast meat, an ineradicable antipathy to vegetables, a nice palate for wine, a bashful countenance, a malignant spirit of revenge, an implacable hatred of rivals, a despicable green-eyed jealousy, a supercilious scrupulousness about the merest trifles, a most clumsy and undiplomatic knack of always knocking down the wrong man, an insatiable thirst for blood, an ardent expectation of reaping where he had not sown, a habit of cutting friends, repenting and breaking promises, and, to shorten a long indictment, all the sordid traits which are to be found in the most degraded specimens of humanity, and which so materially detract from the character of the real gentleman. Truly God is not a man. But it is this ungentlemanly Jewish monster we are to revere and adore when we hear the ambiguous command, *Fear God*. But whoever reads critically and candidly the attributes and achievements of Jahveh cannot fail to conclude that he is simply a gigantic myth or tyrannical fiend, whom the superstitious have ten thousand times more reason to *fear* than to *love*. Can a deity, who damns the whole human race for the fault of one man who was made imperfect, be a fit and proper object of the whole world's adoration and worship? No answer.

What fatherly god is it that has caused all parturition to be attended with the direst pains and dangers, because one woman is supposed to have availed herself of the intellectual means of distinguishing good from evil? What love can any poor mortal cherish for the miscreant God who deals around him death and damnation to the luckless beings who attempt to peep into his divine trunk? It must certainly knock off all the corners of reverence for a deity who commands his tip-top chosen brand of Hebrews to burn their sons and daughters. Is it any wonder that men *fear* God when he is known to circumvent people, and place pitfalls for their destruction? Can we ever forget the holocaust of seven innocent men to stay a famine, or the death of 70,000 men because their unrighteous king took a census; or Godalmity's treacherous diplomacy with Pharaoh; or his assassination of Egypt's firstborn of men and beasts; or his institution of horrid slavery and its hideous concomitants; or his murderous commands to the orthodox, what they shall do to heretics; or his bestial rites of circumcision; or his tomfoolery respecting patent scent, and holy hair-oil, and late dinners etc. etc.? Never! We imbibed it all with our mother's milk; we had it crammed down our juvenile throats

at the day-school, we were dosed with it at the Sunday-school; we got used to it and didn't mind having it inflicted on us from the pulpit, or at the club-room, and we suffer from it in the streets; we cannot escape from it in Europe, the tract distributor sticks it in our faces, glaring with such questions as "Is not the eye of God upon you?" "Sinner, you are going neck and crop down to hell, do you know?" "Do you *fear* God?" etc. If we would escape this curse of creed, we must remain indoors. We know partly as much about it all as the majority of Christians. We know that Godalmity's brutal atrocities reek from every chapter in holy writ. We suspect that he is becoming satiated with his wholesale homicide, animicide, ornithicide, ichthyicide, insecticide, and every other *cide*; and only recently he committed both deicide and suicide, under the plausible pretext that he was over head and ears in love with mankind. We would here point an epigram by saying, anent the absurd doctrine of atonement, that Jahveh had not the generosity to pardon the world when he found that it was not guilty of the charge he had preferred against it; but, true to his own vindictive instincts, rather than be thwarted of his quota of revenge, he would actually eat his own tail off. Lastly, fatty cakes and wine, fatted calves and wether mutton, the blood of bulls and goats, no longer satisfy his rapacious appetite; beefsteaks and lamb cutlets his soul utterly abhors; and our heavenly father, the king of kings, is aspiring to become the king of cannibals; for his holy book informs us he fore-ordained it; that something like ninety-nine per cent. of all the human beings that should ever be unfortunate enough to be ushered into existence would be compelled to experience the pleasure of passing out of this temporal frying-pan into eternal fire, in order that his carnivorous nostrils may smell that sweet savor which shall continually ascend from this *stew-pendous* oven. Byron says in his "Vision of Judgment":

God helps us all, God help me too; I am  
God knows, as helpless as the Devil can wish,  
And not a whit more difficult to damn,  
Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd fish;  
Or for the butcher to purvey the lamb—  
Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,  
As one day will be that immortal fry  
Of almost everybody born to die.

P. W. BALDWIN.

### MOROCCO MEN OF GOD.

IN Morocco the Church, like the communal government the Kabyles, is the essence of pure democracy, and, throwing pretensions of pride and holy descent to the winds, the clever student, weary of the *miserere* of his academic career, can with patience and long-suffering become a "self-made saint," and rise to a proud and lucrative position by his own exertions. The apprenticeship to this profession is not, of course, by any means the most delightful way of spending your time between the years of twenty-five and thirty-five. In Morocco the odor of sanctity is not a pleasant atmosphere to dwell in. Still the rewards are dazzling, and indeed they are the only solid and substantial rewards, safe from the whim and caprice of bashaw and Sultan, that are to be reaped by the children of men in Morocco. For a few years the aspirant must content himself with the most meagre fare. He must content himself with taking his food at the *table d'hôte* of Fortune. He must allow his hair and beard to grow untrimmed. He must discard all clothing, and carefully cultivate and encourage any inclination to skin disease that he may be so fortunate as to inherit or develop by his life during his *wanderjahre*. He must abuse his person in the most brutal manner, bang his head against stone walls until so callous does it become that he can cleave it with an axe without so much as winking. Then the aspiring saint, who will by these exploits and this manner of life have won quite a reputation as a holy man, generally retires from the world to some place suitable for a shrine on the outskirts of a rich and superstitious province. He here sets himself up by the entrance of a cave, or under the shade of a splendid olive or ilex tree for choice; the country people minister to his wants, which at first are simple. As he feels himself firmly started as a saint, his simple wants expand, and he becomes more difficult to please. The country people readily accept the situation and give him his tithes, paying him royally for the blessings he bestows on their flocks and their

fields, or for his condescension in laying his holy hand upon their sick and diseased. In time the country people, generally with very slight provocation, become ardent believers in the prowess and miracle-making power of their own particular and local saint; and as we in England sometimes pit our local pugilists against each other in a mill to decide which is the best man, so the Kabyles sometimes bring their saints together for a tourney in working wonders; but the miracle-makers, it would seem, like other more civilised impostors, have a professional etiquette of their own, and always succeed in hoodwinking the sinners without in any way impairing their prestige. The faith of the Kabyles is too unthinking and too considerate to ever subject them to the rude surprise that overtook the unhappy bishop who, according to the Magyar legend, while preaching to an assembly of Huns on the Blocksberg by Buda, was suddenly thrown over the mountain in order, as his benevolent murderers contended, that he might be given an opportunity of showing that he was as good a man as any of the rest of the apostles—and could fly.

The saint, once formally established, lives in laziness and luxury, and bequeaths his bones to his progeny—generally a very numerous one; for, though the saints generally live ignorant of wine, their acquaintance with women is invariably quite an extended one. The fortunate progeny form themselves into a company, and build for their saintly ancestor a tomb in a "simple inexpensive" mosque, that they erect generally on the very spot which he hallowed for years in the exercise of his saintly functions. In rotation the relatives stand at watch over the tomb, and take gate-money from all who enter the mosque, and, if the saint was widely known, his bones generally bring in to the family a fat living for generations. Perhaps the most pleasing thing about the saint business in Morocco is that, however prone you may be to backsliding, you cannot fall from grace however much you may want to; clerical vagaries which in other worlds and in other religions would call forth condign punishment, are always lightly regarded by the Moorish public and accorded plenary indulgence. A saint cannot commit a sin. There is at least one saint in Morocco whom I have time and again seen in a state of intoxication, only to be accounted for by his well-known indulgence in alcoholic beverages. I have even pointed him out to his worshippers as the contents of a whiskey bottle went gurgling down his throat, but they only smiled at my ignorance, and treated the petty malice of my remarks with pity and contempt.

"It is very true," they said, "the saint is drinking whiskey, but he's such a holy man that the moment the exciting liquid reaches his throat, by contact with his holy person it immediately becomes innocent mare's milk." Who would not be a saint in Morocco? But, of course, the great majority of the students return to their native villages, where they enjoy a reputation for erudition, and convert their knowledge into the copper coin of the realm.—*Stephen Bonsall, in the "Fortnightly Review."*

#### WHAT HIS CONSCIENCE WOULD ALLOW.

A couple of tourists staying at a town that shall be nameless, but which is in close vicinity to Loch Ness, had a fancy one fine Sunday to go for a row on the Loch. They accordingly sallied forth in search of the boatman, whom they met just leaving his house dressed in a complete suit of glossy black, and an extra big Bible under his arm. "We want to go for a row," said one of the tourists. "Did ye no ken that it's the Sawbath?" was the reply. "Ye'll no get a boat frae me the day, forbye I hae ye tao ken I'm an elder of the kirk." "Yes, yes," expostulated the tourists, "that's all very well for you, but we don't require you with us. You can go to church; we can row ourselves." "Ay, ay," said the elder, "but just think what'll the meenister say?" "Never mind the minister," was the reply, "he will know nothing about it, and we will pay you well." "Ah, weel," said the elder, "I'll not let ye the boat, but I'll tell ye what I'll do for ye. Dae ye see yon green boatie doon among the rushes? Weel, she's ready wi' the oars inside. Jist ye gang doon there an' row oot tae the middle, an' I'll coom doon to the bank an' swear at ye; but never ye mind, ye jis row on, an' I'll call for the money on Monday."—*Pearson's Weekly.*

#### MR. JEROME ON VIRTUES AND VICES.

The truth is, we extra righteous folk have got into a wrong way of estimating our frailer fellow-men and women. We judge them, as critics judge books, not by the good that is in them, but by their faults. Abraham and David would have been driven out of public life had they lived in this century. Noah would have been denounced from every platform in the country, and Ham fulsomely belauded for exposing him; and poor Saint Peter would have been kicked out of the church as a liar. We should never have paused to ask ourselves whether, in spite of their failings, these men were not great honorworthy. Out would have reached our Pharisaical hands for the stones, and down they would have gone. We have abolished virtue, and for it substituted a lot of miserable little affectations which we call "virtues." If a man is a teetotaller and belongs to a purity league, we say he is a good man. He may be a narrow-minded, narrow-hearted, narrow-soul libel on a man, selfish and hard and cruel and weak—a man with no more real worth in him than there is in a Brummagem idol. What matter! He has no vices—what we call vices—and therefore he is a good man.

#### THE LOSS OF RELIGION A GAIN.

It is, in fact, the very condition of progress that, as we advance in knowledge and in culture, we give up something on the road. But it is also a condition that we do not feel the need of that which we have lost. Not only as we become men do we put away childish things, but we can no longer realise in thought the enjoyment which those childish things brought with them. Other interests, new occupations, deeper affections take the place of the interests, the occupations, and the affections of our early years. So, too, should it be in religion. Men have dwelt upon the love of God because they could not satisfy the craving of nature for the love of their fellow-men. They have looked forward to eternal happiness in a future life because they could not find temporary happiness in this. . . . Were we thus permitted to find in our fellow-creatures that sympathy which so many mourners, so many sufferers, so many lonely hearts, have been compelled to find only in the idea of their heavenly Father, I hesitate not to say that the consolations of the new religion would far surpass in their strength and their perfection all those that were offered by the old.—*Viscount Amberley, "Analysis of Religious Belief,"* vol. ii., pp. 493-4.

#### ACID DROPS.

The Rev. J. M. Logan, of Bristol, is a curious person. He sticks to it that he did hear Mrs. Harriet Law call upon God to prove his existence by striking her dead. It was many years ago at Glasgow, and the story was first told by Mr. Logan when Mrs. Law had for a considerable time retired from the platform and most Christians who remembered her thought she was dead. Mrs. Law is alive, and she has contradicted Mr. Logan's statement. Mr. Logan, however, does not withdraw it; nor does he attempt to give corroborative evidence; he merely says that we have no sense of logic in believing Mrs. Law's denial in preference to his assertion. As a matter of fact, Freethinkers know more of their own lecturers than Mr. Logan does, and they can only laugh at a yarn which has done duty so often and about so many different persons.

Mr. Logan is to have a written debate with Mr. Foote in the spring. The Bristol minister has had all his own way in the arrangements, but we must tell him that Mr. Foote's patience is not infinite. The line must be drawn somewhere. Mr. Logan declares that he will "see to it that the Christians will only hear through the written discussion things pertaining to the subject of debate." We beg to tell him at once, and once for all, that he will "see" to nothing of the kind. He will not write his own part of the debate and edit Mr. Foote's part. Nor does Mr. Foote intend to submit to any censorship on the part of Mr. Logan's representative. Mr. Logan will write what he thinks necessary, and Mr. Foote will do the same. Unless this is understood at the outset the negotiations had better terminate.

We notice that Mr. J. Grinstead, who undertook to reply to Mr. Foote (in his absence, and without hearing him) at Bristol, is so ill-informed as to put forth Straus as a believer in the miraculous birth, miracles, and resurrection of Christ. If

Mr. Grinstead will read *books*, instead of *extracts*, he will find that Strauss, in the *New Life of Christ*, discarded his earlier belief in such things. In a still later work, *The Old Faith and the New*, Strauss discarded theology altogether. Mr. Grinstead is an illustration of the truth that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

The Rev. Peter Mackenzie has been clowning at Sunderland. He discoursed on Jonah. The audience was kept laughing convulsively at Jonah's adventures, but the great point of the joke is that Peter regards them as real history. Peter is also an authority on Hell. Some day, perhaps, he will publish a guide-book to that locality. Meanwhile he declares that sinners will have a warm time there. God, says Peter, will "drag them down with their Satanic father to the cesspool of Hell, and cover them up with a lid so strong that they would never succeed in escaping." After that the worthy Peter said that the Devil "never hatched a worse slander than when he said that God was harsh."

Chester is a cathedral town, with dean, chapter, a host of parsons, and a bishop who did not scruple to accuse Secularists of cruelty to children. Yet, on the testimony of the Mayor and Chief Constable, "there is no city or town in the kingdom like Chester for bad language."

R. Smith, the commercial traveller, who blew out his brains at Mitcham, left a note saying that God would protect his wife. She has, however, been made chargeable to the parish.

It appears from Captain Lugard's report that religious rivalry has been the ruin of Uganda. The country has been so impoverished by strife that there is little or nothing to tax. Protestants, Catholics, and Mahommedans seem to hate each other with equal zeal.

In the *Church Reformer* for November the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam gives the following testimony as to the work of the Diggleites: "The majority on this Board is doing its best to drive the children into Church schools; they are trying to get rid of a site which even the education department under a Conservative Government considered necessary in Kennington-road; they have attempted to close a small school in Greenwich altogether without providing any places in a Board school at all; and constantly, when sites are chosen, the neighboring clergyman and landlord make common cause, the one saying that the Board school will damage 'his' Church school, and the other that it will damage his property."

Mr. Headlam points out that the Salvation Army authorities, in order to gain the School Board contract for supplying firewood, signed the declaration that they paid the trade union rate of wages. Mr. Enesden, the secretary of the Firewood Cutters' Society, proved this is false, and the Army pleaded they paid no wages at all. Mr. Headlam asks "Is this religion or morality?"

Sixty parsons and others waited upon the West Ham Town Council to protest against the letting of the Stratford Town Hall for lectures and concerts on Sunday evenings. They were introduced by Alderman Smith, a bigoted missionary, whose sniffling remarks were greeted with sonorous "amens" from the impious gallery. The vicar, Arnold Pelly, was very wroth with the South Essex Secular Society. Canon Stevens waxed eloquent on "Sunday labor." Curiously, he offered to give organ recitals if the Council would turn out the Sunday League. It appears, however, that a local Presbyterian wants the Town Hall for mission services. Even in bigotry they are divided. Anyhow, they don't seem to have made much impression on the Town Council.

Councillor Curry, the proprietor of the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Grimsby, has for the last ten years given a sacred concert for the benefit of the Grimsby and District Hospital. This year, however, he has been interfered with. The Lord's Day Observance Society threatened him with a prosecution. This was done after the arrangements were completed. The result is that the Hospital has lost £40, and Councillor Curry about £15 in expenses. It is a great pity he did not snap his fingers at this collection of busybodies. Their bark is a good deal worse than their bite. Besides, a little courage is the best thing to keep the bigots in check.

Dr. Parker received a deputation of the "unemployed." He was unable to suggest anything, but he gave the seven deputators half-a-crown each. For this he received a splendid advertisement in the newspapers. Dr. Parker can invest seventeen-and-sixpence as profitably as any man in London.

Sir Andrew Clark is mightily fond of preaching. Lecturing recently at the Birmingham Athletic Institute, he described man as a trinity in unity, consisting of body, mind, and spirit—which will be news to every biologist. He spoke of the laws of health as commandments of God, but he forgot to say why "God" punishes people for breaking his "commandments" in pure ignorance. Sir Andrew Clark talked about violated laws of nature. We beg to tell him he was talking nonsense. You cannot violate a law of nature. What you can do, and what men like Sir Andrew Clark are always doing, is to use a single word in several different senses. As Hamlet says, it is "words, words, words."

Canon Wilberforce is too fond of playing the bigot. At a recent meeting of the Anti-Vivisection Society this gentleman occupied the chair, and took occasion to denounce the "atrocities" of vivisection as a part of the "gospel of a miserable materialism" which says that "death ends all." Canon Wilberforce should have remembered that Professor Horsley defended vivisection at the Church Congress—not at a meeting of materialists. We may further observe that the secretary of the Humanitarian League is a Freethinker, and that the most vigorous onslaught on Professor Horsley was made in the *Star* by Mr. G. B. Shaw, who is also a Freethinker.

Mr. Chapness, a Wesleyan, has issued a pamphlet entitled *May a Christian go to the Theatre?* He gives the opinions of many Methodist sky-pilots, including Dr. Stephenson, late President of the Conference, and they all decide in the negative.

The *English Illustrated Magazine*, in its November issue, has an article on "New York as a Literary Centre," by Douglas Sladen, in which it gives portraits of three Freethinking men of letters—John Burroughs, Edgar Fawcett, and Mark Twain. Mr. Sladen also refers to Col. Ingersoll—"This big, burly man, with his massive, clean-shaven face, is perhaps the most redoubtable assailant of Christianity. A destructive critic, as might be expected from a great lawyer holding a brief against the Bible, and minutely familiar with it, he leads the life prescribed by the founder of Christianity, and preaches its purely moral part. The model and delightful home-life of the Ingersolls in their great house in Fifth Avenue is a proverb."

The endeavor to keep in with the Christian reader leads Mr. Sladen into foolishness. Col. Ingersoll holds no brief against the Bible. Like others who disbelieve in its divinity, his worldly prospects would be enhanced by keeping silence as to his convictions. Nor does Col. Ingersoll lead the life prescribed by the founder of Christianity. If he did, he would be a monk giving up all to follow Jesus, whereas he is fond of the world, and enjoys above all else domestic bliss.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has been preaching at Maidenhead. One of our Reading friends rode over on a bicycle and gave away at the chapel gates, besides putting into letter-boxes, a number of copies of our exposure of Mr. Hughes's story of the converted Atheist shoemaker. A copy was also sent to Mr. Hughes's chairman. We guess the reverend gentleman is sorry he ever published that yarn. He is too obstinate to withdraw it, but he must be very sick of having it brought up against him wherever he goes. He forgot the text, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

On Dr. Pierson commencing a further ministry of six months at the late Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, he was interrupted by two men, one of whom asked, "How dare you, not being a Baptist, stand in that place?" The disturbers were expelled and conveyed to the Kennington-road police station. Dr. Pierson said he was not disturbed. He believed he was there by the Holy Ghost's decree. We suppose it was equally by the Holy Ghost's decree that his opponents were at the police station.

Heresy-hunting goes on in the Jewish Church, but does not stay the progress of heresy. The Chief Rabbi, Dr. Adler, has recently prohibited the Rev. Morris Joseph from preaching because he refused to pray for the revival of sacrificial rites at Jerusalem.

"Mr. G. W. Foote, the Secularist," says the London *Evening News and Post*, "has been telling Mr. Morley's Newcastle constituents [has he any other constituents?] that the Irish Chief Secretary denies the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. When did Mr. Morley make Mr. Foote his confessor?" A similar paragraph appears in the *Glasgow Evening News*, which asks the very same question, and then adds: "But at the same time there are certain awkward passages in Mr. Morley's writings which give color to what we prefer to regard as a Secularist lecturer's assumption."

Mr. Foote did not claim to be Mr. Morley's confessor. He did not even claim any personal acquaintance with him. He simply based his remarks upon Mr. Morley's published writings, which are open to all men's perusal and criticism. As a matter of fact, he did not say that Mr. Morley denied immortality, but only that he obviously had no belief in the doctrine.

There is something very amusing in this lifting of journalistic eyebrows. Mr. Morley has been before the public for very many years. His principles should be familiar to all who take it upon themselves to instruct the multitude. One is forced to wonder how much reading of real literature is done by the gentlemen who sit in editorial or sub-editorial chairs.

The Conservative papers will doubtless make the most of this incident. But it will not damage Mr. Morley. The cry of "Atheist?" has already been raised against him, but it did not impair his majority. The time has gone by for such nonsense. Charles Bradlaugh's success, in spite of religious bigotry, opened a new epoch in English politics.

Mr. Moody has been conducting revival services at the late Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle. At the close of the services Mr. Moody said there had been talk of another mission in London before he went to America, but he was not sure if he could undertake it. Printed circulars have been sent to Evangelical clergy and Dissenting ministers in London for signatures to an address to Mr. Moody, calling upon him to gird up his loins for this holy enterprise. We are informed that the gentleman who does the canvassing is Mr. Moody's secretary. If this be true, it does credit to the revivalist's business sagacity.

A controversy as to whether baptism should be performed by immersion or sprinkling is occupying the columns of the *Bacup Times*. The disputants seem unaware that the belief in the efficacy of soapless water, whether in large or small doses, is little better than the belief in witchcraft.

The Russian priest, Johann Cronstadt, has the reputation of a saint and miracle worker. Crowds press round him so that he has to be protected by the police, and on more than one occasion his garments have been torn to shreds by devotees anxious to carry away a rag as a relic. Such cases serve to illustrate the reputation of other miracle workers.

At Portsmouth the Rev. William Radcliffe, formerly curate of Meeres Ashby, has been committed for trial on three charges of obtaining goods by false pretences. The evidence showed that the prisoner obtained jewellery, giving reference to professional men well known in the town, and then pawned it.

A person styling himself "General" Maybell bosses the Heaven at Hand Army in California. Shekels are said to be rolling rapidly into the Army, as the "General" promises a speedy millennium on earth to all the faithful.

The clergy want other people to subscribe to preserve their incomes, and are seeking to make the first Sabbath in November a Church Defence Sunday, when a collection will be made for Church defence purposes. The only persons who should subscribe are the parsons themselves.

On the same Sunday the Sunday Society asks that a "Museum Sunday" shall be held, and invites all the clergy to deliver sermons on the necessity and advantages of opening museums on Sundays. This is rather a pull back.

Mr. Algernon Thorold gives in the *Sunday Magazine* some amusing examples of the benefit of religious instruction to the young. One pupil, in his desire to be respectful towards scriptural personages, declared that the first to go into the ark was "Mr." Noah. Mr. Thorold is not greatly surprised to hear at times that Abel killed Cain; that Abram walked in the Garden of Eden, and soon after offered up Isaac on Mount Ararat. Goliath, he was once correctly enough informed, was the name of a big potato. A number of children are found whose answers are based on the chance of being right sometimes. Some of these make a point of answering, be the question what it may, "Jesus Christ, teacher." When the time arrives for rehearsing the creed, the diocesan inspector "looks out" for his old friend "Sponshus Spilat," and is prepared to hear sometimes that he "betrays," sometimes that he "denies," sometimes that he "swears," and occasionally that he is "put to death." It is the commandments, however, that receive the roughest treatment—some children, according to this authority, being apt to mix them with the ten plagues.

The *National Observer* is very severe on Barnum Booth for his new appeal for £60,000, while his character and scheme are *sub judice*. It anticipates nothing useful from the commission, but recommends John Bull to button his pockets against "an adventurer who hurls £74,000 into an Essex marsh, and shifts the responsibility on to those who decline to give him a blank cheque."

Booth says if he does not get the amount asked for it will be "very grieving to God." It is the common trick of religionists to make God stand for their own selves.

The Methodists loudly complain of their congregations being suppressed in Austria. But this is the way in which Christian sects have always acted towards others when they have had the chance.

The dreadful fire at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which has left some thousands homeless and impoverished, broke out in East Water-street, in which are situate the offices of the *Freidenker*, the organ of German American Freethinkers. We do not know if the buildings occupied by our contemporaries are safe or injured, but in the event of the latter we trust their property is fully insured.

The Rev. Canon R. H. Baynes, now languishing in her Majesty's prison, was in 1871 Bishop-designate of Madagascar. He wrote most spiritual hymns in *Lyra Anglicana*. But the spirit has been too strong for him, and drink has proved his ruin.

Superstition still flourishes in Palestine. In the quarterly organ of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Mr. Jones Bliss, says that at the Convent of Mar Nohara, there is a well whose waters are said to be good for the eyes. Monks hawk the water round the villages, and secure a good price for the same. Another convent sells smooth holy pebbles for the cure of rheumatism; while a third is visited by women who desire to have children.

While service was being held in a church in Upper Austria a violent gale was blowing, and the loud rumbling noise of the wind seriously alarmed the congregation. Suddenly the cry that the tower was falling was raised by a woman sitting near the doorway. The howling wind and the clattering of missiles on the roof seemed to give only too much confirmation to the fears of the people. A terrible panic ensued. The excited congregation—men, women, and children—rushed madly to the only means of exit, which speedily became blocked. The stronger members forced their way to the doorway, trampling under foot the women and children, whose shrieks were terrible to hear. When they reached the gravel path it became apparent that a false alarm had been raised; but, before order could be restored, twenty-five persons were crushed to death, and a very large number were seriously injured. This is another proof that the Lord is mindful of his own.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Nov. 6, Camberwell Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road, Walworth-road, S.E.; at 7.30, "The Doom of the Gods."

Nov. 13, Hall of Science; 17, Islington; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Manchester.

Dec. 1, Islington; 4, Grimsby; 11 and 18, Hall of Science, January 1, Birmingham; 8, Leicester; 15 and 22, Hall of Science; 29, Bristol.  
February 5, Hull.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Nov. 6, Birmingham; 8, Chester; 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.
- A. WHEELER.—Your letter was sent on to Mr. Foote in the North.
- D. ELEY.—"E. L. G." often contributes old-fashioned nonsense to the "Correspondence" column of the *Echo*. It is really astonishing at this time of day to find a decent newspaper giving space to the statement that Thomas Paine said the Devil inspired him to write the *Age of Reason*. As to Bishop Watson having "refuted" Paine, we may observe that he also "refuted" Gibbon—and with the same success.
- W. DUNCAN.—Certainly there is a great ignorance among Christians of comparative mythology, and this ignorance is a great advantage to the clergy. Your suggestion is a good one, and shall be carried out when we have leisure.
- G. DYNLEY.—See "Acid Drops."
- F. GARDNER.—Cuttings are always welcome.
- NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S SPECIAL FUND.—We have received: W. Tiffin, 2s. 6d.; W. Robson, 2s. 6d.; J. Downing, 10s. 6d.; W. Duncan, 10s.; A. Lewis, 5s.; E. Holland, £2; W. P. Baldwin, 2s. 6d.; E. Seed, 2s. 6d.; W. J. Jackson, 2s. 6d.; A. Wilkinson, 1s.; Mr. Briggs, 1s.; D. Davies, £1 1s.
- J. KEAST.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Stanley Jones gave satisfaction at Bristol. Thanks for the cutting. Mr. Logan refuses to discuss the question, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" and he cannot be compelled. He is quite aware that he has not a ghost of a chance on the plain, straightforward issue. He will find, however, in the written debate agreed upon, some difficulties he does not seem to anticipate. What they are he will learn in good time.
- R. WALLIS.—Prophecy is a subject which—to use the expression of old Dr. South—generally finds a man cracked or leaves him so. The idiocy of the *Christian Herald* is a good illustration of this truth. For our part, we cannot see any reference to the Papacy in the passage you quote. As for the "coming of Christ" it was declared by the New Testament writers to be "at hand," but it hasn't occurred yet, and doesn't seem likely to. Jesus is like Christianity—behind date.
- G. F. REA.—No doubt it frequently happens in some form or other. Your version may be printed by and by.
- F. ATTWOOD.—Will try to find room.
- J. DOMINEY.—The side of the mountain is as much the surface of the earth as the top of a plain. Read an elementary book on geology.
- R. WOLGEMUTH.—The statement we made about Mr. Rider Haggard was copied in substance from the *Pall Mall Gazette*.
- RON MAHON.—Merely a coincidence. Such things will happen.
- JOSEPHUS.—Morality is both the knowing of what is right and the doing of what is right. Right conduct is simply conduct which conduces to human welfare. Greg's *Creed of Christendom* is able and well written. Of the force of its arguments you must judge for yourself. We don't sit in a papal chair.
- W. FOWLER.—The story of Pope Joan—a woman disguised as a man—is of questionable accuracy. Some investigators believe it, but it does not appear to rest on sufficient evidence.
- J. SMITH.—The villain of Tennyson's *Promise of Man* is an Agnostic. It was the Marquis of Queensberry who rose from his seat, when the play was performed in London, and protested against its misrepresentation of Agnostic principles. A few days afterwards an anonymous explanation—really written by Mr. Hallam Tennyson—appeared in the newspapers, in which it was stated that Lord Tennyson did not mean to imply that the Agnostic's villainy had any connexion with Agnosticism. He was a good-for-nothing, and would have gone to the bad in any case.
- R. DAVIES.—We must know more about the Cardiff Branch before we can write upon the subject.
- H. COURTNEY reports a steady progress of the West London Branch. The indoor lectures at the Hammersmith Club continue to draw good audiences, and the outdoor lectures will be carried on while the weather permits.
- W. TIFFIN writes us from Stocksfield-on-Tyne. He is a pit lad, but he sends a special subscription to the N.S.S. with a

subscription from another pit lad in the same place. They journeyed twelve miles to hear Mr. Foote lecture at Newcastle, and they have introduced the *Freethinker* in their colliery. They are pointed at and prayed for, but it does them no harm.

SAM STANDRING wishes to correct a mistake in one of our recent "Sugar Plums." The Bible class he is conducting has nothing to do with the Manchester Branch. It is held at Harpurhey.

W. M. KNOX.—Paragraphs already in print. Glad to hear that the regular Sunday evening meetings at Belfast are growing larger and larger, and taxing your accommodation.

E. ANDERSON.—See paragraph.

T. THURLOW.—Thanks for your manly letter. We wish Mr. Cohen success.

CESTRIAN.—Bronson Keller's *Short History of the Bible* is a good American book. If you cannot procure it, get S. Davidson's Canon of the Bible and his Introduction to the New Testament.

E. PARKER (West Ham).—Will deal with the matter presently.

E. H. LLOYD.—Delighted to learn that the Edmonton Branch has made thirteen new members during the past quarter. Sorry, however, to hear of your troubles in respect to the indoor lectures.

REGULATOR.—Thanks. See paragraph.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND:—Two Secularists, 2s.; S. M. Peacock, 5s.; A. Swan, 6s.; W. Anderson, 1s.; E. Barrezeit, 1s. 1d.; G. Wykeham (S. Africa), 9s. 6d.; W. Clarkson, £1.

G. NAEWIGER.—The date is booked.

J. W. WITTERING.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

J. DOWNING.—Pleased to hear your good opinion of our efforts to spread Freethought. The word *Profane* before *Jokes* in one of our headings is itself a joke. Generally speaking, we fancy those who object to it would object to the *Freethinker* altogether.

A. BADLAND.—Read *Supernatural Religion*, Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, Strauss's *New Life of Jesus and Old Faith and the New*, Buchner's *Force and Matter*, Huxley's *Controverted Questions*, Clifford's *Essays*, and Mill's *Three Essays on Religion*.

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—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—Walthamstow Express—Bacup Times—Newcastle Chronicle—Newcastle Daily Leader—Evening News and Post—Hull Daily News—Umpire—Bristol Mercury.

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

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

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

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

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.

## TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

## LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

You are hereby appealed to on behalf of the Society's funds. During the past year or two they have been heavily drained by the expenses of fresh propaganda and increased organisation. The old income of the Society is not equal to the new scale of work; and we must either diminish our expenditure, and with it our successful activity, or obtain a larger measure of financial support. Being naturally loth to let the work suffer, the Executive has desired me to issue this appeal, which it is hoped will elicit a generous response. We wish to raise £200 imme-

diately, so that we may enter upon the winter campaign with energy and assurance. Any subscription you may kindly forward will be acknowledged, according to your directions, in the Freethought journals; and also, if requested, by post.

Yours very truly,

G. W. FOOTE,

President.

October, 1892.

P.S.—Subscriptions can be forwarded to me, at 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C.; to Mr. W. H. Reynolds, the treasurer, Camplin House, New Cross, S.E.; to Mr. R. Forder, hon. secretary; or to Miss E. M. Vance, assistant secretary, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's northern tour has been on the whole very successful. There was only a moderate audience at Spenny-moor; partly, no doubt, owing to an accident in the advertising. The lecture-hall which had previously been used at Blyth was refused to the Secularists, and the meeting had to be held in the circus—a large, cold, cheerless building, in which a decent week-night audience was almost lost. Ebchester was visited on Friday—or rather Low Westwood, nearly two miles distant, where the lecture was delivered to a good audience. The local Branch in this colliery district is not very large, but a considerable number of persons appear to be more or less in sympathy with Freethought. The chair on this occasion, as at Blyth, was taken by Mr. Hubert Richardson.

On Saturday evening fresh ground was broken at Bolden Colliery, about three miles from Tyne Dock. Mr. Richardson has recently introduced Freethought there. Mr. Stubbs, a local councillor, made the arrangements for the meeting. A son of this gentleman now sells the *Freethinker* in Bolden, where there are already several weekly subscribers. The meeting was held in the Miner's Hall, Mr. S. M. Peacock, of South Shields, presiding. Mr. Chapman, the Shields secretary, was also present, with Mr. Weightman, Mr. Elwin, and other friends from Sunderland, and Mr. Joseph Brown, the secretary of the N. E. Federation. Nearly three hundred persons assembled, including a fair sprinkling of ladies; and, considering that this was the first Freethought lecture ever delivered in Bolden, it must be admitted that Mr. Foote's discourse was received with remarkable appreciation.

The total proceeds of the Bolden lecture were devoted to the relief of a local victim of misfortune. This, however, did not prevent the Christians from hurriedly getting up an opposition meeting. A black Christian Evidence lecturer was brought over from Shields. In the circumstances, the miners were justly indignant. They are notoriously charitable to each other, and they resented the bigoted action of the chapel people, which was intended to keep some of the villagers away from Mr. Foote's lecture, and thus to injure the person it was to benefit.

The next day the colliery was a good deal excited. The Freethought lecture was the theme of general conversation. No doubt it will help to spread our principles in the district.

Sunday's three lectures at South Shields were delivered in Thornton's Theatre, which is a large and commodious building. The audiences were exceptionally good. The evening meeting was not only a fine one, but extremely enthusiastic. Mr. Peacock presided, the chair having been filled in the morning by Mr. Chapman, and in the afternoon by Mr. Richardson. Mr. Peacock referred to his advertisement in the local press, inviting the black Christian Evidence lecturer to help form a committee to arrange for a debate with a representative of the Shields Branch of the National Secular Society. No answer was forthcoming, and the Shields people would see it was not the Freethinkers who shirked discussion. This remark was greeted with loud applause.

At least 500 people assembled at the Hall of Science on Wednesday evening, Oct. 26, to hear the debate between George Standring and Mr. R. Dunn, one of the lecturers of the Christian Evidence Society. For nearly two hours the wordy warfare went on, the audience listening with close attention to both speakers as they discussed the value of Secular principles. Mr. Dunn had a skirmish or two with impulsive members of the audience; but at the close of the evening he declared himself highly gratified with his reception; and, throughout, the two disputants did not exchange an unfriendly word. It is probable that the experiment may be repeated.

The London Freethinkers' Ball this year will take place at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, November 30. A full and efficient band has been engaged, and Mr. McLeish, of Camberwell, has consented to act as M.C. Miss Vance and Mr. Ward are arranging for a capital entertainment in the minor hall upstairs for those who don't dance or don't want to. The tickets are one shilling each, and can be obtained at the Hall, at 28 Stonecutter-street, or of any London Branch secretary. As the profits of this gathering are to go to the London Secular Federation there should be a large sale of tickets. The Federation is greatly in need of funds.

The London Secular Federation begins its winter campaign with a course of free lectures at Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Islington—a few doors from Upper-street, nearly opposite St. Mary's Church. This is a very benighted and bigoted part of London, and Freethought lectures are much needed there. Mr. Foote opens the course on Thursday, Nov. 17, with a lecture on "Why I Cannot be a Christian," and closes it on Thursday, Dec. 1, with another lecture on "Why I am an Atheist." The two intermediate Thursday lectures, we understand, will be delivered by Mr. Touzeau Parris and Mrs. Thornton Smith. We hope the local Freethinkers—what there are of them—will do their best to advertise this course. Handbills for distribution can be obtained of Mr. E. Pownceby, 8 Finsbury-street, E.C.

Mr. Charles Watts was greeted last week on his first appearance at Belfast with two enthusiastic audiences, although we are informed they were not so numerous as was expected. But it should be remembered that week-nights, particularly in such a "loyal" place as Belfast, are not equal to Sundays for securing large gatherings. We are glad, however, to hear that the three hundred listeners who attended each evening were exceedingly warm in their appreciation of the lectures. Mr. Watts has been invited to make his next visit on a Sunday.

Mr. Watts, during his stay in Belfast, accepted an invitation to a supper that the members of the Branch of the N.S.S. had arranged for the purpose of giving him a welcome, and to have an opportunity of interchanging views upon Secular organisation. In response to the toast of welcome, Mr. Watts pointed out the great necessity existing for Secular propaganda in Ireland, and indicated the methods that should be adopted in the carrying out of Freethought advocacy. We hope that the social gathering will result in giving an impetus to the work of the local Branch.

At Mr. Watts' lectures at Edinburgh last Sunday, a deputation of Secular friends from Fife, a distance of thirty miles, attended to hear the lectures and to obtain information as to forming a Fife Branch of the National Secular Society. We shall be pleased to hear that the Branch has been started. Secularism has made considerable progress in Scotland of late years, but there is still need of more organised effort upon the part of our Scotch friends.

Last Saturday afternoon Mr. C. Cohen conducted a goodly number of Battersea friends through parts of the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, illustrating and amplifying his course of lectures on Evolution. The Battersea Branch, knowing Mr. Cohen's ability to instruct, have engaged him for a course of lectures on Astronomical Science, as follows: 1, The Nebular Hypothesis; 2, The Sun; 3, The Moon; 4, The Planets. These lectures take place each Friday in November.

Owing to extra propaganda, and therefore expenditure, the funds of the Battersea Branch are getting very low, and with a view to replenish the exchequer, a Musical and Dramatic

Entertainment will take place on Monday, Nov. 7, at 8 p.m. Dancing from 10 to 12. Tickets 3d. and 6d.

The Finsbury Branch has engaged the minor hall at the London Hall of Science for a members' meeting on the first Sunday morning in every month. The first meeting takes place next Sunday (Nov. 6) at 11. Members are earnestly requested to attend, and also Freethinkers wishing to join the Branch.

Friends of Freethought living in Islington or neighborhood are asked to meet at Mr. Guest's house on Sunday, at 3.30, to discuss the formation of an Islington Branch of the National Secular Society. The address is Milner Lodge, 18 Waterloo-terrace (opposite the Vestry Hall), Upper-street.

Said an American Congregationalist opponent of Secularism the other day, in a conversation on the U.S. presidency: "The man who could have been the President of the States long ago, had he chosen to sink his views, is Bob Ingersoll, and he may even yet occupy the position. He is a first-rate lawyer, a splendid orator, and a thorough gentleman."

Mr. A. B. Moss had fair audiences at Barnsley and gave satisfaction. We hear that the new Branch expects good results from the meetings.

Last time Mr. Foote visited Grimsby the Branch held a crowded tea-meeting before the evening lecture. The function is to be repeated on Dec. 4, when Mr. Foote is to visit Grimsby again. There is only accommodation for seventy-five, and those who wish to join the gathering should apply early for tickets, which will be one shilling each. The tea will be a substantial one; in fact, the Grimsby ladies are hard to beat in this direction. Any profit will accrue to the Branch, and be spent in propaganda.

Mr. J. W. Wittering, secretary of the Grimsby Branch, reports that the sale of the *Freethinker* is increasing in the town. Mr. Wittering's sale in his own shop is ten copies a week better than before Mr. Foote's last visit. The increase seems pretty general in the north of England. Last week we printed a larger edition, the previous week's containing our Tennyson article, having run out of print on Saturday morning.

## CHRISTIANITY NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT.

[CONCLUDED.]

The author's arguments from Scripture are equally effective. The inspired writers authoritatively denounce unbelief as guilt, and insist on faith as a virtue of the highest order. It is even said, What is not of faith is sin. Did Christ lay the arguments and proofs of his mission frankly before his disciples, and then give them time to consider calmly of their force, and liberty to determine thereon as their reason should direct them? Or did they, when thoroughly persuaded, ever take such course themselves amongst their intended proselytes? No. He taught as one having authority. He demanded faith, and declared, He that is not with me is against me. He declared that it was a foolish and adulterous generation that desired a sign. He did not tell his disciples to argue the matter with unbelievers. The dust was to be forthwith shaken off against them and the doom pronounced. Christ's miracles, had not, and were not even intended to have, any evidential value. He declared no sign should be given to that generation, and when he wrought a cure, told the patient, See thou tell no man. He required faith first, and said, According to your faith be it unto you. He never thought of saying to the virtuous unbeliever, Well done, good though unfaithful servant; thou hast disbelieved from prejudices which I myself gave thee; enter thou, therefore, in the joy of thy Lord. No! He said, He that denyeth me I will deny before my father in heaven.

Paul declared he was determined to know nothing else but Christ and him crucified; he proclaimed his gospel not as a natural and rational but as a supernatural and divine revelation. God, he declared, had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 2). Writing to the Thessalonians,

he said he thanked God without ceasing "because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 13). This was in the very spirit of Jesus, who rebuked the sceptical Thomas for requiring confirmation of his resurrection, and said, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed" (John xx. 29); roundly declaring also "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). Paul gives the experience of all true Christians when he says, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7); and "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). "For the weapons of our warfare," says he "are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 4, 5).

Throughout the history of Christendom the appeal of the Church has usually been made to faith. It is only in modern times that reason has been deferred to; and ever since the history of the Church has been a series of accommodations. Still, with the mass of Christians all relating to religion is based on authority. They receive it because others receive it. The Catholic Church endorses Dodwell's contention, "That the giving all men leave to determine of the gospel as the matter shall appear to their reason, is, if it happen to appear otherwise than true, a liberty entirely destructive of a true faith, authorising infidelity in form, and setting it upon the same footing, in point of conscience, with the profession of Christianity itself. Now if infidelity be justifiable any one moment of our lives, who shall tell me what moment it ceased to be so?"

Sometimes the irony of the author lurks out, as when he says, "All the articles of faith are repugnant to reason, as Lord Bacon has shown in his *Paradoxes*."\* The children of this world learn science, but believers do not so learn Christ. Progress in carnal wisdom is retrogression in the knowledge of the gospel. He points out, moreover, that theologians never give more than a half-hearted hearing to reason. "The arguments proposed are to be constantly all on one side, and they are ready to contend earnestly, provided none shall contradict them in earnest." If reason is pushed, they fall back on mystery, faith, and authority. "They understood the nature of their religion well and consulted her interests wisely who have constantly committed to the flames the pestilential writings of Infidels, and their persons too, whenever it has been in their power, as a sacrifice due to the common safety of souls, and to prevent any dangerous tendency from the communications of such alarms. This, I say, has ever been the well-judged practice among the greater and more prudential part of the champions of Christianity." If all things are to be settled by reason, there should be no support of religion by the civil magistrate; no universities endowed to teach it; and parents should leave the minds of their children free. The only thing that can lead to unanimity and certainty is "a constant and particular revelation imparted separately and supernaturally to every individual." This inner light Dodwell proposes as the true foundation and assurance of religion; and he winds up in a truly pious manner with the exhortation, "My son, trust thou in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Such is a rough outline of one of the most acute and philosophical tracts of the last century. It re-opened all those questions in dispute between Reason and Rome. It showed how much religion was founded on emotion, and that reason cannot be accepted as a guide without the main claims of religion being relinquished. Philosophy and faith are at variance. The basis of the one is examination and scepticism, that of the other submission and faith. Tertullian was right when he said *credo quia absurdum et quia impossibile est*. Faith is the foundation of religion. Even the Theist must believe far more than he can comprehend, or than reason can uphold. Admit a creator and why should you refuse to swallow transubstantiation. It is only the first step which costs. Those who admit a being who made everything out of nothing are on the road to swallowing their own god, or any other irrational absurdity.

J. M. W.

\* A work ascribed to Bacon, really the production of Herbert Palmer.

## SECULAR PROGRESS IN LONDON.

It is sad to find that several London Branches have no meeting places for Sunday evening lectures during the winter season. Something must be done and at once to organise our forces in London. There is greater competition now than in the past—not competition with the church and chapel parties, but with such bodies as the Sunday League and the Sunday Society. Many hundreds are attracted to their various entertainments and lectures. The Socialists and Democrats (to which party many earnest Freethinkers have attached themselves) hold many large and small meetings on Sunday evenings, as will be seen by reference to the Sunday papers. Therefore it is necessary for us to look well to our laurels and see that some of our London Branches are better organised and supported, and that halls are provided in the various districts for Freethinkers to attend on Sunday evenings.

If certain Branches are too poor to obtain halls, help should be forthcoming from headquarters, or a fund should be raised for this special purpose. The sum of £3 per week would be sufficient to keep six small halls going in London. These could be at Peckham, Lambeth or Kennington, Westminster or Pimlico, Hammersmith, Paddington, and Finsbury Park district. A hall or room to hold 100 to 150 could surely be obtained for six shillings per night, and it would be much better to have a small place than none at all—in fact a room that will hold fifty persons would be preferable to no meeting place. As the audiences increased larger premises could be taken.

There are many good and capable lecturers in London who are almost, if not entirely, disengaged during the winter season, and it is really a great pity that their services cannot be utilised the whole year round. Some of these lecturers would no doubt give their services free, merely charging their travelling expenses, until the scheme was a financial success, particularly as there are about sixty Fabian lecturers who will give their services free of any charge whatever. There are Freethought lecturers living in nearly each of the districts mentioned, and if each gave one free lecture a month in his own neighborhood it would be a great help to the cause. Those who will do so might notify to that effect.

Beside the rent of the hall, a thousand handbills (cost about 5s.) would be required each month, announcing the lectures. These should be well distributed, most of them pasted up in conspicuous places by the more energetic members; and what with the announcements in the Freethought journals and the Sunday papers, good audiences should be obtained, as many people prefer a lecture to a sermon. If possible a little select music should precede the lecture—music is the attraction at places of worship, therefore the Freethinkers must adopt this method of attraction. Having an entertainment once a month is a good plan, as it brings people to the hall who would not come to hear a lecture, but come after being used to the place. Besides, people don't want to be continually lectured at; they desire a little amusement. The lectures and entertainments should be free, with collection, but a small charge might be made for front seats at the lectures, as there are surely many Freethinkers who would not mind help paying the expenses in this way, as they must know that the N.S.S. is not endowed. If there is any surplus after expenses are paid the lecturers should have it; then each lecturer will be paid according to his ability to attract. If there is not enough to pay the lecturer's travelling expenses they should be paid by the N.S.S. or special fund raised for the purpose, as before mentioned.

This good work could be carried on by the various London Branches if there was any exchequer to go to in case of need. It is not to be expected that the poorer Freethinkers shall find the money for any deficiency, while at the same time they have to give their time, attention and energy to manage these indoor meetings; therefore it becomes the duty of the well-to-do Freethinkers to furnish the sinews of war, and thus spread the gospel of Freethought the whole year round. If twelve friends will only subscribe five shillings per week to a special fund for this express purpose the venture could be started at once. The sum of £3 per week will be sufficient. Some of the proposed rooms or halls will be sure to pay their way, and others will only require a little help. Then if the scheme is successful more halls could be started in other districts and thus advocate our principles and establish Sunday meeting places throughout the great metropolis.

A. W.

## CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS.

What have the Dogma and the Legend done for the education of the world? What benefits have flowed to humanity from the great Church organisations? It is impossible to discover any benefits that have not been accidental to the system, nor due to the goodness of individuals who have been enlisted in the service of the Church. It is not the system which has made civilisation, but civilisation which has softened and gradually transformed the system. It has been common, for example, to say that Christianity or the Bible has made England great. On the contrary, it is the vigor of of English intellect and humanity which has been constantly impressing itself on the spirit and teaching of the Church from the time of the Reformation. Since the multitude became possessed of the Bible, they have made the Bible echo their own sentiments, which have become more and more humane. The interpretation of the Bible changes with each generation, and so measures the progress of culture. But the attempt to cling, from old habit and affection, to the mediæval literature, has led at last to a great confusion of ideas. Nominally we are Christians, but really we mean humanity. The Creed is still recited, though not an article remains intact in general belief. The New Testament is revered, yet none thinks of obeying its plainest rules of conduct. There is little spirit of persecution, because no dogma commands a hearty assent. Experience is our master, and as experience shows that the life of the rebel against the dogma may be purer and nobler than that of its professional supporter, a coldness towards all dogma has set in. Enthusiasm for it cannot be kindled; yet the people do not willingly hear it oppugned. In such a time of lukewarmness the influence of true teachers, who know that the study of facts must precede the formation of opinions, and that in the knowledge of the facts that concern us lies our salvation, is enfeebled.—*Edwin Johnson, M.A., "The Rise of Christendom," pp. 487-488.*

## OBITUARY.

Died at Brighton, Oct. 25, aged 73, Mr. W. Marshall, formerly of Edinburgh, where he was with Mrs. Marshall well-known among Freethinkers, being at first a leading member of Mr. Cranbrook's congregation, and afterwards of the Secular Society. At the funeral, addresses were delivered by the Rev. A. Hope (advanced Unitarian) and Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who highly extolled the departed. As his concluding words Mr. Holyoake said: "Mr. Marshall was always in front if a principle needed to be vindicated, and he was content to be in the crowd if others would go forward. Anyhow, he was at hand, and could always be counted upon. Once convinced that a question was useful and ought to be advanced, he stood by it; he never distrusted and he never deserted it. We shall see his tall, pictureque form no more, but his example and his trusty comradeship will not soon die out of our memory. He trusted in Truth—it was his pride in his life and his peace in death, and will be his justification at any tribunal he may find hereafter, where good faith, good intent, and sincerity are respected. We may say to the visitor at his grave—

Honest men you seldom meet—  
Here lies one beneath your feet;  
Let it to the world be known  
You are one who reads this stone."

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE N.S.S.

SPECIAL FUND.—E. Barreylett, 2s. 3d.; W. H. West, 1s.; W. H. Leekey, 2s.; J. Baines, 2s. 6d.; J. Garven, 3s. 6d.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—Battersea Branch (omitted), 15s.; Westminster Branch, £1; Wood Green Branch, 10s.; Alpha, 1s.; J. Briereley, 1s.; Hanley Branch, 1s. 8d.; H. Unger, 2s. 6d.  
E. M. VANCE, *Assistant Sec.*

## HOW TO HELP US.

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

## A CONVERSION.

THERE lived a Christian youth of noble mien,  
Virtue and Mind were written on his brow;  
His creed was an Ideal, yet, I ween  
His own Ideal, for his faith did show  
In the strong light that set his bright eyes all aglow.

There came one day a Tempter, offering power—  
The sway of mighty empires—to the youth;  
Ah, piteous was the struggle in that hour—  
A human mind choosing or power or truth—  
Reckless Ambition racks the righteous without ruth.

Failing with this, the Tempter offered Love—  
Love such as looks from longing limpid eyes;  
Love shrined in glorious beauty—and to move  
The youth to dalliance, wine; but in no guise  
Could he succeed through mixing truth and subtle lies.

Then came unto the youth an aged man,  
Whose name is Reason; by his kind address  
And simple truths he taught the youth to scan  
His bright Ideal, 't learn it did possess  
Nothing that might his fellow creatures bless;  
That 'twas a fairy castle built on nothingness.

RON MAHON.

## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Powis Hoult has published through Messrs. Chapman and Hall *Dialogues on the Efficacy of Prayer*, in which arguments on the side of scientific scepticism and of supernaturalism are placed in juxtaposition. This is an easy way for a writer to escape responsibility for any bad arguments either way and is likely to please neither side, though as Mr. Hoult gives the final word to faith he is probably to be classed with believers. The chief argument advanced on the affirmative side is the universality of the belief in the efficacy of prayer. But Mr. Hoult does not point out that no more can be claimed than could at one time be claimed for magic and witchcraft, nor notice that the belief in prayer is, like these analogous beliefs, declining with advancing knowledge.

*Ethnology in Folk Lore*, by Mr. G. L. Gomme, president of the Folk Lore Society, is one of the most interesting books yet published in the series of "Modern Science," edited by Sir John Lubbock.

The *Conversations of Dr. Doellinger*, recently translated by Katharine Gould, record that when, in 1871, he was excommunicated, for writing against the newly decreed Papal Infallibility, he was in canonical law declared to be "the lawful prey of any mad fanatic." There were mad fanatics in Munich who contemplated a violent attack upon him, of which he was warned by the police.

The *Liberty Annual* for 1893 (Watts and Co.; 6d.) is edited as before by W. S. Crawshay and Frederick Millar. Mrs. Fawcett opens with a vigorous article on "Liberty for Women." Alfred Milnes writes on "The Vaccination Fiasco." Mr. Auberon Herbert contributes a short, characteristic article on "Politics and Politicians"—doubting the utility of both. Other articles are directed against Trade Unionism, with insufficient discrimination; and there is one against the Taxation of Ground Rents. Religious Liberty, which is the essence of all other liberty, is without a voice in this number of the *Annual*.

**SUMMONING OLD NICK.**—A little girl was seen digging a deep hole. The gardener saw her. She thought she was unobserved. It was in a very shady corner of the garden, where she occupied herself for some time with tremendous energy. Finally she filled up the hole and stamped the earth down with her spade. Then she hurried away back to the nursery. The gardener thought he would like to find out what the child had been doing. She must surely have been burying something. He took his spade and dug to the bottom of the excavation. He found a piece of paper carefully folded, and written upon it in large capital letters, of a very elementary caligraphy, these words, "Dear, good Mr. Devil, come and fetch Aunt Sarah at once."

## PROFANE JOKES.

"Is Dr. Sixthly an influential man?" "He prayed for rain last Sunday and the congregation was drenched."

"What is conscience?" asked the Sunday-school teacher. "It's what makes you sorry when you get found out," replied a juvenile.

Presiding Elder (to Dakota merchant)—"Can you tell me where Rev. Mr. Masher lives?" "He lives two blocks up the street, but he ain't at home now." "Not at home?" "No, he's away on a vacation." "Did he take his wife?" "No, but he took mine."

Clergyman's Daughter—"Did you notice that papa didn't pray as usual to-day? He didn't pray that his health might be preserved to enable him to go on with his great work." Clergyman's Son—"Of course not; it is getting near vacation time."

"Don't weep, my friend," said the pastor to the sorrowing widower, as he stood beside his wife's coffin; "don't weep, she has gone to heaven." "Yes, I know she has gone there," replied the afflicted man, "and that is what makes it so hard to bear, as I might meet my other two dead wives up there."

## 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, Ida White, "The Story of a Soul—a Reply to the Mahatma Theory" (2d. and 4d.); 9.15, social gathering. Monday at 8, dramatic and musical entertainment and dancing (3d. and 6d.) Friday at 8, C. Cohen, "Astronomical Science, II.—the Sun."

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Past and Future of Secularism." Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class (astronomy). Wednesday at 9, C. Cohen's class on "Spencer's Ethics." Saturday at 8.30, concert and dance. Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Doom of the Gods."

Edmonton—North Middlesex Hall, Fore-street: 6.30, music; 7, Dr. Alice Vickery, "The Population Question."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.O.: 11.15, Touzeau Parris, "The Rights of Labor" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, Touzeau Parris, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless" (3d., 6d., and 1s.) Wednesday at 8, Mrs. Louisa Samsom, "Prayer" (free).

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday at 8, F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "A Criticism of the Roman Catholic Position."

Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street: Friday at 8.30, members' monthly meeting.

West London Ethical Society, Princes' Hall, Piccadilly: 11.15, Stanton Coit, Ph.D., "The Social Education of Working Men and Women"; preceded by instrumental music.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Free-thought."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture

## COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Hall No. 4, upstairs): 6.30, monthly concert.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street. Charles Watts, 11, "Education, Secular and Theological—a Reply to the Bishop of Manchester"; 7, "Christ on the War-path."

Blackburn—Spinners' Institute, Peter-street: O. Trumper, 3, "The Lord hath made all things for himself"; 6.20, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him?"; business meeting at 2.

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: John Grange will lecture at 3 and 6.30.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, important members' meeting; every member should attend.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, W. B. Thompson, "Saints and Sinners"; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "A Long Life and a Happy One" (6d., members half price).

Derby—44 Howard-street: 7.30, musical evening.

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, G. Faulkner, "The Power of the Intellect"; 6.30, A. Paul, "Poor Devil."

Glasgow—St. Rollox Eclectic Society, Toynbee Hall, Parson-street: Tuesday at 8, J. Gilbert, "The Iron Law of Wages."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: Stanley Jones, 11, "Is there Evidence of the Existence of God?"; 3, "The Fall of Man"; 7, "Is Genesis in Conflict with Science?"

Manchester N.B.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': social evening. Tuesday at 8, debating society, Mr. Morley, "Is Theology Reasonable?"

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, G. Selkirk, "We Seek for Truth."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 3, children's meeting; 7, Mr. Lord, "Selections from the Poets." Tuesday at 8, debating class.

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

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, mutual improvement class, Mr. Loveridge, "Free Trade v. Protection"; 6, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Stoddart, a Reading.  
 Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, F. C. V. Harcourt, "The Church and the Stage."  
 South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting; 7.30, entertainment.  
 Ulster—Crown Chambers, 64 Royal Avenue: 7, G. H. Gilliland, "Apology for Plain Speaking."  
 Wolverhampton — People's Coffee Tavern, 48 Bilston-street: 6.30, committee meeting; 7, general meeting, important business.

**LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.**

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

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Nov. 6, Deptford; 13, Camberwell; 23, Hall of Science; 27, e., Libra Hall. Dec. 4, Portsmouth; 11, Camberwell; 18, Libra Hall.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 6, m., Walworth Radical Club; e., Woolwich. Dec. 6, Bermondsey Institute; 18, New Brompton.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Nov. 13, e., Edmonton; 20, Manchester; 27, Lambeth.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Nov. 4, Battersea; 6, m., Battersea; e., Libra Hall; 11, Battersea; 13, Libra Hall; 18, Battersea; 20, Chatham; 25, Battersea; 27, Birmingham. Dec. 4, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell; 8, Walthamstow; 11, Libra Hall; 18, Edmonton.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—Nov. 20, Edmonton. Jan. 1, Chatham; 29, Camberwell.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.O.—Nov. 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester; 14, Pendlebury; 20, Blackburn; 27, Milton Hall. Dec. 4, Sunderland; 18, South Shields; 25, Edinburgh. Jan. 1, Aberdeen; 8, Glasgow.

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