

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE BISHOP OF CHESTER'S HERESY.

DR. JAYNE, the Bishop of Chester, recently preached a most remarkable sermon under the auspices of the Christian Evidence Society, in the Manchester Cathedral, which for outspoken heresy to popular theological beliefs surpasses, if possible, the utterances of the late Bishop Colenso. If Dr. Jayne be right in most of the conclusions arrived at in his sermon, that which has hitherto been understood and taught as Christianity has, in several important instances, been a delusion based upon what he admits are "foundations weak and unsound in many parts." This must be a distressing blow to orthodox believers, who have fondly cherished the notion that they were in possession of the true faith—the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The Bishop took for his text "The first and great commandment," as set forth in Matt. xxii. 37. It reads thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." No attempt was made to show how this could be done if we obeyed the second commandment, to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Apart from the impossibility of complying with this latter request, the question arises: If we give "all" our love to God, how much will remain for our neighbor? Having none left, we should perhaps occupy a similar position to that of the man spoken of in the Gospels, who, having nothing, had it taken from him (Matt. xiii. 12). Frankly, we fail to see how the thing is to be done; but possibly we belong to those of whom it is said: "All these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand" (Mark iv. 12).

The principal theme of Dr. Jayne's sermon was the "love of God," but, said he, "behind this question," there is one "larger and more vital still: Was God, the God of nature, the God of revelation, a fit and possible object of our love?" Certainly, this inquiry should command primary attention, if the first question is to be considered. There is another matter, however, deserving of note, which, considering the worthy prelate's position, he should have dealt with. If we admit the existence of a God of nature, it does not therefore follow that this being is the God of revelation. Thomas Paine and Voltaire believed in the former God, but not in the latter. Moreover, "Advanced Theists" to-day have no faith in the Deity as depicted in the Bible. "It was easy," said the Bishop, "for two sorts of men—the shallow and the saintly—to believe that God is love." But "most of us, in the face of some appalling facts, found it the hardest of all truths to hold that God is love." This is quite true. In the face of facts that are indeed appalling, it is difficult to believe in a loving God who is the cause of the evils to which these facts refer. But what does the Bishop's statement imply? Simply this, that shallow-minded persons whose reasoning powers are not very

brilliant, and saintly-minded individuals who are ever prone to believe without evidence, can readily accept the dictum "God is love"; but those men and women who seriously contemplate things as they are, who, to use the Bishop's own language, find "lamentation, mourning, and woe, impenetrable ignorance and vice, a world still largely lying in darkness and iniquity, must have clearer proof than history and science could, unaided, produce that God is love." It is thus conceded that from the experience of history and the records of science we obtain no evidence to justify the belief in a loving Father in heaven, who regulates the order of things on earth. True, the Bishop thinks that, with the aid of a new and more correct interpretation of scripture than that which has hitherto prevailed among Christians, God's character would be seen in a better light than it is at present. But even with such aid we fail to see how the facts of history and science could be altered. The truth would still remain that the love in human nature would prompt men and women who had the power to alleviate the affliction, to cure the wrong, and to destroy the injustice which cast such a gloom over so large a portion of society, to use it. Contemplating the success of crime, the triumph of despotism, the prevalence of starvation, the struggles for many to get the necessary means of existence, the heartrending sights of deformity in children who are born into the world so diseased, so decrepit, that the true happiness of existence seldom, if ever, gladdens their lives; remembering the existence of these evils and woes, we cannot believe that a God of love dwells "on high" who could, and yet would not, remedy this most lamentable state of things.

"But," said the Bishop, "the worst had yet to come. As we stood beside the waters of perplexity we sometimes seemed to hear, not indistinctly, the death-knell of our struggling hopes being tolled from the very towers of the Church of Christ. The so-called glad tidings of Christ, as too commonly represented, deserved rather to be called the sad tidings of our race. If we frankly faced and fairly followed to their issues certain doctrines that had been long and widely made to pose as the truth that is in Jesus, must we not own that, sad and dark as this world was, it was a cloudless paradise when compared with the chamber of horrors to which, and for ever, love—'pure, universal love'—was hereafter to consign the mass of his redeemed creation? He must indeed abandon hope except, perhaps, for his own small self and a favored few, who entered the iron portals of such a creed as this; and to bid us love the being who had such a destiny in store for the hapless myriads on whom he thrust the fatal gift of existence was nothing less than to bid us commit moral suicide." This is indeed a bold indictment of the orthodox faith, which Dr. Jayne deems himself justified in making because it is based on an "authorised and once almost unchallenged, and still latently dominant, version of the gospel which began with 'God is love,' and ended in wholesale, hopeless

torment, ruthlessly inflicted by the hand of love." Such an impeachment of the popular theological belief reflects great credit upon the Bishop's humanity and his discernment of the signs of the times; and were it not for the fact that the change of positions might mean to Dr. Jayne "financial ruin," we might suspect him of endeavoring to qualify for the Presidency of the National Secular Society. As it is, his heresy places him in rather an awkward position in reference to the Thirty-nine Articles of his Church and to the words of his Master, that only a "few are chosen" out of the many "called." If he rejects the popular faith in consequence of its ignoring real love, why does he accept the teachings of the Prayer-book and those of the New Testament, wherein it is taught that "hopeless torment" is to be the fate of myriads of the human race?

The Bishop thinks that "the hour in the working of God's providence has surely come, not for a new doctrine, but for a new interpretation of the old. . . . When we come to examine the foundations on which the popular belief had been reared, they were seen to be weak and unsound in many parts." Therefore, we must "re-examine our creed, search the scriptures, and weigh more carefully the evidence." Here is a threefold confession that the Christianity now taught in orthodox churches is delusive and not the genuine article. It may be here fairly asked, Was it "loving" upon the part of God to allow a wrong interpretation of his message to the world to be originated and to be perpetuated for nearly eighteen hundred years? If the "foundations" of the popular belief are "weak and unsound," why does the Bishop remain allied with a Church that still inculcates the delusion that those foundations are based on "the very word of the very God"? And finally, if a "re-examination of our creed" be necessary in consequence of its being erroneous, was it not cruelly unjust for the Christians in former times to condemn to prison, to the stake, and to everlasting fire those who then found the creed to be false, and who had the courage to say so? Besides, where is the evidence that the "new interpretation" of the "old doctrine" will establish its truth as a divine revelation of a God of love? The Bible will still be with us as a witness that its God is the very opposite of love, and compared with whom the vilest criminals that the world has ever seen were angels of light. For more than a hundred years Freethinkers have been proclaiming that the Christian idea of God lacked every principle of justice and the true inspiration of love; also that the creeds taught in his name are mockeries, delusions, and snares; and for so doing they have been persecuted during life and threatened with relentless horrors after death. Now, however, we have a Bishop of the only "genuine religion of England" practically admitting that the Freethinkers are right. For he says: "We might indeed wonder that for so many generations a belief so inconsistent with the revealed character of God, so fatal to mankind, had been cherished by pious and loving hearts, did we not know how prone our minds were to the most glaring inconsistencies." And then, with an amazing inconsistency upon his own part, Dr. Jayne, in reply to his own questions, "What did revelation really say? Did it help or hinder?" remarks: "One line of interpretation, sanctioned by venerable names and long tradition, and by no means wholly without support from scripture and reason, led us to a conclusion compared with which the uncertainties of Agnosticism were light and peace."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded).

SOUL AND STOMACH.

MOST people know that in many of the most important languages *spirit* is synonymous with *breath*, but few people are aware that God's chosen people identified their breath, life, and spirit with their stomachs. The proof lies deep in their language and literature, though copyists and translators have carefully veiled the fact; just as, by substituting Manasseh for Moses in Judges xviii. 30, they sought to conceal the evidence that the descendants of Moses were idolaters down to the time of the captivity. The word usually translated *soul* in the Hebrew Bible is *Nephesh*, which comes from a root signifying to breathe. But breath among the ancient Jews, as among other savages, was held to proceed from the body and stomach—not from the lungs, which are never mentioned in the Bible. Hence breath came to signify the body, the person, the stomach, the appetite, the life. The word *Nephesh* is very frequently used in the Old Testament, but though usually translated *soul*, it in no instance clearly means an immortal, immaterial, spiritual essence such as Christians conceive the soul to be. The nearest approach to this is perhaps in those passages where it signifies *desire*. But here the context will often let us see that the stomach is the central feature. Thus the enemy said: "I will divide the spoil; my *lust* (*nephesh*) shall be satisfied upon them" (Exod. xv. 9); "And they tempted God . . . by asking meat for their *nephesh*" (Ps. lxxviii. 18); "a proud man . . . enlargeth his *nephesh*" (Hab. ii. 5). Fifteen times the same word which is translated *soul* is translated *heart*. But the ancients did not hold the heart to be the seat of the affections and desires, but rather the liver and the stomach. The proof of this is clear in Job xv. 35: "Their belly prepareth deceit"; and again in Job xx. 15, "God shall cast them out of his belly" (*i.e.*, out of his affections); and v. 20, "Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly," or, as we should say, "peace in his heart." So Habakkuk says, "When I heard, my belly trembled" (iii. 16), where we should say "My heart was troubled."

It is true in one passage (Psalm xxxi. 9) the Psalmist speaks of "my soul and my belly." But this, if not a repetition, is equivalent to nothing more than "my life and my body." That the Hebrew *soul* had the meaning we attach to it as a primary one is evident from many passages which speak of the soul eating and being satisfied. Thus Exod. xiii. 16, 19, "every *man*" [*nephesh*, margin, *soul*] "must eat." So Lev. xvii. 15, "And every *soul* that eateth that which dieth of itself," and Deut. xii. 15, "thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates whatsoever thy *soul* [or stomach] lusteth after." And Deut. xiv. 26, "thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for whatsoever thy soul [or stomach] desireth." Jacob, deceiving his old father, says "sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me." The Psalmist continually speaks of his soul being athirst, and hungry and satisfied. "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them"; "sent leanness into their souls"; "Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat" (cvii. 5, 18). In the Proverbs, which reflect some of the ancient sayings of the people, we have "The Lord will not suffer the soul [or rather *stomach*] of the righteous to famish, but he casteth away the substance of the wicked" (x. 3); "The liberal soul shall be made fat" (xi. 25); "A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth, but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence" (xiii. 2); "The soul [stomach] of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (xiii. 4); "Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the stomach and health to the bones" (xvi. 24); "As cold waters to a thirsty *soul*, so is good news from a far country" (xxv. 25); "The full

All hail to those bold and fearless natures—the heretics and the innovators of the day—who, arousing men out of their lazy sleep, sound in their ears the tocsin and the clarion.
—Buckle.

soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry *soul* every bitter thing is sweet" (Prov. xxvii. 7). We think it impossible for any critical reader to examine such a people's proverb as this last without perceiving that the original meaning of *soul* was neither more nor less than stomach.

So in Isaiah xxix. 8 the old meaning is apparent in the passage which says, "It shall be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul [or rather his stomach] is empty." In one verse the meaning is so manifest that the translators have absolutely rendered the word which they usually translate *soul* as *greedy*—"Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough" (Isaiah lvi. 11). What the prophet said was, they were dogs of stomach. So in other cases they have translated the word *appetite*—"Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to *appetite*" (*nephesh*, that is to stomach, or great feeding—Prov. xxiii. 2. "All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite [*i.e.*, *nephesh*] is not filled" (Ec. vi. 7). They have even rendered it *pleasure*, as in Deut. xxiii. 24: "When thou comest into thy neighbor's vineyard thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own *pleasure* [*nephesh*], but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel." Here the meaning again is evident. In passing through a vineyard you may fill your stomach, but, as boys now say, "don't pocket any."

Of course I am not contending that wherever the word "soul" appears we should read "stomach." But I do say this is a root meaning of a word which afterwards came to express a variety of aspects in which a living being could be contemplated. I do contend that the word *soul*, as found in our Bible, is utterly misleading and should generally be replaced by such expressions as life, person, being, desire, body, or stomach.

J. M. WHEELER.

RENAN'S PHILOSOPHY.

BY DR. FELIX L. OSWALD.

A SAFEGUARD of justice, in the estimation of moral as well as of intellectual attainments, is the rule to distinguish between the general type and the realised standard—the main direction of the current of tendencies, and the actual rate of its progress.

In comparing the characteristics of different periods of civilisation, the standards, in both respects, will generally be found to differ more than the types, and to have been much more modified by local circumstances. Thus, for instance, the manful rationalism of the Roman nation at the time of the elder Pliny compares, on the whole, favorably with that of their modern descendants in any country of southern Europe; yet local conditions favored the progress in that direction in regard to religious liberty, while they hindered it in regard to secular science. The same statesmen and philosophers who, with rare exceptions, recognised every nation's right to formulate its notions about Heaven and Hades, as fully as they conceded every man's right to express his private theories on the habits of the Man in the Moon—these same prototypes of our most advanced religious reformers nevertheless believed in miracles and omens, in werwolves, mermaids, and goat-footed satyrs. Since the time of King Numa they had undoubtedly advanced both in point of science and religious tolerance; yet in the latter direction their progress was favored by the comparative liberality of their political institutions, while in the former it was obstructed by superstitions derived from the ignorance of their rustic ancestors.

In the intellectual standards of individuals we can often notice a similar contrast which can be best explained while we can still realise the influence of the circumstances that limited the development of

mental tendencies in special directions. For it has been well said that the heresies of one age become the truisms of another, and a time may come when philosophical critics will find it difficult to comprehend by what metamorphosis of intellectual principles the cautious and compromising author of the *Life of Jesus* could come to risk the trenchant, and almost recklessly candid, speculative chapters of the *Future of Science and Moral and Mental Reform*.

For that contrast can by no means be explained on the theory of successive advances from lower to higher stages of rationalism. As early as 1847 Renan's contributions to secular philosophy are marked by the intellectual radicalism of his later works; while to the very last, and at a time of life when men are not apt to sacrifice the prestige of a hard-won reputation to traditional prejudices, his attempts at the solution of ecclesiastical problems characterise a transition stage of the progress from dogma to reason.

Ernest Renan's innate penchant for speculative rationalism manifests itself in all his works, but only in the arena of secular science could his tendency in that direction start abreast with the advanced thought of the times. In everything pertaining to the problems of dogmatic Christianity his speculations were hampered by mountain masses of orthodox prejudices. In the open fields of speculative philosophy he moves with winged steps, unhampered even by the desire of concession to the claims of established theories; within the enchanted circle of religious traditions he staggers under a comparatively diminished, but still enormous load of dogmatism—his light-ward movements sustained by inborn strength, but with the constant implication of an apology for moving at all. To him the deadly anti-naturalism that repressed the intellectual development of a hundred nations, as with the coils of a strangling hydra, is a "sublime system of ethics, injured merely by the exaggerated ideas of its godlike authority." The thousand years' eclipse of freedom and liberty, that intervened like an unnatural night between ancient and modern civilisations, he ascribes to the brutality of barbarous nations—the same barbarians that proved so amenable to the influence of Pagan and Mohammedan culture. He extols the beauty of the horrid superstition that deluged Europe with blood and tears, and appeals pathetically to the duty of free inquiry for having ventured to maintain its human origin and question its absolute truth and infallibility.

Yet in estimating the relative rate of progress we should remember that even the poet-philosopher Goethe, with all his educational advantages, haltered his Pegasus at the rock of Pantheism and listened to the hammer-strokes of the Titan Spinoza, while the nineteen first years of Renan's life were passed under the influence of the Treguier priest-school and the seminary of the Abbé Dupanloup.

In politics, historical criticism, and even in the study of non-Christian religions, Renan was a radical of radicals. He says:

"The Koran is from beginning to end nothing but a mass of sophistical argumentation. . . . Islamism abounds with the most absurd fables. . . . It has been proved that the immense majority of those who followed the prophet of Mecca had not the slightest religious faith in him. After his death it was seriously discussed whether they should not abandon his religious enterprise and only continue his political work (*The Future of Science*, pp. 261 and 479).

"The religion of the Romans always remained an aristocratic creed, and there never was a system of faith less capable of becoming the religion of mankind. What interest could a Gaul, a Syrian, an African take in a worship which concerned only a small number of proud and often tyrannical families?

"It is strange that Europe should have adopted as the basis of her spiritual life the literature of the Hebrews, the work of another race, and emanating from a spirit different

from her own. As a matter of course, she could only accommodate herself to them by entirely misconceiving their meaning."

It can do no harm, though, to notice the fact that the latter passage was not written till after Renan had been deprived of his Hebrew professorship in the College of France. That outrage may have convinced its victim that moderation may cease to be a virtue if carried to absurd and yet insufficient extremes. Our friend Conway, by the way, had the advantage of a similar experience when, in one of his contributions to a leading American Freethought paper, he expressed the trust that "Men will not willingly smite the face of Truth if her aspect is mild and her voice is low," and in a subsequent number of the same journal was brutally attacked for his mild defence of the Freethinker Foote against the persecutions of British bigots.—*Open Court.*

(To be concluded.)

WILL CHRIST SAVE US?

(Continued from page 667.)

ASTRONOMY came to Christendom from the Mohammedans. Like other sciences it was unknown in Europe after the triumph of Christianity, during "the long dead time when so much was forgotten"—to use the forcible language of Dr. Tylor. "Physical science," the same writer says, "might almost have disappeared [from the world, that is] if it had not been that while the ancient treasure of knowledge was lost to Christendom, the Mohammedan philosophers were its guardians, and even added to its store." Galileo invented the pendulum three hundred years ago; but Dr. Tylor tells us that "as a matter of fact, it appears that six centuries earlier Ebn Yunis and other Moorish astronomers were already using the pendulum as a time-measurer in their observations." According to Professor Draper, the Mohammedan astronomers made catalogues and maps of the stars, ascertained the size of the earth, determined the obliquity of the elliptic, published tables of the sun and moon, fixed the length of the year, and verified the procession of the equinoxes. "Meanwhile," says Draper, "such was the benighted condition of Christendom, such its deplorable ignorance, that it cared nothing about the matter. Its attention was engrossed by image-worship, transubstantiation, the merits of the saints, miracles, shrine-cures."

This indifference lasted till the end of the fifteenth century, when it was broken by the great navigators, like Columbus, Di Gama, and Magellan, who settled the true shape of the earth, practically demonstrated its rotundity, and struck a death-blow at the old teaching of the Church. Then came the great astronomers, Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, who completed the work of destruction by restoring the true theory of the universe.

The treatment of these great men shows us the real spirit of Christianity. Copernicus was called "an old fool" by Martin Luther. His great work *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*, kept back from publication for thirty-six years through fear of the consequences, was condemned as heretical by the Inquisition, and put upon the Index of prohibited books, his system being denounced as "that false Pythagorean doctrine utterly contrary to the Holy Scriptures."

Galileo invented the telescope, and with it perceived the phases of Mercury and Venus, the mountains and valleys of the moon, and the spots on the sun. He demonstrated the earth's orbit and the sun's revolution on its own axis. A terrible blow was given to the cosmogony of the Church and the book of Genesis. Galileo was accused of heresy,

blasphemy, and Atheism. The Inquisition told him his teaching was "utterly contrary to the Scriptures." He was required to pledge himself to desist from his wickedness. For sixteen years he obeyed. But in 1632—only 260 years ago—he ventured to publish his *System of the World*. He was again brought before the Inquisition, and compelled to fall upon his knees and recant the truth of the earth's movement round the sun. Then he was thrown into prison, and treated with great severity. When he died, after ten years of martyrdom, the Church denied him burial in consecrated ground.

Giordano Bruno, the poet-prophet of the new astronomy, was imprisoned for seven years, mercilessly tortured, and at last burnt to ashes on the Field of Flowers at Rome.

It will be said that these persecutions were the work of Catholics. But were the Protestants more friendly to science? Martin Luther railed at Copernicus, and John Calvin hunted Servetus to a fiery death at the stake.

Christianity has now lost its power of opposing science. But even in the present century it has barked where it could not bite. It was Christian bigotry which made the author of the *Vestiges of Creation* conceal his identity; it was orthodox prepossession which so long prevented Sir Charles Lyell from admitting the truth of evolution; it was Biblical teaching which inspired all the pulpit diatribes against Charles Darwin. Evolution has practically triumphed, but where its evidences are still imperfect the clergy continue to trade upon the conjectures of ancient ignorance.

The effect of Christian doctrine upon the lay mind, even in a high state of development, may be seen in Mr. Gladstone's defence of the Bible. His labored absurdities, and unscrupulous special pleading, show a deep distrust, not only of the teachings, but of the very spirit of Science.

There is, indeed, an essential opposition between Science and Christianity. The whole atmosphere of the Bible is miraculous. Nor is the New Testament any improvement in this respect upon the Old Testament. It incorporates the savage theory of disease as the work of evil spirits. Its stories of demoniacal possession belong to the ages when madness was treated as a spiritual disorder. The narrative of Jesus casting devils out of men and sending them into pigs is an aspect of the same superstition which inspired the terrible text "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." And the healing of disease by Paul with magic handkerchiefs, or by Peter with his shadow, goes down to the lowest depths of absurdity.

Not a single sentence is to be found in the New Testament showing the slightest appreciation of science or philosophy. It is clear that the writers of those books looked for the speedy second coming of Christ. Nothing therefore was of any importance in their eyes except an earnest preparation for "the great and terrible day of the Lord."

This superstition of the Second Advent is not yet extinct in Christendom. It still retains a hold upon millions of the most stupid and illiterate; and its strength, after so many centuries, and amid such hostile influences, enables us to realise its tremendous power in the early ages of Christianity.

The great majority of Christians are, of course, emancipated from this superstition. They take it for granted that the earth and the human race will exist for thousands and perhaps millions of years. They are reconciled to the idea of mental, moral, and material progress in this world. Nevertheless, their inherited instincts, the teaching of their religious instructors, and the reading of their sacred scriptures, makes the most pious and zealous among them look askance at Science, even while they are ready to enjoy her benefactions. They feel that she is the natural enemy of their faith.

The clergy themselves treat science in precisely the same spirit, only their hatred is sometimes tempered by discretion. The more ignorant and presumptuous still denounce "science falsely so called," preach against Darwinism, and dread every new scientific discovery. They share the feeling (in their small way) of Leibniz, who declared that "Newton had robbed the Deity of some of his most excellent attributes, and had sapped the foundation of natural religion." They also share the feeling of those who asserted that the use of chloroform in cases of confinement was an impious interference with God's curse on the daughters of Eve. The better instructed and more cautious clergy profess a certain respect for science. But it is a respect of fear. You may tell by their faces, tones, and gestures that they detest it while they sing its praises. They are unable to disguise their real sentiments. When they are most successful they merely treat Science as the prodigal son, who has too strong a taste for husks and swine, and is to be coaxed into renting a pew and taking the communion.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS.

THAT Christianity is but a form of sun-worship, has been demonstrated over and over again. Not that the writers of the gospels that have been transmitted down to us in the New Testament had any conception of the true significance of the wonderful stories they related; they were ignorant men, and wrote the stories as literal truth. They copied from the sacred books of ancient religions, and recorded as done by Jesus the same wonderful actions that they found recorded as performed by the many other Christs that had gone before him.

In the more ancient religions from which Christianity was copied, the priests and wise men fully understood that the laws of nature were irrevocable, and that all the narratives of miracles were but allegories of the regular operations of natural law. The Christ, the Savior of the world, was always the sun, born on the 25th of December, or Christmas Day, the time when, having reached his lowest point in the heavens, he began to ascend, and thus to begin his work of saving the world from the evils of cold, cloud, storm, and darkness. It was the sun, personified as a man under the name of Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and many others, all dignified with the title of Christ, that brought life and light to the world of man, sorrowing in the darkness and gloom of winter personified as demons, or the powers of darkness. The Devil, the personified evil principle, was the prince of the powers of darkness.

The story is the same in all the various religions that have ever been invented by the Aryan race. As soon as the sun-Christ is born, the reigning tyrant of his country—that is, the storm and cold of winter—seeks to destroy him. He escapes all these evils, proceeds to fulfil his mission of beneficence to the world. He selects his twelve disciples (the twelve signs of the zodiac) presiding over the twelve months of the year, and then follows the wonderful works of the sun as exemplified in the natural course of the seasons. The dead earth revives. The rivers that have been frozen up all winter (possessed by devils) are now delivered from their icy bonds, the devils are cast out, and the broken masses of ice, like a herd of swine, rush down the stream into the sea. The fountains are opened, and all men are invited to come and drink of the living waters. As the old hymn has it,

Ho! every one who thirsts,
Come ye to the waters;
Freely drink and quench your thirst
With Zion's sons and daughters.

Men and women who shiver in the cold are warmed and refreshed—cured of their palsy by the touch of the sun's rays, and sent on their way rejoicing. Trees and grass that have been dead all winter now have their devils cast out, and are clothed and in their right mind or condition.

The moisture that is in the ground is drawn up in the form of sap in the vine; it fills out the growing grapes that, when ripened and crushed, return the same moisture in the character of wine; and so the sun has turned water into wine literally.

Five thousand, and more, people are annually fed from five loaves and two fishes. It is simply an illustration of the reproductive power of nature. The five loaves are the seed that is planted in the spring, that, by the action of the sun, is made to grow and multiply itself into a sufficiency to feed the multitude. Anyone who knows what the fecundity of fish is will readily understand how the two small fishes might be multiplied so as to give two apiece to the five thousand; and of both loaves and fishes have twelve baskets full left over for seed for the next year, when the annual drama or serio-comedio tragedy would be performed again.

The performance of cursing the fig-tree, and causing it to wither away, is inexplicable on any theory except that the sun in the latter part of summer, when the season for figs is past, has become so hot that a drouth is the result, and the fig-tree dries up and dies. We might go through the gospels, and find that every act of the so-called Christ was but an illustration of the action of the sun in producing the annual phenomena of nature.

The phrase "the glory of God" applies to the sun more than to any other object in nature. The word "glory," in its original signification, means nothing but light, brightness. The old hymn says, "The angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around." That is, a bright light shone around. The Psalmist tells us that "the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters the sea"—an illustration of the universal diffusion of the light of the sun, and which has no application to any other object in nature. St. Paul says, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; and one star differeth from another star in glory"—all which means that all these objects shine with a different degree of light.

Go into a Methodist chapel when there is a prayer meeting in full blast, and hear the whole crowd shouting "Glory! glory! glory!" at the top of their voices. How many of them, do you suppose, have any idea that they are only repeating the prayer of the old heathen Greek, Ajax, for light? Not one. It is not light that they want, however loudly they call for it; they wilfully shut their eyes to it; they think it wicked to look for it in the only place where it is to be found—among the roots and branches of the tree of knowledge.

There is truth in those old sacred books when you have the key to it; when you come to understand that the characters are all mythical, merely personifications of the powers of nature; that the actions are but illustrations of the operations of nature's laws; that there never was, and never can be, any such thing as a miracle; that nature's laws are immutable, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." When you have mastered this fact, then you have the key to all the mysteries of heaven and earth, and are prepared to investigate the whole phenomena of nature and find out the truth of all things.

When a man tells you something which he declares to be the "gospel truth," or "as true as the gospel," you will understand that it is not actually true, but true in a mythical, allegorical, Pickwickian sense; that it is a riddle, like those published in the children's corner of the weekly newspapers, to be studied out or guessed at. You will wonder how it is that anybody with intellect above that of Sancho Panza's dappled donkey, could ever believe in the literal truth of the Bible stories of the curing of sick, lame, blind, and crippled people by a touch or a word; of the casting out of devils—in fact, of the existence of devils at all; of dead men coming out of their graves and walking about the streets, and all the rest of the Bible nonsense.

And yet, there are thousands, perhaps millions, who have not been able to emancipate themselves from the influence of the namby-pamby stories of the nursery and the Sunday-school. They not only believe in the literal truth of the gospel miracles, but they also believe in the promise of Jesus, that those who believe in him shall be able to perform miracles themselves. When challenged to do it, they say, "Oh! the days of miracles have passed." But they pray for miracles every day, for what is a prayer anyway but a petition for something that will not come in the ordinary course of natural law? What is the sense of praying for rain? for instance, when we know that nothing can bring it to us but conditions of the atmosphere that depend upon a long chain of causes entirely beyond the control of the will of anybody. The man who prays for rain, asks God to set aside the laws of nature that control the production of rain, and to bring it by an effort of his will, when it

would not otherwise come. What is that but asking for a miracle? The man who expects to get anything by praying for it, need not tell us that the age of miracles is past, for his actions belie his words. In these days when so many cranks are asking Congress for appropriations to enable them to experiment upon artificial methods of producing rain, would it not be a good idea to test this old, much-used method of praying for it? Nothing could be fairer than the test proposed by Tyndall, to treat the patients of one ward in a hospital by prayer, while those of another ward should be treated by scientific physicians; but there was a unanimous protest on the part of the Christians, and the proposition was stigmatised as blasphemous; which showed that the prayerful Christians had no confidence in prayer, as a cure for sickness. Much sooner would they trust to "the original Doctor Jacob Townsend's bitters, with the name blown on the bottle," or any other of the thousands of patent medicines that are advertised in the newspapers.

The Catholics are more consistent in this matter than the Protestants, for they boldly claim to work miracles. The shrine of the Virgin of Loretto, the fountain of Lourdes, the holy coat of Trèves, and a thousand other holy places and holy things, are proclaimed as cures for everything but foolishness and weakness of the moral senses. These last must find their cure outside of the Church by a subcutaneous administration of quantum sufficit of common sense, without any admixture of religion.

And now, here in the United States, this great, free and enlightened country, where we brag of free schools and general education, we have the mummified arm of the mother of the unfortunate mother of Jesus, and crowds flock to see it and be cured of all kinds of diseases, from the toothache to a broken leg. No wonder we find it necessary to establish asylums for idiots.

The next thing may be a piece of the shadow that the Holy Ghost threw over the Virgin Mary. We already have the shadow of the holy Church, and that is blacker than the traditional darkness of Egypt.

What can be done with such credulous dupes of the Church? Will they ever outgrow the low mental and moral condition that holds them in thrall, the willing slaves of a wily and vicious priesthood? Perhaps; we may hope for improvement, as we remember the facts of evolution. If man has been developed from a monkey-like ancestor, it may be that the pious believers in holy books and holy frauds, may at last develop into rational men and women, who will repudiate the delusions of their ancestors, and take reason and common sense as their guides. Christians and pious people of all religions seem to be still lingering in the monkey-stage of development; at least they have not shed their monkey *tales*.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—Independent Pulpit.

ACID DROPS.

There is an awful amount of selfishness and vanity in religion. Paul himself claimed to be the chief of sinners, and would probably have got in a temper if someone had told him he wasn't. It is so nice to feel superior—even in wickedness; a failing which is splendidly hit off in James Thomson's epigram:

Once in a saintly passion
I cried with desperate grief,
"O Lord, my heart is black with guile,
Of sinners I am chief."

Then stooped my guardian angel
And whispered from behind,
"Vanity! my little man,
You're nothing of the kind."

This has been brought to our remembrance by reading a late effusion of Mrs. Spurgeon's. The lady declares she has found Christ a perfect consoler. Perhaps so. But why does she say, "Grief unspeakable has been my portion; faith and trust have been put to the severest test"? We beg to tell her this is stuff and nonsense. Millions of women have lost their husbands, in far more distressing circumstances than Mrs. Spurgeon's. She has comfort, reputation, and a host of friends; while many poor widows have had to drink the very dregs of the cup of misery.

Those Atheists will commit suicide. Here is the case of the Rev. Robert Parker, rector of Wickham, found shot in his room on Thursday in last week. Yes, Talmage is right.

At the inquest on the body of this clergyman it transpired that his "temporary insanity" was rather prosaic. "He had worried himself a great deal about the depreciation in the value of the incumbency." Parsons seem very much like other men after all. They preach kingdom-come, but they love the good things of this world, and don't care to earn the blessings of poverty.

We don't believe there are many honest clergymen in the Church of England. Not that they would pick pockets, or commit ordinary crimes. Oh dear no! In this respect, we dare say, they are about on a level with other classes of the community. What we mean is that they simply preach for a living, and would preach almost anything to retain the said living. Here and there, however, you do meet with a really honest clergyman, and the experience is quite refreshing. The Rev. Charles Stirling, of New Malden, for instance, has resigned his benefice rather than countenance the Popery introduced by the Bishop of Lincoln with the connivance of the Archbishop of Canterbury. "I have been for forty-one years," he says, "a plain English clergyman. I must decline now to be any longer associated with Romish priests." This may seem fanatical to some folk. To us it seems honest and praiseworthy. We always respect a man who sacrifices something for his convictions. Most people haven't any convictions to sacrifice for.

They had a fine bazaar at the Lincoln Institution for Trained Nurses. Among the crowd was a dexterous pick-pocket, who had a sense of humor. Four ladies were eased of their purses, and after extracting all but the coppers from one of these the thief inserted it in the bishop's pocket. Perhaps the coppers were the thief's subscription. He may have reckoned it about equal to the bishop's contribution, considering the size and security of his lordship's salary.

There was a very funny misprint in last week's *Christian World*. Among the anti-Christian writers of the past are Julian, Lucian, Rabelais, Montaigne, and Boyle. Of course the last named should be *Bayle*. "Boyle" is the name of a very pious Englishman who wrote learnedly, and rather dully, in favor of Theism and Christianity.

This misprint occurs in an article on Dr. Bruce's new defence of Christianity—a book about which we shall soon have something to say to our readers. According to our contemporary, Dr. Bruce's position in relation to the soul is "an admirable illustration of the way in which the enlightened modern theologian can first accept every atom of evidence which his opponents offer, and then calmly proceed to build them into his own argument." (What grammar! by the way.) For our part, we should use a different form of words. We should say that calmness—or *cheek*, as some call it—is a theologian's chief characteristic; and also that the way in which the theologians of one age contradict the theologians of another age is a proof of the honesty of their business.

We don't take much interest in "sport," but some people do, and we leave them to their taste, as we hope they will leave us to ours. But we decidedly object—and have more than once said so—to the hysterical screaming of sky-pilots like Hugh Price Hughes. We can even sympathise with the *Sporting Mirror* (an extract from which is sent us) in its vigorous diatribe against the reverend libeller. Our irate contemporary tells him that music-halls are not brothels any more than "the chapel doors where assignations are made," and music-hall managers no more ruffians than "the minister under whose pulpit the wink is tipped by the frail females of his congregation."

The Tower-hill meetings of the unemployed are getting lively. Mr. H. M. Hyndman has put in an appearance, accompanied by one or two honest Socialists and one or two *farceurs*, and railed at other reformers who keep aloof. We read also that an old navy mounted the parapet, Bible in hand, and prayed that those who were honestly out of work might be delivered from those who did not respect God's word. Surely the whole comedy is a bitter

one when we think of the poor devils who want work for themselves and bread for their children.

The Earl of Derby has promised to contribute £500 towards the completion of Manchester Cathedral. We presume he makes this offer as an Earl. As a man he is said to be rather sceptical and a Malthusian. But the man seems less ready than the earl to shell out for his principles.

"Father Ignatius" is reported to have joined the Roman Catholic Church. He has been going towards it all his life. The wonder is that he was so long in taking the plunge. Parson Lyne, alias Father Ignatius, had some ability as a speaker, but he was a born crank, and his reasoning powers were of the meanest order.

The Rev. W. J. Dawson, lecturing on Tennyson at North Finchley, said that his little boy told him he lay awake at night and thought of "these things"—about all the people shut up in hell who couldn't get out, and why God didn't let them out after they had been there a little while. He thought about these things until his "brain whirled," and he thought of "giving up religion altogether," because *for ever* is a dreadful word. "And perhaps," said the little fellow, "Heaven won't be so nice after all, and perhaps we shan't be able to get out there when we want to." Good little chap! He's a lot better thinker than his father.

The Book of Genesis is still called "the oldest book in the world" in the *Christian Commonwealth*, the editor of which must surely know a great deal better. It is not even as old as some other parts of the Old Testament. It is less ancient than some of the Hindu scriptures, and far less ancient than the Egyptian Book of the Dead. But anything seems to go down with ordinary Christian readers.

Danbury Palace has been sold for £21,000, the money to be appropriated for the purchase of a residence for the poor Bishop of Rochester.

The Deanery of Peterborough, now vacant, will hardly be acceptable to a well-to-do clerical, since the stipend, formerly £1,350 a year, has been reduced by agricultural depression to about half that sum, and the dean has a large and expensive house and garden to keep up.

The Bishop of Trinidad gave a woful picture of episcopal discomforts in that island, but *Truth*, speaking on the authority of a colonist who has lived there many years, advises the public not to waste its sympathies on the missionaries who labor in Trinidad.

Lloyd's Newspaper publishes a special little address by the Archbishop of Canterbury on "Body and Spirit." He speaks of the duty of keeping the body *under*. Well, we guess that isn't very difficult to most of *Lloyd's* readers. People who live on small incomes, and only get a thoroughly good dinner once or twice a week, haven't so much trouble with their bodies as the Archbishop imagines. He is judging from his own standpoint of £15,000 a year. Moreover he has written his homily for the wrong people. Let him preach about keeping the body *under* to the wealthier classes. The poor can do without his sermonising; yes, and without *him*.

The Catholics are crowing over the conversion of one of the Rothschild family. The Baroness James de Rothschild, who has recently been baptised into their communion, was, however, not a Jewess by birth, but became one by marriage.

In announcing the opening of a new Roman Catholic church in Lincolnshire, some of the papers spoke of Bishop Bagshawe as the bishop of the diocese. Bishop King is, however, the only one at present recognised by the Government, though the people may be pardoned who find small difference between the Bishop Romanist and the Bishop Romaniser.

In a paper read before a Boston minister's meeting, the speaker, a prominent journalist, touched on Sunday newspapers. After describing the daily routine and long hours of a reporter during six days of the week, he asked whether the reporter had not then earned the right to rest on Sunday. Responses of "Yes," "Yes," were heard throughout the hall.

"Then why," continued the speaker, "do you ministers go about the newspaper offices on Saturday afternoon and beg that a reporter may be sent the next day to report your sermons?"

At Peasmarsh, near Rye, last week an inquest was held on the body of a man who, being incapacitated from work, took his life in order that he might not become a burden on his friends. Five of the jury found that he was sane when he committed the act, and seven that he was insane. The coroner asked the minority to take the merciful view of the case, and consequently a verdict of temporary insanity was returned. But why merciful? Do the Christians think it impossible for a man to reach heaven if he has no burial service read over him? The suicide had been a local preacher in the Rye Wesleyan Methodist Circuit for nearly forty years, and the loving Father had shown his appreciation of the work by giving his son an epileptic fit and by making his health so bad that he found life unbearable. Verily "God is love!" The man left a note behind him asking God to bless some of his friends. He evidently was sane enough to see the inadvisability of waiting until he could make the request personally!

The Rev. J. S. Pawlyn, of Ealing Wesleyan Church, is one of those bold persons who "rush in where angels fear to tread." He has been lecturing on "Providence," with special reference to the wreck of the "Roumania." "God," said he, "often permitted painful events which he did not actually appoint. It probably was so with the loss of the 'Roumania.' The speed of the great ocean liners had become exceedingly perilous," etc. This does not affect the question of responsibility. The person who permits murders he could prevent, is as responsible as though he committed them.

John Crusher, of Loftus, examined in bankruptcy, showed the benefit of religion to a rogue. Mr. Wright, a preacher, used to stay with him. He got up in the morning and had prayer, and then wanted an accommodation bill signed. Poor Crusher was deceived through religious pretences, which ought to have been a warning to him.

A continual cry is being made on behalf of the poorer clergy, and, says the *Guardian*, this is a more urgent matter than old age pensions. What common sense would dictate is, that the exorbitant stipends of church dignitaries should be levelled down in order that the poor curates should be levelled up. But oh, no, say the church papers, what is wanted is increased generosity on the part of laymen.

Bishop Smythies having, in an address on missionary work, referred to the great fault of the Central Africans being "their belief in witchcraft and the Devil," Mr. W. G. Fisher addressed a letter to his lordship, asking him how, in view of the recognition of witchcraft in the Old Testament and the New (Exod. xxii. 18, Deut. xviii. 10, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6, Acts xiii. 6, Gal. v. 20, Rev. xxi. 8), and the explicit testimony to the personality of a Devil in the story of Christ's temptation, he could disabuse the Central Africans of their fault from the authority of the Bible. The bishop gave a shifty sort of an answer, in which, without denying the reality of the Devil or witchcraft, he made out that the people of Africa had rather too much of a good thing.

The Bishop of Durham, with his thousands a year, continues his posing as the friend of the working men. His charge to his clergy on the Labor Question is full of cheap platitudes. He appears to think that all will be well if the clergy pat rich and poor on the back, beg them to shake hands, and cry "Bless you, my children." He bewails the misery of our crowded cities, and says that "to contemplate such a state of things even afar off is surely to be constrained to do nothing undone to amend it, relying on God's will for the people, and the unexhausted and untried resources of the Gospel."

Relying on God's will is not a very promising policy. It reminds us of Henry George's theory that God meant the land for the people, only the will of the landlords has been too strong for him. Besides, if there is a God, his will is sure to be executed, with or without the aid of the untried resources of the Gospel. The fact is, the Bishop wants the Church to

cut in at the eleventh hour and take as much as possible of the credit of other men's thought and labor.

In the *Carrier Dove* of San Francisco, for October and November, Mr. W. Emmette Coleman gives abundant evidence that Mdme. Blavatsky, before she founded Theosophy, posed as an ordinary spiritist medium, claiming intercourse with the spirits of the dead.

Bismarck never went to Canossa, but the young emperor is going. In order to secure a hundred Catholic votes for the Army Bill, the German government undertakes to let the Jesuits return. This is represented as an act of religious liberty. Perhaps it is, but it shows how the Catholic party is more than holding its own in the land of Luther.

Last year 22.0 per cent. of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland aged five years and upwards, 8.6 per cent. of Protestant Episcopalians, 5.6 per cent. of Presbyterians, 4.4 per cent. of Methodists, and 5.0 per cent. of the members of "all other denominations" could neither read nor write, the mean percentage for the entire population being 18.4. Roman Catholics constitute 75 per cent. of the population.

The American Catholics are not satisfied that all the holy relics should be in Europe. The many pilgrims to see the old undervest of Jesus at Trèves, led to a bone from St. Ann, the mother of the Virgin, and, as a Catholic writer expressed it, "Grandmother of the Eternal God," being exhibited at New York. The latest relics sent there on exhibition to rake in the shekels is a piece of the veil worn by the Holy Virgin, who was mother of a good sized family. How much it cost per yard is not known, but a square inch is said to be worth a million dollars.

The Evangelical Alliance have issued their program of a Week of Prayer, beginning with January 1. The celestials forewarned will doubtless put wool in their ears as the new year approaches.

We are getting a bit overdone just now with æsthetical clergymen. The epidemic crops up every now and then, and the divine to whose discourse we listened last Sunday morning had got it bad. "You will remembah," said he, "that in our discourse of a week ago we spoke of the fact that Jonah was for three days and three nights in the—ah—whale's—ah—the whale's—ah—society!"

The Rev. J. P. Foster, secretary of the Clergy Fees Reform Society, has been adjudicated to pay £200 for a libel on Mr. Charlewood, secretary to the Bishop of Manchester, whom he accused of exacting heavy fees from clergy who were inducted to a benefice. Evidence was given that this sort of thing was done largely by others if not by Mr. Charlewood.

The *St. James's Gazette* is responsible for the statement that the liabilities of "General" Booth's Army are now £39,635, to meet which the only available liquid amounts are cash in bank £921, and sundry debtors £15,635. It also calls attention to the high rate of interest offered by the S. A. bank.

The East London Christian Evidence Society had a stormy committee meeting, the secretary complaining that several meetings had been arranged by the Finance and Assistant secretaries without his knowledge. A heated and protracted discussion ensued. The Finance secretary expressed his intention to resign, and "wash his hands of the whole affair."

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform,
He plants his footsteps on the sea And rides upon the storm.
He has been riding on the storm with a vengeance in China
and Japan lately, where he has destroyed some hundreds of
lives, and in planting down his footsteps has overturned
some heathen temples.

Herman Seigler, of Chicago, has had more religion than he
could carry. Entering his home with a gun on Sunday he
cried out "God is with me," then shot his mother-in-law and
and wife. The spirit sees some of his relatives to have moved Herman to
atrocities even as it did the saint's of old.

An English visitor at Malta refused
the Virgin which he met borne by a

crowd bonneted him—i.e., knocked his hat down over his head—and hustled him off. Later, having gone home and got a new hat, he met another procession, and this time he prudently raised his hat. A yell arose, and the mob chased him several blocks till he escaped in a boat. He had saluted Pontius Pilate, who was going to be burnt in effigy.

The *Church Times*, in its issue for Nov. 25, lets out a profound truth in one of its leaderettes. Alluding to the large amount spent on Church education, it confesses "without Church schools we have no chance whatever of preventing the spread of infidelity and indifference." In other words, "Unless we can mould the minds of children while they are plastic, credulous, and pliable, we can never teach them when mature, and our trade will be extinguished."

The trial of the South Meath election petition has shown how the Catholic priests are a political body. Father Brady stated that when on a visit to Lourdes he placed the names of Parnellites on the shrine, that they might be under the eyes of the blessed Mother of God. Father Buchanan declined to say whether he refused to administer the last sacrament to a dying man until he had renounced Parnellism. It is easy enough to guess what he did, though; for he also stated that if the Bishops declared the Tory party to be immoral it would be a sin to vote for them. Altogether, it is pretty plain that the Romish Church is not simply a religious organisation. As a matter of fact, it exerts direct political influence in exact proportion to its opportunities. Give it the power, even in England, and it would meddle with everything.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have had their day. They are too old-fashioned for the present age, which likes its "Life of Christ" dished up in a less primitive style. Dr. Farrar's trashy book had a great vogue, and brought him a good round sum. His publisher did better still, much to Dr. Farrar's disgust. Since then the English-speaking world has had the pleasure of reading, or at least of buying, Dr. Geikie's *Life of Christ*. From the publisher's point of view, and no doubt from the author's, it is a very successful production. Yes, there's money in poor J. C. still, and the sky-pilots will exploit him as long as it pays to do so. But for all that these Lives of Christ are a sign that Christianity is waning. Men who really believed in Christ as God would never want him tricked out in modern fashion.

Mrs. Grundy follows Christian civilisation over the whole globe. We see that a Kimberley lady vents her indignation in a local paper at the indecencies of the picture gallery. In her innocence she went to see the show, and she found quite half a dozen horrid paintings. One was the "Boy and the Dryad," and "words cannot express" her "disgust" at the dryad, who is "simply a shameless young woman, without a stitch of clothing to her back"—and probably as little in front. We cordially sympathise with this indignant female. But why doesn't she round on her "Creator" for making women naked, instead of providing them with a natural suit of undetachable clothes? That Kimberley woman's feelings must be awful every time she takes a bath—if, indeed, she condescends to such an indecency.

It was at a Sabbath morning service in a village church, and the parson, with due form, commenced to give out the names of a couple who were about to become spliced. "I publish the banns of marriage between John Henry —, bachelor, and Jane. I—er cannot make out the other name, but you'll all hear it next Sunday. If any of you know any just cause, etc., ye are to declare it." Then the organ played.

"I wonder," remarked a school-fellow, to Henry Irving, (who is of a dramatic as well as a sporting turn of mind), "I wonder why Adam has never been made the hero of a play or drama of some sort?" "The reason why Adam has never been available for the hero of a play," replied Henry, "is simply because it is not possible to mix up his name with some married woman."

Parson: "That type-written sermon I received from you was abominably printed—just full of blunders." Business man (sadly): "I know." "Why don't you discharge the fellow?" "It's a girl." "Well, discharge the girl." "Never! I'm in love with her." "Then marry her." "She won't have me."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Dec. 4, Hall of Science, Freeman-street, Grimsby; 11, "Why I Cannot be a Christian"; at 3, "An Hour with the Devil"; at 7, "The Doom of the Gods."

Thursday, Dec. 8, Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-Street, Islington; at 8, "Why I am an Atheist."

Dec. 11 and 18, Hall of Science.

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

February 5, Hull.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Dec. 4, Hall of Science, London; 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.

F. WESTERN.—Thanks for cutting. See paragraph.

E. OLIVER.—Subscription acknowledged elsewhere. There are many members of our party who, like yourself, cannot be active workers for the cause. We wish they would all, like yourself, help to furnish the sinews of war for those who can do the work.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S SPECIAL FUND.—We have received:—Edward Oliver, £1 1s.; W. C. (Dorking), 10s. 6d.; G. Macready, 2s. 6d.; J. Terry, 1s.; B. A. Millichamp, 2s.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. H. R., 2s. 6d.; Seeley, 1s.; J. P., 2s.; W. W. Wood, 3s.

O. WRIGHT.—The earliest Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament only dates at earliest a thousand years after the Christian era. It is known as the Codex Laudanus, and has the vowel points.

S. J.—It is not for us to try the Lawrence case over again. It is always open for anyone to say that the case against any prisoner was not proved. Your analogy is fallacious. We never disputed the fact of our responsibility for the *Freethinker*. Our contention was that what we had done was a legitimate exercise of freethought. For the rest, we really have no time to waste on "spirit photographs." As well ask us to study alchemy or astrology.

R. E. HOLDING.—Your experience at Professor Boet's meeting does not astonish us. It was lucky you came out of it as well as you did. Happily hard words break no bones. The man you refer to is of a criminal type you will often see in Lombroso's plates. If he were not venting his malignity on Secularism he would probably be gratifying his instincts in a more dangerous manner.

A. SIMSON.—We do not see why the Brighton Branch should not be successfully reconstituted. Let us know if a hall can be obtained, and we will see what can be done on our part.

G. MACREADY.—Wait a little. Mr. Foote will write you shortly about Freethought lectures in Northampton.

K. HUNT.—Letter to hand. The date therefore stands as per list.

J. BRENNER (Hull).—It is all right.

A. LEWIS.—Shall appear.

W. T. STEELE.—All your suggestions, and many more, will be carried out at the London Hall of Science in due course; provided, that is, the scheme is properly supported. More accommodation is wanted for the purposes of an Institute; and the sooner the directors are enabled to rebuild the front part of the premises, the sooner the N.S.S. will be able to carry on all the splendid work that is desired.

H. ROWDEN informs W. B., who inquires for some one who sells this journal at Canterbury, that he should apply to Mr. Ludd, near Cathedral Gate.

T. DUNMORE.—Some lecturers like a little desk on the table for notes and papers, and some do not. If there were any strong demand for it the committees would supply it as a matter of course. However, we let the Branches see your suggestion that something of the kind should be provided.

T. E. M. (Belfast).—Shall appear. It has decided merit. Glad to hear you were so pleased with our lectures in your city. Certainly, if we are to have any religion, the only satisfactory one is the Religion of Humanity.

NEMO.—Colonel Ingersoll has not replied to Father Lambert. He is under no obligation to write a set reply to any and every Christian who chooses to attack him. He only fights with gentlemen; and having crossed swords with Judge Black, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. Gladstone, he may well leave the smaller fry of faith to get an advertisement for themselves at someone else's expense.

W. PARTRIDGE.—Pleased to receive your Birmingham list of subscriptions for the General Fund. We note your report of Mr. Cohen's very satisfactory lectures at Birmingham, and your committee's opinion that other Branches would do well to engage him.

SAM STANDRING.—Sorry, though not surprised, to learn that your little monthly will not be carried on in the new year. Our opinion is that the Freethought party in England has

at present as many papers as it needs, or is able to support. We wish you success at Rochdale and elsewhere in the district, but some kind of guarantee is necessary. You will find it difficult to make lectures pay, and impossible to live on enthusiasm.

J. W. WITTERING.—Very sorry to hear of Mr. Alward's serious accident, and the consequent postponement of the tea before Mr. Foote's evening lecture. We hope to find our old and esteemed friend making good progress to recovery.

J. L. ROGERS (Plymouth).—Mr. Foote will try to give you a Sunday in February or March. Let him know immediately what hall is available.

B. A. MILLICHAMP.—Thanks. We will keep the information handy.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for cuttings. We note your appreciation of our reply to Gladstone in the *Grand Old Book*.

W. WHITCHER.—We expected you would find difficulties. Let us know further about the hall you mention.

G. HUNTLEY.—Under consideration.

JOSEPH BROWN.—Send us the manuscript and we will see. Don't be vexed by the black champion's scurrilities. You pay him too much honor.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND:—W. Bailey (Manchester), 10s.; A. Friend, 5s.; R. W., £1; J. K., 2s. 6d.

JOSEPHUS.—(1) Mr. Grinstead does not know what he is talking about when he says that the evidence for the Gospels is "much more plentiful than any evidence which relates to the works of Shakespeare." We have poems and plays of Shakespeare published during his lifetime, and the complete collection of his plays published after his death, in 1623, by his friends, with an introductory poem by Ben Jonson, who also knew him personally. Where can we find any such evidence for the Gospels? (2) Mr. Foote never said that the Gospels were not written till "several hundred years after Christ." (3) We cannot follow your reconciliation of the two accounts of Paul's conversion.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Liberty—Liberator—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Secular Thought—Modern Thought—Twentieth Century—Für Unsere Jugend—Freethinker's Magazine—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Clarion—Church Reformer—Ironclad Age—Independent Pulpit—La Vérité Philosophique—Echo—Watts's Literary Guide—Freedom—Cosmopolitan—Star—Glasgow Herald—Daily Telegraph—Truth—North Eastern Daily Gazette—Dundee Advertiser—Tit Bits—New Era—Natural Food—Midland Evening News—Middlesex County—Times—Moralist—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Northern Echo.

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 had good meetings on Sunday at Manchester. The morning attendance was fair, there was a great improvement in the afternoon, and in the evening the hall was inconveniently crowded. During the day the chair was taken by Messrs. Payne, Taylor, and Pegg. Each lecture was followed by questions, and the third by some discussion. The evening meeting was very enthusiastic. A collection, and apparently a good one, was made for the N.S.S. General Fund.

The Manchester Secular Hall is now further improved by the addition of a handsome little platform, presented by the same good friend who gave the Bradlaugh portrait and paid for the redecoration. We are also pleased to hear that the Branch is in a better financial position than it has known for some years. The committee intend to carry on an active propaganda during the winter.

Mr. Charles Watts had two large enthusiastic audiences last Sunday at the London Hall of Science. His exposure of the follies of Theosophy met with long and repeated applause. Mr. Watts again lectures at the same hall, morning and

evening to-day (Sunday, December 4). Prior to the evening lecture Mrs. Watts will give a recitation.

Sunday, December 25, being Christmas Day, the London Hall of Science will be closed. It is not thought advisable to bring a handful of people away from the season's festivities. On Wednesday evening, December, 28, the Hall will be open for a novel function. The members of the National Secular Society are invited to attend a conversazione, to meet the President and his colleagues of the Executive. The hall will be open for this purpose from eight till eleven. At intervals during the evening a little music and a few good songs and readings will be given.

On Thursday evening next (Dec. 8) Mr. Foote concludes the London Secular Federation's course of Free Lectures at Wellington Hall, Islington. His subject is "Why I am an Atheist." Ample opportunity will be given for pertinent and courteous discussion.

Freethinkers should procure early copies of the National Secular Society's *Almanack* for 1893. A margin has been left this year for an increased sale. The profits of the publication go to the Society's general fund. A full list of the contents will be found in our advertisement columns.

Mr. James Rowney (Secularist) and Mr. J. Boyce (Christian) will hold a discussion at the London Hall of Science next Wednesday evening (Dec. 7). The subject for debate is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The admission is free.

Renan's *Vie de Jésus* has had an enormous sale. At the original price of seven francs and a half, it is said that 60,000 copies were sold. The cheap edition must have had a far wider circulation. There is also an illustrated edition which has doubtless found many purchasers. Of course the *Vie de Jésus* is the most popular of Renan's works, but his other writings must have had a considerable public. It appears, however, that Michel Levy, the publisher, had very much the lion's share of the profits. Renan was often told so, but he replied that Levy deserved them. Other persons thought differently, but Renan was immovable on this point. It was partly a poor sense of business, but more largely a sense of chivalry towards the publisher who first found him a market. Renan's "vices" did not include avarice.

Renan was so little avaricious that he had hardly left his widow sufficient for her maintenance. She has been compelled to sell the special library of Oriental works he diligently collected during his lifetime. It appears that his office was only worth about £400 a year, and the profits from the sale of his writings are not very great. Madame Renan will probably be the recipient of a pension from the government of France.

Plymouth, Devenport, and Stonehouse readers of this journal are requested to support the Plymouth Branch, and to attend the meeting this evening (Dec. 4) at 100 Union-street. They will find a nice comfortable room, a fair library of books, and an opportunity of taking part in arrangements for Freethought propaganda.

At the sixteenth annual Congress of the American Secular Union, Judge Waite was re-elected president, with Mrs. M. A. Freeman for secretary, and Otto Wettstein treasurer. It was decided to hold an International Congress during the World's Fair.

We are pleased to learn that the accomplished widow of Richard A. Proctor, the Freethinking populariser of astronomy, has been appointed curator of the Proctor Memorial Observatory at San Diego, California.

The *Weekly Dispatch*, writing on the coroner for West London having asked the jury to hold up their hands instead of kissing the greasy covers of a Bible, remarks: "Of course, it is open to us to affirm if we declare that we do not believe in the sanctity of the Bible or in the creed of which it is a symbol. But in doing that we are apt to court insult, and sometimes actual injury. It is quite time that the present form of oath were abolished, and something more reasonable and as binding substituted for it."

The Japanese have frequently been reported as ready to adopt a new religion. The thirty-one rival sects of Christians in Japan, had, however, given them pause as to the merits of that faith. We believe we are quite correct in stating that the leading minds in Japan, and those who are coming to the front in politics, are decided Freethinkers, treating Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, and Shintoism alike, from the eclectic natural point of view.

While Mr. Symes has been touring in South Australia, his place at Melbourne was taken by a Mr. Joseph Skurrie, who seems to have given every satisfaction.

The *Independent Pulpit* of Texas in its November number reprints Mr. Foote's article on "Tennyson and the Bible." The *Pulpit* maintains its standard with a number of serious high class Freethought articles.

The Humanitarian League holds its next meeting on Monday (Dec. 5) at the Wheatsheaf Restaurant, 13 Rathbone-place, Oxford-street, London, W. Dr. W. B. Richardson takes the chair at 8, and an address will be delivered by Mr. H. F. Lester on private and public slaughter-houses.

The projected Islington Branch is making satisfactory progress. A special meeting of members will be held at Milner-lodge, Waterloo-terrace, at 3.30 on Sunday (Dec. 4). A full attendance is requested, as important business has to be transacted.

The publishers of *Secular Thought* (Toronto) have reprinted A. B. Moss's article on the Christian Creed as a pamphlet. We are glad to see that English Freethought writers are being more than ever read in America.

Portsmouth friends will on Sunday have an opportunity of hearing Mr. H. Snell, who then pays his first visit to that city. They should make a point of being present. Mr. Snell is now one of the special lecturers of the N.S.S. His subjects are attractive, and will, we believe, be ably dealt with. At any rate, the Portsmouth folk should judge that for themselves.

Mr. Cohen and Mr. Snell, two of our younger London lecturers, are winning golden opinions, and we hope they have both a bright future before them in our party. We are more than ever in need of rising men to carry on Freethought propaganda. Nothing would please us better than to see a hundred good lecturers in the field, and a dozen men able to fill the President's chair.

An effort is being made to establish a Freethought Circulating Library for East London. At present there is only one Circulating Library for the whole district, and the books are under a rigid censorship. Gifts of books for the new venture have already been received from Sir John Lubbock, Leslie Stephen, George Anderson, and others. Readers of this paragraph who are willing to assist should send direct to Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road, Old Ford, E.; or to E. Cohen, librarian, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E. All presents of books, or other help, will be duly acknowledged.

A number of Freethinkers at Ipswich have resolved to form a Branch of the N.S.S. Mr. Foote is to visit the town on Monday, Dec. 12, and lecture in the Co-operative Hall on "Secularism Superior to Christianity as an Intellectual Light and a Moral Guide." Mr. Robert Forder will accompany Mr. Foote and take the chair. After the lecture the new Branch will be constituted and arrangements made for further propaganda.

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.

COLONEL INGERSOLL AND THE PRIEST.

WHEN at Chicago delivering his great oration on Voltaire, Colonel Ingersoll appears to have stayed at the same hotel as the Catholic Bishop Spalding. At any rate a priest named Maurelian called to see the Bishop, and by some inadvertence was shown into the Colonel's room. He afterwards wrote to the papers, complaining he had been insulted by the infidel. Colonel Ingersoll in consequence addressed the following letter to the *Sun*.

"To the Editor of the *Sun*.—Sir,—My attention has been called to the grievance of 'Brother' Maurelian, who seems to think that he was badly treated by me at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

"The account given by 'Brother' Maurelian, as published in the *Sun*, is not quite correct as to the language used by me, and as to my manner toward him, it is altogether wrong.

"A card was presented to me on Saturday, the 8th of the month, at room 33, Grand Pacific Hotel, and on this card was either 'Brother Maurelian' or 'Father Maurelian'—I think 'Father Maurelian.' I told the waiter bringing it to show the gentleman up. In a little while 'Brother' Maurelian appeared and asked for Bishop Spalding. Of course I instantly saw that a mistake had been made, and the situation struck me as having in it at least a spark of humor. Think of a Catholic 'Brother' calling at my room for Bishop Spalding! And so I said to the 'Brother' pleasantly as it was, or is, possible for me to say anything, 'Bishop Spalding is not here; but I am a bishop, and I have been called a pope, although I am not. My name is Ingersoll, and now you see the danger into which you have fallen.'

"The gentleman excused himself, and I said, 'It is not your fault; it was a mistake at the office,' bade him good morning as politely as I could, and wished him good luck.

"That is the extent of the insult. I never treated anyone better in my life. My tone was perfectly kind, and while I was saying what I did, I looked as pleasantly as I could at the reverend 'Brother,' it never occurring to me that he could take the slightest exception to what was being said. Unconsciously I paid him the compliment of taking it for granted that he had sufficient perception to know that all was said without the slightest intention of wounding his pride or shocking his religious convictions or sentiments.

"I do not attack persons. I do not denounce Catholics, but Catholicism. I do not deride Protestants, but I do attack their creeds.

"There are thousands and thousands of good men who believe the Bible, and when I attack the dogma of inspiration I am not attacking them. This is a distinction that many fail to make. I hate no one because he is a Catholic, I hate no one because he believes what I think are superstitions. I have no prejudice against any human being based on color, race, or creed, but with every drop of my blood I hate the superstitions that enslave the mind and seek to give to organized credulity the control of this world.

"Brother Maurelian, filled with 'the charity that thinketh no evil,' allowed himself to feel insulted by words of pleasantry and kindness, but I hope that some time he will forgive himself. Hoping that you will have the kindness to publish this statement.—I remain, yours sincerely,

"R. G. INGERSOLL.

"New York, Oct. 19, 1892."

THE LONGEVITY OF A LIE.

THE WATCH STORY.

THE story told by the Rev. J. Moffat Logan of Mrs. Lawe (*sic*) having challenged God to strike her dead on the platform, is an extremely old one. Having very frequently heard the lady in question at Glasgow, where Mr. Logan located the scene (*Bristol Messenger*, April, 1892), I had no hesitation in disbelieving it even before Mrs. Law gave it a denial (*Freethinker*, May 1, 1892). It was such an old, familiar fable, with such an ancient, fish-like smell. Not that I accuse Mr. Logan of being a wilful liar. Possibly he may have heard Mrs. Law allude to this venerable story as a specimen of the genus myth, and his treacherous memory may have, after the lapse of many years and when the lady had long retired from the platform, induced him to make her

the heroine of it. Most Freethinkers know how this watch story followed Mr. Bradlaugh from the days of his early youth till he at length put his foot upon it by entering an action at law against one of its circulators named, I believe, Edgecombe, compelling him to pay a good round sum to the Masonic Orphans' Institution. The veteran, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, pointed out about that time that the story had done duty before Mr. Bradlaugh came to the Freethought platform, having been used against Richard Carlile and others.

A similar story was told of one of the orators at the Feasts of Reason in Paris, nearly a century ago. M. Aulard, in his able work on those interesting episodes of the French Revolution, says of the actor Monvel: "It is pretended that this comedian, clothed in a tricolored dalmatic, cried, 'If there exists a God, I defy him to destroy me this moment in order to show his power.'" And M. Aulard gives as his reference the Abbé Gregoire's *History of the Sects of the French Revolution*, vol. i., p. 35. But, adds M. Aulard, we have the discourse of Monvel, 3,000 copies of which were printed at the expense of the section of la Montagne; and it is seen there that the actor speaks of God in a totally different manner. "If he exists," said he, "this creator of all; and the contrary opinion would be too desolating."* Monvel, in fact, was a Theist.

But the story was an ancient one in the days of the Abbé Gregoire, some similar versions being found in Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgments* and in the early atheographers. It may probably be traced even to the days of the Greek Diagoras, who is said to have asked if Zeus exists, why he did not display his power by hurling his thunderbolts at perjurers who took his name in vain. Perhaps it even extends to Homeric days and the story of Ajax defying the lightning. Theists and Christians have never shown much imagination in their inventions; witness the constant infidel death-bed yarn. But what they lack in variety they make up in persistency; and probably, when we have all gone to glory, it will be gravely recorded that G. W. Foote called on God to strike him dead on the platform, and that a prayer to a justly enraged Deity was the last dying utterance of

LUCIANUS.

A CONFIDENCE TRICK.

"Look up," says the parson, "look up, look up;
There is hope for you in the bright unknown;
There's a banquet for all who lack bite and sup;
There are riches and friends for the poor and lone."

"See, see," says the parson, "those beautiful robes;
They are all for you, my poor shivering friend.
Far, far through sky-beauties of sparkling globes,
There is warmth and bright mansions for you without end

"Work, work," says the parson, "and trust to me.
God's a friend of the poor, and he promises true.
Soon the time will come for thy rest to be,
And then for the weak there is strength anew."

The wretched ones gaze with a straining eye
If haply such treasures may really show.
"Oh, God!" they beseech, as they strive to descry
Relief from their cursed despair and woe.

"Oh, God, let it be so. Oh, God, are you there?
We are wearied to death in this desert of pain.
If here we may ne'er find relief, may thy care
Provide that in death we may weep not again.

"For Jesus' sake pity us, God! make us blest.
We are hungry and cold and have labored till tired;
Thy servant has told us of food and of rest,
Show also to us, things like these desired.

"We have worked day and night for a pitiful wage,
Yet we yield up to Thee the last mite that we have;
We are sinful, but spurn us not. Blot from the page
Of thy Book all our wickedness. Pity and save."

Thus crying, beseeching, they fall in the mire,
Death-trodden by men of less heart and more grit;
While one to the glories of heaven may aspire,
Ten thousand wake shrieking in hell's fiery pit.

E. ANDERSON.

* *La Culte de la Raison et le Culte de l'Étre Suprême*, par F. A. Aulard, p. 103; 1892.

BOOK CHAT.

Dean Hole, in his *Memories*, relates the following by no means novel story: "An American bishop, whose praise is in the Churches, told me that a collector in a church in San Francisco, on receiving a shake of the head instead of a dollar from the hand of one whom he knew intimately, stopped to remonstrate, and said, 'William, you must give something. You've heard what the rector has said—it's your duty.' 'My money belongs to my creditors,' said William. 'And Who is your greatest creditor? To Whom do you owe the most?' asked the collector. 'Well, that's very true,' replied William; 'but just now He's not crowding me quite so much as the others.'"

* * *

That acute cosmopolitan observer, Max O'Rell, in his latest book, *English Pharisees and French Crocodiles*, remarks: "There is no place for the poor at the banquet of life in England. For them, beer and the Bible. They take beer." The English will not open their museums on Sunday, says this satirist, but "meanwhile the London taverns remain open, which proves that the English bigots consider gin and beer more powerful moral stimulants than the masterpieces of great artists."

* * *

A small edition of the newly recovered "Gospel according to Peter and Apocalypse of Peter" is now in preparation at the Cambridge University Press, and will be ready in a few days. It will include a lecture on the Gospel, by Mr. J. Armitage Robinson, of Christ's College, and another on the Apocalypse, by Mr. M. R. James, of King's College; and it will contain the Greek texts emended and annotated together with translations into English.

* * *

James Elishama Smith—"Shepherd" Smith, as he was afterwards known from editing the *Shepherd*—after being dead and almost forgotten for many years, has at last found a biographer in his kinsman, W. Anderson Smith. He was a noteworthy man in his generation—a sort of Christian Socialist and Pantheist. His most extraordinary publication was entitled the *Anti-Christ*, and he afterwards became editor of the *Family Herald*.

* * *

Mrs. Andrew Crosse, in her recent volumes, tells an anecdote of two little boys who were discussing Biblical characters: "The one who always took the highly moral view of things observed, with great gravity, that 'Abraham was a very good man.' 'No he wasn't,' replied the other small boy; 'he wasn't good at all, for he oughtn't to have had two wives.' 'Oh, but you know,' replied the first, 'he only had one wife; the other was a porcupine.'"

* * *

Mrs. Crosse once asked her gardener what prospect there was of a good apple-crop. "Please God," he replied, "we shall have a terrible fine crop; but please him or no, we shall have a goodish lot."

* * *

Another story, an old one, is of a primitive clerk, who startled the congregation by giving out "This is to give notice that Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Chase will preach here every Sunday to all eternity." The worthy man only intended to signify that two neighboring clergymen had arranged to do duty alternately.

* * *

Mr. C. E. Smith recently purchased a complete set of our old magazine *Progress* bound in morocco. For this he had to pay a bookseller two guineas. Complete sets of this magazine are very scarce.

* * *

The Sunday Question is the title of a threepenny pamphlet, published by the Circle Co-operative Printing Co., 25 College-street, Belfast. It contains a controversy in a series of letters between Mr. Lalor Crawford and the Rev. John Waddell. On the whole it is lively reading, and the name of the *Freethinker* appears with great frequency. Mr. Waddell once sent us a long communication which we did not insert, and the incident preyed upon his mind. Mr. Crawford bids him to cease "weeping over the ghastly waste-basket." We hope the reverend gentleman will take this sound advice. The discussion itself should do good in the north of Ireland, and perhaps elsewhere.

A SNUG RETREAT.

ALTHOUGH they're strictly orthodox
And never prone to doubt,
At times the faithful meet some rocks
That put their sailing out.
For instance, they can't understand
(Although to both they'd swear)
How Jesus sits on God's right hand
If God is everywhere.

These awkward statements plagued me so
When I was quite a youth,
That I was in a sweat to know
How both could be the truth.
And so I sought our parson out,
A learned man, and one
Who knew no end of things about
The Father and the Son.

I spoke my mind. "My friend," said he,
'Tis vain to cavil thus,
To comprehend these truths may be
Impossible to us:
These facts you inharmonious deem
Because your light is dim.
Trust God—they will no longer seem
Impossible with Him.

Encourage Faith, let Grace abound,
If reasons you'd assign,
It shows how greatly you confound
The Human and Divine."

I took my hat and said "Good-day,"
On holy thoughts intent.
But must confess I came away
No wiser than I went.

Faith did not come. I could not place
This question on the shelf.
And getting tired of trusting Grace,
I asked our Lord himself—
The lion lies *outside* the Lamb,
For Jesus, when I cried
"Where art thou?" answered "Here I am,
In my Papa's inside."

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE SECULAR FEDERATION.

A MEETING of delegates will be held in the Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road, Bradford, on Sunday, Dec. 4, at 3 p.m., to consider a program of active work submitted by the Rochdale Branch, and other important business. The following is the program of aims and objects:

1. Abolition of the oath and substitution of affirmation in all cases.
2. Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws and of those concerning Sunday observance.
3. Compulsory non-religious education in all day schools drawing any Government pay.
4. Abolition of all workhouse, prison, army, navy and other chaplaincies paid for out of the public purse.
5. Compulsory civil marriage and an extension of the laws facilitating divorce.
6. Repeal of all laws granting to Christian churches, chapels, schools and other such buildings an exemption from taxation.

SAM STANDRING, Organising Secretary.

A RESULT OF CHRISTIAN TREATMENT.

We learn with regret that Miss Robins, an active worker of the Finsbury Branch, has been obliged to go to the Royal Free Hospital to suffer an operation for tumor, and with indignation that the immediate occasion of the disorder was the ill-treatment to which she was subject in the park on Sept. 11, at the hands of some Christian roughs, incited by the Christian Evidence opponents of Mr. Heaford on that occasion. Miss Robins has our sincere sympathy and good wishes as well as those of all her co-workers.

The Croydon Crawler was trying to find a north-west passage from the leg to the second joint of the duck, and was muttering under his breath. "Ma," whispered little El Dorado, "is pa saying grace?"

UGANDA.

While the clericals are pushing the Government to retain its hold on Uganda, it may be worth while to notice how *Truth* replies to their usual arguments.

The Christian converts would be abandoned.—The country contains about 3,000,000 human beings. There are at most 400 Christian converts. It would be far cheaper to offer to bring away these converts. Converts, however, in Africa are generally very questionable Christians. In Natal an advertisement for a black servant often finishes with the words "no mission boy need apply."

Uganda is a field for missionary labor.—So is India; so indeed, is London. A soul is a soul wherever the body in which it is enclosed resides. Is it not a little absurd to annex Uganda in the hope of converting its inhabitants to Protestantism, when we have above 200,000,000 souls within our own territories the possessors of which are not Christians?

We must not desert the missionaries.—According, then, to this, if the missionaries penetrate into any portion of Africa, we are bound to follow this up by annexation. Close by Uganda there are other kingdoms. If half-a-dozen missionaries enter one of them, are we bound to annex the kingdom? The Catholic missionaries in Uganda say that they have no fear of any personal consequences to themselves if the Company withdraws.

CHRISTIAN THEORY, SECULAR PRACTICE.

The magistrate who listens with devout attention to the precept, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," on Sunday, on Monday dismisses, as intrinsically absurd, a charge of bewitching a cow brought against some old woman; the superintendent of a lunatic asylum who substituted exorcism for rational modes of treatment would have but a short tenure of office; even parish clerks doubt the utility of prayers for rain, so long as the wind is in the east; and an outbreak of pestilence sends men not to the churches, but to the drains. In spite of prayers for the success of our arms and *Te Deums* for victory, our real faith is in big battalions and keeping our powder dry; in knowledge of the science of warfare; in energy, courage, and discipline. In these, as in all other practical affairs, we act on the aphorism, "*Laborare est orare*" (To labor is to pray); we admit that intelligent work is the only acceptable worship; and that, whether there be a supernature or not, our business is with nature.—*T. H. Huxley, "Essays on Some Controverted Questions."*

PROFANE JOKES.

Farmer: "You had a fire at the manse this morning. Any serious loss?" Minister: "Yes, ten years' sermons were completely burned." Farmer (with the memory of many a weary Sunday morning): "Mon, they had made a gran' blaze, they were so dry, ye ken."

The pastor had no dislike to the choir, but some of its members were almost ready to resign, not long ago, on account of one of his announcements. So many of them were sick that the choir seats were deserted. The good man was sorry for it, but the idea uppermost in his mind was to choose a hymn that the entire congregation could sing. He mentioned the absence of the choir, and then said, "Since Providence has seen fit to afflict them with bad colds, let us all join in singing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'"

"Did you meet anybody you knew while you were sojourning at that watering-place in Germany?" asked Weldon. "Did I?" said Raredon. "Hadn't been there two days before the pastor of our church out in Wabash Avenue settled down at the same hotel with his whole family for a six weeks' stay." "That must have been a pleasant surprise." "Why—aw—yes. Of course. But how would you have liked it if you had travelled three thousand miles from home to have a good time?"

There is a very religious restaurant in Boston, on the walls of which there is an odd jumble of texts of Scripture and items from the bill-of-fare, sometimes as follows: "He shall Feed His Flock like a Shepherd—Hot Sausages, 10 cents." "If ye be Obedient ye shall eat of the Fat of the Land—Hot Apple Sauce, 5 cents." "God moves in a Mysterious Way—Hash, 10 cents." "Be Careful for Nothing—Coffee and Cakes, 10 cents."

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' Touzeau Parris, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless" (2d. and 4d.); social gathering after the lecture. Tuesday at 8' dancing. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class. Thursday at 8' committee meeting.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 5.30, public tea (6d.); 7.30, free concert and dance. Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class (physical geography). Wednesday at 9, C. Cohen's class on "Spencer's Ethics." Thursday at 8.30, debate, "How to Find Work for the Unemployed," opened by James Branch, L.C.C. (free). Saturday at 8.30, free concert and dance.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11, debating class, Rev. Stewart Headlam, "The Work of the London School Board"; 7.30, C. Cohen, "What the Universe Teaches."

Edmonton—North Middlesex Hall, Fore-street: 6.30, music; 7, C. J. Hunt, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth?"

Finsbury Branch: 12, general members' meeting in the Minor Hall of Science.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Charles Watts, "Horrors of the French Revolution" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Education, Secular and Theological—a Reply to the Bishop of Manchester" (3d., 6d., and 1s.) Wednesday at 8.15, debate between J. Rowney and L. Boyce on "Life and Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (free).

Islington—Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-street: Thursday at 8, G. W. Foote, "Why I am an Atheist" (free).

Kentish Town—7 Kentish Town-road: Thursday at 8, debating class, "The Business Aspect of Nationalisation."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7.30, Robert Forder, "Signs of the Zodiac."

Walthamstow—Workmen's Hall, High-street: Thursday at 8, C. Cohen, "Socrates: his Life and Teachings" (free).

Westminster and Lambeth Branches—"Duke of Ormonde," 13 Prince's-street; Adjourned meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion."

COUNTRY.

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

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, W. F. Carter, "Good and Evil Points of Socialism"; 7, G. Bayliffe, "Thou Atheist."

Blackburn—Spinners' Institute, Peter-street: Mr. Atkinson, 3, "Agnosticism and Christianity"; 6.30, "This World and the Next."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 85 Sunbridge-road: 3, Conference of the Lancashire and Yorks Secular Federation; 6.30, Sam Standing, "Militant Secularism: a New Program."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 2.30, Mr. Roger, "Our Present Social State: from a Positivist Standpoint."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, J. B. Coppock, "The Age of the Earth"; 2.45, Sunday-school for children; 7, J. B. Coppock, "A Glimpse through the Corridors of Space" (illustrated by lantern); singing after this lecture.

Derby—20 Newland-street: 7, important business meeting. Monday, at Mr. Harper's, 44 Howard-street, New Normanton, at 8, social gathering.

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: James Prelooker (Russian Exile), 11.30, "The Position of Women in Christianity, Mohammedanism, etc."; 2.30, "Secret Sects and Nonconformity in Russia"; 6.30, "Russia in the Clutches of Autocracy."

Glasgow—St. Rollox Eclectic Society, Toynbee Hall, Parson-street: Tuesday at 8, D. Williamson, "Christianity and Evolution."

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: G. W. Foote, 11, "Why I Cannot be a Christian"; 3, "An Hour with the Devil"; 7, "The Doom of the Gods."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Mr. Doeg, "The Claim Made for the Church"; committee meeting after the lecture.

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Mrs. Thornton Smith, 11, "Some Remedies for Poverty"; 3, "The Evolution of Conscience"; 6.20, "Materialism and Ethics." Tuesday, Clarence de Rome, "Music: Ancient and Modern."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, a lecture. Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: H. Snell, 3, "One Hundred Years of Science and Invention"; 7, "Is there a Moral Governor of the Universe?"; preceded by a dramatic recital.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: Ernest Evans, 3, "The Struggle for Existence and what we Learn from it"; 7, "Diseases of the Lungs, and how to Prevent them."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting; 7.30, Capt. J. Thomson, "Home Rule."

Sunderland—Co-operative Hall, Green-street: Stanley Jones, 11, Has Christianity Opposed Science"; 3, "The Cooling of Hell"; 7, "Creation and the Fall of Man."

Wolverhampton—Athenæum Assembly Room, Queen-street: R. S. Bransby, 11, "Brotherly Love at the Church Congress"; 3, "Heaven and Hell"; 7, General A. Phelps, "Secularism and Vaccination."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Dec. 4, Battersea.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Dec. 4, Portsmouth; 11, Camberwell; 18, Libra Hall.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London. S.E.—Dec. 6, Bermonds-y Institute; 18, New Brompton; 21, Hall of Science. Jan. 1, Camberwell.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Dec. 4, Edmonton; 22, Walthamstow. Jan. 1, m., Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Dec. 4, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell; 8, Walthamstow; 11, Libra Hall; 18, Edmonton.

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

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