

August 20, 1893. 233

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. XIII.—No. 34.]

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20, 1893.

[PRICE TWOPENCE.



THE WORSHIP OF THE CURATE.

A WALK THROUGH THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

I AM indebted to the Rev. J. G. Kitchin for the idea of taking my readers round the British Museum, to see how far its antiquities confirm the faith once delivered to the saints. In his amusing little book, *The Bible Student in the British Museum*, he points to the Moabite stone, which records that the altars of Jehovah were prostrated before the Moabitish God Chemosh; to the cylinders recording the defeat of Hezekiah by Sennacherib; and the carving representing the tribute of Jehu to Assyria, whereas the Jew-book gives the very opposite complexion to these events. I cannot hope to be as funny as the Rev. Mr. Kitchin, but if the reader will trot round the museum with me I trust the visit will prove as interesting as if a shilling were tipped to the curator of the Biblical Museum in Sergeant's Inn to act as guide.

First, to show we are human, let us feed the sacred pigeons at the entrance of the museum. This is a duty certain of the constant readers are punctillious of in the winter time. I have seen as many as fifty representatives of the Holy Ghost cluster round my feet to pick up the crumbs. Having thus propitiated the guardian spirits, let us enter freely. It is our property, though our rulers will not permit us to see it on our one day of leisure; and, in a very real sense,

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the treasures here belong to all who can learn from them.

Let us turn to the left, down the Roman Gallery. If your disposition resembles mine, you will regard most attentively the busts. First, in the corner, note (1) the spare face and high, intellectual forehead of Julius Caesar, "the foremost man of all this world," who proclaimed himself a sceptic in the Roman Senate; note, too, those of Brutus, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Hadrian and his favorite Antinous, the severe head of Antoninus Pius, and the benign countenance of Marcus Aurelius, in one instance attired with the wreath and priestly robe of a *Frater Arvalis* (26). And this noble Aurelius is the alleged persecutor of Christians. And where is Christian Rome? No marble here perpetuates her greatness. You may be told that the busts of the Popes are found in the Cathedral of Sienna, among them the female Pope Joan, altered into Pope Zacharias; or you may look up their portraits, from Peter downwards, in *Ciacconi Vita et res Gestae Pontificum Romanorum*, all, till the thirteenth century, of the same authenticity, with the portraits of the old Scottish kings in Holyrood Palace, painted from one and the same porter.

The very first room we enter suggests that Christianity made a break in art. There is a wide gap—over a thousand years—from Pagan Rome to the Renaissance, bridged only by monkish fabrications. The

gulf becomes yet more apparent in the succeeding rooms of Græco-Roman sculpture. What grace, what beauty, what noble manhood and sweet femininity are here. What has Christian art to compare with Pagan sculpture? But we are not intent on the masterpieces, but the confirmations. Turn your eyes from that statue of Venus preparing for the bath (112) and regard attentively the statue in the corner marked "Dionysos." This is not the jolly vine god, but the bearded Bacchus, uniting sweet feminine tenderness with the grace of Apollo and the serene majesty of Olympian Jove. Note it carefully, for here you have the Pagan original of the ideal Christ. Before we leave the sculpture, let us note another of Christ's progenitors, the Persian sun-god Mithras slaying the bull (163). Other Mithraic monuments are in the basement and in the entrance hall, one, with the tail sprouting into corn, suggests we have here an allegory of the seasons and the ever-renewing spirit of vegetation.

We must leave, if we can, the Elgin Room, with its glorious sculptured friezes from the Parthenon at Athens, and turn to the massive and majestic figures of Ancient Egypt. Here, if we wish to study, we may begin, as Champollion began, with the Rosetta stone (Southern Gallery, No. 24), inscribed with a priestly decree in three characters—hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek—conferring divine honors on Ptolemy Epiphanes. A large proportion of the monuments in the Egyptian hall are of the famous XIX. Dynasty, under which the Jews are supposed to have suffered and escaped from bondage, yet not a solitary link connected with their legends in Exodus is to be found here or elsewhere.* Mr. Kitchin will point you to statues (63 and 517) of the cat-headed goddess Sekhet or Pasht, wearing the sun's disc and serpent, and holding the crux ansata in her hand, on which statue appears the name Sheshonk, referred to in 2 Chron. (xii. 9) as Shishak. The veracious Chronicles goes on to inform us that Asa, who only ruled over the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, possessed an army of 580,000 spearmen and archers, "all mighty men of valor" (xiv. 8), who overthrew a host of a million under Zera the Ethiopian. As, however, this yarn is unknown to the earlier writer of Kings, it may safely be classed with the fable in the previous chapter, of how Abijah slew 500,000 chosen men of Israel in one day (2 Chron. xix. 17), as one of the long list of Bible lies.

One other little link between Egypt and Israel may perhaps be discovered in the frequent repetition of the name of the god Amen. According to a statement in the Harris papyrus Ramases III. erected in Philistia, "a Ramesseum, to Amen, in the city of Kanaan, a statue of the god was set up in its holy of holies in the name of the king."† Mr. H. M. Kennard says, "Here, then, we have an authentic record which proves beyond a doubt that the worship of Amen was followed in Palestine." The symbol of Amen was a ram. The quick reader will at once think of the horns of the altar, of the ram's appearance to Abram, and cease to wonder if the old god was a ram that his son should be a lamb!

But we must not frivel in the solemn Egyptian hall. Note on the sarcophagi, the obelisks, and in the hands of the statues 518, 37, 57, 60, 62, 68 and 88, the crux ansata, ankh, or cross of life. Come to the top of the room, under the colossal head of Ramases II. Note the cross on the tomb of Khufu-Ankh, high officer of Cheops, the builder of the great pyramid at Gizeh, B.C. 3733. Here you have the so-called Christian symbol portrayed as the sign of life at the time when, according to Bible chronology, Adam was still living ‡ Ascend and see the mummies. Notice the same sign on the coffin of Men-Kau-Ra (the Mycerinus of Herodotus) the builder of the third pyramid 3600 B.C. (wall case 1, No. 6,617). Note that the king is addressed as one with Osiris living for ever, and that the sign for the idea of immortality is the cross. How evident that Christianity only adopted the symbol rendered sacred by centuries of usage. On the wall of this First

Egyptian Room note the large painting of the Judgment Scene in the Book of the Dead, the Egyptian sacred book, far older than any portion of the Bible. Observe the twelve gods seated as judges before a table of offerings. The heart of the departed Ani is being weighed in the balance against the feather, the symbol of Law. Amemit the Devourer, with the head of a crocodile, is ready to receive Ani, but Thoth delivers judgment that the heart of Ani weighs straight, and on the right hand side he is introduced by Horus the Mediator into the presence of Osiris, the judge of the dead. Note the sign of Osiris as the seeing eye, and the cross on calvary among the inscriptions. Here you have an Egyptian view of the Judgment which long afterwards was embodied in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. So far from Christianity bringing immortality to light, the Egyptians knew the doctrine long before the Jews are said to have dwelt in Egypt.

Round the wall cases of the Third Egyptian Room you may see numerous small figures of all the principal gods and goddesses of Egypt. Observe the statuette of Isis and Horus, the prototype of Mary and Jesus. Pass on to the case of Gnostic gems, and remark the amulet presented by Mr. Rider Haggard (Case N, G. 469), with figure of tree and woman giving birth to child, with the mystic ankh again, inscribed "one God of heaven." Then read C. King's *Gnostics and their Remains*, and you will have a key to the origin and early beliefs of Christianity.

Another week, if you will, we may take a look at the Assyrian remains. J. M. WHEELER.

THE MODERN DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

IT should be obvious to the careful observer of polemics that the mode of attempting to defend Christianity has undergone an entire change within the last decade. The plan adopted by Paley, Watson, Butler, and Pearson, finds no favor with modern Christian controversialists. The arguments upon which these writers depended to support "the faith once delivered to the saints" have long been found to be untenable, and other methods of defence have had to be selected. Twenty-five years ago Christian advocates decided upon a platform crusade against the rapidly growing scepticism, but this kind of theological warfare failed to secure victories for the orthodox combatants; and it was therefore abandoned by the intelligent portion of Christian exponents. To-day it is almost impossible to induce a first-class debater to engage in a platform discussion in defence of the claims of Christianity. It is true that upon the principle that certain persons rush in where "angels fear to tread," fourth-rate men are willing to essay the defence of their crude notions of the Christian faith, but as they represent no one but themselves, and no views but their own, and those very indifferent, their rash ventures deserve but little notice, and receive but little, even from the clergy.

Recently, however, some of the ablest men in the Church have come to the rescue of the Bible and Christianity, but they substitute the press for the platform as their battle ground. There has been an "International Theological Library" to which specialists are to contribute. The first volume issued was by Canon Driver, Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, on the Old Testament, and the third, published some months ago, was written by Professor A. W. Bruce, D.D., of Glasgow, and entitled *Apologetics of Christianity Defensively Stated*. Thinking that it is useful to sometimes "see ourselves as others see us," we read the chapter on "Freethought in the Present Time," naturally expecting to see something upon the subject. We were, however, disappointed to find that in a work of such pretensions, the names only of Strauss, Spinoza, and Matthew Arnold were mentioned, while the principal positions of Freethought were unnoticed. We found a long disquisition on Jesus the Man, and Jesus the Christ, the conclusion arrived at being that, if Christ were Jesus, Jesus was Christ. This profound reasoning reminded us of an old follower of Robert Owen whom we once knew, who had a way of his own for making all heretics Christians. This was how he represented his case:—Jesus said, "I am the truth," but if Jesus were the

* Instead of having all the firstborn of Egypt slain and being drowned in the Red Sea, inscriptions record that Ramases II. was blessed by Amen with a good old age, after a most prosperous reign.

† Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. ii., 164. *Philistines and Israelites*, p. 43; 1893.

‡ See "The Mystery of the Cross," *Freethinker*, April 10, 1892.

truth, the truth was Jesus, and, as all heretics believe in truth, they must be believers in Jesus!

Professor Bruce's mode of dealing with Agnosticism is similar to his treatment of Freethought, for he makes Herbert Spencer the founder of modern Agnosticism, who formulated its doctrine—"the Power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable." Dr. Bruce omits to mention the fact that Professor Huxley first conceived and named the modern theory referred to as Agnostic. Such an omission as this upon the part of a special controversialist indicates great carelessness, or something worse. He defines Agnosticism as the negation of possible knowledge of God and his relation to man and the world. This is a definition that we believe no intelligent Agnostic would accept, for it is inaccurate and thoroughly misleading. Would it not be well for Christian exponents to make themselves better acquainted with the views they profess to criticise? Such lack of knowledge as is here shown may be expected in the few amateur theological debaters who are now forcing themselves before the public, but in a learned professor it is almost unpardonable.

The doctor informs us that elaborate *Lives of Jesus* can be done without, as "a candid inquirer can obtain a comfortable sense of the knowableness of Jesus by an unaided use of the Gospel." This may be so, but the question is what is the value of the "sense" thus acquired? A searcher for truth should be more concerned about the verity of knowledge than its being "comfortable." Many persons, theologians in particular, have been too prone to feel comfortable while believing the most glaring errors, allowing their feelings rather than their reason to be gratified. We next meet with the following declaration made by the doctor, the like of which, differing only in its phraseology, we have found in many Christian works. In spite of all scepticism, he says, there remains the fact that "the hero of the evangelical story is the sweetest, most winsome, and most powerful character in the whole history of humanity." It would have been more in keeping with a proper defence of Christianity if, before deducing certain inferences from any "powerful character" in history it had been shown that the character itself was historical. Historical characters, as we understand the term, are not men born of virgins without human fathers. Yet we are told that the value of the Christ-like description just given depends upon the validity of the virgin episode; for, says the doctor, "if the virgin birth is given up, the virgin life and perfect goodness of Jesus will follow." It is frankly conceded by Dr. Bruce that "the belief in the virgin birth must go" if we are to accept "a purely naturalistic theory of the universe." But is it not a fact that "history" is only concerned with events that are in harmony with such a theory, and that all else is fable, fraud, or imagination? To speak of these matters as having any relation to history is clearly misleading. We are told that "Christ came not to tell us who wrote the law and the prophecies, or when or in what order they were written." But if Jesus knew that a time would come when his having quoted them would be construed into establishing their authenticity, he, in not doing what the doctor mentions, omitted a very important duty. On the other hand, if he did not know, what becomes of his alleged divinity? As a matter of fact there is no evidence whatever that Jesus doubted that the books he quoted were written by the persons whose names he mentioned, and if he knew they were not so written it was not to his credit to remain silent upon the subject.

Dr. Bruce observes: "There is no need to contend for special creations of planets and animals that work might be provided for God to do; or to regard life as something which God alone could produce." Perhaps not from a rational standpoint, but there is such a "need" if we accept the Bible theory of creation. Before the modern discoveries in astronomy, geology, and biology, it was thought that creations of everything were "needed," and those who now say we "need" them not, fail to discover that fact by reading and interpreting the book of Genesis. Science, not theology, has given us that information, and has thus instructed us in truths which the Bible could not

impart. It is not possible to read the conflicting accounts given in Genesis, without discovering that the writer, or writers, believed that a power above nature was the cause of all the phenomena they there describe as coming into existence for the first time. The doctor writes in a similar strain as to the work Jesus is supposed to have done. We are told that Jesus healed men's bodies and souls; whether by natural or supernatural power, may be interesting to science and theology, it is not, however, of vital importance to religion. But Dr. Bruce should remember that the Christian religion is built on the person of Christ, who is alleged to have possessed supernatural powers, but who, in their absence, is only the Socrates of Palestine.

The life of mind apart from body, and a soul apart from brain, are matters that the doctor admits he cannot inform us about, but he says "there is no reason to think that death is the destruction of the thinking principle." We answer, a "principle" is not an entity that comes under the category of body or brain, and it depends on the fulfilment of the prophecy that "God will provide in future what is necessary for its exercise if it continue after death." It is a recognised scientific fact that the "thinking principle" is now connected with an organism, and there is no reason to suppose it ever was, or ever will be, otherwise. To make it into a latent potency of a disembodied state, is to reduce mind to something less substantial than what we call moonshine. To argue in this way is to abandon rational investigation, for what God will provide in future for the exercise of the thinking principle, "God only knows." If this work is a fair sample of the modern defence of Christianity by its modern defenders, it is not much of an improvement upon the old style of defence. Its utter insufficiency to meet the reasonable demands of the advanced thought of our time, affords additional proof that, however the Christian claims may satisfy the faith of orthodox believers, such claims fail to harmonise with the logical deductions and the impartial verdict of the dispassionate thinkers of the present day.

CHARLES WATTS.

EUSEBIUS' CHURCH HISTORY.

II.

I COME to the question of the original of this book, whether it was Latin or Greek. This point requires very careful consideration; but I believe I shall be able to convince my readers (especially those who have been prepared by the arguments adduced by Mr. Wheeler for the Latin original of parts of the New Testament) that this first *Church History* was really composed in Latin in one of the monasteries of the West.

What is the evidence? The monks in that notable List of "Illustrious Men" or "Catholic Writers," to which I have already directed your thought as the main key to Church literature, allege that a Latin translation of the Eusebian *Church History* was made by one "Rufinus." And who was "Rufinus"? The statement in the List aforesaid is that he was "Presbyter of the Church of Aquileia, an important doctor of the Church, who had an elegant genius for translating from Greek into Latin. Thus he set before the Latins the greatest part of the library of the Greeks, to wit, Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea of Cappadocia, Gregory of Nazianzus, most eloquent man, Clement of Rome's Books of 'Recognitions,' the *Eccelesiastical History of Eusebius of Cæsarea of Palestine*, the 'Sentences' of Hystus of Rome, the 'Sentences' of Evagrius, the 'Against Mathematici' of Pamphilus Martyr.

"Of all these, whatever treatises with prefaces are read by the Latins have been interpreted by Rufinus; those which have no prologue were translated by another, who did not wish to write a preface; but not all treatises of Origen, because Jerome translated some few of these, which are distinguished in his preface.

"But by his own labor, or rather by the gift of the grace of God, the same Rufinus expounded 'The Symbol,' so that he is without a rival in this work. He also discoursed on 'The Blessing of Jacob on the

Patriarchs' in the threefold sense—that is, the historic, the moral, and the mystic. He also wrote many hortatory epistles to the fear of God, among which are eminent those which he gave 'to Proba.'

"To the Ecclesiastical History which we said was written by Eusebius and interpreted by Rufinus, the latter added the tenth and the eleventh book. But to a detractor from the merit of his opuscles, he replied in two volumes, arguing and convincing that he had stirred up his heart through the beholding of God and the utility of the Church, while his adversary, incited by the goad of rivalry, had turned his pen to obloquy."

And who wrote the notice of this wonderful Rufinus? The answer, at the end of the List, is: "I, Gennadius, Præbyter of Marseilles," in the time of "St. Gelasius, Bishop of the City Rome."

I will show, if my readers will only follow me with patience, that this List, in its two parts containing no less than 234 names, is in every respect fictitious. The names are not those of real, but of imaginary persons. The List was not drawn up more than one thousand years before the Renaissance, but during that period, and may be described as the device of a Round Table of Benedictine abbots, whose interest and ambition it was to make themselves masters of the trade of Letters, and to impose upon the world the false idea that Christianity and Christian Letters were of an inconceivable antiquity.

In showing this, I shall, at the same time, be showing that Latin is the earlier written language of the Church.

Now the Catalogue of "Illustrious Men" has a Preface address to "Dexter, Prætorian Præfect." I think it may be safely said that, as no educated Englishman would dedicate a book to "Sir Smith," or to "Right Hon. Brown," so no educated Roman would have addressed a high official of the Empire as "Dexter"! The monk stumbles on the threshold, but he goes on with his nonsense in a cynical manner, as if he were absolutely certain of the success of his imposture. He pretends that it is "Dexter" who wanted the List of Church Writers, in imitation of that drawn up by Suetonius of Gentile writers, also of certain other Greek and Latin bibliographers. You have before you, in the very first paragraph, one of the numerous revelations of the fraudulent intention to assert the Catholic Church as coeval with the Roman Empire. He represents himself as writing in the fourteenth year of the emperor Theodosius, and he uses the *Latin* language. "Dexter" is said to be son of "Pæcatian, Bishop of Barcelona." Both are "illustrious"!

In the next paragraph, he complains of the poverty of his sources; and acknowledges the great assistance he has derived from "*Eusebius Pamphili*" in the "Ten Books" of his Ecclesiastical History, and from others named on the List. He then proceeds to offer a solemn prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ, that he may be able to do for the writers of the Church what Cicero did not disdain to do in his *Brutus* for the orators of the Latin tongue, and so fulfil his task in a manner worthy of "Dexter's" exhortation. He pretends to be writing in an obscure "corner of the earth"—in reality, a cell or writing-room carefully screened from public observation.

Finally, he launches a defiance against "Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, mad dogs against Christ, and their followers, who think that the Church had no philosophers and eloquent men, no doctors. Let them learn how many fine men founded, built up, and advanced it; let them cease to accuse our Faith of rustic simplicity, and rather recognise their own ignorance. Farewell in the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Men like myself of Christian education should be shocked to the depth of their being when they first see what this audacious passage means; while men who have any taste for science and letters should brand the passage with all the marks of ridicule and indignation. It is simply a confession under the form of vaunt and falsehood that at the epoch of the Revival, the Church could not produce any ancient literature, any tradition whatever from the old Roman time; and that the monks having made up their minds to deduce her origin from that time, had found it necessary to

vamp up this list of the "Illustrious," the first name on which is the Rock-Man, Simon Peter, first of Popes, who is said in the work of the third "Illustrious," Matthew or Levi, to be the foundation of the whole Church structure.

I say that these manifestoes were published to the world, according to the printed dates, something less than four hundred years ago, and that there is no solitary scrap of evidence to prove that they had long been composed. On the contrary, the whole weight of evidence is against the statement. And the denial that the Church had a genuine literary history is the actual denial of certain Renaissance scholars which has often been quoted, but too little understood. *They* said to the monks, "Pooh! your history is not matter of testimony at all; it is holy trickery!" The monks retorted in that peculiar vein of brag and menace and adjuration which betrays their falsehood; at the same time their triumphant insolence shows how they felt that their organisation had brought the world to their feet.

The Book is what used to be called a colored or colorable performance. The MSS. are very few, the oldest being the Vatican, the Verona, and the Vercelli. Though written in Latin, it is sprinkled with a large number of Greek words, proper and common names. It may be thus regarded as the model of Church books, and offers a strong confirmation to the able arguments of the Rev. John Black in *Palæoromæica* for the Latin original of the New Testament. But there is no argument on the other side except the pretensions of the monks of the West to Greek learning. These destroyed, the truth is obvious, palpable, and can no longer be denied.

Now let me show that the original of the Eusebius' Church History was in all probability Latin. The question is one of our own time, it may be said; for the first critical edition of the Latin text was only published by Cacciari in 1740; who used five Vatican MSS. The point before us is: does this alleged Latin translation by the alleged "Rufinus" look like a translation at all? Is the writer really following the Greek? What are the facts?

The Latin writer shows again and again the greatest licence and caprice, quite inconsistent with faithful translation. He leaves out the supplement of book viii., and the greater part of book x., the rest being placed under book ix. Again, this alleged "translation" is seen, by comparison with all extant Greek MSS., not to be dependent on them, and therefore presumptively older than them. The German scholar Kimmel (1838) has, I think, conclusively proved that the Latin is actually the *best guide* to the true readings of a work alleged to have been composed in Greek! Further, if this Latin scribe was following a Greek text, *which* was it? Not one of them; neither the Mazarine, Medicean, the Fuketian, Savilian, nor the Royal Codex. There are *agreements*, some with this and some with that Greek text, but not one of them is indicated as the authoritative original, from which the Latin was framed.

Let me show how bewildered the editors have become, either from not understanding, or from being unwilling to admit, that the allegation of a Greek original was false. Strothius (1779) was induced to imagine that there had been *two* Greek editions of the Eusebian work; that "Rufinus" had a copy of the former edition, and that our MSS. have followed, for the most part, a latter and worse edition, of which he supposed there had been three recensions! This scholar could not but see that the alleged Latin translation was much better than any of the Greek recensions; and was thus led to invent the theory of an early Greek text of which there are no traces whatever!

The last distinguished editor, Heinichen (1868), a timid but industrious scholar, made particular use of the "Rufinus' translation" so-called, and was the first to make the Latin the *critic* (as he says) of the Greek. In other words, he felt that the Latin had a *great authority over the Greek* in deciding many readings. Further than this he did not go, perhaps could not, or dare not go, without endangering the whole credit of "Eusebius."

Similar was the position of the well-known historian

Gieseler. In the third edition of his *Church History* he observed that "Rufinus' Latin Translation" is frequently "rather a working-up of Eusebius than a translation; but for all that, the Latin had not been adequately used as yet for the criticism of the original." A very remarkable opinion! It is as good as saying that the translator might understand the original writer better than the original writer understood himself! Did Gieseler see whither such opinions must tend? I know not; but in his next edition he expunged the latter words, and substituted the flat phrase, to the effect that the Latin "was not unimportant." And Heinichen blames him for this. But Heinichen himself never went to the root of the matter. He never put the question, which I think he ought to have put, "And after all, why should we believe that there was any translation from Greek into Latin of the History at all, seeing that the facts contradict such a statement? May not the Latin have been the original?"

The critic who asks such a question must endeavor to answer it. Nor can he stop at "Eusebius." He must carry the argument on to the case of the New Testament and other Church books, and then he will find that a *prouton pseudos*, a "first lie" is at the bottom of all this confusion. And then he will be forced to the admission that the writers who have been "false in one particular" have been "false in all," and their wholesale frauds will be laid open, beyond the possibility of honorable defence.

So far the presumption has been raised that the truth has not been told us in any one particular concerning the composition of the momentous *Church History*. Published in 1544, it is alleged to have been written some 1,200 years before that time, and by a man whose name is on a list of persons whom there is no reason to suppose other than imaginary, and in the Greek language, whence it was translated into Latin. Accepting the date of publication as true or near the truth, the rest of the statements are presumptively a series of falsehoods. I will proceed to offer a few proofs in detail of the proposition that Latin was really the original language of the *Church History*.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

LORD BACON ON ATHEISM.

[CONCLUDED.]

COMING now to Lord Bacon's essay on Atheism itself, we find him opening it with a very pointed utterance of Theism. "I had rather," he says, "believe all the fables in the legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind." The expression is admirable, but the philosophy is doubtful. When a man says he would rather believe one thing than another, he is merely exhibiting a personal preference. Real belief is not a matter of taste; it is determined by evidence—if not absolutely, at least as far as our power of judgment carries us.

"A little philosophy," his lordship says, "inclineth man's mind to Atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." The reason he assigns is, that when we no longer rest in second causes, but behold "the chain of them confederate and linked together," we must needs "fly to providence and Deity." The necessity, however, is far from obvious. All the laws, as we call them, of all the sciences together, do not contain any new principle in their addition. Universal order is as consistent with Materialism as with Theism. It is easy to say that "God never wrought miracles to convince Atheism, because his ordinary works convince it"; but, as a matter of fact, it is the God of Miracles in whom the multitude have always believed. A special providence, rather than a study of the universe, has been the secret of their devotion to "the unseen."

Lord Bacon drops below the proper level of his genius in affirming that "none deny there is a God, but those for whom it maketh that there were no God." This is but a milder expression of the incivility of the Psalmist. It is finely rebuked by the atheist Monk in the play of "Sir William Crichton," the work of a man

of great though little recognised genius—William Smith.

For ye who deem that one who lacks of faith
Is therefore conscience-free, ye little know
How doubt and sad denial may enthrall him
To the most timid sanctity of life.

Lord Bacon, indeed, rather doubts the existence of the positive Atheist.

"It appeareth in nothing more, that Atheism is rather in the lip than in the heart of man, than by this, that Atheists will ever be talking of that their opinion, as if they fainted in it within themselves, and would be glad to be strengthened by the opinion of others: nay more, you shall have Atheists strive to get disciples, as it fareth with other sects; and, which is most of all, you shall have of them that will suffer for Atheism, and not recant; whereas, if they truly think that there is no such thing as God, why should they trouble themselves?"

Although Lord Bacon was not the "meanest of mankind," there was certainly a lack of the heroic in his disposition; and this passage emanated from the most prosaic part of his mind and character. "Great thoughts," said Vauvenargues, "spring from the heart." Now the heart of Lord Bacon was not as high as his intellect; no one could for a moment imagine his facing martyrdom. He had none of the splendid audacity, the undauntable courage, the unshakable fortitude, of his loftier contemporary, Giordano Bruno. So much truth is there in Pope's epigram, that his lordship was capable at times of grovelling; witness his fulsome, though magnificent, dedication of the *Advancement of Learning* to King James—the British Solomon, as his flatterers called him, to the amusement of the great Henry of France, who sneered, "Yes, Solomon the son of David," in allusion to his mother's familiarity with David Rizzio. And in this very passage of the essay on Atheism we also see the grovelling side of Lord Bacon, with a corresponding perversion of intelligence. Being incapable of understanding martyrdom, except under the expectation of a reward in heaven, his lordship cannot appreciate the act of an Atheist in suffering for his convictions. His concluding words are positively mean. Surely the Atheist might trouble himself about truth, justice, and dignity; all of which are involved in the maintenance and propagation of his principles. But, if the closing observation is mean, the opening observation is fatuous. This is a strong word to use of any sentence of Lord Bacon's, but in this instance it is justifiable. If an Atheist mistrusts his own opinion, because he talks about it, what is to be said of the Christians, who pay thousands of ministers to talk about their opinions, and even subscribe for Missionary Societies to talk about them to the "heathen"? Are we to conclude that an Atheist's talking shows mistrust, and a Christian's talking shows confidence? What real weakness is there in the Atheist's seeking for sympathy and concurrence? It is hard for any man to stand alone; certainly it was not in Lord Bacon's line to do so; and why should not the Atheist be "glad to be strengthened by the opinion of others"? Novalis said that his opinion gained infinitely when it was shared by another. The participation does not prove the truth of the opinion, but redeems it from the suspicion of being a mere maggot of an individual brain.

Lord Bacon then turns to the barbaric races, who worship particular gods, though they have not the general name; a fact which he did not understand. More than two hundred years later it was explained by David Hume. It is simply a proof that monotheism grows out of polytheism; or, if you like, that Theism is a development of Idolatry. This is a truth that takes all the sting out of Lord Bacon's observation that "against Atheists the very savages take part with the very subtlest philosophers." We may just remark that the philosophers must be very hard pressed when they call up their savage allies.

Contemplative Atheists are rare, says Lord Bacon—"a Diagoras, a Bion, a Lucian perhaps, and some others." They seem more than they are, for all sorts of heretics are branded as Atheists; which leads his lordship to the declaration that "the great Atheists indeed are hypocrites, which are ever handling holy things, but without feeling; so as they must needs be cauterised in the end." Now we have no respect for

hypocrites, and for that very reason we object to them as a present to Atheism. Religion must consume its own smoke, and dispose of its own refuse.

The causes of Atheism next occupy Lord Bacon's attention. He finds they are four; divisions in religion, the scandal of priests, profane scoffing in holy matters, and "learned times, especially with peace and prosperity." "Troubles and adversities," his lordship says, "do more bow men's minds to religion." Which is true enough, though it only illustrates the line of the Roman poet that religion always has its root in fear.

It will be observed that, up to the present, Lord Bacon has not considered one of the reasons for Atheism. What he calls "causes" are only *occasions*. He does not discuss, or even refer to, the objections to Theism that are derived from the tentative operations of nature, so different from what might be expected from a settled plan; from ugly, venomous and monstrous things; from the great imperfection of nature's very highest productions; from the ignorance, misery, and degradation of such a vast part of mankind; from the utter absence of anything like a moral government of the universe. Only towards the end of his essay does Lord Bacon begin business with the Atheists. "They that deny a God," he says, "destroy a man's nobility; for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body; and, if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature." This is pointed and vigorous, but after all it is a matter of sentiment. Some prefer the fallen angel, others the risen ape. Lord Bacon, like Earl Beaconsfield, is on the side of the angels. We are on the other side. A being who has done something, and will do more, however humble his origin, is preferable to one who can only boast of his fine descent.

Finally, his lordship takes the illustration of the dog, to whom man is "instead of a God." What generosity and courage he will put on, in the "confidence of a better nature than his own." So man gathereth force and faith from divine protection and favor. Atheism therefore "depriveth human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty." But this is to forget that there may be more than one means to the same end. Human nature may be exalted above its frailty without becoming the dog of a superior intelligence. Science, self-examination, culture, public opinion, and the growth of humanity, are more than substitutes for devotion to a deity. They are capable of exalting man continuously and indefinitely. They do not appeal to the spaniel element in his nature; they make him free, erect, noble, and self-dependent.

On the whole we are bound to say that Lord Bacon's essay on Atheism is unworthy of his genius. If it were the only piece of his writing extant, we should say it was the work of one who had great powers of expression but no remarkable powers of thought. He merely echoes the commonplaces of apologists. What then are we to conclude? Why this, that Lord Bacon dared not give the rein to his mind in an essay on Atheism. He was bound to be circumspect in a composition level to the intelligence of every educated reader. We prefer to take him where he enjoys greater freedom. Under the veil of a story, for instance, he aims a dart at the superstition of a special providence, which is an ineradicable part of the Christian faith. Bion, the Atheist, being shown the votive tablets in the temple of Neptune, presented by those who prayed to the god in a storm and were saved, asked where were the tablets of those who were drowned. Bacon tells the story with evident gusto, and it is in such things that we seem to get at his real thoughts. In a set essay on Atheism, a man of his worldly wisdom, and unheroic temper, was sure to kneel at the regular altars. The single query "Why should they trouble themselves?" explains it all.

G. W. FOOTE.

The late rector of Handsworth is the authority for the following anecdote. At the yearly examination of his parish schools, the inspector was putting a class of little girls through the Child's Catechism, and addressed to one the question, "Child, who made your vile body?" "Please, sir," was the answer, "mother made the body and I made the skirt."

ACID DROPS.

The Church Congress is to be held at Birmingham in October, by which time the "classes" will have got through their shooting season. From the official program we see that the parsons will continue to agitate the Labor Question, in which many of them have the very smallest personal interest. Half the questions down for discussion are quite foreign to the Church's real function. Its business, if it has any business, is to look after the people's souls. What on earth (or anywhere else) has it to do, for instance, with "The Disposal of the Dead"? That is a matter for doctors, sanitarians, and jurisprudents. Probably the parsons see that cremation is winning, and therefore they must no longer oppose it, but chip in so as not to be left out in the cold.

One article of the program is characteristic, and touches the Church in its most sensitive part—"The Financial Condition of the Clergy." Under this head the parsons will discuss "The Duty of the Clergy to One Another," and "The Duty of the Laity towards the Clergy"—which, of course, is to shell out handsomely. Nothing is said about the duty of the Clergy towards the Laity. Perhaps it was overlooked in the hurry.

"The Work of the Church among the Artisan Population" is to be discussed—as usual. A few years ago the Black Champion was trotted out by the Bishop of Bedford. Would it not be well to have him again, with all the rest of the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers? A repetition by them of the eloquent and genial orations they deliver out of doors against Freethought, and especially against Freethinkers, ought to create a sensation.

The better the day the better the deed, thinks the adulterating milkman. Anyhow, it is stated by Mr. Stokes, the Public Analyst for the Paddington Vestry, that "milk adulteration is more rife on Sundays than on other days, it being presumed that the inspector will not be about then." What volumes this speaks for the morality of Sabbatarianism!

Belfast does not seem to improve in the matter of toleration. On Bank Holiday the Irish National Foresters, returning from an excursion, were set upon by an Orange crowd, who pelted them with stones and iron nuts and bolts. A considerable number of women and children were among the excursionists, and it is to be presumed that the Orangemen were aware of the fact, unless they were too drunk to see.

Mr. Phil May, in the course of an interview in the *Sun*, tells a curious story about the *Sydney Bulletin*:—"The paper was originally a religious paper. But one day certain members of the staff revolted, two brought it out without notice as an extremely secular paper. The new style proved to be a good deal more popular than the old, so, in spite of the annoyance of the original subscribers, it has remained an extremely secular paper ever since."

The ghosts are still used to hamper the living. The St. Pancras Vestry wisely converted the old burial ground, disused for above half a century, into a recreation ground, where the poor Somers Town children get a little fresh air and see a few flowers. This was of course opposed by the vicar, but without avail, for the Baroness Bardett Coutts subscribed to see the project carried out. The vestry now propose to set up a band-stand, but the vicar calls this desecration, and the English Church Union supports him in his attempt to prevent it being carried out.

Brother Moody declares that men and women are no better now than they were six thousand years ago. Which is important if true. Because it proves pretty clearly that since the world began the clerics of every creed, although they have ever lived on the fat of the land, have not earned their salt.

The Rev. W. Redcliffe from Portsmouth, who some time ago got in trouble for taking a ring from a Margate jeweller, was arrested at Yeovil for obtaining a gold Albert and silver watch from Mr. Tyte, jeweller. He gave the name of the Rev. J. Lindsey, and said he was staying with the Rev. Mr. Fox at Templecombe. But the goods were pawned in London

Another clergyman, the Rev. Arthur H. Greenwood, has been committed for trial at Cambridge on two charges of obtaining money by false pretences, a charge which seems very natural preferred against any man of God. Arthur Herbert could not find anyone to stand bail for him and had to go to prison.

The shindy at Samoa has resulted in the triumph of Malieto. His braves celebrated the victory by carrying the heads of their slain enemies to Apia. "He certainly appears," says the *Westminster Gazette*, "to have carefully studied the account of barbaric warfare in the early books of the Old Testament."

Dr. Cyrus Edson writes as follows in the *North American Review* on the subject of Death Beds:—Nothing is more common than to hear from the pulpit pictures in words of excitement, of alarm, of terror, of the death-beds of those who have not lived religious lives, yet, as a rule, if these pictures are supposed to be those of the unfortunates at the moment of death, they are utterly false. In point of fact, ninety-nine of every hundred human beings are unconscious for several hours before death comes to them; all the majesty of intellect, the tender beauty of thought or sympathy or charity, the very love for those for whom love has filled all waking thoughts, disappear. As a little baby just born into the world is but a little animal, so the sage, the philosopher, the hero, or the statesman, he whose thoughts or deeds have writ themselves large in the history of the world, become but dying animals at the last. A merciful unconsciousness sets in as the mysterious force we call life slowly takes leave of its last citadel, the heart, and what is has become what was. This is death.

The beneficent power of religion has been shown in various parts of the world. In Hungary there has been serious rioting owing to the efforts of the Greek Bishop to drive the Magyars into the Greek Church. A large crowd marched to the bishop's palace, and finding him absent, smashed his windows as well as those of a neighboring church. The military had to be called out, the police being unable to cope with the crowd.

In Bombay there has been several days fighting and rioting between Hindus and Mohammedans. The Hindu temples have been attacked, looted and defiled, and the Moslem mosques have been desecrated and destroyed. According to some reports, the Hindu Cow Protection Society is at the bottom of the riot, but the *Times* says the Moslems began the attack. The truth is religious bigotry makes each party ready to fly at the other's throat at the slightest provocation. At Bombay some 50 000 persons were engaged in rioting. Of these thirty-two have been killed, as well as three policemen, besides many wounded.

Charles Squires, a laborer, aged twenty-eight, was annoyed one night by the crying of his wife's two-year-old illegitimate baby. Getting out of bed, he held it by the mouth and nostrils till it was suffocated; then he went back to bed, and slept the sleep of the just. In the morning he tried to persuade his wife to say that he had overlaid the child, but it did not answer, and on Thursday last (Aug. 10) Charles Squires was hung at Shepton-Mallett. His last words were "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The newspapers do not say whether the Lord Jesus accepted the offer.

Charles Squires confessed his crime and died "penitent." That is, he tried his best to keep out of hell. It does not appear that he showed the least concern for the "spirit" of the poor, helpless, little child whom he murdered with such callous indifference.

Cardinal Vaughan, on behalf of Pope Pecci, dedicated England to St. Peter. It was a rare piece of "cheek," for the consent of England was not obtained, nor even solicited. And on the Christian theory of things, the dedication was a blunder, which has been decisively stamped with the displeasure of Providence. All sorts of accidents and calamities have followed it: such as the sinking of the "Victoria," the Thornhill Colliery explosion, the Skegness boating accident, the great fire in the City of London, the quarrel between France and Siam, pugilistic encounters in the House of Commons, and a perfect epidemic of murders and violent outrages. Cardinal Vaughan had better try back, before Providence sends England to the dogs.

Cholera is one of the Lord's tender mercies, and some people expect it here shortly in the due course of providence. The London Necropolis Company has actually made an offer to a Southwark Board of Guardians to bury cholera corpses at twenty-four hours' notice. We hope there will be no need to give the Company an order.

A mad wolf at Kieff has been worse than Elisha's two God-inspired bears. It bit about fifty persons, amongst them forty-five children, the wounds being described as awful. At home, our heavenly Father has given us a plague of wasps, with terrific thunderstorms, resulting in loss of life and much damage to property: a disaster to a boating party of Sunday school excursionists, and another railway accident.

The church at Council Bluffs, Iowa, has been visited by a highwayman or madman, who, drawing a revolver from his pocket, ordered the congregation to hold up their hands. One of them grappled with him, and during the struggle the revolver went off. The church was in a panic, and the stranger fled.

Some American Spiritists have started a "Direct Spirit Slate-writing Company, Limited." One thousand shares are to be issued at one pound each, and the shareholders will get messages from the spirits in return for their money. We fancy the prospectus of the "New Patent Salvation Company, Limited," in our Summer Number, must have been dictated by the spirits.

The Musselburg tailors recently had an outing "riding the marches." In the procession they bore a banner with the motto—

Old Adam sewed fig leaves together,
To shield his fair Eve from the weather.

A Freethinker at Dalkeith said they ought to add another couplet from Genesis iii. 21—

And God himself thought it no sin
To make for them some coats of skin.

Dr. Rendel Harris has an article on "The Structure of the Gospel of Peter" in the *Contemporary Review*, in reply to Dr. Martineau. He contends that the Gospel of Peter owes its origin to false construction of presumed events in the life of Jesus, on the basis of peculiar interpretation of Old Testament prophecies. But could there be a more glaring false construction than that in Matt. xxi., which makes Jesus ride into Jerusalem on two donkeys because Zachariah said "thy king cometh sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass"?

Dr. Harris sees that bogus history has been constructed out of alleged prophecy in the case of the Gospel of Peter, but he does not see that this cuts the ground from under the whole of the gospel history. If "Peter" invented some incidents to fit the Old Testament, may not Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have invented others? Matthew, for instance, makes his hero go to Egypt, "That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophets, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." Mark makes John the Baptist prophesied by Isaiah. John makes the soldiers pierce Jesus to fulfil a saying which is in the Septuagint, but not in the Hebrew Bible. In fact the whole story of a wonder-working Messiah is founded on the prophecies, and has nothing better to sustain it. Moses was said to have brought water from the rock and fed the Jews with manna, so Jesus must turn water into wine and multiply loaves. Elijah raised the widow's son, so must sweet Jesus. Whatever was expected of the Messiah the early Christians were ready to assert of their blessed Savior. As they could not get over the fact that he met an ignominious death, they were put to the assertion that he went like a lamb to the slaughter, and that his death made an atonement like the old sacrifices.

Heresy is finding expression in all sorts of places nowadays. The *Manchester Examiner*, in a leader on the terrible railway accident near Cardiff, wonders "as Job wondered long ago, why in a God-governed world such miseries as those to which this Welsh catastrophe is but the latest contribution are permitted, when Omnipotence might so very easily make it all so contrastingly otherwise." Our contemporary expresses a pious hope that we shall some day "get behind this veil of mystery," but that is padding to break the blow to the orthodox.

As if it were not enough that private landowners should filch common rights and block public rights of way, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have now gone to work in this direction. A vigorous campaign has been opened at Childs Hill against an attempt to close a footpath leading from West End to Hendon Church. The antiquity of the right of way is proved beyond question, but the Ecclesiastical Commissioners unceremoniously put up a notice closing the path; and when remonstrated with by the Local Board, they only went so far as to offer to leave the path open on condition that the Board would go to the expense of fencing it—a proposal only one degree less impudent than their original proceeding. Not long since, the commissioners enclosed and built over a common in the same district, known as Golders Green; and recently a piece of waste land adjoining Cricklewood-lane has been filched by them. By such methods is "the patrimony of the Church" acquired!—*Truth*.

The Rev. W. P. S. Bingham, vicar of Keinton, Exeter, said, at a meeting of the E.C.U., "No fact was more firmly established than this—that Ritualism did not lead to the Church of Rome." Well, the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, the organ of the Irish papal party, says, "almost all our converts come from the Ritualists," and the English Catholic *Weekly Register* bears the same testimony—"Out of every twenty Anglicans who have joined the Catholic Church, not less than seventeen have been prepared for the step by the teaching they have heard from Ritualistic pulpits, and by the practices they have got accustomed to in Ritualistic churches." It would be strange indeed if it were otherwise, now that in hundreds of churches the practices which aroused the Reformation are restored.

The Pope has excommunicated Gerard Gul, the old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht, despite a very submissive letter which he sent to His Infallibility.

At Brazeka, in Bosnia, an old superstition has come to life again which resembles the fables of Jewish ritual murders. In Bosnia, the people have believed at all times that a bridge could not be firm and lasting unless a human being was walled up in it. Thus there is a legend connected with the handsome Roman bridge at Mostar which says that the fine arch across the Narenta could not be finished until the architect walled up in it a bridal pair. Now that a solid bridge is being built across the Save at Brazeka, this superstition is revived. It is rumored everywhere that gipsies are stealing children to sell them to the contractors, who wall one up in each pillar. A few days ago there was a regular pursuit of some unlucky gipsies, of whom it had been said that they were raiding for children.

Rev. William Metcalf, of the immersion faith, was inspired to entertain the wife of Grant Wilberly, near Rossvie, Tennessee, while the husband attended a lodge meeting. He, on returning home, seeing suspicious movements within, stood beside the door and awaited the egress of the invader of his castle. Presently the Rev. stepped forth, and the sable sentry plunged a knife into his abdomen. Metcalf was disemboweled and will die. Both were colored.

Canon Cazenove, of Manor House, Cranborne, Dorset, died suddenly while playing at tennis. Here is a theme for a sermon on Matt. xxiv. 42.

In the good old days there was a black statue of the Virgin at Willesden, which was publicly burnt in 1538, the inhabitants probably seeing it was a remnant of heathen idolatry, for as the country was still Catholic then, it would hardly have been burnt otherwise. The Papists have put up another statue there—white this time—which, when blessed by Cardinal Vaughan, will, it is hoped, again draw the pilgrimages and pence of the faithful.

The newspapers report that Thomas Collins, who is lying in Cardiff Gaol under sentence of death for murdering Mary Sheen, his paramour, "pays due attention to his spiritual adviser." Collins is another candidate for glory, who will soon be welcomed into the kingdom of heaven, and repose safe in the arms of Jesus.

"The history of Christianity shows it to be divine," says the *Rock*. Does it? How, then, has it taken so long to do so little? The *Rock* is rabidly Protestant, and every Pro-

testant must admit, not only that three-quarters of the world are not Christians, but that two-thirds of the Christian world are to-day mistaken as to its meaning, and that for upwards of a thousand years the simple religion taught by Jesus was supplanted by an ecclesiastical system totally at variance with it, a system which has caused more bloodshed and misery than all other religions put together.

The Methodists are getting anxious. They find they are not keeping step with the increase of population. During the last seven years they have only increased four per cent. They attribute their falling-off to the Salvation Army.

The editor of the *Western Figaro*, who is a great authority on Hymns ancient and modern, and to come, says that "I would not live always; I ask not to stay!" was the hymn sung at Methuselah's funeral.

A Christian minister started the Liberator Relief Fund this ought to be a sufficient guarantee. Yet a "Five Guinea Subscriber," writing to the *Westminster Gazette*, wants to know how much has been received, how much has been distributed, and how much has been absorbed in the distribution. Until these questions are satisfactorily answered, he thinks the fund will remain in *statu quo*.

Perhaps Mr. Engström will now inform us that the Archbishop of Canterbury is a rigid teetotaler. At any rate, he has appointed Nov. 12 to be kept as a Temperance Sunday. If his grace keeps a good cellar for his friends, of course there are among them no weak brethren liable to stumble at such a temptation.

The Barnsley magistrates should have an elementary legal manual for their common use. Not only did they refuse the affirmation to two lady Secularists, who were witnesses in a case before the court, but they bawled out "Get down from the box; leave the court!" and actually shouted to a policeman, "Turn that woman out!" Our advice has been asked and we have given it. The magistrates are legally bound to administer the affirmation to a witness who claims it on the ground that he or she has no religious belief. So much only should be said, and no questions whatever should be answered. If the magistrates repeat the outrage, and we are furnished with a clear statement of the facts, we will do our utmost to get them reprimanded.

SHILLING MONTH.

RECEIVED.

[When no figures follow the name the amount is 1s.]

Chester Branch 8s., W. H. Heath. Per G. Nidd: G. Nidd, S. Fraser, L. Fraser, D. Young, H. Varley, C. Varley, W. Wasley, J. Tylee, G. Smith, D. Stacey, C. Groves. Per Miss Vance: E. Ayre, W. H. Leekey 2s., J. H. Maden 2s., N. Richardson 2s., H. Bishop 2s., Collop, Simpson 2s., Adams, McCusker, Fairchild, Newman, Schofield, Rich 2s., J. Bywater, T. W. Gore, H. Lyon, J. Hilton, J. Bissell, T. Levine 1s. 6d. Per A. Fincken: Langton, Standon, Denny. J. Herrington, W. Bailey £1, Robt. Green 2s., Rd. Green 2s., W. Murton, T. Elliott 2s.

N.S.S. ONLY.—M. Weatherburn, Louisa Samson £1 1s.

OBITUARY.

GENERAL SIR EDWARD HAMLEY, who has recently died, was not only a gallant soldier—he served in the Crimea, and it was to him Tennyson dedicated his "Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava"—he was also an accomplished writer. He was the author of one of the best little books on Voltaire, that in the series of Foreign Classics for English Readers.

PRAYER.

We are so far from the times when Elisha saw the angels and chariots of fire compassing the city in which he lived to protect it, that such a faith would now appear an hallucination or an imposture. The belief in prayers against drought or rain, or against pestilence, and the recourse to days of national humiliation are dying out.—C. H. Pearson, "*National Life and Character*," p. 269.

"Mamma," said Tommy, who had just come back from church, "sister behaved very badly; she kept looking all round her while they were saying the assigination creed."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

August 27, Liverpool.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ATHEIST.—We have closed the "*Freethinker* Sustentation Fund," so your subscription is put wholly to the Chicago Delegation Fund. We agree with you, that ridicule is a potent weapon against superstition, if only used with skill.

J. FISH.—Our thanks to the Chester Branch. It is poor but generous.

P. R. BUTLER.—Glad to hear you have found our *Bible Handbook* so useful, especially in discussion with Christians. Mr. Ball's labors made it as good a piece of work as was ever turned out. Pleased also to hear that you are delighted with *Flowers of Freethought*, and that nearly all who have seen your copy want to borrow it.

T. BARNETT.—There is only one way to success on the Secular platform—hard study, hard thinking, and hard practice. The practice is to be obtained by taking part in discussion, by getting the local Branch to let you try your powers in a lecture, and by availing yourself of any favorable opening that presents itself.

SYMPATHISER.—(1) Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

C. BURTON.—Your account shows the pious fellow to be a great scoundrel, but we do not care to deal with such cases until they get into the ordinary press, for the libel laws are dreadful things for a heterodox editor to affront. (2) You may rely on our upholding the old policy of the *Freethinker*.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, treasurer, acknowledges: West London Branch collection, 16s. 3d.; Battersea Branch collection, 3s.

J. INNES.—The Irish members did vote against Charles Bradlaugh's taking his seat in the House of Commons. But we doubt if they did so on purely religious grounds. Parnell at first voted for Bradlaugh, but afterwards gave the order to vote against him, apparently to punish him for something in his attitude which the Irish considered offensive. Parnell had no scruple in this kind of policy. He was an Irishman, and all Englishmen were actual or possible enemies.

J. L.—The passage "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me," occurs Luke xix. 27. You will find all such passages in the *Bible Handbook*, which you can order from Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, for 1s. 4d. in paper, or 2s. in cloth, post free. Pleased to hear from a six years' subscriber.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) It is impossible to give the precise number of years since the last glacial epoch. Geologists have not the date for an accurate calculation. But that does not prevent them from saying it was a long while ago, probably two or three hundred thousand years. We cannot say exactly how high Mont Blanc is by looking at it; but, without measuring the altitude, we may laugh at the man who says it is only a thousand feet. (2) We cannot recall any one pamphlet on this special subject.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Arbroath Branch, 5s.; Islington Branch, 8s. 6d.; A. Tripp, 10s.

W. H.—(1) Of course the century ends with December 31, 1900. How on earth could it end with December 31, 1899? You can't make a century of 99 years. We remember that Cardinal Newman instanced this confusion, many years ago, to show what sensible, educated people are capable of in the way of muddle. (2) Most of the great leaders of the French Revolution were Atheists—notably Mirabeau and Danton.

H. YOUNG.—You may rely upon the figures in *Royal Paupers*. The twenty millions or so spent on religion in this country includes the incomes of the Nonconformist Churches as well as that of the Church of England. Mr. Foote intends to write a companion pamphlet on the Aristocracy.

W. H. COPE.—We are not offended.

H. GREEN.—Mr. Foote is unable to leave England at present. Mr. Watts goes along as delegate from the National Secular Society at the Chicago International Freethought Congress.

M. WEATHERBURN.—Much pleased to hear from you.

W. BAILEY.—Glad to hear you will try to be present at Mr. Foote's lecture at Douglas Head on Sept. 3.

K. HUNT.—Thanks. See paragraph.

F. LANE.—Mr. Foote hopes to visit Oldham and all the principal South Lancashire towns this winter. Glad you think our Summer Number worth sending to Australia. Thanks for cutting. Catalogue shall be forwarded if you send full address.

D. MCINTOSH.—See "Sugar Plums."

W. T. GRIFFITHS.—Thanks for the budget.

G. WHITE.—It is canting enough, but hardly of sufficient interest otherwise.

J. KENNEDY.—Your postal order never reached us. The Post Office is far from a model institution. A good many letters go astray in it. And as any thief can cash an open postal-order, the red-tape in connection with them is a tedious absurdity.

J. ROBERTS.—If we reproduce the "libellous" matter, we shall be liable to the same penalties as Mr. J. H. Wilson, and perhaps worse. We can't afford it.

W. W. ROBERTS.—We are prepared for a slight loss in circulation. It will probably be little and temporary. Under the new lecturing arrangements we shall no doubt be able to gain fresh subscribers. The portraits will be continued with the biographies. To lengthen the latter would, we fear, necessitate a disproportionate space in many cases.

CHICAGO DELEGATION FUND.—Collected at Mr. Watts's lecture at Hall of Science. £1 13s. 3d.; J. Samson, £1 1s.; M. Weatherburn, 2s.; T. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Atheist, 5s.

W. HOLLAND.—We have written two or three articles on the general question. Perhaps we may do one on the Labor Church in particular.

W. HEAFORD'S address is changed to 6 Sussex Cottages, Spa-road, Thornton Heath, S.E. Branch secretaries will please note.

R. SOWERBUTTS.—Contents-sheet shall be forwarded. Pleased to have your opinion that the appearance and quality of the *Freethinker* are worthy of the price, though you are sorry for the poorer readers. We note your address for purchasers of Freethought literature—17 Hacking-street, Darwen.

W. SUYNHAM.—Mr. Edwards contends that the Indian and other traditions of the Flood are posterior to Christianity, while the Babylonian account is older than Judaism. That "all the families of the earth came from one district originally" is very questionable.

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—British Architect—Ironclad Age—Fur Unsere Jugend—Carrier Dove—Commonweal—Freedom—Church Reformer—Weekly Dispatch—La Vérite—Watts's Literary Guide—Boston Sunday Globe.

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

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.

This phenomenal hot weather is very trying to pressmen. It is hard work cudgelling your brains for copy with the perspiration running into your eyes, and your whole economy undergoing a Turkish bath without the shampooing. Something it is to bring out the *Freethinker* at all in such weather; and if—we only say *if*—it should be a little less lively than usual, the reader must throw the blame on Providence, or whoever (not ourselves) is responsible.

Our circulation always drops a bit in August. Allowing for this, the increase in the price of the *Freethinker* has had very little effect on its sale. Some of the wholesale agents have actually gone up in their orders; on the other hand, a few of the smaller agents are ordering a few less copies. On the whole we are satisfied. We believe our circulation will be well maintained at twopence, and we are looking forward to freedom from debt and all financial worries, and wider usefulness in the lecturing field.

Mr. Foote lectures at Liverpool on Sunday, August 27. The next day he will leave for the Isle of Man, where, on Sunday, Sept. 3, he will deliver an open-air address at Douglas Head. Thence he will proceed to Glasgow, to open the winter session for the local Branch with three lectures on Sunday, Sept. 10; after which he will return to London to try the new experiment at the Hall of Science.

Mr. Charles Watts has set sail for America, and will represent the National Secular Society—of which he is a vice-

president—at the Chicago International Freethought Congress. The amount subscribed for the expenses of the delegation is inadequate, and Mr. Foote has had to make an additional provision, merely to secure Mr. Watts against absolute loss. There is still an opportunity to subscribe to this fund, and we shall be glad to receive further donations forthwith.

Mr. Watts intends to deliver a few lectures in Canada and the United States before returning to England. He will be home again early in November. As soon as possible he will send us letters from the other side of the Atlantic for the *Freethinker*.

The American Liberals—that is, Freethinkers—will be disappointed at Mr. Foote's not attending the Congress. Mr. Putnam begs him to come if possible, and promises him a fine welcome. But the thing is simply impossible in the present condition of affairs in England. Mr. Foote is writing a letter as President of the National Secular Society, and it will be read to the Congress by Mr. Watts. Next year it may be possible for Mr. Foote to make the personal acquaintance of his American brothers in the cause of Freethought.

Mr. Watts is expressly commissioned to do his very utmost to persuade Colonel Ingersoll to "come over and help us." Mr. Foote is also sending the Colonel an urgent letter of invitation. The cost of the Chicago delegation will be a splendid investment if the great American leader can only be induced to pay England a visit.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectures at the London Hall of Science this evening (Aug. 20). As some of the regular attendants will probably be away at Brighton, with the Secular Federation's Excursion, it is to be hoped that their places will be taken by others, so that Mr. Moss may have a good meeting.

The London Secular Federation's annual excursion comes off to-day (Aug. 20). A special train leaves London Bridge at 9.5, calling at New Cross at 9.10, for Brighton; also leaving Victoria at 9.5, calling at Clapham Junction at 9.10. The tickets are 3s. each; children half-price. They can be obtained from any London Branch secretary, at the Hall of Science, at 28 Stonecutter-street, or outside the stations half an hour before the departure of the train. The return from Brighton is at 8.

The Brighton Freethinkers are going to meet the excursionists. They are to assemble at Brighton station at 10. Bills have been got out, announcing a Great Demonstration on the Level at 3.30, to be addressed by Mr. G. W. Foote and "other leading lecturers." The Brighton friends are looking forward to this gathering, and we hope it will be a very large one. All the metropolitan Branches should throw themselves into this excursion and demonstration.

In New Zealand there has been two bye-elections—one at Inangahua, won by Sir Robert Stout, who, since the death of his friend Robert Ballance, has, at his solicitation, decided to return to politics; and the other at Wanganui, won by Mr. A. W. Willis. Both these gentlemen are vice-presidents of Freethought Associations. One-eighth of the New Zealand House of Representatives are avowed Freethinkers, and for the respect everywhere accorded to Freethought New Zealand claims to lead the way.

One of the inscriptions at the Zurich Socialist Congress was "We leave Heaven to the angels and the sparrows; we want the earth."

We receive from E. Slenker, of Snowville, Pulaski Co., Virginia, a copy of the *Little Freethinker*, which, as an attempt to familiarise the young with sense instead of superstition, is certainly a step in the right direction.

From Trinidad we receive number two of *Progress*, being the August number. A Freethought journal in the West Indies is evidently a novelty. The *Port of Spain Gazette* says: "Its existence is an insult to a Christian community." The *San Fernando Gazette* notices it at length, and calls up the bogie that "with the theologies all the virtues will disappear from the world." We trust they will find that *Progress* has come to stay. The present number reproduces Mr. Foote's paper on "Altar and Throne" and Mr. Joseph

Symes on "Holy Shuffling." There are also some smart paragraphs by Scrutator.

Mr. C. Tomlinson gives in *Notes and Queries* the lines of Béranger on the Goddess of Liberty, and says he does not know to whom they refer. He would find some information in this year's *N.S.S. Almanack*. In the same number of *Notes and Queries* Mr. Joseph Collinson gives some particulars of the Russian Skopski or eunuchs, substantially the same as that found in our Summer Number.

A Chess Club has been formed in connection with the Portsmouth Branch. For information apply to J. Webb, at Wellington Hall.

A sturdy Scot, on board the "Royal Sovereign," sends us a cheerful report of progress on the biggest battle-ship afloat. A year ago the Freethinkers on board numbered two; now, thanks to the distribution of a couple of hundred tracts, the circulation of the literature sent by Mr. George Anderson, and the weekly *Freethinker*, the number has risen to fifteen. Five have this journal sent direct from the office and six from Portsmouth. They are not millionaires, but they could not give up the *Freethinker* if the price were more than twopence. We should just like an hour's smoke and chat with those fifteen Jack Tars.

Watts's Literary Guide fills an obvious gap in Rationalist literature. Its character is well sustained in the new issue for August 15. This opportunity is rather out of place, but we must take it, to express our sympathy with Mr. F. J. Gould, who has recently lost his daughter Eva, at an age (six years and a half) when the budding female intelligence is very attractive and endearing.

Mr. J. B. Coppock, who teaches the Science Classes at the Camberwell Secular Hall, has just passed the preliminary examination for the B.Sc. degree at the University of London.

The Town Council of Northampton have shown they have more regard for the honor of the town than for bigotted opinion. After a long and heated discussion, the council decided by eight votes to four to allow the statue of Charles Bradlaugh to be placed in Abington-square. This will be a satisfaction to the many who worked so strenuously for our late leader during his Parliamentary struggle.

Mr. Keast has been the very able, zealous, and active secretary of the Bristol Branch ever since its first start after the Logan-Foote debate. We regret to learn, therefore, that he is resigning the post. It is not, however, in consequence of any diminution of his interest in Freethought. His business is more exacting than it was, and he desires to devote more time to speaking on Freethought and other platforms. Messrs. G. W. Harvey and F. Roe are elected joint-secretaries to succeed him, one attending to finance and the other to organisation.

Ethical Culturists have been having an "Ethical Congress" at Eisenach. One Swiss advised affiliation with Freemasonry. Another, pastor Ziegler of the Evangelical Church, said it was no marvel to him, considering the faults and follies of the church, that it was "now avoided by the very best men and women." A committee was appointed to draw up a handbook of Ethical Teaching.

Under the heading of "A Warning to Students" the *London Daily Chronicle* pitches into a new Illustrated Bible Dictionary, edited by the Rev. M. G. Eason. The article appeared in the issue for August 14. For matter and manner it might have appeared in the *Freethinker*. Articles of such thorough-going scepticism in the daily press are a notable sign of the times.

Mr. Foote's new brochure, *Will Christ Save Us?* is to be published next week. It contains all the articles he wrote under that title for the *Freethinker*, with much additional matter. The price will be sixpence.

Our next week's illustration will be the portrait of a lady (Mrs. Louisa Samson), who has occasionally occupied the secular platform, and given great satisfaction by her ability and earnestness. Mrs. Samson is gracefully modest without being anything but a member of the "shrieking sisterhood."

PAUL ON CHRIST.

PROFESSOR SANDAY, who cannot, as a matter of course, be expected to adopt the rational view that the gospel Christ-myth is only a refurbishing of the immemorial sun-myth, contends that Christians have a much more satisfactory explanation. He says that, in argument, the Christian can firmly take his stand on the four genuine Epistles of Paul, supplemented by the common matter of the Synoptics.

But, in the first place, the miraculous stories told of Christ in the gospels were hoary with age before Jesus of Nazareth was dreamt of. And it has next to be remembered that even the historic actuality of Paul is not beyond dispute. It has been gravely called in question, both by learned theologians and by scholars, who do not call themselves theologians.

No one knows when Christ was born, nor the date of his death. And the same remark applies to Paul. According to Christian tradition, Paul was born somewhere about 2 A. D., and suffered martyrdom under Nero. But, if Paul wrote 2 Corinthians—and this is one of the four epistles which Professor Sanday claims as genuine—then, according to Paul's own statement, he flourished 62 years B. C. In 2 Corinthians xi. Paul relates what he suffered for Christ's sake, and he concludes by saying that when Aretas was King of Damascus, he escaped arrest at the hands of the governor by being let down by the wall in a basket. Now, if this occurred when Aretas was king, it must have been 62 years before the Christian era, for it was in the year 62 B. C. that Damascus was captured by Pompey and annexed to the Roman dominions. So that, according to Paul, he was a follower of Christ sixty-two years before Jesus was born.

The truth is that, just as the gospels describe, not one Christ, but several, so the Epistles and the Acts depict more than one Paul. The Paul of the epistle to the Galatians, is not the Paul described in the Acts. The apostle depicted in the Acts is an observer of the law, and allows circumcision. But the Paul described in Galatians is a ferocious opponent of the law, and denounces circumcision as contrary to the genius of the gospel. He says, let him be accursed who teaches such doctrine as that held by the Paul of the Acts.

By the common matter of the Synoptics, I take Professor Sanday to mean that which the earliest accessible version of Mark has in common with Matthew and Luke. But this omits the virgin-birth, the passion and resurrection, and it contains not one single phrase ascribing to Jesus either goodness, benevolence or love.

And Paul's information is equally meagre. He tells us nothing of the virgin-birth, nor of the miracles Christ is alleged to have performed. Indeed, on two points only is Paul's testimony at all relevant, viz, the crucifixion and the resurrection. And on these points his evidence is contradicted by other contemporary Christian writers. In 1 Corinthians xv., verse 6, he says that Christ, after his resurrection, was seen of five hundred brethren at once. But according to the gospels, Christ showed himself only to the apostles, and one or two devoted females; while Acts i., verse 15, states that *after his ascension* the number of Christ's followers was only about one hundred and twenty. While, too, Paul preaches "Christ, and Him crucified." Peter says Christ was hanged (Acts x. 39), as Paul himself does in Galatians iii. 13.

In short, the only thing the epistles prove is Paul's incompetence as a witness. No advocate who knew his business would ever think of calling as a witness a person of such peculiar mental constitution as the Apostle to the Gentiles. According to his own showing, he was continually seeing visions and receiving revelations. In 2 Corinthians (v. 2, 3) he says, "I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth." So that Paul could not even distinguish between what was subjective and what was objective. In 1 Corinthians xv. 8, he puts the resurrection on a level with one of his visions. Well might he say, as he does in 2 Corinthians xi. 23, "I speak as a fool." And it is the evidence of such a

witness supplemented by certain "common matter" wholly irrelevant to the issue that is to establish the historical character of the Christ of the gospels. Oh, Professor Sanday!

A. LIDDLE.

THE MIRACULOUS PORTRAIT OF JESUS CHRIST.
THE VERONICA HANDKERCHIEF.

THE fabulous story of the portrait of Jesus Christ, imprinted on a handkerchief, seems to have had an early origin, and yet it has some features that appear quite modern.

In the Gospel of Nicodemus the composition of which is variously assigned to the second, the third and the fifth centuries, the "God-fearing Jew" produces witnesses before Pontius Pilate to testify to the good work of Jesus. One of these was a woman named Veronica, who says: "Twelve years I was in an issue of blood, and I only touched the edge of his garment, and directly I was cured."

In an apocryphal gospel of apparently late date, entitled "The death of Pilate," we read that Tiberius Cæsar, being very ill and hearing of Jesus, who cured by a word, sent a messenger to tell Pilate to send Jesus to him. When the man got there, Pilate was sorry to inform him that Jesus was dead. The man then happened to meet a woman named Veronica, who had a portrait of Jesus which she obtained in a miraculous manner. While on her way to a portrait painter with a canvass on which she wanted a likeness of Jesus painted, Jesus himself met her, and asked her where she was going. She told him her purpose. He asked to take the cloth, and having taken it, handed it back to her with a true likeness of himself impressed upon it. By gazing on this picture, said Veronica, the emperor would be cured. The messenger wanted to buy it. She refused to sell it, but was willing to go with it to Rome. So the messenger took her to Rome and the sight of the picture restored the emperor to health.

Another apocryphal gospel, entitled "The Avenging of the Savior," tells us that the messenger inquired for the portrait, and was told that Veronica had it. He sent for her and she denied it, but being put to the torture confessed that she had it wrapped in clean linen, and that she daily adored it. The picture being produced, the messenger returned to Rome with it, accompanied by the woman and all the disciples of Jesus. The sight of the portrait cured the emperor and every other diseased person present. Then Tiberius was baptised by the captain of the vessel, and was "instructed in all the articles of faith."

Another different story of the portrait is referred to in an editorial note on the text of Eusebius concerning Christ and Abgarus. The note is as follows:

"How that Abgarus, governor of Edessa, sent his letter unto Jesus, and withal a certain painter, who might view him well, and bring unto him back again the lively picture of Jesus. But the painter not being able, for the glorious brightness of his gracious countenance, to look at him so steadily as to catch his likeness, our Savior himself took an handkerchief, and laid it on his divine and lovely face, and by wiping his face, his picture became impressed on the handkerchief, which he sent to Abgarus."

This story, says Robert Taylor, is severely censured by Nicephorus, a Greek writer of the ninth century. Taylor also copies from Blount's *Philostatus* the following prayer, extracted from a Roman Catholic Liturgy or Manual of True Piety.

"The prayer to Veronica.

"Hail, holy face, impressed on cloth! Purge us from every spot of vice, and join us to the society of the blessed, O blessed figure."

A very suspicious circumstance in regard to the name Veronica is its possible derivation from the Latin words *vera* and *icon*, "true image."

Vera-icon would be easily and naturally converted by Italians into Veronica.

Furthermore it is possible that the story is an invention of the Benedictine monks, who, according to the learned Jesuit, Harduin, forged nearly all the Christian literature which purports to antedate the revival of learning.

—Ironclad Age.

ANTICHRIST.

INGERSOLL ON LABOR.

And let me tell you what I mean by liberty of the body. It is to give every man what he earns with his hands. And this great question of division has got to be settled even in the United States. Capital takes too much; labor gets too little. Labor will not always live in a hut with capital living in a palace. Flesh and blood are more sacred than gold, and the time will come when the law will see that every man has the right to life, liberty, and not only the pursuit of happiness, but the right to catch some of it before he dies. I want to live until I find an aristocracy of honesty, of generosity; an aristocracy of intelligence; an aristocracy of heart and brain. I am sick of the old kind. I want liberty for every man. I do not believe in the law of supply and demand as applied to flesh and blood. If they who toil cannot have some of the good things of this world, then I do not want anybody to have them.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BISHOP TEMPLE DEFENDED.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your leading article of August 6, amongst other complimentary statements as to the character and actions of the Bishop of London, you observe that "His Lordship is of that ambiguous class of social reformers, whose precept and practice can only be squared by a very subtle geometry."

There can be no doubt that in penning that you meant to state that Dr. Temple, while posing as a teetotaler, was very fond of a glass of "his 'very excellent' claret." And I quite believe that you really thought the Bishop was the hypocrite you call him later on.

Now, as you are continually declaring yourself to be a lover of truth, and a lover of mankind, you will be delighted to make some amends to the man you have unwittingly maligned, by printing this letter in your issue of August 20, inasmuch as I am able to state, not hurriedly, but on the best authority, that the Bishop of London is a total abstainer in the strictest sense, but does not compel others to abstain. No alcohol is drunk either by himself or by his family.

For my own part I think it specially admirable in a man, whose whole heart and soul are for self-denying temperance, that he should *not* compel his guests to be teetotalers like himself and his family.—Yours etc.,

C. LLOYD ENGSTROM.

Christian Evidence Society, 13 Buckingham-street,
Strand, London, W.C. August 10, 1893.

P.S.—I am proud to be one of the clergy of a Bishop, who is, beyond all things else, an *honest* MAN.

[After this handsome, and also judicious, defence of his Bishop, Mr. Engstrom is entitled to a bottle of that "excellent claret" out of the episcopal cellar. We let his letter speak for itself; merely adding, on our own part, that when a man's butler praises his wines, it is a natural inference that he drinks them himself.—EDITOR.]

CHURCH DATES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Though "E. P." has only a hearsay knowledge of Professor Johnson's views, he seems aware of the dubious character of documentary evidence. His own argument from buildings is more substantial as far as it goes. But it is not conclusive. Different styles of church architecture may have co-existed in the past as at present. A century or so may suffice for all the differences in Gothic architecture. What are supposed to be cruder and earlier churches may have been those on which inferior taste and inferior workmen were employed. As with family pedigrees, there is a disposition to antedate old buildings. This is shown by the evidence of trees surrounding old abbeys and cathedrals, which are invariably found to be much later than the age assigned to the buildings, though there is no evidence of replantation. "E. P." does not tell us the dates of the buildings or mosaics with "texts quoted from the New Testament." I think he has not to go far back, either with pictures, mosaics or buildings, to find the ideas are taken from other sources—as for instance the cross, the nimbus, the vesica pisces, and the other main symbols of ecclesiology. Even when, as with the dove and the lamb, they are found in the New Testament, the symbols may have preceded the documents.

MAC SWEENEY SECUNDUS.

SAMUEL FOX AND HIS HAT.

And therein of Custom, Conformity, Conscience, Compromise, and Character.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

"He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself employs all his faculties."—*John Stuart Mill.*

DEAR SIR,—You have scant sympathy with Samuel Fox. "Hats are removable in Secular Halls as well as in churches." I do not think you would, like the Lord Mayor, imprison a man for breach of etiquette, for it seems to me that the feeling which prompts to this is similar to that which imprisoned yourself for attacking the Christian myths. It is mere resentment at Nonconformity. Thomas Carlyle thought the donning of a leather suit, by George Fox, "Perhaps the most remarkable incident in Modern History." I, then, may be pardoned for thinking Samuel Fox's now much battered

brown hat as significant as some kingly crowns. That old tile may cover important matters. True, I regard hat doffing or hat donning as trivial. I have had more drilling in manners than in manliness. But to Samuel Fox, with his Quaker blood and training, the matter is momentous, affecting the fundamental right to develop one's own character without servility to others. The claim to control outward manners, is the claim to repress inward character. To me this is repugnant. If Mr. Fox enters my house, I not knowing him, may ask his permission to hang up his hat. But if he states that he prefers to remain covered, I must respect his idiosyncrasy, as I wish him to respect mine. Why should he be treated differently in a Secular Hall? In a church he is on a superior footing. In a house, secular hall, or private chapel, he is a visitor. But in a church he has the legal right of entrance of all parishioners and citizens. Why should he not be covered if he choose, as he may in the British Museum? It is not as at a theatre where the headgear may obstruct the view, and even here much forbearance is shown, especially to women. The action is truly self-regarding. Liberty of thought and discussion have been nearly won by the hard struggles of Freethinkers. Let us not sneer at those who claim to carry out their liberty in inoffensive action. For Samuel Fox is not a brawler, and he is constitutionally so delicate, that imprisonment would mean martyrdom. "Intelligent deviation from custom," said Mill, "is better than a blind and mechanical adhesion to it." Why should not individuality show itself in dress? Why should one woman be hooted for wearing a crinoline, and another for wearing a divided skirt? If I choose a turban rather than a chimney pot, why should my sour grapes set others teeth on edge?

This spring, to have appeared on the Stock Exchange in a straw hat would have been an heinous offence, warranting expulsion. But the hot weather came. A Freethinking member appeared in his straw, to the horror of some, but the innovation soon found followers. I am not contending Samuel Fox's is the most intelligent deviation from custom, but I do say the attempt to crush it out is the way to hinder improvement. The question of conformity to custom is one for the individual conscience. If Freethinkers had always conformed to the oath without protest, we should never have had the Evidence Amendment Act. If I enter a church I remove my hat, because I regard it as indifferent; but I do not recite the Creed nor bow at the name of Jesus, for this I should feel as inconsistent with my convictions and self-respect. If taking off the hat implied to me, what I suppose it originally meant, reverence for supernatural beings whose house the church was supposed to be, I could no more do that than bow at "the sacred name." I have had a crowd howling at and threatening me because I did not rise and remove my hat when "God Save the Queen" was played. Not owning any God and having no particular regard for the lady in question, I did not choose to have my action dictated by others. Hence the sympathy with Fox as with his greater namesake. The faith of George Fox was puerile. Yet he held it, even face to face with Cromwell, with sturdy dignity, proving "the man o' independent mind is king o' men for a' that." With the creed of a child, George Fox had the heart of a hero. Believing that cranks are the salt of the earth, kindly allow me to sign myself,

A KRANK.

THE METHODS OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE LECTURERS.

It has several times occurred to me that Christian Evidence lecturers have a draught of their discourses prepared for them at headquarters. From each one you will hear the same stock arguments, the same old "wheezes," the same analogies used in illustration, the same garbled extracts, the same fallacious reasoning. It did not occur to me, however, that any one of those gentlemen would set forth his ability as an illogical reasoner, as a recommendation. Nevertheless, this has been done by Mr. George Wise in an eight-page circular, soliciting engagements as a lecturer. Amongst the testimonials in the circular, is the following:—

"I have known Mr. George Wise for the last few years personally, and as a Christian Evidence lecturer. I have formed a very high opinion of the purity and devotedness of his life to God and his Christ. While, as a lecturer on Christian evidences, I have never heard his equal in his own department of Apologetics; he excels in the *argumentum ad hominem* in his lectures, and in dealing with an opponent. I

only wish there were more such men so necessary for these times.

"RICHARD HOBSON,
"Vicar of St. Nathaniel's Church, Liverpool."
"May 12, 1893."

Professor Jevons, in his *Elementary Lessons in Logic*, thus describes the *argumentum ad hominem*, in which Mr. Wise excels:—"This fallacy is, in fact, *the great resource of those who have to support a weak case.* (Italics mine). It is not unknown in the legal profession, and an attorney for the defendants in a lawsuit is said to have handed to the barrister his brief marked, 'No case; abuse the plaintiff's attorney.' Whoever thus uses what is known as the *argumentum ad hominem*, that is an argument which rests, not upon the merits of the case, but the character or position of those engaged in it, commits this fallacy."

It is very significant that the religion which is alleged to have been ushered into the world with a blast of angelic trumpets nineteen centuries ago, has now to rely for support on unwarranted—and, in many cases, unfounded—attacks on the characters of individuals living in the present generation. As Mr. Hobson admits, they are "so necessary for these times."

It goes without saying that those who decline to be convinced by illogical methods are dubbed "infidels," which Jeremy Bentham would probably class amongst "question-begging epithets."

CAUSTIC SODA.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons on the subject of the attendance of registrars at Nonconformist marriages, recommend that in future this be dispensed with, the officiating minister acting as registrar, and periodically sending the official copies of the registers to Somerset House. Power is proposed to be given to the Registrar-General to withhold the certificate from ministers of any sect so small or so irregular as to make it doubtful whether the premises are safe for the custody of the register.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)
Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): Sunday and Tuesday at 8.30, social gatherings (free). Wednesday at 8.15, dramatic class.
Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "The Origin of Life."
Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street; Monday at 8.30, West London Branch business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: C. James, 11.15, "Bruno: his Life and Philosophy"; 3.30, "Confucius, Buddha, and Christ"; 7.15, "Does the New Testament Teach Eternal Torment?" Monday at 7, C. James, "Christian Evidences."
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. St. John will lecture.
Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Various Phases of Evolution."
Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Aug. 24, at 8.30, H. Courtney, "Holy Liars."
Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, C. Cohen "Missionaries."
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution"; 3.30, a lecture. Wednesday at 8, Mr. St. John will lecture.
Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, H. Courtney will lecture.
Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Belief and Prayer."
Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Salvation."
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Christian Religion."
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture; 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.
Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, R. Rosetti, "Russian Gods."

COUNTRY.

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall (No. 9 Room), Northumberland-street: Tuesday at 8, business meeting.
Hall—St. George's Hall, 8 Alton-street: 7, N. B. Billany will lecture.
Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Conflict between Science and Religion."
Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: John M. Robertson, 11, "The Ethics of Marriage"; 6.30, "Mr. Balfour's Policy in Religion." Tuesday at 8, debating circle, J. Wood, a Paper, "A Full Quiver."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea 7, a meeting.
Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: W. Heaford, 3, "Insanity in Relation to Religion"; 7, "Mrs. Besant's Theosophy: its Follies and Superstitions."
South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7.30, business meeting.
Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, T. Pearson, "Liberty."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Bradford—Market-ground, Godwin-street: 6.30, John Grange will lecture.
Brighton (on the Level): 3.30, a demonstration.
Sheffield, near the Monolith, Fargate: 11, W. Heaford, "Christian Evidences: what are they Worth?"
Sunderland—Opposite the "Wheat Sheaf," Monkwearmouth: 6, an address.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Democratic Club, Essex-street, Strand, W.C.—Aug. 20, m., Midland Arches; 27, Mile End. Sept. 3, m., Wood Green; 10, m., Camberwell; 17, m., Midland Arches; a., Finsbury Park.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Aug. 20, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Aug. 20, a., Hyde Park; e., Victoria Park; 27, Chatham. Sept. 3, m., Mile End; a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 10, m., Wood Green; a., Hyde Park; 17, m., Bethnal Green; a., Hyde Park; 24, m., Victoria Park; a., Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Aug. 20, m., Hyde Park; 27, m., Wood Green. Sept. 3, m. and e., Camberwell; 17, e., Edmonton; 24, m., Westminster; e., Kilburn.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Aug. 20, m., Clerkenwell Green; 27, m., Hyde Park; a., Regent's Park. Sept. 3, m., Clerkenwell Green; 10, m., Hyde Park; e., Battersea; 17, m., Camberwell; 24, m., Battersea; a., Regent's Park.

SAM STANDRING, 16 Gray's Inn-road, E.C.—Aug. 27, a., Stoke Newington. Oct. 14 and 15, Salford; 16, Rochdale.

St. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—Aug. 20, m., Bethnal Green; 27, a., Hyde Park; e., Kennington. Sept. 3, m., Victoria Park; e., Kilburn; 10, m., Bethnal Green; e., Hammersmith; 17, m., Battersea; 24, m., Finsbury Park

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CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

In the *Church Times*, July 28, is an interesting article on "A Pilgrimage to Lourdes." The writer went on his bicycle, called at Chartres and saw the Black Virgin, and the altar said to have been erected by Druids to the Virgo Paturita, then at St. Maure, on Sunday, saw another curious Pagan survival. "A young woman, carrying two long thin loaves wrapped in a white napkin, was led to a chancel step, where both she and her loaves were sprinkled with holy water by the priest, who said some prayers as though performing a Churching." But the most interesting item to archaeologists, is the writers' visit to the Temple de St. Jean, Poitiers, said to go back to the earliest times of Christianity. The workmen were refurbishing up old stones, some of them being marked with the cross and other Christian devices. "Engaged in chiselling one of these casts was an elderly man much intent on his work, with a long rather ragged grey beard, and dressed in the ordinary workman's cotton smock, whom my guide surprised me by addressing as 'Mon père.' On inquiry, I found he was a Belgian Jesuit priest, who for thirty years had worked in this building as I saw him, saying his Mass at the cathedral hard by, and, doubtless, his Office in private, but otherwise living like a common workman; his object, which I believe he has entirely achieved, being to establish beyond question that the Temple de St. Jean was an ancient Christian Baptistry, not, as some had maintained, a pagan temple." Be sure the Jesuits did not send him there thirty years for nothing.

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In the *Contemporary Review* an article on "The New Islam," by Mr. Edward Sell, shows that Freethought is spreading even among the Mahommedans. The increasing sect of Mutzalas, for instance, deny the infallibility of Mohammed and the Koran. These Freethinking Moslems also favor monogamy and the abolition of slavery.

A chapter on marriage in the Burmese census reports may suggest that these heathen, who are Buddhists, might not be much improved by becoming Christians. Though polygamy is free, "most Burmese have only one wife." The reason for this is stated to be that divorce is very easy; either party wishing a separation can take his or her property and no more. The other party has the rest, including the house and children. The safeguard against frequent divorce is not only public opinion, but the self-respect of women, who refuse to marry divorced persons. The report says: "Divorce is very rare, a fact attributable equally, perhaps, to the high position occupied by women in Burmese society, the care with which marriage contracts are entered into, and the extreme evenness of temper which characterises both sexes." Perhaps Christians might even learn something from the heathen Burmese.

Sir Gerard Portal, says the *Berliner Tageblatt*, is determined to have a serious talk with the Christian missionaries in Uganda, and to forbid them in future to interfere in politics, they having in this way already done so much harm to the country.

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