

# The Freethinker

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J. E. BRUMAGE.  
(See page 526)

### LORD BACON ON ATHEISM.

THE pedants will be down upon us for speaking of Lord Bacon. It is true there never was such a personage. Francis Bacon was Baron of Verulam, Viscount St. Alban, and Lord High Chancellor of England. But this is a case in which it is impossible to resist the popular usage. After all we write to be understood. The pedants, the heralds, and all the rest of the tribe of technical fanatics, rejoice to mouth "Lord Verulam." But the ordinary man of letters, like the common run of readers, will continue to speak of Lord Bacon; for Bacon was his name, and the "Lord" was but a pretty feather in his hat. And when his lordship took that splendid pen of his, to jot down some of his profoundest thoughts for posterity, did he not say in his grand style, "I, Francis Bacon, thought on this wise"? You cannot get the "Bacon" out of it, and as the "Lord" will slip in, we must let it stand as Lord Bacon.

Lord Bacon was a very great man. Who does not remember Pope's lines?—

If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,  
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.

But his bardship was fond of wielding the satiric lash, and that spirit leads to exaggeration. Bacon was not the meanest of mankind. Pope himself did things that Bacon would never have stooped to. Nor was Bacon the wisest and brightest of mankind. A wiser and brighter spirit was contemporary with him in the person of "a poor player." The dullards who fancy that Lord Bacon wrote the plays of Shakespeare have no discrimination. His lordship's mind might have been cut out of the poet's without leaving an incurable wound. Some will dissent from this, but be it as it may, the styles of the two men are vastly different, like their ways of thinking. Bacon's essay on Love is cynical. The man of the world, the well-bred statesman, looked on Love as "the child of folly," a



necessary nuisance, a tragi-comical perturbation. Shakespeare saw in Love the mainspring of life. Love speaks "in a perpetual hyperbole," said Bacon. Shakespeare also said that the lover "sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt." The poet knew all the philosopher knew, and more. What Bacon laughed or sneered at, Shakespeare recognised as the magic of the great enchanter, who touches our imaginations and kindles in us the power of the ideal. Exaggeration there must be in passion and imagination; it is the defect of their quality; but what are we without them? Dead driftwood on the tide; dismantled hulls rotting in harbor; anything that awaits destruction, to give its imprisoned forces a chance of asserting themselves in new forms of being.

Bacon was not a Shakespeare; still, he was a very great man. His writings are a text-book of worldly wisdom. His philosophical force is almost proverbial. Nor was he wanting in a certain "dry" poetry. No philosophical writer, not even Plato, equals him in the command of illuminative metaphors; and the fine dignity of his style is beyond all praise. The words drop from his pen with exquisite ease and felicity. He is never in a hurry, never ruffled. He writes like a Lord Chancellor, though with something in him above the office; and if he is now and then familiar, it is only a slight condescension, like the joke of a judge, which does not bring him down to the level of the litigants.

The opinions of such a man are worth studying; and as Lord Bacon is often quoted in condemnation of Atheism, we propose to see what he actually says about it, what his judgment on this particular theme is really worth, and what allowance, if any, should be made for the conditions in which he expressed himself. This last point, indeed, is one of considerable importance. Lord Bacon lived at a time when downright heresy, such as Raleigh and other great men of that age were accused of, could only be ventilated in private conversation. In writing it could only be hinted or suggested; and, in this respect, a writer's *silence* is to be taken into account; that is, we must judge by what he does *not* say, as well as by what he *does* say.

Some writers, like Letourneau, the French ethnologist, have gone to the length of arguing that Lord Bacon was a Materialist, and that his Theistic utterances were all perfunctory: as it were, the pinch of incense which the philosopher was obliged to burn on the altars of the gods. This much at least is certain—Lord Bacon rarely speaks of religion except as a philosopher or a statesman. He is apt to sneer at the "high speculations" of "theologues." There is no piety, no unction, in his allusions to theology. He looks upon religion as a social bond, an agency of good government. It is impossible to say that he took a Christian view of things when he wrote, "I have often thought upon Death, and I find it the least of all evils"; or when he wrote, "Men fear death as children fear to go into the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other."

Lord Bacon has an essay on Atheism, which is significantly followed by another on Superstition. The latter is seldom referred to by religious apologists, but we shall deal with it first.

"In all superstition," he says, "wise men follow fools." This is a bold, significant utterance. Fools are always in the majority, wise men are few, and they are obliged to bow to the power of the multitude. Kings respect, and priests organise, the popular folly; and the wise men have to sit aloft and nod to each other across the centuries. There is a freemasonry amongst them, and they have their shibboleths and dark sayings, to protect them against priests and mobs.

Perhaps the story of Balaam is a subtle anticipation of Lord Bacon's dictum. It was the ass that first saw the angel. Balaam only saw it afterwards, when his wits were disordered by the wonder of a talking donkey. Thus the prophet followed the ass, as wise men follow fools.

Superstition is worse than Atheism, in Lord Bacon's judgment; the one is unbelief, he says, but the other is contumely; and "it were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of him." He approves the saying of Plutarch, that he

"had rather a great deal men should say there was no such man as Plutarch, than that they should say there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born"—which, on the part of Lord Bacon, looks like a thrust at the doctrine of original sin and infant damnation.

With his keen eye for "the good of man's estate," Lord Bacon remarks of superstition, that "as the contumely is greater towards God, so the danger is greater towards men."

"Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation: all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not; but superstition discounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men: therefore Atheism did never perturb states; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no farther, and we see the times inclined to Atheism (as the time of Augustus Cæsar) were civil times: but superstition hath been the confusion of many states, and bringeth in a new *primum mobile*, that ravisheth all the spheres of government."

By "civil times" Lord Bacon means settled, quiet, orderly, progressive times—times of civilisation. And it is rather singular that he should pick out the age immediately preceding the advent of Christianity. Whatever fault is in Atheism, it is no danger to human society. This is Lord Bacon's judgment, and we commend it to the attention of the fanatics of faith, who point to Atheism as a horrid monster, fraught with cruelty, bloodshed, and social disruption.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded).

#### ASSYRIA AND THE BIBLE.\*

THE present century has seen the unearthing of unsuspected portions of past history and the deciphering of long-forgotten languages. Bible worshippers have not been slow to grasp at anything which seemed to confirm their sacred books, and indeed, together with the many genuine inscriptions and remains which have been discovered, a class of spurious ones have been manufactured for their especial benefit.† Dr. Kinns and Dr. Kitchin have been to the fore with stories of the marvellous confirmation of the Bible by ancient monuments. The latter gentleman gives us a good sample. On the cover of *The Bible Student in the British Museum*, he has a copy of the cartoon on the obelisk of Shalmaneser II., representing the tribute of Yaua. In the text he tells us, "No record of this tribute is found in the Bible. . . . Thus the accuracy of Bible history is demonstrated." The accuracy consists in the record of a name, while as to the fact the Bible writers seek to obscure the truth that Israel in this, its earliest monumental witness, was a mere tributary of Assyria.

Several reasons conspire to make Assyriology written and read mainly with Bible eyes. The decipherment of the language showed that Assyrian would cast a powerful side light on the construction of Hebrew, as well as Arabic. The persons interested in such matters are mainly those whose profession makes them study the sacred books, and accordingly works are written and published for this class. Not only men like Kinns and Kitchin, but serious students like the Rev. A. H. Sayce, Mr. T. G. Pinches, and Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen are unconsciously influenced by the fact that they have to publish the results of their researches through the orthodox publishers like the S.P.C.K. or the Society of Biblical Archaeology. Under these circumstances Freethinkers should heartily welcome and ungrudgingly support a gentleman who, like Mr. C. Edwards, studies the subject independently, and is prepared to tell the plain truth in the matter. Mr. Edwards is a painstaking and cautious writer, who may be trusted as a safe guide. In showing how far the Bible is from being confirmed by the ancient monuments, he never unduly presses a point, and he must not therefore be held responsible for all the inferences I may draw. That his own are not of an orthodox

\* *The Witness of Assyria; or the Bible Contrasted with the Monuments*, by Chilperic Edwards. London: A. B. Bonner, 34 Bonverie-street; 1893.  
† See *Les Fraudes Archéologiques en Palestine*, by M. Clermont Ganneau, and *Les Fausses Antiquités de l'Assyrie et de la Chaldée*, by M. Joachim Menart.



description may be judged from the following passage from his carefully-written and instructive Introduction:

"The discovery and decipherment of the Assyrian records have raised the curtain upon forgotten dramas of the earth's history; and have removed the Jewish writings from the solitary position they once occupied. We have now before us the voluminous literature of a race allied to the Jews in blood, creed, thought, and language. The stories of the creations, the deluge, and the Tower of Babel are already shown to be Babylonian; the ritual, dress, and furniture of the temple was Babylonian; and the religious poetry of the Hebrews is anticipated by that of Babylon. The history and chronology of the Hebrew scriptures are proved faulty and unreliable, and the whole evidence at command supports the opinion of critics as to the very late day of the Jewish literature."

Mr. Edwards not only says this, but proves it. His chapters dealing with the two accounts of the Creation, the Deluge, and the Tower of Babel are to my mind conclusive. But as these are, or should be, familiar, I must pass them over, together with the chapters on Abraham and Joseph.

Let us come to Moses in the bulrushes. This myth is evidently founded on that of Sargon, who lived two thousand years before the time ascribed to the Jewish lawgiver. It is thus given by the Rev. A. H. Sayce: "He was born, it is said, of an unknown father; as Mars had wooed the mother of the founder of Rome, so some god whom later tradition feared to name, had wooed the mother of the founder of the first Semitic empire. She brought forth her firstborn 'in a secret place' by the side of the Euphrates, and placed him in a basket of rushes, which she daubed with bitumen and entrusted to the waters of the river." The Euphrates refuses to drown its future lord, and bears the child to "Akki," "the irrigator," the representative of the Accadian peasants, among whom Sargon is brought up, till at length, like David, he makes his way to a throne. Mr. Edwards, who cites the original tablets on Sargon, remarks that commentators and apologists have long seen the absurdity of representing Pharaoh's daughter as giving a purely Hebrew name to her foundling, and have tried to torture it into something Egyptian. This attempt, our author shows, is vain.

The longest chapter in the book is on Jewish Religion and Ritual, and it might have been longer with advantage. Mr. Edwards might have traced the remnants of the worship of Bel and Anu, or On, in Israel, and have devoted a separate chapter to the Sabbath and the "sacred seven."† Further instances of the resemblance between Hebrew and Assyrian devotion might have been given. Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen says: "It is curious in these hymns, dating back certainly to the twenty-fifth century before the Christian era, to find phrases and expressions almost similar to those used by the Hebrew psalmists."‡ The Rev. Mr. Sayce, for instance, gives the following:§

Above thee, O God, have I no director.  
Ever look upon me and accept my prayer.  
Say "How long shall my heart be wroth?" and let thy liver be quieted.  
When, O mistress, shall thy countenance be turned in pardon?  
Like a dove I mourn, on sighs do I feast myself.

But the chapter, as far as it goes, is a satisfactory and interesting one, as are also those on "The Moabite Stone," "Israel and Assyria," "The Lost Ten Tribes" and "Sennacherib."

The British Museum has more than one cylinder narrating the expedition of Sennacherib against Judea. According to these, Sennacherib took twenty-six strong cities of Judah.¶ It was not, however, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, for Sennacherib was not reigning then, but some ten years later. The Assyrian monarch, however, records that he shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem like a caged bird, and that the Jewish king sent as a tribute 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, with stones bright and precious, thrones of ivory, etc. What a beautiful corroboration of Isaiah, who says that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000, "and when they arose early in the morning, behold they

were all dead corpses" (Is. xxxvii. 36). Now let us look at the conquest of the Babylonian empire by Cyrus. This great event, one of the most remarkable in the world, must have impressed every surrounding nation. Yet Daniel, although supposed to be a contemporary—but really proved to have been written as late as the time of Antiochus—actually does not know the name of Nabonidus, the king reigning in Babylon at the time, while in the Babylonian chronicle of the taking of the city Daniel's Belshazzar is not once mentioned. Further, Daniel makes Darius the Mede the capturer of Babylon, while the cuneiform inscriptions corroborate the Greek historians, who say it was captured by Cyrus. Ingenious, but unsatisfactory, expedients have been invented, by which the orthodox reconcilers make Gobryas equal Darius, and Bel-sar-usar a king without a crown. Whatever happens, Daniel must be proved correct. I am much mistaken if a perusal of Mr. Edwards' book does not suggest to the reader how much of ancient history has yet to be rewritten from the monuments. This, at any rate, is my own conviction.

I must not conclude without mentioning that the value of Mr. Edwards' work is much enhanced by its appendices, which gives the chronological order of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian kings, and of the Egyptian dynasties, together with the Babylonian calendar from which the Jewish months were manifestly taken. The work has a full index, and is in every respect a valuable one. I sincerely hope that the sale will recompense the author for the trouble he has taken.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### THE NEW GOSPEL.

ABOUT thirty years ago Dr. Tischendorf published a gospel he had discovered, which he thought belonged to the first half of the fourth century. A few months since, as our readers will remember, it was announced that another gospel, that of Peter, which it is said dates back to the middle of the second century, had been found in Egypt by the French Archaeological Mission. Great was the exultation of the orthodox party at this discovery. It was to corroborate the truth of the events narrated in the four canonical gospels, and to verify the claims put forward in the New Testament. Subsequent examination of this newly-discovered gospel, however, has proved that these orthodox congratulations were premature. In the June number of the *Nineteenth Century*, Dr. Martineau, the eminent scholar and theologian, devotes considerable attention to this document; and from his analysis of its contents, it is evident that no proof is therein furnished of the reliability of the statements found in the other Christian records. On the contrary, in many particulars, the latest discovery contradicts several allegations made by the four evangelists, and it gives a very different account from theirs of certain events recorded in the biographies of Jesus.

Dr. Martineau points out that the differences between the four gospels and the one ascribed to St. Peter are "So discrepant that neither harmony is possible nor any order of derivation determinable." In Peter's gospel Christ is said, when on the cross, to have "kept silence as feeling no pain." While this is in direct opposition to the orthodox gospels, it is in harmony with the belief that Jesus was only a spirit, and that as a spirit he returned to heaven from the cross devoid of pain. This, it is said, was why the latest gospel was objected to as being "heretical" by other Christians, who believed that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary and a descendant of David in the flesh. There is also a difference between the accounts given in the old gospels and the new one as to the final words which Christ is supposed to have uttered on the cross. In the New Testament they are variously given as being he "cried aloud," "into thy hands," and "it is finished"; but St. Peter says the last words were, "My power, my power, thou hast left me." Peter alleges that the darkness was only in Judea, and that the priests and the people spoke of evils consequent on the treatment "the Lord" received. No mention is made of this in the orthodox gospels. He also says

\* Hilbert Lectures, 1887; p. 27.

† See my *Bible Studies*.

‡ *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 19.

§ Hilbert Lectures, p. 620.

¶ Mr. Edwards reads forty-six, but Mr. Pinches reads twenty-six.



that the arrest of Jesus made them all so afraid of being caught and made prisoners as criminals, that he and his companions "hid themselves away." Peter omits the language said to have been used by him in denying his master; the incident of his cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest as mentioned in Matthew xxvi., and also the application of Joseph for the body of Jesus after his death. In John's gospel it is stated that it was not the limbs of Jesus that were broken, "that the scripture might be fulfilled." In the gospel of Peter it is not the limbs of the penitent malefactor which were broken, "that he might die in torture." Peter says the inscription on the cross was "King of Israel," which makes one more contradiction as to what the "inspired" writers really saw thereon or were informed of. In reference to the "great stone" at the door of the tomb, Peter says it took a number of people to "roll" it, while Matthew states that Joseph did it himself. But ultimately Peter makes the "great stone" roll itself away when the heavens opened. Now, in the face of these contradictions, it is certain that if Peter's gospel is correct, the statements contained in those bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John must be incorrect. The orthodox devotee can "pay his money and take his choice," or he can follow our example and not be misled by either.

Perhaps the most important contribution that Peter's gospel adds to the orthodox faith is the furnishing of "eye-witnesses" of the resurrection. This becomes interesting because in the New Testament, where one might expect to find such evidence, none is to be found. The first witnesses there, not of, but about the resurrection are mentioned by Luke (chap. xxiv.) They were two disciples at Emmaus, a village "about three-score furlongs" from Jerusalem. At first these disciples did not know their master, and when they did know him "he vanished out of their sight." Peter's "witnesses" were the centurion and two guards on duty at the tomb, and this is what they saw, according to Peter. Two men descending from heaven; the stone rolling itself away, and the men entering the tomb. Then three men, who are supported by the other two, and the cross following after, like the rolling stone, without any assistance. Then they hear a voice from heaven inquiring, "Hast thou preached obedience to them that sleep?" To which the cross answered "Yes." To show the extraordinary effect all this had upon the two guards Peter mentions that they actually "woke" the centurion to see what was going on; but what that worthy man thought of the scene we are not informed. In spite of the "evidence" that is here furnished, unbelievers will probably continue to doubt the story of the resurrection, although it is given in a gospel which even Dr. Martineau considers authentic; because, he says, it is referred to by Justin and Eusebius. If, however, this gospel were authentic, it would destroy the authenticity of the New Testament gospels, inasmuch as the one clearly contradicts the others.

Although Dr. Martineau admits that there is "strange reading" in St. Peter's gospel, he thinks it must have existed before A.D. 150, because he says it is quoted by Justin Martyr. But surely the Doctor knows that it is impossible to base a trustworthy argument in favor of the truth of any gospel upon the writings ascribed to Justin or to any of the Christian fathers. Is it not a fact that much that was once ascribed to Justin has now to be abandoned, and that he is credited with having quoted what have been proved to be Christian forgeries? Dr. Martineau admits that "till about the middle of the second century all Christian literature was anonymous. The gospel was first preached orally, no documents being left behind by the earliest missionaries of Christianity. Notes were probably taken, but it must be remembered that the art of writing was not by any means common. There is no evidence of a single shred of Christian writing till forty years after the departure of Christ." The Doctor further grants that the gospels had to wait until the middle of the second century to be named, and that their names "were largely attached by guesswork and conjecture; often by a bishop who attached the name of the writer he liked to the doctrine he approved."

It will be seen by these admissions that the New Testament gospels have a very uncertain history. The fact of no Christian writings being in existence during the first forty years after the alleged death of Christ, renders it most improbable that we could have any accurate account of what he said; for as Dr. Driver puts it, the less time that elapses between the occurrence of events and when they are recorded, the more reliable is the record likely to be. The selection of gospels in the second century which were in harmony with the views of the selectors, is a strong proof against the genuineness of the four gospels. If the Gospel of St. Peter were named, it was as being heretical, and it is difficult to see how an heretical gospel can substantiate the orthodox ones. It by no means follows that because Peter mentions some things stated by John, that the former was quoting from the latter. It is quite possible that both of them were referring to the same gospel, one of which we know nothing. In either case it would not affect our conclusion as to the incredibility of the stories related in any, or in all of the gospels. It is a significant fact that in this newly discovered gospel, Peter, after the supposed betrayal, the arrest, and the crucifixion of Jesus, refers to "the twelve" apostles as if they were a united number. If this is evidence of anything, it is of the absence of the plan mentioned in the New Testament by which the arrest, trial, and death of Christ were carried out.

In our opinion, the latest discovered gospel only tends to sustain the belief that in the early ages of Christianity, many stories full of fabulous and pious wonders were in circulation. From these the different groups of Christians selected what was in accordance with their particular views, and what they thought tended to give such views authority. If we concede the point that the repudiated documents prove the existence of the veritable gospels, it reflects upon the good sense and discernment of the primitive Christians. To suppose that they had all Gospels before them, and that they selected and believed the wrong ones, implies an utter incapacity upon their part to distinguish the true from the false.

CHARLES WATTS.

#### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

WHAT are the attributes of the Christian's God? With the ethereal nothing upon which the pure Theist expends all his eloquence in vain attempts to give form and substance, we need not here concern ourselves. Indeed, we may say with the witty Scotch politician, Dr. Wallace, that we know as much of the unknown as anybody else; upon that subject all men stand upon an equal footing. The pure Theist, however, not only pretends to possess knowledge concerning the *unknown*, but actually makes bold to describe the qualities and characteristics of his unknown God.

The Christian Theist is in a slightly different position from his Theistic friend, for he alleges that he has had vouchsafed to him a revelation from God, and he thus considers himself qualified in every way to give names to the many characteristics of his God's nature. Indeed, the Christian speaks of God as though he were on terms of intimacy with *him*, and, as Matthew Arnold says, "as though God lived in the next street." I say *Him*, because in the mind of the Christian there appears to be no doubt as to the gender of his Deity. How he arrives at such an opinion, altogether passes my understanding. He does not allege that he has ever beheld the Creator; nay, he is inclined to rely on the verse in the first chapter of John, which says, "No man at any time hath seen God." True, he has read of Moses talking with God face to face, and of Moses in company with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders, gazing on the Lord from an exceeding high mountain. He is inclined, however, to believe that there is some mistake here; that this passage from Exodus does not mean what it says; because, God being a spirit, it would have been as impossible for Moses or any other of the Jewish elders to have actually perceived the



Lord, as it would be for a man to see the wind or think the unthinkable.

But let us inquire again, what are the attributes of the Christians' God? Kind friend, what is your answer? Nay, be not so voluble; let us have them slowly one after the other. First then you allege that God is "infinite." What do you understand by that term? Do you mean that God is illimitable in extension? That is, that he occupies the whole of space? Let us cogitate briefly upon this first. Was God always infinite? or was there a time when a vacuity existed which God has since filled up? But you say that God created the universe; and if, as you allege, he was always infinite, how, I ask, can anything be added to infinity? If every part of space were occupied before God commenced to create, where was there room to put anything that might be created? You say that this is an old argument; but the question is not whether an argument is old or stale, but whether it is valid and sound. The fact of the earth revolving round the sun, was old long before Galileo proclaimed it; but it took the people a long while to come to the recognition of its truth. John Stuart Mill defined nature to be "the sum of all phenomena, together with the causes that produce them, including not only all that happens, but all that is capable of happening, the unused capabilities of causes being as much a part of the idea of nature as those which take effect." It will here be observed that Mr. Mill has described nature or the universe to be everywhere. The sum of all that is; in brief, nature is the infinite. Was John Stuart Mill inaccurate? Was he describing God with a wrong term? How are men to distinguish God from the universe? Are there two infinities? Or are both God and the universe finite? What, my Christian friend, are the other attributes?

OMNISCIENCE, OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, ETERNITY, IMMUTABILITY, AND PERFECT GOODNESS.

Thanks; we will now deal with these as far as possible, and see how far they may be justly predicated of God. But first let me draw your attention to this fact that these are the qualities of man very highly elaborated. Now do you perceive? Well, let me give you some examples. Man has wisdom in a limited degree, and so wisdom is extended infinitely, and God is said to be all wise. Man is capable of occupying only one place at a time; God is said to be everywhere at the same time. Man has power and might in a limited degree; God is alleged to be Almighty. Man has existed but a brief period; God is eternal. Man is changeable; God immutable. Man is but slightly good; God is perfect in goodness. Thus it will be seen that God has had transferred to him impossible qualities—the exaggerated qualities of man. An ancient philosopher, Xenophanes, said that if horses and asses were to paint their gods, they would delineate respectively horses and asses.

I think I have shown, then, that the Christian has simply bedecked his Deity with the amplified characteristics of himself. But surely such attributes cannot belong to the Creator of all things. Besides, I venture to think, my friend, that it is tautological to say that God is infinite, and immediately to add that he is also omnipresent. If he is infinite, he must necessarily be omnipresent; both are the same; but if he is not infinite he cannot by any possible rule of logic be allowed to be omnipresent. You say that God is all-wise. What is implied in this? Intelligence of the highest order. I think I can show, by the assistance of the other alleged attributes, that God cannot be intelligent.

To be intelligent, God must think: to be capable of thinking, he must possess a brain; to have a brain, means to be an organised being; and an organised being cannot be infinite. To think implies change, because every new thought is the recognition of something that was before unknown, and thus two other attributes at once collapse, viz., omniscience and immutability. Again, God could not always have been intelligent. Before God commenced to create there was nothing in existence to think about, to perceive. In this manner it may be proved that all the attributes ascribed to Deity are impossible qualities. But let us take another aspect of the

subject. You say that God is Almighty. Where shall we look for evidence of this power? Neither the Bible nor nature reveals an omnipotent Deity. Where shall we seek? But God, you allege, is also all-wise and all-good, as well as all-powerful. Shall we look to the Bible as evidence of this? Shall we look at the all-wise Creator of the Devil, the all-good Creator of Hell, wherein he will torture without ceasing, for ever and ever, the poor frail creatures of his manufacture? Look, too, at the hideous designs in nature; see how impious and unbelieving man is ever trying to improve them. If God would win the admiration of mankind, why does he not remove the manifold evils of the world—the ignorance, the poverty, the disease, and the injustice to which the poor have been so long subjected? If he could remove them, why doesn't he, and if he cannot, where is his power? Christian Theist, why not acknowledge with the Atheist and the Agnostic, that the being and attributes of Deity, even if he exist, are unknown to man.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

DURING the past ten or fifteen years a change has been coming over the Freethought lecture platform. Sabbatarianism was once so dominant that if a man, in any large town, wanted to go anywhere on Sunday, he had practically but one alternative—either to go to church or to attend a Secular lecture, if there happened to be one in the town just then. Of late, however, Sunday attractions have multiplied. In London especially there are a vast number. Sunday Societies, Sunday Leagues, Liberal and Radical Clubs, and all sorts of progressive associations, compete for the patronage of those who have no taste for church, and as little for its rival—the publichouse. The churches themselves are going in largely for "pleasant Sunday afternoons." And what applies to London applies more or less to most of the great towns in the provinces.

In the majority of these cases the public are invited *free*. There may be special seats to be occupied by payment, but the doors are open freely to all comers. It is becoming more and more difficult, therefore, to fill Secular halls with a charge for admission. If a lecturer has special influence, special notoriety, or a special gift of speech, he may still attract paying audiences; but in the ordinary run of things, it is natural that many people should hesitate to pay for one class of lectures when they can hear other classes of lectures for nothing.

Taking the whole country into view, I cannot say that my own audiences show any tendency to decrease, but rather the contrary. Still, the general problem is independent of my personal experience; and I am satisfied that it must be dealt with, if we are to extend as well as hold our ground, and to popularise our propaganda so as to reach the great masses of the people.

With this conviction I resolved (if possible) to make an experiment, and the opportunity presented itself when I raised the price of the *Freethinker*. I have already explained that, by securing an income from the paper, I could throw myself with more freedom and effectiveness into the work of lecturing. This is what I propose to do first at the London Hall of Science. The Organisation Committee, and after it the Executive, have accepted my proposal to throw the doors open *absolutely free*. A certain part of the Hall (yet to be decided) will be set apart for free sittings. We shall be able to advertise "Free Admission," and see if we cannot attract to the Sunday evening lectures a large number of persons who are not yet sufficiently interested in Freethought to pay anything towards the cost of its maintenance, or too poor to pay even three-pence without a good deal of hesitation.

The other part of the Hall will be charged for, and the seats will only be accessible by means of tickets. Freethinkers who can afford to pay for their seats will be expected to do so; indeed, I scarcely think it



necessary to press this upon their attention. They know that our movement is not endowed, that all our expenses have to be met out of current income, and that *somebody* must pay the cost of the lectures they attend. Rent, printing, advertising, etc., are like the Lord's rain; they fall alike upon the just and the unjust, upon the cause of truth as well as the cause of error.

If the experiment at the Hall of Science succeeds, it will furnish a valuable precedent; if it fails, no harm will be done, and we can revert to our old lines of action.

To give the experiment the best possible chance of succeeding, I have promised to occupy the Hall of Science platform for four or five successive Sunday evenings. I shall give my services gratuitously; and thus, if there should be any loss at first, it will not fall upon the Society, which will take every penny of the proceeds. The experiment will probably begin on the second or third Sunday in September.

Should the experiment succeed, as I believe it will and become a settled policy, new arrangements will have to be made with the lecturers. But this is a matter on which I need not go into details—at least for the present.

I have now to state something with respect to the Chicago delegation. It will be obvious that the subscriptions received are far from sufficient to pay the expenses of two delegates to the International Freethought Congress. Mr. Watts offers to stay in England, and do all he can for me in my absence, if I go to America myself; but, in the existing state of our party's affairs, my presence in England is the more necessary during the next few months. Circumstances are such at present, indeed, that I hardly think I could go to America even if I had a few hundred spare guineas jingling in my pocket. Some will perhaps say, "Well, why have any delegation at all?" I answer that our American brethren have set their hearts on having a representation from England. Mr. Watts will go therefore, and I may be able to meet the American Freethinkers next year, or the year after.

Several subscribers, I am aware, have hoped that they were helping to provide me with a good holiday. Well, I should have enjoyed a trip to America, if I could have undertaken it without injury to home interests; but I am not going without a holiday altogether. At present I am spending a week or so in Kent, and in a fortnight I hope to be recreating for another week or so in the Isle of Man. For the rest, I beg to assure my friends that my health is excellent.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND MARRIAGE.

Both those who attack and those who defend the indissolubility of the marriage-tie, are apt to think that the engagement which man and woman take to remain united "till death do us part," expresses an obligation created by Christianity. This view is the very reverse of fact. The highest civilisations of the old Pagan world had devised or instinctively adopted the theory that marriage was for all time. This was especially true of Rome, where an extravagant tradition says there was no divorce for five centuries; and of Germany, where Tacitus tells us that a woman had one husband as she had one body and one life.—*C. H. Pearson, "National Life and Character,"* c. 5, p. 235; 1893.

#### A DUMB ANIMAL TALKING.

A Sunday-school teacher at Hartford (Ct.), recently put the following question to her class of juvenile seekers after biblical learning: "Is there any mention in the Bible of any dumb animal ever talking?" Long and awkward pause. At last one little seven-year-old lifts her hand. "Can you tell?" asked the teacher. "Yes'm; after the whale thwallered Jonah, he felt very uncomfortable around here [rubbing her lower stomach], and he exclaimed, 'Thou almight perthwadeth me to be a Christian!'"

#### MR. J. E. BRUMAGE.

MR. JOHN EDWIN BRUMAGE, whose portrait we have the pleasure of presenting to our readers, has long been a diligent worker in the ranks of Freethought and advanced opinion. His labors have by no means ceased, since he is now a member of the Organisation Committee of the National Secular Society. Mr. Brumage was born on Feb. 10, 1831, at Morice Town, near Devonport. His father was a shipwright in the dockyard, and Mr. Brumage was apprenticed to the same trade. He attended Sunday school, and for eighteen months was teacher. In 1847 he removed with his father to Pembroke, at which place, "in the days of '48," he first heard from the pulpit of "the Atheist, Tom Paine." He determined to read Paine for himself, and as the local bookseller would not order the pestilent literature, had to procure it himself from Bristol. Paine's *Rights of Man* and *Age of Reason* were read together with Bishop Watson's *Apology for the Bible*, and an examination of the old book itself. The result was, he became a Freethinker and Republican. With Mr. T. D. Harris, a Freethinker still living near Milford, he started the first Mechanics' Institute at Pembroke. Removing to Woolwich in 1853, he there became the centre of a group of reformers, engaging halls for lecturers like Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Holyoake, and Mrs. Law, and occasionally visiting London where he heard the sprightly Charles Southwell. He was active on a committee in aid of the cause of Garibaldi and Mazzini, and helped to form a local library for Freethinkers and inquiries. At Woolwich Mr. Brumage was promoted, through his successful examination and practical knowledge, to the position of Inspector of Shipwrights. In 1869, on the closing of Woolwich Dockyard as a naval depot, he was transferred to Portsmouth, where he was promoted to be Foreman of the Stores, a position he held until his retirement in May 1891. Mr. Brumage was, throughout his career, an ardent supporter of Mr. Bradlaugh. With a few friends at Portsmouth he formed a local Branch of the N.S.S., which has acquired a former chapel as its hall, and carried on effective work. Mr. Bradlaugh, when visiting Portsmouth, usually made his residence his home. All our leading lecturers and other lights of the cause, indeed, have partaken of the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Brumage, his good wife being as ardent in the cause as her husband.

Although occupying a prominent post in the dockyard, Mr. Brumage never concealed his opinions. He took the chair for Mr. Bradlaugh when no one else was willing to do so. Without obtruding his views out of season, he was always ready to give a reason for his Freethought. This sturdy honesty won the respect of all with whom he came in contact. In 1889, the advanced party in Portsmouth testified their respect for Mr. Brumage by placing him on the School Board with a poll of nearly 8,000 votes. This was done without any personal canvassing, and with but a trifling expense for circulating his address to the electors, in which he stated himself in favor of purely secular education. In 1891 Mr. Brumage retired from his responsible post in the dockyard, being presented with various testimonials as a mark of the esteem and respect of those under his charge. Portsmouth friends were anxious that he should renew his candidature for the following School Board, in which case they expected to place him higher on the poll than ever; but to this he could not accede, as he intended to take up his residence at London. No doubt his leaving Portsmouth was felt as a serious blow to the Freethinkers of that town, but they may feel some compensation in the knowledge that he is by no means lost to the cause, being one of the most active and exemplary attendants at the Executive meetings of the N.S.S., and on its Organisation Committee. May he long live to show others a bright example in all progressive work.

#### ACID DROPS.

The Sabbatarians in the United States are boasting that the Sunday opening of the World's Fair was a failure. But what are the facts of the case? On the first open Sunday 100,000 people passed the gates; afterwards the attendance gradually dropped to 40,000. Certainly this looks like failure. Still, it was not so in reality. The truth is, that half the Exhibition buildings were closed, the exhibits in the remainder were closely covered up, and the bandstands were empty and silent. Is it likely that people would pay half a dollar to hear nothing and see nothing? It is monstrous to call this Sunday opening at all. As is pointed out in a Reuter telegram, the Chicago theatres, music halls and concerts are all well patronised on Sunday, and "it has not been religious scruples that have prevented Jackson Park from being filled on the first day of the week."

General Booth's Army has a large hall at Ramsgate, and his soldiers hold a meeting occasionally on the sands. They seem to labor under a depression of spirits. Their audience is not a very large one, and they appear to feel that the



Devil has it pretty well his own way amongst the pleasure-seekers. A few of these look on for a minute with an expression of amusement; a few others look a little serious, as though the pious tunes and the pious expressions awoke the awe of their religious training. The really interesting part of the business is the praying. A Boothite screws up his eyes, and in a low, solemn tone of voice holds a one-sided conversation with God Almighty, who does not appear to take much notice of the performance. The mighty waters roll in the offing, the great sky bends overhead, and the god of all that (if there is such a being) must have enough to look after without troubling himself about the whim-whams of a little knot of Salvationists.

The niggers attract far bigger audiences than the Boothites, and do a lot more good. With a perfectly harmless entertainment, they keep a host of little children amused, not to mention the big children who grin in concert with the little ones. In a certain sense these gentlemen with black faces are public benefactors. Of course they are working for a living, but they really seem to share the merriment of the laughing youngster.

What a divine sight are those thousands of little ones digging and racing on the sands! It is fine study for the sour believers in original sin. The little girls are particularly fascinating, in their bits of light colored dresses, and cheap bewitching sun-bonnets. There is nothing so lovely on this planet, we believe, as the face of a dear little English maiden, with the warm sun-tints laid gently upon its cream and roses, and the sun's light dancing in the merry eyes. Trouble will come by and bye when they grow sophisticated, and join in the race for prizes not worth a spade and bucket, or a single gleam of the sun upon a tossing wave, or a single fleecy cloud floating lazily across the sky. Meanwhile play and shout, ye happy children! Ye are now in paradise. And may the time come when your elders will linger long upon its borders, feeling with the Celestial sage that "happy is he who keeps a child's heart in the breast of a man."

There used to be a curious open-air preacher at Ramsgate. He was well dressed, and he used to sit upon the slope in front of the sea, nearly covered with an umbrella. His back was turned to the passers-by, and he preached apparently to the German Ocean. A Bible was always open in his hand, and his favorite texts were picked out with great readiness. He was "dead nuts" upon the Jews; he said they had offended God, and you knew them by their noses. Next to the Jews he was great on Providence. We should all trust in God. "Look at me," he used to say, "I have good clothes, a good house, good food, good beer, and occasionally something better." And it was hinted that all this was the result of faith. But the truth was (we were informed) that the pious preacher was kept in comfort by a well-to-do wife who didn't mind his riding this hobby-horse. Still, there was something refreshing in his simple faith, and we are sorry to miss him. He was a very harmless lunatic.

Mr. R. S. Gundry, writing in the *Fortnightly Review* on Missions in China, gives his testimony against indiscriminate distribution of the Bible. He says the Chinese are apt to be offended at the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter. The proceedings of Ruth are open to question, and Samuel's treatment of Agag looks rather barbarous. Mr. Gundry conceals the fact that the strongest objections of the Chinese are against the New Testament. The unfilial character of Jesus, and his injunctions to hate father and mother for his sake, and to let the dead bury the dead, are, to the Chinese, whose every sentiment of morality is bound up with filial piety, utterly revolting.

At Gif, near Paris, is a girl of nineteen who beats Mary Magdalene all to bits. Mary had seven devils. The curé of Gif declares this one has 28,000. Dr. Dumont Pallier says the girl is only afflicted with hysteria, but Monsignore Goux, the Bishop of Versailles, backs up the curé in his genuine New Testament belief, and authorises him to exorcise the whole 28,000.

The Pope occupies his spare time in penning encyclical letters, which are received with much admiration by his own flock, but otherwise fall on a heedless world. Once more he has given his pronouncement on the labor and social question. It is the old tale. "The rulers of the earth," says his infal-

libility, "stand towards the people as the magistrates of Heaven." They are to preserve society by upholding the banner of the cross, "the sole bulwark of social order." Rulers must settle the terms of the social contract on a religious basis. "The maximum of labor and the minimum of wages must be fixed," and the poor looked after. Here the Pope shows himself in advance of Jesus Christ. He only inculcated indiscriminate almsgiving, and this was all the Church, for all the centuries, when it was a power, had to offer; but now the Pope says "the poor have the right to be assisted by the rich, not by indiscriminate almsgiving, but by preparing for them such employment as may be useful." Only the rich, the rulers, and the priests are to direct matters. The Pope has yet to learn that the people may prefer to look after their own destinies. At best he would but offer them a benevolent despotism of God-appointed rulers over well-cared-for serfs. After an innings of 1800 years it is rather too late for the Pope to wake up to the fact that the masses must be considered, and to attempt to take them back to the middle ages.

The Scripture Readers' Association is hard up. The *Journal* says "there is not sufficient left to pay the Readers' salaries for two months ahead." Now there is nothing to raise the wind like a good story of a converted infidel, and accordingly an anonymous one is found who "is now a member of the Church." Among the patrons of the Association are the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London, Winchester, Rochester, and St. Albans. Lord Ebury, Sir W. Farquhar, and Viscount Portman are on the committee, so they ought to raise funds enough to convert more than one infidel. It is a tough and expensive business, but with the help of the Lord it should be managed.

It is reported that in the cholera-infected districts of Russia, the clergy have been instructed to publicly read after Divine Service "a compendium of preventive measures against the epidemic." If this is true, it indicates an advance beyond the belief in prayer. It might be an advantage if our own clergy were ordered to give sanitary instruction from the pulpit.

Our National Education Budget has now reached six millions. A great sum for a great purpose. Out of over ninety millions of expenditure, it is the best investment. But as it increases, it is time to remember the millions squandered on what gives no return in national well-being. The funds in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissions, would nicely wipe out our Education Bill.

Despite the warnings of the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, two of the longest-headed dignitaries in the Church, the National Society has decided to claim assistance from the rates for the Church schools. With the warning staring them in the face that this in the long run will mean public control, they are yet impelled in this direction for the simple reason that Church schools are everywhere falling behind in the race, are in many cases in a deplorable state of inefficiency and insanitation, and the money to improve them is not forthcoming from Churchmen. Some time ago the Bishop of London proclaimed that £25,000 was urgently needed for Church schools in his diocese. The secretary of the Diocesan Board of Education writes to the *Times* that of this only £1,000 has as yet been contributed.

Bible-reading England is not over refused in its amusements. The way in which some thousands of her men and women enjoy Bank Holiday would be regarded as disgraceful by the worse savages to whom we send missionaries. Our evening papers too find it pay to publish expensive telegrams from America about the result of a prize fight for £1,300. Such is the civilisation in Christendom after all these centuries of "the only true religion."

Doth God care for oxen? asked Saint Paul, and he evidently thought not. It is not surprising, therefore, that in a Bible-fed country the "lower animals" should be counted very cheaply. We picked up a newspaper the other day, and on the same page we saw two curious bits of news. The first was the drowning of a poor little boy. Four men stood near and never tried to help him; one of them, on being appealed to, said it served the little — right. The other incident was the rescue of a little girl from drowning by a dog, that jumped into the water, dragged her out, and leapt and barked



around her to show his joy in the deed. When we reflect that dogs like that are vivisected to save men like that from pain, we are ready to cry with the old dramatist, "A mad world, my masters!"

The *Tablet* (Aug. 5) publishes in full the decree from Rome, dated July 14, placing Mr. Mivart's articles on Happiness in Hell on the *Index*. Three articles in the *Nineteenth Century* are prohibited, those in Dec. '92, Feb. '93, and April '93. They are not put on the *Index Expurgatorius*, which would mean they might be reissued when supervised by the Congregation, but on the *Index liber prohibitorum*, which means that no Catholic must read any portion of them. So much for the supposed new spirit of liberality in the Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic *Month* tells of a convert to Catholicism through spiritism. It seems that at a séance a spirit turned up who confessed he was a devil. Catholicism, in fact, admits spiritism, but says it is diabolical.

The writer of "A Pilgrimage to Lourdes" in the *Church Times*, lets us see what a profitable thing a vision of the Virgin can be made. He says that the whole population, between six and seven thousand, "lives entirely on the devotion of pilgrims and the curiosity of visitors."

The Bishop of London, whose palace was recently visited by burglars, has just licensed a fresh batch of curates. These soul-savers are probably not fit for any other occupation. For easy billets, with big plums in prospect, there is nothing like the Church—until it gets disestablished, and, which is worse, disendowed.

Among the Lord's recent mercies are outbreaks of cholera in various parts, and a violent hail and thunderstorm in Central Styria, completely destroying the harvest.

Half the city of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, has been swept away by terrible floods, which have devastated the country.

A young lady, named Elizabeth Holderness, living at 31 Marlborough-place, Brighton, came to a fearful death last week. She was kneeling at her bedside in prayer, when a paraffin lamp was upset and fell on the kneeling woman, who was instantly in flames. Here is a fine subject for an orthodox discourse on prayer and special providence.

A man named Bird died at Sutton, Hunts, from injuries received in the belfry of the parish church. The unfortunate man had gone into the bell-chamber, and when the ringers arrived they were ignorant of his presence, and he was struck by one or more of the swinging bells.

#### IN CHURCH.

I feel a solemn sanctity,  
Sweet rest of soul is mine,  
My heart abides in pious peace,  
My bonnet sets divine!  
Grace, like a river, fills my soul,  
In chastened joy I sit,  
I feel religion's deepest power,  
My sacque's a perfect fit.

O holy rest! O Sabbath calm!  
O chastened peace serene!  
I feel thy deep abiding spell,  
How dowdy is Miss Green!  
I feel a pure religious glow,  
O rapture undefined!  
I know my bonnet looks so nice  
To those who sit behind.

The Rev. Alfred Brook sued the Bishop of the diocese of Moray, Ross, and Caithness, and carried the matter to the House of Lords. Of course it was a question of the holy Trinity of £ s. d.

Mr. J. R. Cowell has been preaching in the Isle of Man what the *Ramsey Courier* calls "a remarkable sermon." The sermon is chiefly remarkable as going back to the standpoint of the old theologians, who contended that our idea of God was derived, not from nature, but revelation. Mr. Cowell points, as an Atheist might, to mine explosions, to show that

nature does not reveal an all-good God. What ideas, he asks, had heathens of God. "One worshipped the sun, one worshipped the alligator." So, to glorify his fetish-book, Mr. Cowell puts the God of Nature out of court. He reminds us of the sawyer who cut off the branch of the tree on which he was sitting.

Old Testament methods still survive in Africa, and it is Christians who carry them out. There is a German expedition going through East Africa, and the natives have to give way to these Christian buccaneers, and do all that they command, on pain of decimation and the destruction of their villages. A certain chief named Matura, fancying that he and his people had a better right in the country than the Germans, refused to obey their insolent orders. Of course this was flat blasphemy and high treason rolled into one. Accordingly the "savages" were marched upon, and they put themselves into a posture of defence. The Germans bombarded the village with grenades; but, as luck would have it, the Christian marauders were suddenly attacked by a swarm of bees. It look as though the god of the country were protecting his people, as Jahveh used to do on similar occasions. But the poor Africans were so frightened by the grenades that, bees or no bees, god or no god, they decided to skedaddle; and when the Christians got rid of the bees, they found the village deserted. This did not satisfy them, however; the natives had dared to oppose the invaders, and their village was utterly destroyed. This is how Bible-reading Christian expeditions act in Africa, and it fills us with a deep appreciation of the value of the old Jew book. "Thou shalt utterly destroy them" is a command of Jahveh's which is far from being played out. Bible-reading Christians are equal to Bible-reading Jews in that line of business.

The entire revenue of the Protestant missions of the world is computed at £2,450,000. With this sum at command it should not take long to Protestantise the world.

"A Nun's Brother" writes to the *Weekly Register*, urging the prosecution of Miss Golding for libelling nunneries, in which she states that immorality and something very like deliberate poisoning is of frequent occurrence. He offers £10 towards the expense. The Catholics, however, are little likely to stir in a matter which might lead to an official inspection of their convents.

Samuel Fox's appearance in St. Paul's Cathedral with his hat on was followed by his appearance at the Mansion House with his hat off. The Lord Mayor sentenced him to a fine of forty shillings, or fourteen days' hard labor in default. Quaker Sam was led off to the cells, swearing, or rather affirming, that he would never, never pay the fine, but go to prison as a martyr. The ruling passion held out strong to the end. As Quaker Sam left the dock he asked for his hat.

Thirty thousand people assembled on Newcastle Town Moor last Monday. It was Bank Holiday, and bills had announced that an aeronaut would go up in a hot-air balloon and descend from the greatest height on record with a parachute. No "artiste" appeared, and the crowd was hoaxed. The next time they assemble, after this sell, it will be to witness the descent of J. C. Nothing else would fetch them out again.

#### SHILLING MONTH.

##### RECEIVED.

[When no figures follow the name the amount is 1s.]  
Smothwick 2s., H. Towers, J. S. 2s., J. W. F., Ipswich, O. R. Featherstone 5s., Mrs. J. Featherstone 4s., L. Featherstone, J. Tomkins 2s. 6d., W. Hardie and Family 5s., Heckmondwike Branch 5s., P. H. Echlin 2s., E. F. B. 2s. 6d., H. E. Higgins 2s., J. W. 2s., F. Rogers 2s., T. Nichols, E. Gazo, J. Welch, Joseph Scott. Per R. Chapman: J. Horsman, J. Fothergill, H. Bennett, Reay, J. Newcomb 2s. 10d., A. Firth 2s., J. Denham. Holloway 2s., J. D. 5s., Baines, E. Cruttenden, S. P. M., G. R. Gwyn 5s. 4d., D. Baker, Mrs. Baker, and Miss Baker 5s., W. V., Hanley Branch 10s., T. S., A. R., J. S., F. Boorman, F. W. Kirkman, W. B. Thompson, A. Riley, Flora Mann, Mr. Mann, Mrs. Mann, Mr. Pierson, Millie Hearnden, J. Martin, J. B., A. H., Mr. Bunyar, H. R. Clifton, J. Chamberlain 2s., W. Pearson 2s. 6d., R. Waller 2s. Per R. Forder: R. T. Jones, 2s., Mr. Pearce, Mrs. Pearce, W. Stewart, C. H. Parkinson, G. Ralph, A. Robertson, A. J. Larkin.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

September 3, Douglas Head, Isle of Man; 10, Glasgow.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. TOMKINS.—Pleased to hear you will "help a little further in the matter of shares in the National Secular Hall Society" when possible.
- W. HARDIE.—Post-office thieves are not as rare as the phoenix, it seems. Our compliments to the Hardie family. Sorry we cannot include Mr. Keir Hardie in the remembrance.
- H. ROTHBERG.—We thank the Heckmondwike Branch.
- P. H. ECHLIN.—Better luck!
- H. E. HIGGINGS.—Thanks. We have used the joke before, in a slightly different form.
- O. R. FEATHERSTONE.—Our compliments to your mother. It is pleasant to hear that she enjoys reading the *Freethinker* on Sunday mornings instead of going to church. Glad to know that your sister is also interested in Freethought. We reckon one woman worth two men to the cause, on the average. Your praise of our Summer Number is also welcome. You reckon the five copies you bought a good investment; it is not surprising, therefore, that you approve of our new departure in regard to the weekly issue.
- SMOTHWICK.—Pleased to hear you will continue to take two copies weekly.
- J. P. wants the address of a newsagent near Palace Gate, Kensington, who sells this journal.
- R. CHAPMAN.—The South Shields subscriptions, per C. Watts, were acknowledged last week.
- J. NEWCOMB.—Summer Number sent; balance (2s. 10d.) put to Shilling Month.
- A. GUEST.—Shall have attention.
- E. S.—(1) You raise a very knotty problem, which cannot be settled offhand in a few sentences. (2) Certainly some Christians have fought for liberty, but—against other Christians. (3) Catholics and Protestants have both justified persecution from the Bible.
- W. PEARSON.—Crossing a cheque or postal order means making two parallel lines, an inch or so apart, across the printing. This makes it payable only through a bank.
- W. G. COX.—Margate and similar places are chiefly supported by visitors. It is very difficult to do any Freethought work in them. We fear the expense would be out of all proportion to the result.
- G. R. GWYN.—Balance (5s. 4d.) to Shilling Month.
- T. CARLTON.—Thanks to the Hanley Branch.
- YOUNG RECRUIT.—What you mention, to use a phrase of Guizot's, does not rise to the level of our contempt. We certainly do not mean to give it an advertisement.
- S. P. M.—Glad you think the twopence for the *Freethinker* will be a good investment for the party if it enables Mr. Foote to devote more time to lecturing.
- E. GAGE.—You think the *Freethinker* well worth twopence, and you will continue to take it, but you are sorry for our poorer readers. So are we. It was for their sakes that we were so loth to make the alteration. But we cannot court ruin for them. That is more than our share of sacrifice for the cause.
- E. W. W.—Thanks. We have ordered a contents-sheet to be posted weekly to your newsagent. Will you kindly see whether he receives it and displays it? Glad to hear you are so pleased with our Summer Number.
- J. S.—We fear the times are too bad, as you say, for a really successful Shilling Month at present.
- W. B. THOMPSON.—Thanks for your good wishes.
- W. HOLLAND.—It is an old Mark Twain story.
- FLORA MAY MANN.—Many hearty thanks for the nine shillings you have collected for Shilling Month; one shilling for every year of your own age.
- ETHICUS.—Not without merit, but hardly good enough for its length.
- CHICAGO DELEGATION FUND (FOOTE AND WATTS).—E. Gage, 1s.; J. Thumance, 1s.; J. Chamberlain, 5s.; Sydney A. Gimson, £1.
- ANTI-HUMBUG.—See "Acid Drops."
- T. GARDINER.—Contents-sheet forwarded.
- N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance begs to acknowledge: N. Richardson, 10s.; G. H. Dunn, 5s.; parcel of clothing from Daniel Baker.
- J. PARRIDGE.—See paragraph. We hope you will have a good meeting. The Birmingham Branch should be active during next winter.
- JOSEPH BROWN.—Sorry to hear of the distress on the Tyneside, also of your personal trouble. Write again as soon as possible.
- 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.
- 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

—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Tablet—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Straits Times—Ramsey Courier—Manchester Evening News—Post—Engineering Review—English Mechanic—Bradford Daily News—Sirilaka Situmina—Progress—Bulletin de la Federation—Française de la Libre Pensee.

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. 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.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a beautiful Cartoon by Mr. Calvert, entitled "The Worship of the Curate." It is a pleasant and refined piece of satire.

Our Summer Number is still selling steadily, and although we have not yet recovered our investment in it, we expect to do so and more before the end of the season. Some of our wealthier readers ought to buy a few copies of this "extra special" for circulation amongst their friends and acquaintances, if only for the sake of the magnificent portrait of Colonel Ingersoll. A fine portrait of such a splendid man is a good advertisement for our cause.

Metropolitan Freethinkers should be providing themselves with tickets for the London Secular Federation's excursion to Brighton next Sunday (Aug. 20). As already announced, the party will go by special train, from London Bridge and Victoria; and the tickets are—adults 3s., children 1s. 6d. Mr. Foote will join the party, and hopes to find it a very large one. Arrangements are being made for an open-air Freethought demonstration during the day at Brighton, and full particulars will be given in next week's *Freethinker*. We may add that the tickets are obtainable at the Hall of Science, at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from any London Branch secretary.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at the Hall of Science, London, this evening, Sunday, August 13, taking for his subject "The Fanaticism of Religions." As this will be Mr. Watts' last lecture in England before he starts for the International Congress in Chicago, we hope to hear that he has had a large audience. Mr. Watts will sail in the "Parisian" from Liverpool on Thursday, August 17.

The Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. will hold a Ssirée on Tuesday evening at Baskerville Hall, to commemorate the departure of Mr. Watts to America." Dancing to commence at eight o'clock. The surplus of the proceeds is to go to the funds of the local Branch. Our Midland friends should remember this and make an effort to be present. During the evening Mr. Watts will deliver a brief address.

The Birmingham Branch ho'ds a special meeting this evening (Aug. 13) at 7, to make arrangements for an active winter propaganda. Members are earnestly invited to attend, and any friends who can help financially.

Zola's *credo*, put into the mouth of the hero of his last great book, *Le Docteur Pascal*, is as follows: "I believe that the future welfare of humanity lies in the progress of reason by means of science. I believe that the pursuit of truth through science is the divine ideal which man must set before himself. I believe that all is vanity and illusion except the one treasure of truths slowly acquired and destined never to be lost. I believe that the sum of these truths, growing from day to day, will in the end give to man power incalculable, and if not happiness, peace. Yes, I believe in the final triumph of life."

Doctor Pascal was wont to say, when he saw a laborer coming home to his rest after a hard day's work, "There is a



man who will not lose his night's rest because of the bother about the Beyond." "The doctor meant," says Zola, "that this trouble only misleads and perverts the idler's feverish brain. If everybody did his task-work he would sleep quietly enough."

Mr. Leslie Stephen has at last made the *amende honorable* in regard to Thomas Paine. In the current number of the *Fortnightly* he has a paper on Paine, which he opens by confessing his mistake. He says: "My description of Paine's last years was taken from a statement by a witness, whom Mr. Conway has proved to be utterly unworthy of credit." Further, he says, "his writings were the product of brains certainly unsodden by brandy, but clear, vigorous, and in some ways curiously free from passion." Towards Paine's work our literary critic still adopts a somewhat high and mighty tone. The impression he gives is that, after all, Paine was only a populariser of other men's thoughts. Well, to popularise them in the fashion Paine did was, anyway, a great achievement. Of the *Age of Reason* he speaks as bringing into clear daylight the general opinion of the classes he addressed. But surely it did far more than this, or it would not have been received with such a storm of virulence and persecution. Mr. Stephen says, and here his opinion has some weight, "English theologians were accustomed to boast that they had confuted the Deists of the earlier half of the century. What they had really done was to assimilate it." Mr. Stephen calls the *Age of Reason* "an attack of remarkable shrewdness." He evidently thinks Paine would have been the better for studying Hume. But what is the use of dealing with might have been?

Judge Stein, of the Superior Court, has decided that the World's Fair directors who were immediately responsible for closing the gates on Sunday, July 23, violated the injunction granted against such closing, and has fined them for contempt of court.

In Mrs. Macdonald's article on the Evidences of Theosophy in the *Echo* of Aug. 3 and 8, she goes pretty fully into the question of the *bona-fides* of the late Madame Blavatsky.

Lancashire Freethinkers will remember that Mr. Foote's lecture at Douglas Head, Isle of Man, is to be delivered (D.V., etc.) on Sunday, September 3. Some of the Lancashire "saints" who intend to visit the island will perhaps make it convenient to be there just then.

Last Sunday the Parisian Freethinkers had a demonstration at the statue of the Freethinking printer, Etienne Dolet, in the Place Maubert, the place where he was hung and burnt three hundred and forty-seven years ago.

From Port of Spain, Trinidad, we receive the first number of a new Freethought monthly, entitled *Progress*. The journal is edited, printed, and published by Emanuel dos Santos, 15 Upper Prince-street, Port of Spain, who is a member of the National Secular Society. He proclaims that his editorial policy "will be distinctly Atheistic." The first number of *Progress* is a very creditable one indeed, and Senior dos Santos must be congratulated on taking this bold stand for Freethought in the West Indies.

The North Eastern Secular Federation's excursion to Jesmond Dene was a success, although, owing to the distress on the Tyneside, the party was not quite so numerous as on former occasions. The Newcastle contingent was joined by about sixty country members. The scenery was greatly admired, and a capital tea was provided by Mr. Armstrong. Most of the excursionists repaired afterwards to the Town Moor, and listened to the Sunday Music Society's admirable concert.

The Glasgow Branch goes on excursion to-day (Aug. 13) to Loch Thom, Greenock. Train leaves St. Enoch Station at 7.50 a.m. Single fare ninepence, return by either system. Friends should bring their own provisions. All Freethinkers are welcome.

The *English Mechanic* has been having a controversy on "Mythical History," in which "M. F. T." has put the sceptical position, and met both opponents and supporters. The former are, however, remarkably shy of defending the old legends.

The Islington Branch desires to thank the Freethinkers who rallied to their aid on Sunday last, when a quieter meeting was the result, and they hope the support will be continued to the end of the season.

The members and friends of the Derby Branch are raising funds for a testimonial to Mr. John Dean, a veteran Freethinker who is now too decrepit to fight any longer for the good old cause. It is intended to make the presentation after a tea and entertainment on August 28. Subscriptions should be sent to Mr. G. Harper (secretary), 44 Howard-street, New Normanton, Derby.

Among the Shelleyan manuscripts handed over to the Bodleian Library, and not to be opened till 1922, is an essay On the Devil and devils. It consists of twenty-seven leaves of proofs, with MS. corrections and additions.

A Branch of the N.S.S. was formed at Dundee after Mr. Foote's last visit, but its existence was a brief one. Several of the members went off to the Labor Church, where the singing of Sankey's hymns took the place of "infidel" propaganda. There seems to be a prospect of better success just now, and an effort is being made to restart the Branch. Preliminary meetings are to be held to-day (Aug. 13) at the Cutlers' Hall, Murraygate, at 2.15 and 6.30 p.m. Local Freethinkers are earnestly invited to attend.

Mr. H. Smith, of Farsley, a well-known member of the N.S.S., has visited Chicago to see the Exhibition, and his impressions are given to an interviewer of the *Bradford Daily Argus*. Mr. Smith enjoyed his trip, and he seems to have looked about him everywhere with a fresh observant eye.

#### CHURCHES AND DATES.

ALTHOUGH I cannot claim more than a hearsay knowledge of Professor Johnson's position, I would venture to point out that modern history rests upon more than mere documentary evidence. I cheerfully admit that many of the writings which have been prized as the foundations of English history (for example) are now considered by historians as undateable forgeries. Numismatics, again, is a very uncertain guide, and it is an almost impossible task to say what coins should be ascribed to William the Conqueror and what to William Rufus. But still, there are other things, impossible to have been the inventions of Benedictine monks—who, in spite of their cleverness, were not omniscient. At the time of the Renaissance a certain style of architecture was in fashion: the characteristics are well known. But besides this there are buildings in an entirely different style, characterised among other things by the use of pointed arches. This is the so-called "Gothic," which divides itself into the three varieties of Perpendicular, Decorated, and Early English. The Early English passes into a romanesque style called Norman architecture, the very early varieties doubtfully ascribed to the Saxons. The evolution of these styles of architecture has been satisfactorily investigated, and it has been shown that the Norman passed on to the Perpendicular Gothic by a slow development. These various styles are associated with the reigns of various kings, and bring us to the battle of Hastings; or, to speak in the terms of the chronology which Professor Johnson condemns, to the eleventh century. Before that time it is the received opinion that this country was ruled by a series of Saxon monarchs, and coins in a rude style of art are still occasionally found, bearing the names of these Saxon monarchs.

It is also said that there was an irruption of a northern nation called Danes, who professed a different faith from the Saxons. In confirmation of this, there have been found in Scandinavia, from time to time, large numbers of weapons and personal ornaments in a style of art ascribed to the "viking period"; and similar weapons and ornaments have been turned up in the western isles of Scotland, in Ireland, and in England; which would tend to prove that Scandinavian rovers really did invade the British Isles. Certain stone crosses and other sculptures are also known, inscribed with a peculiar writing called "runes,"



which has not been proved to have been known to the Benedictines. Some of these inscriptions (notably the Ruthwell Cross) are of such a character as to imply that their originators had religious ideas at least akin to the Christian. But this "Saxon" art was not always known in England, and the Saxon kings, whose coins we have, are said to have originally come from some country about six hundred years before the battle of Hastings, though we have very little history that can be considered approximately authentic for more than a hundred years after; and no coins worth mentioning before those of Offa, ascribed to the eighth century, and generally bearing a cross. On the Continent, in a similar way, buildings and other remains still existing and referable to a still earlier date, until one reaches Constantine the Great, who, I understand, is not questioned. We thus have architectural remains, ornaments and coins, in several successive and distinct styles of art, associated with numerous monarchs who require several centuries in which to reign. Moreover, in some of the architectural remains in the Byzantine and Romanesque styles, we have sculptures, mosaics, and inscriptions, bearing the names of Jesus Christ, the twelve apostles, and the four evangelists; the latter often appearing under the symbols of the angel, bull, lion, and eagle, in allusion to the visions of Ezekiel. We, further, have occasional texts quoted from the New Testament; and it seems more reasonable to suppose that the New Testament was in existence when those buildings were erected, than that the Benedictines sent their scribes all through Europe in order to copy these inscriptions, so that they might be incorporated in the gospels, which were written in the fourteenth century. E. P.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR ORTHODOX HISTORIANS.

TRUTH always begins in a minority of one. Hence Freethinkers keep open minds as to the possibility of the crank of to-day becoming the leader of to-morrow. The spectacle of "Athanasius against the world" is to me an exhilarating one, and in the tilt of Professor Johnson against all Christian history, documents, and theology, I confess my sympathies are with the crank. Evidently he has something to say for himself, and there are certain difficulties in the orthodox position which he entirely escapes. These difficulties I have sometimes put to my orthodox friends in such questions as these:—

- How does it happen that, though Jesus declared himself sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the New Testament is written entirely in Greek?
- Matthew is said to have written in Hebrew, but if he did, what became of it?
- How could Jewish fishermen like John and Peter write in Greek?
- If they were divinely inspired, why were not the originals preserved?
- If MSS. copies of the fourth century could be kept, why not the more important originals of the first century? If the early Christians did not value these, why should we?
- Why were they not written and published at the time and in the place where the wonders they relate are said to have occurred?
- Since Christianity only spread among the common people of the Roman empire, is it not likely the New Testament—at any rate the epistle to the Romans—would be written in Latin?
- What really is known of so-called early Christian documents outside the monasteries?
- How was it that Christianity, the boasted religion of civilisation, was succeeded by the night of the Dark Ages?
- Why did this divine revelation never overcome Judaism, Mohammedanism, or Buddhism? nor extend beyond the bounds of the old Roman empire?
- How came it that the Holy Roman Empire, which succeeded the Pagan Roman Empire, was neither Holy Roman nor Imperial?
- Why did the men of letters at the Renaissance with one accord go back to the literature of Pagan Greece and Rome?

What arts, science, or letters can be claimed to have a Christian origin, or were even known in Europe before contact with Mohammedans?

Did not the pretence to temporal and spiritual power of the Moslem Caliphs precede the same claim on the part of the Roman Pontiffs?

I think an answer to such questions as these will show that new views are required.

LUCIANUS.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE monthly Executive meeting was held at the Hall of Science on Thursday, July 27th; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. E. Hartmann, R. O. Smith, Geo. Standing, E. Truelove, J. M. Wheeler, C. J. Hunt, J. Samson, J. E. Brumage, W. Heaford, J. Marshall, J. Potter, T. Gorniot, G. Ward, W. Trew, C. W. Martin, B. Wherle, C. Cohen, G. H. Baker, and E. M. Vance, assistant sec.

Moved by Mr. Heaford, seconded by Mr. Cohen, "That the minutes of previous meeting be confirmed."

Moved by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Gorniot, "That the N.S.S. affiliate with the Hall of Science Club for the current year." Carried.

The President reported that the sub-committee appointed at the last meeting had already met, and would submit their conclusions to the council at the next sitting.

The minutes of the Organisation Committee's meetings were then discussed, and the recommendation that the Almanack for 1894 be issued by the Society, edited as before, and with amended title, was adopted. The change of title gave rise to some discussion, and it was moved by Mr. Hartmann, seconded by Mr. Hunt, "That the future title be the *Secular Almanack*." This resolution also requested the President to exercise his judgment in relation to the contents.

The meeting then dealt with an important recommendation from the committee, viz., "That an attempt be made at the Hall of Science to popularise our propoganda by making some provision for the free admission of the public to the Sunday lectures."

The President informed the meeting that the proposal was his, and had been carefully considered by his colleagues. He gave at some length his reasons for the suggestion, and offered the Executive a course of free Sunday lectures to commence with.

The matter was discussed, and several members having spoken in support, it was finally moved by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Cohen, "That the President's proposal be accepted."

The Organisation Committee minutes were then confirmed. Other minor matters were dealt with and the meeting closed. E. M. VANCE, assist. sec.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING held at Hall of Science on Thursday, Aug. 3. In the absence of the President, the chair was occupied by Mr. G. Standing. Present: Messrs. Baker, Callow, Dowding, Mrs. Fisher, Renn, Rowden, Schaller, Ward, and Williams. The minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary reported that he had received a grant from the N.S.S. Executive for the open-air work; and it was agreed that he be authorised to send sums to those Branches which had applied for assistance.

The Committee appointed at the June meeting (to which Mr. Schaller was now elected in place of Mr. Blackmore) presented a report which gave rise to considerable discussion. It was decided to accept the recommendation that the Federation conduct open-air lectures during September at a station near that formerly occupied by the Ball's Pond Branch; the Secretary to make the necessary arrangements.

A proposal of the Battersea Branch, submitted to the Council by the Committee, was, so far as it affected the constitution of the L.S.F., ruled out of order; and was withdrawn by the Branch delegate. It was decided, however, that a Conference of London members be held in October at the Hall of Science, and that resolutions for the agenda be submitted to the Council meeting in that month.

The question of a training class for speakers was next considered; and it was agreed to invite would-be lecturers, or those willing to read a paper on a Freethought subject for the purpose of discussion amongst members, to communicate at once with the Secretary; the officers being authorised to call a meeting if sufficient applications were received. The financial position of the Federation was considered; and the Secretary was instructed to present a statement at next meeting, showing the contributions of Branches (by delegates fees or other methods) to the Federation. The Secretary was also instructed to send notices of the Council meetings, including the names of delegates attending, to the *National Reformer* and *Freethinker*. The Council then adjourned.

The Secretary, E. Pownceby, 9 Finsbury-street, E.C., will be pleased to hear from young members of the party willing to read a paper or deliver a short address, with a view to gaining experience as speakers for the Freethought platform.



## THE PIOUS MONKEY.

CLOSE by a cathedral in Marseilles there lives a merry cobbler, who very innocently has given grave offence to the black-gowned dignitaries of his parish.

This cobbler, perched in the corner of an old wall, has a pet monkey, who all day long is capering and grimacing among the parings of hides and soleless shoes with windows at the toes. Some cobblers are satisfied with a canary bird or goldfinch in a cage; this friend of ours keeps a *sapajou*. Everybody takes his pleasure where he finds it, and this is no crime. But this monkey, prescient of his proximate humanity, manifests mysterious religious tendencies. His favorite pastime has been climbing along the front of the cathedral. There, seated on his tail, he peeps through window-panes at what is going on within. Several times the sacristan, crossing the street, has come to give the cobbler a rating in the name of the curate. But the pious votary of St. Crispin pleaded that his monkey, having been brought up among good Christians, and indeed under the very shadow of the church, was a beast without guile, and that his curiosity rather evinced pious inclinations. He also remarked that our pious forefathers, those wonderful builders and sculptors of friezes in the by-gone ages of faith, had not scrupled to adorn with heads of beasts the cornices of old cathedrals, as Notre Dame bears witness. Thus the monkey obtained grace.

One morning, however, observing the door of the sacristy open, he slipped in, and finding a square cap and surplice to his liking, put them on. Thus sacredly accoutred he enters the sanctuary and gets upon the steps of the great altar. In the body of the building at this time there were only two old ladies kneeling, with their heads bowed against a prayer desks, in ecstatic meditations.

Then the monkey, emboldened, began to toss about the missals, the candlesticks, vases, and statuettes.

The devout ladies, roused, became conscious that the tonsure displayed by the hindquarters of this prodigy was neither the curate's nor the vicar's; cried aloud, "O Lord, have mercy on us," and ran away as if the Devil was after them.

The whole church membership was presently in commotion, and the penitents believed that the Devil had, in fact, taken lodgings in the house of God.

Curate, vicars, beadle, bell-ringer, and the Swiss guard all drew back, frightened at the monkey's gambols on the altar.

The Swiss, whose religious education is defective, owing to his birth in a country of heretics, was the first to suspect that, however probable the subtle instigations of the enemy of mankind, the phenomenon admitted of a naturalistic explanation, and as it did not seem proper that the Devil should have things all his own way, this view gained credence.

Then the Swiss alone, armed with his truncheon, marched upon the *sapajou*, who, apprehending danger, climbed along the frame of a picture representing the flight of Israel from Egypt, and, from moulding to moulding, from cornice to cornice, reached an open window, and absquatulated. A minute later he was quietly playing before the cobbler's door.

The curate, whose terror now gave way to indignation, lodged complaint against the cobbler with the police, and the cobbler was summoned to answer. Confounded by this strange event, he no longer defended the pious inclinations of his monkey, but he pleaded, "Would it not redound more to the glory of religion to change the beast's heart, than to tie him up? In Spain, where I was raised, good Catholics were used to have their asses and their pigs baptised, and surely my monkey is more human than they. Try this on him, and I will go his surety for good behavior to the extent of supplying the curate with shoes." This proposition rests *sub jure*, the question being considered too intricate for the curate to decide upon his own responsibility. An answer is expected from his holiness the Pope.

Without altering any of the facts in this narrative I have permitted myself a few pious reflections.

The religious education of animals is not a new idea. It dates at least from the epoch of the prophet Balaam, and Wordsworth, in his "White Doe of Rylstone," has voiced it with tender sublimity. But the clerical education of the monkey is a promising suggestion, especially since it has become difficult, at least in Europe, to engage children of respectable families for the service of the altar as *enfants de chœur*. I have noted this myself in Paris, even under Louis Napoleon. I commend it to my Darwinian brethren in Christ, such as Henry Drummond, as a second title to immortality, to be added to his illustrious and physiological researches in Christian Socialism, where he has found that "bread and water" are plenty good enough for working men, and ought to satisfy them.

You also, Brother Swing, you also, Brother Talmage, though not an Evolutionist like those whose catholicity embraces Jesus and Malthus and Darwin in one clasp, you ought, all of you, to feel a divine sympathy with our monkey, for do you not every Sunday "play such tricks before high heaven at the altar as make the angels laugh?"

EDGEWORTH.

## A MISSIONARY SPOILED.

ROBERT KEYWORTH was a poor orphan boy, who was raised by hand, so to speak, by the family of the Rev. Mr. Thomas, a reliable Methodist clergyman, who resides in the suburbs of Austin. Robert was naturally a good boy. He was of a loving, gentle disposition, and owing to his surroundings, he grew up to be a most exemplary youth. He became converted at an early age, and expressed a frenzy to study for the ministry. In order to qualify himself for his high and lofty calling he studied day and night until he became so thin and pale that he was obliged to give up his studies in order to regain his former appetite. The medical gentleman who was called in insisted that a change of air was indispensable, and urged that young Keyworth be sent out on the frontier, where an active life among the cowboys would soon restore him to his original strength. Robert refused to listen to this advice at first. He said such a life might divert his mind from his sacred calling, and while he was getting his body in good trim, he might lose his immortal soul. Parson Thomas had no such fears. On the contrary, he was of the opinion that the unostentatious piety of Robert could not fail to create a profound impression on the wild nomads of the prairies. In the hands of Providence, Robert might become the humble instrument by which many brands on the frontier might be snatched from the burning. Robert no longer objected. On the contrary, he was anxious to begin his missionary labors at once. Mounted on a gentle old mare, armed with an umbrella, and his saddle-bags filled with church literature, he bid a tearful farewell to his kind benefactor, who made him a present of his blessing, and journeyed toward the setting sun.

Robert's letters to Parson Thomas were not very numerous, nor were they of as spiritual a nature as might have been expected. Robert had regained his health, for he referred to running horse races and other modes of regaining his strength.

One morning, about a year after Robert left for the frontier, an unmistakable cowboy, wearing a large Mexican hat and spurs, rang the bell at the modest suburban residence of Parson Thomas. On being admitted he introduced himself as Bill Kelly. He was the friend and chum of Robert, who had directed him to call on his former benefactor.

"I am truly glad to hear from my young friend. I suppose Robert has entirely regained his health."

"Robert is all hunkey, but he had a mighty close call week before last."

"You don't tell me that Robert has already had a call! How much salary was he offered by the congregation?"

"I don't mean that kind of a call. We was chased by the Injuns while we was out hunting stock, and if it hadn't been for a motte of timber they would have got our scalps, sure. It was a mighty close call."

"Oh, you were in peril from Indians. Tell me, when you first saw the Indians, did not Robert tell you that you should rely on divine providence—that the very hairs of your head are all numbered?"

"No, he didn't say that, Robert didn't. He said our days were numbered if we didn't get to that motte of timber quicker than hell a' beating' tanbark."

"I regret to hear that Robert has learned to swear, but I suppose it was due to the excitement of the moment. However, when you got to the motte of timber, and were safe from Indians, did not Robert throw himself on his knees?"

"He did that very thing, parson. He just flung himself on his knees, and raised up—"

"His hands in prayer to offer up thanksgiving for his escape. I knew that the religious principles I had instilled into that boy would bring forth good fruit. He raised up—"

"Yes, he flung himself on his knees, and he raised up his Winchester and offered up the nearest Injun. Shot him right out of the saddle, and, parson, right here is his scalp," and Kelly threw down on the table a fresh Indian scalp.

Parson Thomas recoiled in horror.

"Robert told me to tell you it was the spile of his spear and bow, and that, like David, he thanked God who had taught his fingers to fight and his hands to war," said Kelly.

Parson Thomas was inexpressibly shocked that the teachings should have born such fruits.

"It pains me very much to hear that Robert has become so neglectful of his Christian duties. So you escaped without loss."

"No, indeed we didn't. One of the Indian bullets hit a bottle of cocktail in Robert's saddle-bag, and ruined our only deck of poker cards. There was not another bottle of cocktail or deck of poker cards within forty miles. That hurt Robert. He said if it had not been for the consolation of religion which you had instilled into him, that he didn't know what he would have done."

"My young friend," said Parson Thomas sadly; "you cannot imagine how badly I feel over your account of Robert's recklessness. From what you say I cannot but believe that he has become profane, that he indulges in strong drink, and in card playing. He may yet repent of his sins, and become a worthy Christian."

"I've not told you the worst about Robert," said Kelly, hesitatingly. "He has—"



"Committed murder?"  
 "Worse than that."  
 "Impossible!"  
 "He ran for the legislature."  
 "He is lost beyond redemption."  
 "And he was elected, too."  
 "Worse and worse."  
 "And he says when he comes to Austin he is going to have you elected chaplain of the House."  
 "Hey?"  
 "And you will get five dollars a day for a five minutes' prayer."  
 "God bless the noble boy," and when Kelly left, Parson Thomas had tears in his eyes, and was fondling the Indian's scalp.—*Texas Siftings.*

THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Archdeacon Lyall, in his *Propædia Prophetica*, has an argument for the divine establishment of Christianity. He says modern missionaries have the same doctrines as those in the time of Justin and Tertullian: there are the same promises, the same threatenings, the same precepts the same rites, and the same church discipline. Where there is any difference is to the advantage of the present age, with increased power, prestige, wealth, learning, and ability. Yet Justin and Tertullian could boast that Christianity had planted itself in every country, which, after 1,600 years, cannot now be pretended. The sufficient answer to Archdeacon Lyall's paradox is, that at the present time we can ascertain the facts, for the former we have only the Christian fathers' assertions. If God took supernatural means to propagate the Christian church, he should have also taken the same steps to uphold it. There is as much necessity for Christian missionaries being endowed with the power of God now as ever, only facts prohibited them asserting that as true of themselves, which they do not scruple to ascribe to the first apostles.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notices," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.O.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Theological View of Life" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)  
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): Sunday, and Tuesday at 8.30, social gatherings (free).  
 Camberwell—81 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, H. Snell, "The Genesis of Religion."  
 East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus: God, Man, or Myth?"  
 OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.  
 Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, H. Snell, "Story of the Atheists of the French Revolution"; 7.15, A. Johnson, "Good God."  
 Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. James, "Heresy: a Plea for Mental Freedom."  
 Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, J. Rowney, "God's Great Anger and Suicide."  
 Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, F. Haslam will lecture.  
 Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.  
 Thursday at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.  
 Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Creation"; 3.30, S. H. Alison will lecture.  
 Hammersmith (corner of the Grove): Thursday, Aug. 17, at 8.30, C. Cohen will lecture.  
 Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Is the Bible Inspired?"  
 Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Mr. St. John, "Christianity and Progress"; 3.30, Mr. St. John will lecture. Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.  
 Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.  
 Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, H. Courtney, "Lying Saints."  
 Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Christian Miracles: are they Credible?"  
 Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, W. J. Ransey will lecture.  
 Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery."  
 Newington Green: 3.15, A. Guest, "Recipes for Happiness."  
 Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Conflict between Religion and Science."  
 Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Cooling of Hell"; 3.30, F. Haslam will lecture.  
 Tottenham (corner of Seven Sisters-road): 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.  
 Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Marshall, "Christian Pardon: How and When?"; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.  
 Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, W. Heaford, "A Freethinker's View of Christ."  
 Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, Sam Standing, "The Relation of Science to Theology and Philosophy."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, important meeting of members.  
 Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, J. Rogers, "The Origin of Social Discontent in England"; and important business meeting.  
 Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, F. J. Boorman, "Triumphs of Science over Superstition."  
 Chester—Cathedral Restaurant, City Walls: 6.15, A Member, "Church and Progress."  
 Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7, business meeting.  
 Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 3, logic class (Mr. Small, B.Sc.); 7, Mr. Doeg, "Witchcraft in Christian Countries."  
 Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': John M. Robertsen, 11, "The Training of Children"; 6.30, "The God Hallucination." Tuesday at 8, debating circle.  
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, W. Dyson, "Joan of Arc and the Miraculous in History."  
 South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7.30, business meeting.  
 Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, J. Robertson, "Jesus Christ: God, Man, or Myth?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Chatham—High-street, New Brompton: 11, W. B. Thompson, "Are there Errors in the Bible?—a Reply to some Recent Local Sermons."  
 Sunderland—On the Green, at Ryhope: 11, J. Robertson, "Bible Heroes and Heroines." At 8, opposite the "Wheat Sheaf," Monkwearmouth, an address.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Democratic Club, Essex-street, Strand, W.C.—Aug. 13, a., Finsbury Park; 20, m., Midland Arches; 27, Mile End Waste.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Aug. 13, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 16, Hyde Park; 17, Hammersmith; 20, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Aug. 13, m., Regent's Park; a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 20, m., Victoria Park; a., Hyde Park; 27, Chatham.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Aug. 20, m., Hyde Park; 27, m., Wood Green.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Aug. 13, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell.

ST. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—Aug. 13, m., Hyde Park; 20, m., Bethnal Green.

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## BOOK CHAT.

From Lincoln, Nebraska, we received a volume entitled *Nudis Verbis; or Bible and Real Truths*, by J. F. Ballinger. Mr. Ballinger holds that it is lack of acquaintance with the actual contents of the Bible, that supports priestcraft and bibliolatry. From the pulpit only the more acceptable portions of the old books are quoted, and its true barbarous teachings are as far as possible concealed. It is mainly with a view of disclosing those parts of the word of God that are generally untouched by men of God, that Mr. Ballinger has written *Nudis Verbis*. He goes through the volume from Genesis to Revelation, stripping bare its inaccuracies, absurdities, atrocities and indecencies, and bringing a robust common sense to bear on every item. Thus on the story of Abraham and Isaac he asks, what person with a mind of his own would reverence a man who, to-day, would thus prepare to offer his only son as a sacrifice to a mythical and murderous God? Mr. Ballinger shows, with relentless hand, what savage and filthy stories the Bible actually contains. He has none of the fanciful reverence for Jesus Christ, which, like that for the Bible, is due to a partial representation. He sees traits in "Sweet Jesus" that are far from worahipful or even admirable. In short, Mr. Ballinger looks at the Bible with the unreverential eyes of an American of to-day, and his work should be an eye-opener to those who bow to it as to a fetish which they regard with blind awe, and whose utterances they consider must be swallowed with implicit faith.

*Positivism and its Founders*, by Malcolm Quin, is a neat sixpenny pamphlet, published by the author at 30 Alexandra-place, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. Quin conducts the Church of Humanity there, and the pamphlet contains his address on January 1, 1893; or, according to the Positivist calendar, the 1st Moses, 105. It is rather calculated for Positivists than for the general public, but it is really eloquent, and extremely well worth reading. Gambetta called Comte the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century; Mr. Quin regards him as the greatest in all history, as befits the founder of the Religion of

Humanity. One touching incident is here recorded, which we had never seen or had forgotten. Mr. Quin remarks that Comte "was careful, after his own simple meal every day, to eat a morsel of dry bread, that he might not lose the remembrance of those who lacked even that." Some people will regard the act as fantastic. Mr. Quin regards it as "sacramental and significant," and we think his view is the truer. In another respect, also, we think Mr. Quin is right. He protests against being called a "Comtist"; those who profess the Religion of Humanity, as Comte founded it, are "Positivists." At any rate, people should not have badges fastened on them by others—unless they are convicted criminals.

Positivism is Atheistic, in the sense that most Atheists attach to the word. Did not Comte say that God had become merely the head of a hypocritical conspiracy against the people? Mr. Quin admits that "only the shadows of the gods remain." "One after another," he says, "they have risen above the horizon of the human consciousness, have had their day of grace and ascendancy, and have disappeared into the darkness. Now the last of the gods has gone, and Humanity remains. She has surveyed her territory. She has examined the depths of her own soul, and knows herself in her strength and weakness."

Prof. Ludwig Büchner, the author of *Force and Matter*, has an article on "The Brain of Women" in the *New Review* this month. He points out the lower we look in the scale of civilisation the less difference is found in the size of the brains of the sexes, and infers that it is to civilised division of labor, and not to original difference in nature, that present differences must be attributed.

The *Quarterly Review*, noticing Mr. C. H. Pearson's *National Life and Character*, says: "That so candid, considerate, and comprehensive an intellect should take it for granted that Christianity is behind the age, that it has done its work, and can no longer be reckoned a great power in the world's order, surely may make us pause." Yes, and the longer Christians pause the more they will find that the world is coming to this opinion.

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