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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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KEIR HARDIE ON CHRIST.

FOR some time the Labor leaders have been assiduously courted by the Churches. It is reckoned good business to have one on exhibition at Congresses and Conferences. Ben Tillett is in frequent request as a preacher. Tom Mann, who was once heterodox, is now declared by the *Christian Commonwealth* to be a member of a Christian Church. "We are not aware," our contemporary says, "that John Burns is opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ."

This appropriation of the Labor leaders is an excellent piece of strategy. Churches have seldom had the harmlessness of doves, but they have generally had the cunning of serpents. They often stoop, but always to conquer. And this is precisely what they are doing in the present case.

A year or two ago a leading Socialist, who is also an Atheist, remarked to us how the clericals were creeping into the Socialist movement. "Yes," we observed, "and they will appropriate and stifle it. They will talk about the Socialism of Jesus Christ, bamboozle your followers, and get them out of your control. Then the Socialism will gradually disappear, and Jesus Christ will be left in sole possession of the field. The clericals, in fact, will trump your best cards, if you let them take part in the game."

We warn the Labor leaders, whether they listen to us or not, that they are coquetting with the historic enemy of the people. All religion is a consecration of the past, and every minister is at heart a priest. The social and political object of Churches is to keep things as they are; or, if they *must* be altered, to control the alteration in the interest of wealth and privilege. Fine words may be uttered and popular sentiments may be echoed; but history teaches us that when the leaders of religion talk in this way, they are serving their one great purpose as surely as when they curse and damn the rebellious multitude.

The course of events will show whether we are right or wrong. Meanwhile let us "return to our sheep." Not that Mr. Keir Hardie is a sheep. We don't mean that, though he is certainly being attended to by the wolves.

Mr. Keir Hardie has been interviewed by the *Christian Commonwealth*. "His father," we are informed, "is a very vigorous and militant Atheist, so that the son was brought up without any religious belief." To some extent we believe this is true. Mr. Hardie's brother, and another member of the family, attended our last lectures at Glasgow. But we do not understand that Mr. Keir Hardie was ever a professed Atheist, or a member of any Freethought society. The scepticism he was "weaned from" by the Evangelical Union Church could hardly have been of a very robust order. He seems to have imbibed a sentimental form of Christianity as easily and comfortably as a cat laps milk.

During his last election contest the statement was circulated that Mr. Keir Hardie was an Atheist. "Whereupon," we are told, "Dr. James Morison, the

venerable founder of the Evangelical Union, and Dr. Fergusson, of Glasgow, both wrote in the most eulogistic terms to a local clergyman as to Mr. Hardie's moral character and religious work in Scotland." This is extremely affecting. It is good to see parliamentary candidates walking about with certificates of moral character—written out by a local minister. It is also reassuring to find that such a certificate is an absolute answer to the charge of Atheism. No doubt Mr. Keir Hardie will print the testimonial as a postscript to his next election address at West Ham.

Mr. Keir Hardie calls himself a Christian. He does not say, however, if he believes in the supernatural part of the Gospels. Does he accept the New Testament miracles? Does he embrace the Incarnation and Resurrection? If he does, he is a Christian. If he does not, he has no more right to call himself a Christian than we have to call ourselves a Buddhist or a Mohammedan.

The Christianity of the schools, Mr. Keir Hardie says, is dead or dying. By this he means "the old theological sects." But here we should like him to be more explicit. Does he think there can be a Christianity *without* "theology"? Or does he mean that the "sects" comprise all persons who have more theology than himself?

But if the Christianity of schools is dead or dying, the "humanitarian Christianity of Christ is again coming to the front." Now what is this humanitarian Christianity of Christ? Upon this point Mr. Keir Hardie throws but a single ray of light. "The whole of Christ's teachings and conduct," he says, "proves that he was intensely interested in the bodily welfare of those with whom he came in contact as a preparative to their spiritual well-being." This is a clear statement; all we now want is the clear proof. Mr. Keir Hardie should give it. We believe he cannot; nay, we defy him to do so. It is idle to cite the so-called "miracles of healing." They were occasional and special; they had as much effect on the "bodily welfare" of the Jewish people as tickling has on the gait of an elephant; and as for their being a "preparative to spiritual well-being," we may ask the "humanitarian Christians of Christ" to tell us, if they can, how much of this quality was afterwards displayed by the ladies and gentlemen who were the lucky subjects (or objects) of Christ's miracles. Mr. Keir Hardie might also recollect that the said miracles, if they ever happened, are of no "bodily" importance to the present generation. Humanitarians of to-day are unable to work miracles; they have to sow the seed of progress, and await its natural harvest.

Mr. Keir Hardie is undoubtedly an earnest social reformer. We wish him all success in his efforts to raise the workers and procure for them a just share of the produce of their industry. Some of his methods may be questionable without affecting his sincerity. If we all saw eye to eye there would be no problems to settle. What we object to is the fond imagination that any light upon the labor question,

or any actual social problem, can be found in the teachings of Christ. Jesus of Nazareth never taught industry, or forethought, or any of the robust virtues of civilisation. On one occasion he said that his kingdom was not of this world. He might certainly have said so of his teaching. It is all very well for Mr. Keir Hardie to assert that our "industrial system is foreign to the spirit of Christianity." What is the spirit of Christianity? Twenty different things in as many different minds. Some industrial system is a necessity, and whatever it is you will never find its real principles in the Gospels. Christ's one social panacea was "giving to the poor," and this is the worst of all "reforms." It only disguises social evils. The world could do very well without "charity" if it only had justice and common sense.

Charles Bradlaugh, the Atheist, was laughed at for advocating the compulsory cultivation of waste lands. He wanted to see labor and capital employed upon them, even if they yielded no rent to landlords. Mr. Keir Hardie, the Christian, also desires to bring the people into "contact with nature and mother earth," though his recipe, of "open spaces laid down in grass" seems ludicrously inadequate. The loss of this contact, he told his interviewer, is "accountable for much of the Atheism which is a natural product of city life." This "tender thought" was spoken in a voice "which sank almost to a whisper." Very naturally it struck the interviewer as "the finest and most beautiful of Mr. Hardie's utterances."

Both the interviewer and Mr. Keir Hardie forgot a fact of Christian history. Christianity spread in the towns of the Roman Empire. The pagans were the villagers—*paganus* meaning a countryman or rustic. Possibly some of the pagans said to themselves, "Ah, this Christianity is a natural product of the towns."

The diagnosis is in both cases empirical. In a certain sense, however, Mr. Keir Hardie has touched a truth. Progressive ideas must always originate in the keen life of cities. But in another sense Mr. Keir Hardie is mistaken. He seems to regard Atheism as a city malady, like rickets and anemia. Now this is untrue. It is also absurd. Mr. Keir Hardie would find a good many of these "afflicted" Atheists able to make mincemeat of his "humanitarian Christianity of Christ." He would also find, if he cared to look, a great many of them in the Socialist camp. It would be rare sport to see Mr. Keir Hardie defending his "new school" Christianity against the young bloods of the Fabian Society, though it might necessitate the interference of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty.

But we do not wish to part from Mr. Keir Hardie in a spirit of sarcasm. If he is a hopeless sentimentalist there is no more to be said; but, if he is capable of reason in matters of religion, we appeal to him, in all sincerity, not to press the new wine of Humanitarianism into the old bottles of Christianity. He will only break the bottles and lose the wine. We also implore him to cease talking nonsense about Christianity being "a life, and not a doctrine." It never can be the one without the other. Finally, we beg him to consider what is the real value of Christianity, if, after all these centuries, it is necessary to put "humanitarian" in front of it, in order to give it a chance in decent society. G. W. FOOTÉ.

MORALITY AND RELIGION.—One great element of religion—that moral element which among the higher nations forms its most vital part—is indeed little represented in the religion of the lower races. It is not that these races have no moral sense or no moral standard; for both are strongly marked among them, if not in formal precept, at least in that traditional consensus of society which we call public opinion, according to which certain actions are held to be good or bad, right or wrong. It is to the conjunction of ethics and animistic philosophy, so intimate and powerful in the higher culture, seems scarcely yet to have begun in the lower.—*Dr. E. B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture,"* vol. i., p. 427.

PARASITES.

THE subject of parasites is not an attractive one, but it is one which throws some little light on the nature of nature. It has its ramifications in all directions, from the lowest organisms up to the highest social developments. Parasitism is only one department of that universal system of prey, of life substituting on life, which is one of the difficulties of the belief that nature is the result of the contrivance of some all-wise and all-good Creator.* Here, however, the difficulty is, if possible, intensified, since fully one-half of existing species are parasites—that is, beings who can only live in, on, and at the expense—often at the torture also—of others. Swift, in his *Poetry a Rhapsody*, has the well-known lines:

So naturalists observe, a flea
Has smaller fleas that on him prey;
And these have smaller still to bite 'em,
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.†

This may not be taken strictly to the foot of the letter, but it is not without some foundation in fact. Prof. Rudolf Leuckhart, the chief authority on Parasites on Man, mentions that water-lice and threadworms are found on parasitic crustaceans, and the endoparasitic larvæ of some *Hymenoptera* are themselves preyed on by other larvæ. With the increase of microscopic power comes the increase of our knowledge of life. Must and rust are found to be alive. Disease is more and more discovered to be but another manifestation of life. The rotting carcass enables many to live. A pitched battle is constantly going on within us between the cells which make for our individual life and the organisms which tend to our dissolution and the consequent life of others. While men are suffering, bacilli are having a high old time. A tumor supports the lives of countless hydatids. A contagious disorder means the pullulating prosperity of innumerable parasites. The curing of the disease means the destruction of myriads of God-created microbes. What a consolation when down with typhus fever to know you are contributing to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of typhoid germs. God maketh even the wrath of man to praise him, and there may be more rejoicing in heaven over one parasite than over ninety and nine of the species it torments.

The special parasites of man are estimated by Cobbold, at as many as 121 distinct species, infesting most of our organs, including liver, kidneys, bladder, bronchial glands, muscles, blood, and brain. A chief characteristic of all parasites—seen even in the human parasites on the commonwealth—is their fecundity. A louse may become very much of a grandfather within a fortnight. Leuckhart points out that the tapeworm has an average life of two years, during which time it produces about 1500 proglottides, each containing some 57,000 ova. Since, fortunately for us, tapeworms on the whole are not increasing, it follows that the divine Creator creates ova which only have about one chance in 85 millions of reaching maturity. The Theist may be sure that not a single germ develops without the divine guidance of the All-Sustainer. What an argument for the teleologist does this organism present, adding joint upon joint within the human intestines, this unbidden

* "Ehonqui [a New Zealander] evidently considered that the whole analogy of nature was in favor of cannibalism. He was surprised at the horror of it felt by D'Urville. Big fish, he said, eat little fish; insects devour insects; large birds feed upon small ones; it is in accordance with the whole analogy of nature that men should eat their enemies."—Sir John Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, pp. 371, 372.

† Prof. Auguste de Morgan, in his *Budget of Paradoxes*, gives the lines:

Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em,
And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*;
And the great fleas themselves in turn have greater fleas to go on
While these again have greater still, and greater still, and so on;

guest growing day by day as its host becomes more and more emaciated, until it reaches some twenty or thirty feet, and must be expelled or its victim succumb.

The social organism, as we have already remarked, has its analogues to the physical organism. The Established Church reminds one of the tapeworm. It lives at the expense of society, without contributing in the least to its support. It consumes without producing, and thrives by the impoverishment of the general body. What good purpose it serves is like the merits of parasites in general, known only to the Deity.

J. M. WHEELER.

"THE RELIGION OF THE BODY."

ON Saturday evening, October 29, Sir Andrew Clark, President of the Royal College of Physicians, delivered a lecture upon the above subject in the Birmingham Athletic Institute. It was rather a novel idea to identify religion with gymnastics, cricket and football. It was another indication that Christians feel the necessity, in order to bring their faith in touch with modern life, of associating with it the secular agencies of life. In its popular aspect religion has been supposed to refer to what is termed the "spiritual nature of man." The rising generation, however, display far more devotion to secular pastimes than they do to the ceremonies of the churches. Sir A. Clark is at the head of a profession whose chief function it is to attend to the body, and, in introducing him to the meeting, Sir Walter Foster, M.P., described him as "the titular head of the medical profession, and one of the most eloquent leaders of the thought of our times." The secular importance of the subject and the position of the speaker justify a consideration of certain statements made and inferences drawn on the occasion by "one of the most eloquent leaders" of modern thought.

Sir Andrew Clark called obedience to the laws of the body "physiological righteousness," and disobedience thereto "physiological sin," and he urged that there was "no forgiveness of sins against nature." He not only asserted that living in harmony with the laws of nature was "the one thing needful," but he affirmed that the state of the body influenced "the other parts also." It is here that the speaker begins to manifest confusion of thought, and allows assumption to take the place of facts. The "other parts" mentioned are supposed to be entities other than the body. He takes the case of a child, in whom, he says, there are not only life, body, and mind, but there is also spirit. Surely the first three named should have been sufficient to constitute what he terms "trinity in unity" of "a Religion of the body"; but Sir A. Clark discovers his trinity in body, mind, and spirit, and these three are one, and the unity "is a trinity—three natures in one person. The body is related to the material world, the mind to the animal creation, the spirit to God." This division of the complex being called man is obviously not a scientific one. Is not the body also in relation to what is called the animal creation? And what are we to understand by the term "spirit"? The eminent lecturer says that "if he had time he could show what the virtue he called spirit—but which Agnostic philosophers called the Supreme Unknown—was capable of becoming." He then alleged that this "spirit" produces within man "notions of right, wrong, and of conscience." But Agnosticism does not consider the agencies that determine "right and wrong" as "the Supreme Unknown." It may be quite true that there are forces in the universe of which at present we have no knowledge; but it is also true that we are not entirely ignorant of the causes of "notions of right and wrong" and of what produces conscience. These mental conditions are

the results of a certain physical organisation and of education; these influence human character during its development. Ideas of right and wrong grow out of a knowledge of natural law, which law of course Agnosticism does not term "the Supreme Unknown."

The lecturer was good enough to say that the body was not an inferior part of man, and that it was not to be despised or treated with contumely, "as many good and pious people used to think, and did still think." This should furnish an object lesson to those orthodox believers who are inclined to reverence the texts of scripture, which speak of "our vile body," and advise to "Fear not them that kill the body." "Mortify your members which are upon the earth," and "I know that in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing." We are glad to see, that in this "Religion of the body," slavish adherence to Bible teaching is condemned.

Sir A. Clark loses his eminence as a "leader of thought" when he approaches the realms of theology. For instance, he described the world as a vast Loan Society. "The body was lent to us to take care of; to make the best of it." But it should be remembered that we were no party to the borrowing, and that many unfortunate persons are prevented from making "the best of it," in consequence of the nature and conditions of the "loan." For he also informs us that we are all liable to suffer through the misuse of the "loan" by our fathers three or four generations before we were born. He does not even hint that there is any cruelty or injustice in this: On the contrary, he states that all these sad consequences felt by the unoffending, innocent children are the results of "ordinances of heaven." He further adds, "The body did not make itself, the laws did not make themselves. These laws were commandments of God." Obedience to these laws he calls "Physical religion," and "the duty is nowhere better seen than in the infliction of penalties upon their violation." He does not, however, attempt to explain how the children of the fourth generation who are visited with the sins of their fathers can be justly said to commit "a violation" of "the natural laws" upon which a penalty is put by God. He says it was "decreed" and "it was literally true." And it is equally true that penalties are imposed upon some persons who have not disobeyed. This may be in accordance with the divine plan, but it is the very opposite of human justice.

Now while it is quite true that many individuals who neglect the laws of their being, and that others who are ignorant of them, may and do suffer, there is a monstrous miscarriage of justice if a person is decreed to be punished for the ignorance or neglect of someone else. It is one thing to suffer inevitable evils, but it is quite another matter to assume and to assert that God purposely intended that one man should have the "loan" of a body and spoil it, and that a member of a subsequent generation should pay for the damage. But even this is not the worst part of it. The body "lent" was bequeathed by a father of a previous generation, without any consideration as to the liability involved. To ascribe the whole transaction to "heaven" or "God" destroys every feeling of gratitude in the breast of one who has to carry this imperfect body, with all its attendant miseries, from the cradle to the grave.

Sir A. Clark reminds us of the old-time beliefs in speaking of "violations," "breaking" the laws of nature, of their not "making" themselves, and of their being "commandments of God." This kind of language might be expected from a bishop or from a Salvationist, but certainly not from an F.R.S. Such a "leader of thought" might fairly be supposed to know something of the efforts that have been made to show the misuse of the term "laws of nature" as if these laws were like acts of Parliament, something existing externally to nature and imposed upon it by God.

It seems necessary to repeat continually, for the edification of certain learned men, that by "laws of nature" is not meant something added to phenomena. It means nature's methods of movement, the way in which her forces work. A boy climbing a tree to steal apples may lose his footing, and falling break his leg or his neck, but not any law of nature. He may "break" some "law" against stealing apples, and neglect the advice of a philosopher, never to come down from any place faster than you go up. He has not, however, disobeyed the law of gravitation any more than the apples do which fall to the ground when they are ripe. The point is that the term as used by Sir A. Clark is misleading, and does not aid in the forming of accurate views as to the "laws" which govern human bodies.

If "the religion of the body" requires a "trinity" surely it does not need a Tower of Babel and a confusion of tongues. Of body, life, and mind, we know something, but what is known of spirit? Surely it is the height of orthodox absurdity to talk of a spirit that is independent of life and mind, having none of their attributes, and yet being so related to them that it can destroy their serenity. The cultivation of the human body may be called, if it is thought wise to do so, a religion, but it must be a religion of this world, unfettered by orthodox fancies and free from theological delusions.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE SABBATH.

An Infinite Being for infinite years

Was alone in an infinite void,

No sound ever broke on his infinite ears,

The silence was never destroyed

By the prayers, or the praise, or the curses of men—

Such things never soothed or excited him then.

No sight ever greeted his infinite view,

For in fact there was nothing to show.

All-knowing, 'tis certain that nothing he knew

Just because there was nothing to know.

In nothing his infinite skill was displayed;

He was Monarch of Nothing—'twas all he surveyed.

But at length, though we cannot pretend to say why,

The monotony irksome became.

He perceived, as unthinkable ages went by,

That his life was decidedly tame:

With nothing whatever to do, hear, or see—

No wonder he suffered a bit from ennui.

So he grumbled out lazily "Let there be light,"

And he hadn't a moment to wait.

Then he carefully rested a day and a night,

For he found the exertions so great.

If you ask why this trifling effort seemed vast,

Just think how inert was the infinite past.

For some time his labor each day was the same,

Though a different "work" was begun;

For he'd nothing to do but to mention the name

Of the thing he required to be done.

But when six days were over, he felt it was best,

For his health's sake, to give up the seventh to rest.

And that is the reason the Sabbath we keep

As a holy and laborless day.

Devoted to dinner, to God, drink and sleep,

How calmly it passes away.

How grateful to God we should be for this boon;

How thankful to think that his strength failed so soon.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

The Meenister—"And now, what do we lairn from the fate of these bairns that moskit Elisha, eh, Jock?"
Jock—"Nae tae misca' onybody whan there's beers about!"

Parson (to parishioner)—"Giles, I'm perfectly shocked! The idea of your bringing a bottle of beer to church with you!" Giles—"Well, paarson, ye maun own your sermons dew be mortal dry!"

CONSCIENCE.

"Conscience doth make cowards of us all."

WHAT is this conscience which, as Shakespeare truly remarks, makes cowards of all? A definition of the word is required; and here we have our greatest dramatist giving us an illustration which is at once a definition and an explanation.

"Conscience"—a combination of the two Latin words "con" (together) and "scire" (to know); that is to say, the building up or product of our knowledge. Thus the product of our knowledge forms a certain state in our minds which, by a sequence of events, makes cowards of us all.

A child strokes a dangerous animal with no knowledge of the evil effects of such contiguity with what is dangerous. It may truly be said the child has no conscience or consciousness of the evil. A child has no knowledge of many evils which sadly oppress it in more mature years—its conscience has not developed.

Can there be any question that "conscience" is developed by our increase of knowledge and years. That being so, is there any period in the life of a human being when "conscience" may be said to have no existence whatever? I think not. We know not what ideas and thoughts a new-born child may have when it first appears in this sphere of life, but there would be no doubt that ideas and thoughts present themselves to its young mind immediately upon its birth; that is, the product of its knowledge may also be said to commence its being.

Ideas and thoughts lead to action, and it is admitted by all scientists that our actions are controlled in a measure by the ideas, thoughts and actions of our ancestors. Therefore, in the first place, our "conscience" is formed in some degree by the conscience of our ancestors. The subject of "heredity" has been a favorite one with both physiologists and psychologists, and as we reproduce the physical proportions or peculiarities of our ancestors, so we, in the same measure, reproduce the mental or psychical peculiarities of our ancestors. Certain families are known by their peculiar gait, noses, or other features, and families are also known as inheriting passionate tempers, etc.

In the second place, our course of conduct is affected by our surroundings. Thus in an atmosphere of love and tenderness the young child itself becomes loving and tender, and the conscience is being formed thuswise.

In the third place, our course of conduct is affected by the religious, mental, and physical education which is given to us, commencing from our earliest youth; and our conscience is further being formed by the knowledge which it attains through these media.

In the fourth place, conscience is built up by observation; the mind observes and builds up its knowledge from what it sees and hears in our daily path through life.

And all these are acting together, and forming, or building up, what we call our conscience. Let us for the moment recapitulate these various instruments by which the conscience is thus built up.

1. By our hereditary instincts or traits.
2. By our surroundings from our earliest beginning of life.
3. By our education, religious, ethical, mental and physical.
4. By our powers of observation.

All these, therefore, combine together and, as a whole, go to make what we call our conscience. The question now arises whether the "conscience" which is so often mentioned by our spiritual pastors, and which is referred to in the scriptures, is the same conscience which, as we have seen above, is merely a growth wholly of ourselves, and not implanted within us by a so-called omnipotent creator.

Our parsons say, "Listen to the voice of your conscience." And let us see how the word is used in the scriptures. In that most beautiful allegory of the woman taken in adultery, related in St. John's gospel, we read these words: "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one." Here the word is clearly used in its legitimate sense—that is, the product of the knowledge which each of these persons possessed was sufficient to self-convict each one of them that they were not themselves blameless of such offence; and here one might be permitted to digress for a moment from the subject at present engaging our attention, by expressing regret that one of the most impressive events connected

with the life of Christ has been consigned, even by the most orthodox of ecclesiastics, to the region of romance; as we read in the Revised Version of the Bible that the conversation in reference to the woman taken in adultery is not to be found in the most ancient authorities. A serious study of this romance contains one of the most powerful sermons ever conveyed to the human ear—and yet it is a romance and nothing more.

St. Paul, in the Acts of the Apostles, says: "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." May we not be allowed to use a very powerful illustration here of the fact that conscience is simply a matter of human growth? Here we have a man who, by his own testimony, declares that from his youth he was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of his fathers and was zealous towards God, and yet persecuted unto death both men and women. Now if his conscience were something given to him by his God, it could not so have acted upon him as to impel him towards these enormities; but the fact is, his conscience was the product of the four component parts mentioned above, and purely and simply so, and not in any way a gift from God, or means whereby God declared to him the right and proper path to follow; and, being the result of his surroundings, education, observation, etc., he acted in what appeared to him a perfectly natural and legitimate manner. Strange to say, in several other portions of the writings attributed to him, he speaks of always having had a good conscience, although that same conscience impelled him at different periods of his life to exactly opposite methods of conduct. Could it be argued by even the most zealous Christian that this conscience of St. Paul's was the gift of God in each of these cases? Can it not be more safely argued that his conscience in each case was the product of his knowledge at the particular period of life which he had attained, and which impelled him to a particular course of conduct at that time.

The word "conscience" was apparently a favorite expression with St. Paul, as out of thirty times in which the word occurs in the New Testament, it is used no less than twenty-six times by St. Paul in his speeches and writings. He speaks "of a conscience void of offence"; "their conscience bearing witness therewith"; "my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost"; "the testimony of our conscience"; "asking no question for conscience sake"; using the same expression in one particular chapter, "shall not the conscience of him that is weak"; "out of a pure heart and of a good conscience"; "holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith, have made shipwreck."

The above are a few examples of St. Paul's use of the word. St. Paul traces errors of faith to a badly regulated conscience; so it is presumed he would call his anti-Christian period of life a time when he possessed a badly regulated conscience, although he never in his writings gives expressions to such ideas.

St. Peter speaks also of "having a good conscience." Turning to the Church of England Prayer-book, we find the word used several times in the preface. We also find the word used in one of the collects, "forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid," and the expression is quoted in numerous other portions of the book. We thus find it to be a popular expression both in the New Testament and in the Prayer-book, and used in a manner which denotes that, in the meaning of the writers, it is meant to express a state of feeling in ourselves given to us direct from God.

The object of this article is to draw serious attention to the wrong likely to be done to young and immature minds in teaching them that the voice of conscience is something to which they should pay the highest attention. Not for a moment is it argued that the voice of conscience is of no importance; on the contrary, it is of great importance, but cannot be relegated to the position of a supreme law in our future actions or methods of procedure.

Our education progresses and our powers of observation enlarge; and by each such progression and enlargement our conscience undergoes a change. It may be for the worse, or it may be for the better. People imagine and give expression to ideas, as if the conscience were some immaculate pope placed within our hearts, always at hand to lead us to right conduct.

It was the conscience of the Jews which crucified Christ, that burnt the early Christian martyrs; that perpetuated all the horrors of the Holy Inquisition; that burnt the

Protestants in Queen Mary's time, and tortured and imprisoned the Roman Catholics when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne. In the name of conscience some of the most horrible deeds which have disgraced humanity have been done, and yet we are called upon to follow "conscience" in whatever way it would direct us.

No, conscience used rightly, and in its true subordinate position, is a most efficacious agent in determining our conduct, but when it becomes our supreme master we are lost to all hope of true reform, and to a right appreciation of those changes in the study of duty and good conduct which different ages produce in different climes and in different people.

J. HARVEY SIMPSON.

GOD IN A GAS-PIPE.

IN the proclamation by the President of the United States, appointing Friday, October 21, the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, as a general holiday, he says: "In the churches and the other places of assembly of the people, let there be expressions of gratitude to Divine Providence for the devout faith of the discoverer, and for the divine care and guidance which has directed our history and so abundantly blessed our people." And in the dedicatory services held at the opening of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago on that day, the newspapers report: "As the strains of the music of the Columbia March, given by the orchestra, died away, Bishop C. H. Fowler, of California, one of the most eminent divines of the Methodist Church, arose in his place. The immense audience followed his example, and heads were bowed and hands clasped while the eminent divine gave thanks to the Almighty for what had already been accomplished, and besought the blessing of the Great Ruler of all upon what remained to be done. A hundred and fifty thousand throats voiced a fervent Amen! as the bishop resumed his seat." In the speeches which were delivered afterwards, the speakers had a great deal to say about God and his goodness to mankind in general, and to the Yankee nation in particular. But one of them, Mr. Henry Watterson, "took the cake" for crowding that mystic term, God—that "unknown quantity"—the most number of times into the least space, inasmuch as he managed to introduce it seven times in some four lines. He said: "God bless the children and their mothers! God bless our country's flag! And God be with us now and ever—God in the roof-tree's shade, and God on the highway—God in the winds and waves, and God in all our hearts!"

How's that for God? The speaker might have added, "And God in a piece of gas-pipe!" "God in a gas-pipe?" the reader exclaims. Yes, in a gas-pipe. Let me explain. On the same day and at about the same time that the right reverend sky-pilot of California gave thanks to "Almighty Gawd" for what he had done, and that the much-be-Gawded Watterson was so busy in putting Gawd in the flag, in the roof-tree's shade, on the highway, in the winds and waves, and as much of him, her, or it as was left into the hearts of the hundred and fifty thousand people ready, there and then, to give him, her, or it lodgment—on the same day, I say, this same Gawd was playing the devil with a piece of gas-pipe that was being used in the right reverend sky-pilot's own State in a humble, though doubtless as sincere a Columbus celebration as that held at Chicago.

At Los Angeles, California, on Columbus Day, a number of people, including many children, had crowded round the spot where preparations were being made to explode a piece of six-inch gas-pipe loaded with powder (and God). The contrivance exploded prematurely and caused dreadful havoc. Seven persons were killed outright, or received injuries from which they died soon afterward. Besides these, it is believed that at least five others were killed or fatally injured, while several others were seriously injured. One man was standing by holding his two little daughters by the hand; both girls were instantly killed, the side of one of them being entirely blown away.

So now you know what I meant by "God in a piece of gas pipe." Would it not seem that there was rather too much of his Gawdship in it, judging by the terrible results? And the question arises, if God *was* in the piece of gas pipe, was he, she or it, unceremoniously blown out, sky-high, at the time of the explosion? If God was present, and had the power to prevent so direful

a catastrophe, would not his, her, or its eternal annihilation by the explosion have been a fitting end to such a monster of cruelty?

What a farce, and what buncombe is the mouthing of such empty twaddle that prates of "divine Providence," and "the divine care and guidance which has so abundantly blessed our people," when viewed in the light of the disastrous occurrence mentioned above? What sycophantic and time-serving hypocrites these mortals be! They pretend to pay homage to a being that indicts—or has the power to prevent—such pitiful calamities upon themselves and their fellows, returning thanks and calling them instances of divine Providence; and yet they take care that they themselves do not put dependence in that same divine Providence they so supinely talk about. They put more faith in physic than Providence in warding off disease. They feel greater security in quarantine and sanitation than trusting to God's divine care as a safeguard against the cholera; have greater faith in the power of the Dollar Almighty than Gawd Almighty; and have insane asylums into which they would clap anybody who had the hardihood to live up to the letter of the so-called teachings of the God they make believe to worship.

And such is Christian consistency in this year of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by that tool of the Papacy and the Spanish throne—Columbus.

D. H. MARSHALL.

HOLY HARMONY IN AMERICA.

The recent census of the United States brings to light, in the Department of Religious Statistics, some facts of interest to the promoters of Church union. Four different denominations have each appropriated to themselves the name of "Brethren," so that numerals have to be employed to distinguish them. Four different kinds of Presbyterians go by nearly synonymous names, which recalls the question put by C. S. Robinson at the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance meeting in Philadelphia—"Why don't you call yourselves *split P's*?" The names of some of these sects, which the census has brought to the knowledge of the general public, are curiously singular, such as the Six Principal Baptists, the Mudhead Baptists, the River Brethren (who baptise only in running water), and the Old Two-Seedin Spirit. Besides these are the Primitive, the Freewill, the Original Freewill, and the General Freewill Baptists. The Society of Friends has four branches—the Orthodox, the Primitive, the Hicksite, and the Wilburite. The Lutherans divide into seventeen or more distinct organisations, some of which do not hold fellowship with others. The Mennonites, followers of Menno Simonis, a Dutch Baptist of the sixteenth century, have twelve branches, comprising 41,000 in all. In all there are about one hundred and fifty different religious denominations in the States. Whatever hope of union among the larger bodies there may be, it will be long before the little sects will abandon the fantastic peculiarities that divide them.—*Christian World*.

The passing of years and the increase of obesity have made Col. Ingersoll a younger man in appearance than he was when in Washington a decade ago. A correspondent who saw him in his Nassau-street office a few days ago says that "his round, full head is now nearly bald. The hair that remains is snow-white and closely cropped. His round, full face was smooth-shaven and with scarcely a line or wrinkle. His forehead was broad and full. His eyes are a keen blue-gray, with a twinkle in their depths of the latent humor always underlying nearly everything the Colonel says. His nose is prominent and straight. His mouth is fine in its lines and small. His chin is round, pronounced and very strong in its contour. He is as smooth-shaven and as fresh-colored as an English country squire. He has the high color of a man of health and the unmistakable air of success which always goes with men who accomplish something in this world. When I saw him the other morning he was dressed in a dark frock suit, with a great bunch of pink and white sweetpeas in his buttonhole."—*N. Y. World*.

Shajts, a new woman's paper, shows its liberality by inserting a letter from "An Inquisitive Child," on the influence of Bible teaching and Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell*.

ACID DROPS.

The Archbishop of Canterbury opened St. Savior's Church Schools, Croydon. They are capable of accommodating 529 children. How many will go to them is another question. Nevertheless, the Archbishop remarked that "notwithstanding the fact that Board schools were offering every possible advantage, poor people still clamored at the doors of Church schools, such was their desire to be absolutely assured that their children would have religious education." While the Archbishop was speaking, the Marylebone Vestry was considering the case of St. John's Wood Chapel, where the income from pew rents had dwindled from £200 to £8 5s., and the attendance on Sunday night was five women and three children. Perhaps the Archbishop will give this case his consideration before he boasts again of the success of his Church.

A Christian minister always looks out for a constable at the end of his sermon. He has no idea of persuasion except when he can't compel. The history of Christianity is full of impudent and foolish attempts to put down vice. Every man of sense knows it cannot be put down by strait-waistcoat methods. You must trust to the spread of intelligence and the gradual improvement of taste. But the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes (of course!) thinks otherwise. Some time ago he called gamblers "thieves"—which is a gross absurdity. Now he proposes that every newspaper editor who gives betting odds should be liable to a month's imprisonment. Ministers of this stamp, if they had the power, would soon make the country a prison for all who lived outside Church regulations.

We don't like gambling any more than Mr. Hughes. We show our dislike of it by not gambling. Mr. Hughes, however, wants to advertise his virtue; so he shouts and screams, and calls ill names, and goes purple in the face with savage hatred of his less virtuous fellow men. He forgets that gambling is not the only vice. Malice, hatred, and uncharitableness—especially when they rage every day and all day long—are a great deal worse.

We read that a Paris publisher has issued a *Life of Renan*, by Jesus. It is said that the book will cause a stir. We are glad to hear it. It is high time that Jesus caused a stir on his own account. Hitherto he has let other people do it for him—from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John down to Farrar. A bit of his own writing would be welcome.

Dr. Driver, Canon Cheyne, and other "advanced" divines tell us that we must not regard the book of Jonah as "strictly historical." It is a sort of fairy tale, to be read for its moral. But this view of the book is objected to by divines like the late Canon Liddon. Jesus Christ, they point out, said that he was to be three days in the earth as Jonah was three days in the whale's belly. The same objection to the "advanced" view is raised by Dr. Kennedy in his *Merchant's Lecture on Jonah*. "Jesus Christ," he says, "knew more about Jonah than does T. K. Cheyne." Possibly; but we very much doubt it. Anyhow it is a pretty quarrel. Once upon a time the "infidels" denied the story of Jonah, and all the sects hated them for it. Now the clergy are divided among themselves. Some swear by Jonah still; others cannot stand him at any price. Thus does "infidelity" hatch its serpent eggs in the very bosom of Holy Mother Church.

"Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word" is the motto of the greatest Scottish city. Still, it mustn't interfere with business. Ships are being built on the Clyde for the Russian government. They are fitted up with iron cages for the reception of the Czar's prisoners who are destined for Siberia *via* the Northern Seas.

A strange story reaches us from Nottingham, where Mr. Calderon's much discussed picture of the Renunciation of St. Elizabeth has been exhibited at the Castle Museum. A pious young man, a regular attendant at his parish church, seems to have become depressed from losing his employment, and was noticed to spend consecutive hours in the picture gallery intently gazing on the humiliation of the saint. One day recently he was present at early communion in his church, and you may judge of the horror of the officiating

curate when this poor fellow actually began to follow the supposed example of St. Elizabeth, in the centre aisle, by rapidly disrobing himself, with a view, as he explained, of renouncing the world in a naked condition before the altar. The service was immediately stopped and the young ladies present hurriedly left, whilst it took all the strength of the clergyman and a couple of policemen (who "providentially" were easily found) to prevent the misguided individual from entirely accomplishing his purpose. He is now in safe custody.

The large hall of the Turn Verein, at San Francisco, has been burnt down, and the deed is credited to a Christian. Mr. Martin, the proprietor, received a postcard as follows: "If you do not cease allowing persons to have your hall for Sunday night dances I will set the building on fire or blow it up with dynamite." A few days later another postcard came: "I will take the chances of burning up innocent people to prevent vice.—A Christian." The whole of the property was destroyed, but the loss was fully covered by insurance. "A Christian" has not yet been discovered.

Many good Christians will say that this person, supposing him to have been guilty of the arson, was not entitled to the name he took. This we deny. It seems to us that if a Christian thought Sunday dances were sending souls to eternal hell, he would consider any and every means justifiable to put a stop to them. The truth is that sincere Christians are bound to be persecutors of those who differ from them.

The *Two Worlds* quotes from *La Lumière*, a French spiritist organ, the assertion that Queen Victoria is a spiritist and has many books full of communications received from her deceased husband, and owes many grand decisions to her spirit guides. *La Lumière* give no authority for its assertion, but the *Two Worlds* says it "puts into print what has often been privately asserted in this country."

Mr. H. Foulke, who claims to have been selected as head of the Theosophists by the spirit of Madame Blavatsky, came over here with "precipitated" portraits to substantiate his claim, which was, however, rejected by the authorities at the headquarters in Avenue-road.

St. Peters, London Dock, is a well-known Ritualistic parish, where religion takes precedence of all else. At the infant school they believe in Solomon's old maxims about the chastisement of children, and Miss Mary Pitt, the mistress, has been fined 20s. and costs for slapping the face of one of her pupils, aged seven. The mother of the girl stated that her daughter's cheek presented the appearance of a piece of liver, and said the clergyman in charge of the school, offered her 2s. and two new dresses not to proceed with the charge.

The *Glasgow Weekly Herald* is responsible for the statement, that "A Glasgow minister declared from the pulpit last Sunday, that the first chapter of Romans was too indecent to read." In the Church of England it is appointed to be read every 31st of August. Genesis xxxviii., a yet more indecent chapter, is appointed to be read on Jan. 20.

Charles M. Emmons, a gunmaker, of Springfield, Massachusetts, having an overdose of religion, took a revolver and fireworks to church with him, and read from the Bible, keeping the church officers and police at bay for three hours.

A woman in San Francisco who attended the meetings carried on by the revivalist, Mills, saved her soul, but lost her mind. She became a raving lunatic under the excitement of the moment, and screamed out: "I want to be an angel, and wear a robe of white," at the same time tearing off her dress and other clothing. Such is the fruit of religion.

The Rev. E. Harris, pastor of the Universalist Church at Massachusetts, committed suicide by shooting himself with a revolver.

Talmage is right. Atheists are always committing suicide. Amy Eleanor Saunders, who jumped over Clifton suspension bridge, left a letter between the leaves of a Bible which was

found in her pocket. She threatened to haunt her enemies. Yes, Talmage is right.

Dr. Thain Davidson, preaching at Swansea, solved the question, "Where is Heaven?" He hasn't been there, and apparently doesn't want to go there yet. He thinks, however, that Heaven is in the heart of the Pleiades. It is a certain world with seven suns revolving around it!! And this is "the peculiar residence of Jehovah, the metropolis of Creation, the palace of the King of Kings." Dr. Davidson's *forte* is preaching to young men. We should think he likes them *very* young.

Mr. S. M. Peacock, of the South Shields Branch, has inserted three "invitations" to Celestine Edwards in the advertisement columns of the *Daily Gazette*. Mr. Peacock invites him to name half the members of a local committee to arrange for a set debate with a representative of Secularism; the whole of the proceeds, after deducting the cost of hall and advertising, to be paid over to a local charity—say the Ingham Infirmary, which is in want of funds. The black champion does not bite, and his local supporters are beginning to frown.

Professor Joseph Agar Beet, D.D., is to deliver a course of four lectures on "The Book of Genesis" at the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, 186 Aldersgate-street, London, E.C., on Tuesday evenings, November 22 and 29, and December 6 and 13. Business begins at 8. We see that "all young men are invited," and that "an opportunity will be afforded for questions on matters dealt with by the lecturer." Perhaps some "young men" of our own party will drop in and put a few searching questions to the reverend professor.

The *London Echo* refers to Dr. Bridges as the author of a *General View of Positivism*. This is a mistake. The author is Auguste Comte. Dr. Bridges is the translator. Of course it is very impertinent on the part of such an illiterate journal as the *Freethinker* to correct such a high-class journal as the *Echo*, but we hope our contemporary will try to forgive the offence.

Captain Astley Cooper has grown an onion weighing 2½ lbs. and 18½ inches in circumference. It must have been onions of this sort that the Jews cried at leaving behind them in Egypt.

St. Andrew's Parish Magazine (Wolverhampton) asks "our people" to pray for a good assistant curate. They are requested to ask God to send "a man after thine own heart." It is to be hoped he won't. The only man after God's own heart in the Bible was David. If a person like that turns up in Wolverhampton, he will certainly be run in.

In all the Roman Catholic churches at Montreal last Sunday formal excommunication was read against two Liberal journals which commented freely upon the conduct of the clergy in connection with the recent scandals of seducing women. This method of hushing up all that did not redound to the glory of the Church was all very well in the days when excommunication meant death, but at present the journals in question will probably be not a penny the worse.

"We are learning," says Mary Ralph in the *Methodist Times*, "that there may be more gospel in a cup of hot coffee than in a twenty-minutes' prayer, in a painting lesson than in many sermons." More good anyhow, whether or not more gospel.

Dr. Dods has been pitching into Archdeacon Farrar. He says that such attempts as the archdeacon's to explain away "everlasting" punishment are "the subterfuges of good men to support optimistic notions, who try to get out of what is written." Dr. Dods would personally like to believe that all men will be ultimately saved, but he cannot do so "without throwing overboard the plain words of Christ." Dr. Fairbairn supports Dr. Dods. Altogether we may say that Hell is looking up a bit. The damnable thing takes a great deal of crushing. But it will have to perish, and Jesus Christ will go with it; for if he did not teach everlasting hell, it is idle to say he taught anything.

The Rev. Mr. Cuppage, rector of North Barsham, was fined at Fakenham County Court, Norfolk, for letting his dog bite a tradesman. He was further fined £5 for insolence to the judge during the hearing of the case.

Another East-Anglian case has recently been tried at the Norfolk quarter sessions. A local preacher, who was also a superintendent of a Sunday School, was charged with indecent assault on a married woman when clearing out a chapel. He was found not guilty on the plea that the woman was a consenting party. Were a Secularist prosecuted for such an offence the Christian papers would give long reports and declare it was a natural result of Secular teaching. On the part of a Christian it seems too common for notice.

A controversy as to the real existence of Jesus has been going on in the American spiritualist organ, the *Progressive Thinker*. Dr. Hudson says trustworthy spirits who lived at the time say there was no such person, and that the legends attributed to him are founded on the life of Apollonius of Tyana. This position is contended for in a big book entitled *Antiquity Unveiled*. On the other hand, Dr. J. R. Buchanan adduces the testimony of a number of spirits who profess to have met Christ. Dr. Buchanan, however, makes a great slip in putting forward a certain person of Glasgow as "one of the most gifted and most reliable mediums in the world." Our sub-editor has attended some *séances* where this medium operated, and is of opinion that if he is the "most reliable" the rest must be barefaced frauds.

Apròpos of a witness named Jacobs being asked his Christian name, the *Hawk* tells a story of a Hebrew witness who gave his name as Isaac Moses, his address as Middlesex-street, and his occupation the vending of second-hand garments. "And what is your religion?" pursued the counsel. "Well," said Mr. Moses, "my name is Isaac Motheth, I liveth in Petticoat-lane, and I thells old clo's—th'elp me, I think I must be a Roman Catholic."

The Irish Queen's Bench ordered the Rev. John Fay, parish priest of Summerhill, to be imprisoned for one month for contempt of court by using intimidatory language in reference to the South Meath election petition. He was also ordered to pay the costs.

The poor Bishop of Winchester has only £6,500 a year, and has to keep up, but not pay rent for, Farnham Castle, which contains 64 rooms and 14 staircases. When recently re-furnished these required about two miles of carpet, and the 250 head of deer in the park alone cost £1 each. Surely he ought to have an increase of stipend to properly maintain the dignity of a successor of the Apostles.

Mr. Theodore Bent, in his lecture on Mashonaland at South-place, said the inhabitants had a Sabbath called God's Day, which comes every sixth day. Its observance was only compulsory in the ploughing season, and it is kept by getting drunk on Caffre beer. Their religion is a form of ancestor worship. They believe that good men who die turn to lions, and fight for the tribe. So they have a lion priest, and once a year a bull and a goat are sacrificed, and the flesh is partaken of sacramentally, then given to the lions.

EPITAPH.

Here lies Mrs. Sarah Pym,
Who was so very pure within,
That she brake her earthly shell of sin
And hatched herself a cherubim.

The *Spectator* for Nov. 12 has an article on "The Relation of Philanthropy to Atheism," in which it shows itself very near the apprehension of some important truths which it cannot well reconcile to its own philosophy. It says "at least half of the Atheists in England are philanthropists." They are so "not in spite of, but because of their Atheism; because they cannot endure to behold sufferings which, if there be no God, are purposeless; because they rely on themselves alone to mitigate misery; and because they are dominated by an instinctive longing of man for an ideal, and can see it only in the bewildering complexity of human affairs, in unselfish benevolence."

This is very different from the old-fashioned view, which regarded every Atheist as a miscreant who might sharpen a knife on his mother's tomb to cut his father's throat. But there is more. The article goes on to say, "A large division of modern Atheists care for humanity just as Christians do, some even more, for the Christian knows that humanity is cared for by a power above his own." The *Spectator* here touches on the essential difference between the Theist and the Atheist is their attitude towards suffering humanity. A Theist sees a helpless widow and children. It is God who has for his own good reasons taken away the bread-winner from her. Why should he seek to thwart His intentions? God will provide. The Atheist is deterred by no such scruple. He knows that what help comes must come from humanity, and he does not look for consolation or reward to any fabled heaven.

The *Spectator* proceeds to admit that "There are men who are made Atheists by the very depth of their philanthropy. They sympathise so deeply with suffering, especially when diffused among large masses, that they grow bewildered, and not only cry 'Where is God?' as plenty of Christians also do, but suffer their belief to be extinguished altogether." To this we have only to add—Then they are no longer bewildered, for it is only the predication of an all-wise and all-powerful Creator which makes a bewildering mystery of evil.

The *Spectator* continues: "The condition of mind is not, of course, new, bewilderment at the inexorableness of Nature being probably as old as the power of abstract thought in the human race." And it refers to Job. But Job's bewilderment was that of the Theist, in whose vocabulary the inexorableness of nature is the inexorableness of God. The bewilderment of early thinking man arose because he was compelled to interpret nature in the terms of his own being and action, and he could not reconcile the facts with his desires. The Atheist gives up this interpretation as a mistake, though a very natural one in the evolution of human thought.

The conclusion of the *Spectator* is, however, a sufficiently notable one. It says: "We do not hesitate to say that the full realisation of human conditions which excites some to dare the careers of martyrs or apostles, stirs others into total, though possibly temporary, disbelief in any governing power." We know no valid reason why such disbelief should not be permanent as well as total.

There are at present several bishoprics vacant in France, and the Vatican has rejected the whole of the names submitted to it by the French minister for these posts. This shows how far the Pope was sincere in adhesion to the Republic. The truth is his counsel in this matter was only given in the hope of obtaining Ultramontane instead of Gallican bishops.

The Rev. S. E. Keeble, Flookersbrook, Chester, writes to the local *Chronicle* in answer to Mr. Watts's recent lecture. Mr. Keeble appears to give up the doctrine of hell—which is flying in the face of Jesus Christ. Yet he says that he found "intellectual satisfaction, moral stimulus, and an adequate moral ideal in substituting the discipleship of Charles Bradlaugh for that of Jesus Christ." Mr. Keeble states that in his "youth" he was a "frequenter of the Hall of Science." Perhaps so, but can he give us a "reference"?

HOW TO HELP US.

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

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Thursday, Nov. 17, Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-Street, Islington; at 8, "Why I Cannot be a Christian."
 Sunday, Nov. 20, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.; at 11.15, "How to Deal with the Land Question"; at 7, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

Nov. 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. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Nov. 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 (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

A. DARLEY.—Thanks for cutting; see our criticism in another column.

J. WATSON.—We will find room as soon as possible.

W. J. WENHAM.—We do not intend to notice the dirty pamphlet you mention. The writer may be a good Christian, but he is too fond of filthy personalities. It would be a degradation to discuss with such a man and on such grounds. Beating a chimney-sweep involves more dirt than glory. Besides, the people who could be influenced by his pamphlet must be foolish or malignant, and Secularism is far better without them.

DOUBTFUL.—See our leader on Keir Hardie. The rest of his family are Secularists. They date from Flemington by Cambuslang, Glasgow. They are working people, but they send us 5s. for the National Secular Society. On the whole, we feel that working men support our cause more liberally, in proportion to their means, than the wealthier Freethinkers.

G. FRASER.—The Christian authority you mention is either ignorant or impudent. Look at Genesis iii. 21, and you will see that it was God who made Adam and Eve "coats of skin"—their first suit. Certainly the text doesn't say he made Adam a pair of breeches, but "coats" is a general term, including all that was necessary for covering; and as the earth was to bring forth "thorns and thistles," it is fair to imagine that Adam's shanks were fairly protected. Breeches or leggings, what does it matter?

J. W. GORT.—It was simply a reply to a correspondent who objected to "puffing"—which all advertisers must do, more or less, if they publish commendations of their own goods. We merely said that we could only interfere in a case of fraud. Of course this doesn't mean that there is a case of fraud; quite the contrary. Anyhow you were not alluded to. Nothing but satisfaction with your goods has been expressed to us by purchasers.

J. ECCLES.—You omitted to stamp the envelope, and we had to pay twopence, which is deducted from your special subscription.

J. POLLITT.—Your acknowledgment to hand. You somewhat misread our letter. Pray dismiss the matter from your mind. Mistakes will occur, and no doubt we commit them as well as other people.

W. H. STAINER.—In applying to affirm instead of taking the oath you must state either "I have no religious belief," or "The taking of an oath is contrary to my religious belief." Full directions are given in the *N.S.S. Almanack*.

R. KILLICK.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

O. LEWIS.—See "Sugar Plums." Glad to hear of Freethought progress in sleepy Chester. The increased circulation of this journal in the city is a sign of the times for Bishop Jayne.

JOSEPH BROWN.—We have inserted your appeal, and we hope the Durham and Northumberland friends will support the North Eastern Federation. No part of our organisation is more deserving of financial assistance.

S. HALL.—(1) Vague language is useless. Tell us of any single Christian writer before A.D. 150 who mentions the Gospel of Matthew. The apostolic fathers do not quote from the New Testament. They sometimes cite a saying of Jesus, but never in the precise words of the Gospels. (2) Dr. Pierson's "claims" on behalf of Christianity are all dealt with in Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress*, a reply to Mr. Gladstone.

W. D. MCSICCAR.—See paragraph.

A. G.—The "medium" Lawrence was some years ago sentenced at Clerkenwell to three months' imprisonment for "obtaining one shilling in money, with intent to defraud, by falsely pretending that he had the power to summons, or produce or cause to be present certain spirits, whilst in fact he had no such power, but used artifice to deceive the prosecutor." The Rev. F. W. Monck also had three months hard labor at Huddersfield for a similar offence, and Dr. Slade had a similar sentence at Bow-street in 1876.

E. COLVILLE reports that E. Anderson was elected president of the West Ham Branch at the recent quarterly meeting, and a good committee was formed to carry on future work.

W. BIRRELL.—Dr. Davidson's books are the work of a competent and reputable scholar. A full review of his work appeared in our columns two years ago. He accepts more of the orthodox position than we do.—Papias is only known through Irenæus and Eusebius. The date of his death is conjectural. For the Canon see Davidson's book and B. C. Keller's *Short History of the Bible*.

R. CARTON.—No change has taken place since Mr. Bradlaugh's death in estimating the "increase" in the National Secular Society. Mr. Bradlaugh used to state the number of new members enrolled each year; members, that is, for whom the President signed certificates. Mr. Foote has done precisely the same. All the declaration forms of new members are kept at the office, duly numbered, and can be produced at a moment's notice. Mr. Bradlaugh never reported the total membership of the Society, nor has Mr. Foote done so. It is difficult to calculate in the absence of a specific rule as to arrears, and Mr. Bradlaugh never attempted it.

G. F. LANGLEY.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND:—W. Pratt, Christchurch, New Zealand, £10.

JAMES NEATE.—See acknowledgment in this column.

ANTI-HUMBUG.—Cuttings are always welcome.

HORSA.—We have done as you desire.

R. WRIGHTMAN.—Your letter is handed to the N.S.S. secretary to whom it should have been addressed. You seem to be under a misunderstanding. The subscriptions ordered to stand over until the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company put forward a practical proposal (and amongst them your Sunderland subscriptions) are still on deposit in the Birkbeck Bank. Subscribers who gave no directions left the matter, so far as they were concerned, in the hands of the N.S.S. Executive. The Conference also left it in their hands by a special resolution. Exercising their right, the Executive have withdrawn the balance under their control from the Birkbeck Bank, and invested it in shares of the National Secular Hall Society—which, by the way, are negotiable. This was resolved on by a majority of sixteen to six, the President not voting. The shares are held by the National Secular Society through the three trustees of the Memorial Fund—Messrs. George Anderson, W. H. Reynolds, and G. W. Foote. NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S SPECIAL FUND.—We have received:—D. Hardie and family, 5s.; H. M. Ridgway, 10s.; J. Eccles, 4s. 10d.; R. V. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; Juno, 4s.; J. D. Simmons, £1 1s.

L. N. CLIFTON.—See paragraph.

H. M. RIDGWAY.—Acknowledged as requested. Thanks for cuttings.

D. WAUDBY.—Will use if possible.

S. SYKES.—Destructive and constructive Secularism cannot well be separated at present. Those who use the terms in contrast must explain what they mean. The language of the person you allude to is very reprehensible. If he actually uses the expressions you attribute to him, his room would be a great deal better than his company.

W. CHARLESWORTH, 6 Gedling-street, Nottingham, supplies this journal and other Freethought publications.

C. W. HECKETHORN.—Very sorry we misjudged you. We were misled by the *partial* statement you sent us of your views. It is pleasant to find that a man like yourself agrees with our view of metaphysics as well as theology. We shall be glad to hear from you again, whenever the spirit moves you to write.

A. LAMB.—It was an insolent busybody who sent you such rubbish in such circumstances.

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—Froidenkor—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—San Francisco Call—Chester Chronicle—Dereham and Fakenham Times—Reading Observer—Dublin Ethical Echo—Freethought Messenger.

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.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening at the London Hall of Science, drew an excellent audience. Mr. Robert Forder presided and made an eloquent appeal on behalf of the building scheme. The lecture dealt with the question "Was Shakespeare a Christian?" It involved an extensive appeal to the great poet's writings. The audience listened with deep interest for an hour and a half, and gave the lecturer a perfect ovation as he resumed his seat.

Mr. Foote occupies the Hall of Science platform again to-day (Nov. 20). Admission is free to the morning lecture "How to Deal with the Land Question." The evening lecture is entitled "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

The *Freethinker* has readers in all parts of the world. Some of its best friends are in "foreign parts." They read the paper for its contents and warmly appreciate them. A few weeks ago a Canadian friend sent us a substantial subscription; and now we have received a larger one from New Zealand. Mr. W. Pratt, of Christchurch, one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, writes to say that he will subscribe £5 per quarter to our Sustentation Fund. He encloses £10 for the September and December quarters. We heartily thank Mr. Pratt, and some day or other, when we take to visiting the saints that are in the southern hemisphere, we hope to shake hands with him.

It was once the custom of the Christian Evidence Society to "beard the infidel in his den" at the London Hall of Science. The place used to be engaged for a course of four lectures, and the enterprise made a great figure in the Society's annual report. Of late years, however, the C.E.S. has kept away, through want of funds or some other reason. In a certain sense this is a pity, and the Organisation Committee instructed Miss Vance to offer the use of the large hall to the C.E.S. for one or two evenings "free, gratis, for nothing," on condition of discussion being allowed after the lectures. Mr. Engstrom is "unable to accept" the offer. Never mind. It does not affect the liberality of the invitation.

Freethinkers should induce their Christian friends to attend the Wednesday free lectures at the London Hall of Science. Next Wednesday evening, Nov. 23, Mr. H. Snell occupies the platform; his subject being, "Is there a Moral Governor of the Universe?"

We beg to call the attention of London Freethinkers to the social gathering at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, Nov. 30. The tickets are one shilling, and the profits will go to the London Secular Federation, which is very much in want of funds. A good band is engaged, and a good entertainment is arranged for in the minor hall, in addition to the dancing in the large hall downstairs. The party is restricted to Secularists and their personal friends. Mr. Foote will be present, and possibly Mr. Charles Watts.

Members of the N.S.S. who avail themselves at any time of the privileges of the Hall of Science Club, will please note that their cards are useless for that purpose if they are three months in arrear with their subscriptions. Members will be required, when asked to do so, to produce their cards for inspection by the Club manager—Mr. James Anderson.

Last week Mr. Charles Watts, on his first visit to Chester, had a capital audience, who gave him a most enthusiastic reception. The *Crewe Chronicle*, in giving a very fair report of the proceedings, said: "About 400 or 500 people assembled to hear the lecturer, who produced a marked effect upon the audience by his eloquence, his moderation, and his logic." Some debate followed the lecture, in which the Rev. John Morgan took part.

Mr. Watts lectured last Sunday morning and evening in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, to two very enthusiastic audiences, many strangers being present. To-day (Nov. 20) Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Hall of Science, Rockingham-street, Sheffield.

Mr. Touzeau Parris delivers three lectures at Wolverhampton to-day (Nov. 20). Dudley, Wednesday, West

Bromwich, and Walsall friends should go to hear him. They will find themselves amply repaid for their time and trouble. Mr. Parris is able, accomplished, and a good speaker.

Mr. J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., lectures at the Battersea Secular Hall, this Sunday evening, on "Animals and Plants: a chapter in Evolution." The lecture will be illustrated by the aid of a lantern. Mr. Coppock has not patronised Battersea for a long time, and the hall should be crowded on this occasion.

The Liverpool Branch has started a Hebrew Class. Ten or twelve lessons will be given for a fee of half-a-crown. There is also a Philosophy Class. We hope that both will be joined by the younger members.

The Hull Branch holds its annual tea, soiree, and ball next Thursday (Nov. 24). Time, 7.30; place, St. George's Hall, Albion-street. Tickets, 1s. 6d.; ball only, 1s. Apply to the secretary, G. Naewiger, 9 De la Pole-terrace, Bean-street. A large company is expected.

The Nottingham School Board elections take place on November 24. Messrs. Peacock and Bowers, the independent candidates, are supported by the N.S.S. Branch, which calls on its members and friends to place them at the head of the poll. We presume that both these gentlemen are in favor of secular education.

The London Positivist Society has published a protest against occupying Uganda, "the object of a coalition of hot-headed Imperialists, ill-informed philanthropists, zealous religionists, and unscrupulous profit-hunters."

Colonel Ingersoll's *Oration on Voltaire*, now on sale at our publishing office, is one of his finest and ripest efforts. The peroration, which we print in another column, gives a fair taste of its quality. Freethinkers should circulate this splendid oration among their orthodox friends.

The *Ethical Echo* which we continue to receive from Dublin, is a well-written monthly magazine, which expounds the views of the Dublin Ethical Society. It should do some much needed work in Ireland.

Secular Thought, of Toronto, continues to be ably maintained by Mr. J. Spencer Ellis. We are glad to see that he is obtaining a fair financial support. The last number to hand contains some interesting editorial notes, and the continuation of Mr. Foote's "Will Christ Save Us?" from the *Freethinker*.

At Barmen, Germany, says the *Daily News* Berlin correspondent, a Court of Arbitration between employers and workmen has just been formed. When the members, twelve on either side, had met to take the oath, several of the workmen declared that they were Atheists and could not swear. As, however, they were told that under these circumstances they could not be members of the court, they declared themselves willing to repeat the formula, meaning only to express by it their intention of judging according to their best knowledge and conscience. They were finally permitted to take the oath.

The son of the Minister of Public Worship in France was recently married without religious ceremony, whereupon the Catholic papers call for his father's resignation. But they do not order matters this way in France.

Samtidem, of Bergen, which is quoted in *Public Opinion*, has an excellent article on "Spiritism among Savages," in which it shows that modern spiritists are people who represent the same moral standpoint as that held by savages. Spiritism is at the bottom of all forms of religious faith.

Busts of Mrs. E. Cady Stanton, Miss Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott have been produced at Rome by Miss Spofford, and will be exhibited at the World's Fair, Chicago. All these ladies were Freethinkers as well as workers for the emancipation of their sex.

The National Secular Society's *Almanack* for 1893 will be on sale early next week. We think it will be found

the most interesting issue of this publication. The calendar has been revised and added to; there is a good supply of articles by leading Freethinkers, and portraits of the members of the Organisation Committee—which will be followed by another group next year. Copies have been printed for an increased sale.

INGERSOLL'S PERORATION ON VOLTAIRE.

Voltaire was perfectly equipped for his work. A perfect master of the French language, knowing all its moods, tenses, and declinations—in fact and in feeling playing upon it as skilfully as Paganini on his violin, finding expression for every thought and fancy, writing on the most serious subjects with the gaiety of a harlequin, plucking jests from the mouth of death, graceful as the waving of willows, dealing in double meanings that covered the asp with flowers and flattery, master of satire and compliment, mingling them often in the same line, always interested himself, therefore interesting others, handling thoughts, questions, subjects as a juggler does balls, keeping them in the air with perfect ease, dressing old words in new meanings, charming, grotesque, pathetic, mingling mirth with tears, wit and wisdom, and sometimes wickedness, logic and laughter. With a woman's instinct, knowing the sensitive nerves—just where to touch—hating arrogance of place, the stupidity of the solemn, snatching masks from priest and king, knowing the springs of action and ambition's ends, perfectly familiar with the great world, the intimate of kings and their favorites, sympathising with the oppressed and imprisoned, with the unfortunate and poor, hating tyranny, despising superstition, and loving liberty with all his heart. Such was Voltaire writing "Œdipus" at seventeen, "Irene" at eighty-three, and crowding between those two tragedies the accomplishment of a thousand lives.

NORTH EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

THE sub-committee of the North Eastern Secular Federation respectfully announce that their annual social gathering will be held in the Arcade Assembly Rooms, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Tuesday, Dec. 27. Tea on the table at 6.30. Concert at 7.30. Dancing will commence at ten p.m. and continue till two a.m. Arrangements have been made with the manager of the rooms for country visitors to be accommodated at the rooms all night. Tickets 1s. 6d. each, children 1s. each. We also beg to acknowledge the following subscriptions: Mr. Hubert Richardson, £1 1s.; Mr. George White, 5s.; Mr. Rae, South Shields, 2s. 6d.; Miss Bennett, 6d.; Mr. Bennett, 6d.; collection at Mr. Jones's lecture at Newcastle, 19s. 8d.; Chester-le-Street Branch, 12s. 1d.; Newcastle Branch, 15s.; South Shields Branch, 6s.; Ebchester Branch, 10s. As our funds are in a low state, the committee wish to urge on the Branches who have not yet paid their affiliation fees to do so at once. They also urge on the vice-presidents who have not yet sent in their subscriptions to do so as early as possible. They also appeal to the wealthy Freethinkers of the north of England to support them financially. Without increased support the committee will have to suspend all propaganda work for the present. Surely the good work done by the Federation in the past deserves some recognition from the numerous Secularists who remain outside our ranks; and the committee hope that this appeal will not be in vain. Subscriptions sent to my address will be acknowledged in this paper. Tickets for social gathering can be had at my address; Mr. Peter Weston, newsagent, 77 Newgate-street, Newcastle; Mr. J. H. Summerfield, 61 Grove-street, Newcastle—J. BROWN, 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE N.S.S.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—Camberwell Branch, £3 2s. 9d.; Glasgow Branch, £1 4s. 6d.

SPECIAL FUND.—W. Johnson, 5s. 3d.; Dick Edwards, 10s.; H. Chapman, 2s.

E. M. VANCE, Assistant-Sec.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A SECULAR SICK AND TONTINE SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The opinion has often been expressed by Secularists that a sick and benefit society should exist in connection with the N.S.S.; it appears that this cannot be done under the rules upon which the N.S.S. is established.

But a benefit society for Secularists can exist (as evidenced by the Ball's Pond Secular Sick and Tontine Society), providing that a sufficiently large number of members is on the lists.

Now, the Society named in the preceding paragraph is unfortunate in regard to the number of members, and it is very probable that, unless there is an accession of a few more members, it will dissolve at the end of this year. I would urge all Secularists who desire to belong to a sick and benefit society to join one, so that when they are on a sick bed, they will have a Freethinker to visit them, and that they can be assured of if they join the above named Society; which, I beg to say, has as good a foundation as any other society in existence. The death payments are guaranteed by each member being insured through the Post Office, and there is a share-out each year, so that a member always has something from the Society, whether he is ill or not.

I shall be glad to hear from any Secularist who is desirous that Secular sick societies should be encouraged, and would be willing to join—anyone between the ages of 18 and 45 is eligible. Any communication may be sent to me to the address below, or I should be glad to meet any prospective member on any Thursday evening from 9 till 10.30 p.m.

All applications for membership should be sent in during this month, as it is intended to call a general meeting early in December, to discuss the subject of dissolving the Society.

If you would kindly grant me notice of this in your journal, I should be much obliged.—Yours, etc.,

WILLIAM SIMONS.

12 Wolsey-road, Mildmay Park, N.

THE RECTOR'S PSALM.

The bishop is my shepherd; I shall not want. He giveth me a good living and green pastures, he filleth my pockets with tithe money; he leadeth me in the path of prosperity. Yea, though I walk through the mud of hypocrisy, I need fear no evil, for the episcopal eye and benediction are upon me. Thou preparest a table for me to which I invite no unbelievers, thou anointed my head with maccassar oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and plenty shall follow me all the days of my life, for I live on the church and enjoy its perquisites for ever.

THE CORYBANTIC CREED.

I believe in William Booth, the General Almighty, founder of the Salvation Army; and in Bramwell Booth, his son begotten of Catherine Booth, and in all the officers appointed by his family. I believe in the *War Cry* and all its reports of miraculous conversions. I believe in uniforms, bands, and banners. I believe in the Army guernseys, boots, bonnets, brushes, tea, and lucifer matches; and I promise to forsake all others. I believe in blood and fire, in holy hallelujahs, brass bands, tambourines, big drums, the commission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and noise everlasting.—LUCIANUS.

VERY POLITE.—A little girl had been guilty of some bit of naughtiness, and her mother sternly told her to go into her chamber and ask God to forgive her. She did so reluctantly, but came out presently with a triumphant air. "Well, Mary, did you ask God to forgive you?" "Yes, I did," she replied, and God said, "Don't mention it, Miss Perkins."

Parson Squire—"I understand, deacon, that the church carpet is being ruined by water from dripping umbrellas." Deacon Goode—"It is so, parson, and something has got to be done." Parson—"Why not have a rack in the vestibule, and leave the umbrellas there instead of carrying them to the seats?" Deacon—"I am afraid it would spoil the solemnity of the benediction." Parson—"You think so?" Deacon—"Yes; everybody would want to be the first out so as to get the best ones."

BOOK CHAT.

Vol. 32 of the *Dictionary of National Biography* extends from Lambe to Leigh. One of the most interesting articles is that on Landor by Leslie Stephen, who says: "In politics he was an aristocratic republican after the pattern of his great idol, Milton. His religion was that of the eighteenth century noble, implying much tolerance and liberality of sentiment, with an intense aversion for priestcraft." A long article on Archbishop Laud is contributed by the historian, Dr. S. R. Gardiner, who, confining himself mainly to facts, holds the balance very even. A terse but trustworthy account is given by A. Gordon of Bartholomew Legate, the last heretic burnt at Smithfield, March 18, 1612. His offence was holding that Christ was "a meere man."

* * *

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen has just put out a third series of his *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, essays reprinted from the *Saturday Review*. This new volume includes papers on Berkeley, Paley, Burke, Paine, and Bentham.

* * *

M. Ary Renan announces that the completion of his father's work on the *History of the People of Israel* will be published in two volumes during the ensuing year.

* * *

Mr. Holyoake's *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* is now out in book form. The *Daily News* notices it at length as "a book which veteran reformers will read with great interest, and from which the Liberals of a younger generation may derive much profit and instruction."

* * *

Dr. Gordon Hake, a cousin of General Gordon, in his *Memories of Eighty Years*, says of the General: "A slight knowledge of physiology would have sufficed to root out most of his theological ideas; but that slight knowledge, even, he did not possess."

* * *

The Supernatural: its Origin, Nature, and Evolution is the title of a two-volumed work announced by Williams and Norgate.

* * *

Good old books are ever fresh. Selden's *Table Talk* is a pungent work of common sense, which well deserved re-editing, as it has been by Mr. S. H. Reynolds.

* * *

Francis Galton has put out a new edition of *Hereditary Genius*, which he confesses should rather have been entitled *Hereditary Ability*.

* * *

"Miss Naden's *World Scheme*," is the title of an essay by G. M. McCrie, reprinted from the *Open Court*, and annotated by Dr. Lewins, of whom Miss Naden appears to have been a disciple in Hylo-Idealism.

* * *

A pamphlet on *The Infallibility of the Bible*, by J. H. Pratt, reaches us from Spring Hill, Kansas. Mr. Pratt has a straightforward style of exposing the contradictions and absurdities of scripture. Thus, comparing the genealogies in Matthew, who gives from David down to Jesus as twenty-eight generations, with Luke, who gives from Jesus up to David as forty-three generations, he says: "The surveyor who, in his field notes, would return, 'The distance on a straight line from one stake to another on a hill side is twenty-eight chains measured down hill, and forty-three chains measured up hill,' would certainly be impeached for drunkenness. But to charge an infallible God with such confusion can be little less than blasphemy."

Ethel—"I hate to see you so sceptical! Why don't you write to that western clergyman who advertised to answer religious doubts at a dollar a doubt?" Charlie Creedless—"But, my dear girl, I'm only worth 25,000 dollars."

A vicar (very deaf) had been getting some new hymn-books, and he wished to sell them. At the morning service the clerk gave out the following notice: "Those who wish to have their babies christened this afternoon may do so by leaving their names at the vestry." "Yes," said the vicar, "and those who have not got them may have them by applying at the vestry door, first size, twopence; second size, fourpence; and those with cloth backs, sixpence."

GENESIS, CHAPTER I.

One morning, long before the sun had riz,
Deo had figure 9 with tail rubbed off, to start in biz.
He made the heavens and earth that had no form;
Then Deo called for light, and it was warm.

The light disclosed lots more that he could do;
Six days would make him hustle to get thro'.
He yanked the firmament and waters well apart—
By Tuesday night had got a first-class start.

Wednesday he took a ninety-million run,
Made lots of stars and moon, beside the sun.
Sent all careering on their new-found way,
Just as the curtain drew on the fourth day.

Jack-rabbits, skunks and snakes were yet to be,
The busy mole and nimble skipping flea;
It took an hour to graft the ears on donkey,
And was pitch dark before He'd done the monkey.

Then Jacko scratched his head with knowing wink,
As good as said, "I soon shall talk, I think."
That night the boss tossed round and failed to sleep;—
He could not brook the monkey's vain conceit.

Next morn a God-like man was made of clay;
A tip-top job spoke Hebrew right away;
Jacko was beat, but soon conceived the plan
To play the role of pre-historic man.

And Deo charged the beasts to multiply;
But who would tend the stock should Adam die?
Just then a lucky thought struck Deo's brain,
How to provide a nurse, and thus raise Cain!

The thing was done; but Eve, to take control,
Was no mud-baby filled with living soul;
Clean bone was Eve, and Eden's reigning belle,
And played the part of "Enoch Arden" well.

The trash for rhymsters left in Chapter One
Is sample stock for others bent on fun.
By few such senseless impious lies are prized;
'Tis strange that Chapter One don't get revised!

—D. S. Maynard.

PROFANE JOKES.

One evening, while kneeling at her mother's lap before going to bed, Nellie, instead of whispering the prescribed petitions in the usual tone, began to shout them at the top of her voice. "Nellie, my dear," the mother expostulated, "you mustn't say your prayers like that. Why do you do it?" Pat came the answer and justification—"God must be so tired of listening to us when we speak so low that I thought he would like to hear me plainly for once."

It was the same small lassie who one day, while she was enjoying her midday meal, startled her mother by asking, "What does God have for his dinner?" "My child, he never has any dinner," was the answer. "Then," Nellie suggested after a minute's reflection, "I suppose he has an egg with his tea."

"Pa, I shall never marry," sighed a heart-sick Chicago maiden. "I cannot find a man to suit me." "What kind of a man do you want?" "One who is handsome, has dark eyes, a big mustache; one who does not chew, smoke, drink, gamble, flirt, belong to a club; one whose soul soars far up into the unfathomable realms of angelic—" "My child," interrupted the father, "you have no business in Chicago. Heaven is your home!"

Harold, a little boy now quite four years old, was naughty one evening, and refused to say his prayers. After he was in bed, he said, "Aunt Jennie, tell me about Joseph." "Joseph was a good boy," said auntie. "Did he say his prayers?" "Yes, and God took care of him." Silence. "Aunt Jennie?" "Well?" "What did they put Daniel in the den of lions for?" Auntie smiles, and responds, "Well, what was it for?" The answer is given in a defiant and triumphant tone, "For saying his prayers."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name

Address

Occupation

Active or Passive

Dated this.....day of.....18

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription; and, on admission of the member, a certificate will be issued by the Executive.

The minimum subscription for individual members is one shilling per year; all beyond that amount is optional, every member being left to fix his subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Members are classed as *active* or *passive*. *Passive* members are those who cannot allow their names to be published. *Active* members are those who do not object to the publication of their names, and are ready to co-operate openly in the Society's work.

Fill up the above form and forward it, with subscription (as much, or as little, as you think just to yourself and the cause), to Mr. Robert Forder, sec., 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.; or to a local Branch Secretary.

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 J. B. Coppock, "Animals and Plants: a Chapter in Evolution" (with lantern illustrations). Tuesday at 8, dancing. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class. Friday at 8, C. Cohen, "Astronomical Science, IV.—The Planets" (2d. and 4d.)

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture (free). Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class (astronomy). Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen's class on "Spencer's Ethics." Thursday at 8.30, debate, Mr. Landsley, "Socialism" (free). Saturday at 8.30, free concert and dance.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11, debating class, I. L. Blain, L.L.B., "American Democracy and Labor"; 7.30, B. Hyatt, "Unless we eat of the flesh of the Son of Man we have no life in us"; preceded by a dramatic study from Hamlet.

Edmonton—North Middlesex Hall, Fore-street: 6.30, music; 7, S. H. Alison, "Satan's Pedigree."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "How to deal with the Land Question" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?" (3d., 6d., and 1s) Wednesday at 8.15, H. Snell, "Is there a Moral Governor of the Universe?" (free).

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday at 8, Mr. St. John, "The God Idea."

Islington—Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-street: Thursday at 8, Touzeau Parris, "The Mystery of Evil Unveiled."

Kentish Town—7 Kentish Town-road: Thursday at 8, debating class, "Heredity and its Relation to Character."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7.30, T. O. Bonsor, M.A., "Too Many Babies."

Walthamstow—Workmen's Hall, High-street; Thursday at 8, C. J. Hunt, "Life and Death" (free).

West London Ethical Society, Princes' Hall, Piccadilly: 11.15, Stanton Coit, Ph.D., "Can the Church of England be Converted into an Ethical Society?"; preceded by instrumental music.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Freethought, the only Real Salvation."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Hall No. 4, upstairs): 6.30, debate between James Robb and John Harkis on "Is there Sufficient Evidence to Prove the Existence of a God?"

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: G. H. Martin, 11, "The Evaporation of Christian Dogmas"; 7, "Itinerant Evangelists."

Blackburn—Spinners' Institute, Peter-street: John Badlay, 3, "Christian Peace: its Real Meaning"; 6.30, "Christianity; its Birth, Development, and Decay."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, H. Smith, "The Best Way to Solve the Labor Problem."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: T. Hulin, "Is there a God?—a Reply to Mr. Logan."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religions"; 2.45, Sunday-school for children; 7, C. Cohen, "What the Universe Teaches."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, J. F., "The Blood: its Structure and Functions"; 6.30, R. Laurie, "The Real v. the Ideal Christ."

Glasgow—St. Rollox Eclectic Society, Toynbee Hall, Parson-street: Tuesday at 8, W. Grear, "Socialism: what is it?" Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, J. Needler, "Is Spiritualism Credible?"

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 2.45, Hebrew class; 3.30, philosophy class; 7, Mr. Booth, "The True Basis of Religion and Morality."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, Joseph Brown will lecture.

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

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, mutual improvement class, Mr. Yeaxlee; 6, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Hore.

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone-road: 6.30, Sam Standring, "Is our Archdeacon a Real Priest?" Thursday at 8, Sam Standring, "We are Men, my Liege."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: Charles Watts, 11, "Education: Secular and Theological—a Reply to the Bishop of Manchester"; 3, "Man: his Nature and Destiny"; 7, "The Blight of Superstition."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting; 7.30, R. Chapman, "Vegetarianism."

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, W. R. Weightman, "Morality Without the Bible."

Ulster—Crown Chambers, 64 Royal Avenue, Belfast: 7, W. M. Knox, "Henrik Ibsen: Freethought Dramatist."

Wolverhampton—Athenaeum Assembly Room, Queen-street: Touzeau Parris, 11, "The Value and use of the Bible"; 3, "The Rights of Labor"; 7, "Creator and Creation—a Reply to Dr. Dallinger."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Rochdale—Town Hall-square: 3.15, Sam Standring, "A Chat about Angels" (in the hall if wet weather).

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Nov. 20, Wolverhampton; 24, Wellington Hall, Islington.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Nov. 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.—Dec. 6, Bermondsey Institute; 18, New Brompton.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Nov. 20, Manchester; 24, Walthamstow; 27, m., Battersea. Dec. 4, Edmonton; 22, Walthamstow; 29, m., Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Nov. 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.C.—Nov. 20, Blackburn; 27, Milton Hall. Dec. 4, Sunderland; 18, South Shields; 25, Edinburgh. Jan. 1, Aberdeen; 8, Glasgow.

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