

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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THE DEATH OF THE DEVIL.

(See page 574.)

## S U I C I D E .

[CONCLUDED.]

BUT if Freethinkers are not specially prone to committing suicide, it is indisputable that a great many persons take their lives under the influence of religious melancholy. The very worst cases of suicidal mania are those of men, and frequently women, who imagine that God hates them, that they have committed the unpardonable sin, that they have sold themselves to the Devil, or that they are too wicked to live. We have seen the faces of such persons, and the look of their eyes is enough to draw tears from a heart of stone; so pathetic is it, so terribly weary, so awfully despairing, or so hungrily imploring rest from the burden of existence. Watching such poor, miserable creatures year after year may be right; but it is at least arguable that it would be a greater kindness to let the curtain drop upon the silent tragedy.

But the main causes of suicide are, of course, neither religious nor irreligious. Brain disease, chronic melancholia, deranged livers, inveterate dyspepsia, are among the physical causes. Then there are mental causes, such as disappointed love, painful bereavement,

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domestic misery, and financial trouble. There are also moral causes, such as morbid egotism, self-contempt, and general *malaise* following a life of drunkenness or debauchery.

Pessimism is sometimes included among the mental or moral causes of suicide, but that is an absurdity. How many Pessimists have committed self-slaughter? Leopardi, Schopenhauer, and James Thomson all died natural deaths. Let a man think as he may that this is the worst of all possible worlds, or that on the whole it would have been better if the human race had never existed; what inducement is this to individual suicide? One man's exit makes no difference to the mass of human misery. On the other hand, a Pessimist may believe himself able to make life, if not happier, yet more tolerable for those around him. And then, there is the lust of life, which is independent of our intellectual conclusions; a potent instinct generated within us by countless millenniums of evolution. Besides, it is something to watch the great drama of life, with its perpetual novelties and surprises. To act a great part in it is absorbing, and merely to play the part of a spectator is a fascination.

Many delicate problems would arise—if we pursued this branch of the subject. But there is no necessity



to do so. No one advocates suicide, and if it had advocates they would hardly make converts without killing themselves to prove their sincerity, which would put an end to their propaganda. Mr. William Archer, however, does go to the length of suggesting that public provision should be made for the convenience of persons who want to make a decent and comfortable exit from life; but his lethal chambers are not likely to be established in the immediate future. Men will shrink from death while they shrink from the means of death, and when a man has conquered that aversion he can generally find a way to die, without troubling the public authorities for their assistance!

There is no need to encourage suicide, nor use in doing so. Suicides will happen under certain conditions of body, mind, or character, which will almost always be abnormal. Still, we think there is food for mirth in some cases in which the jury return a verdict of "temporary insanity." Occasionally, indeed, a more truthful verdict would be "temporary sanity." Suicide is sometimes the only sensible action in a man's career. When a man like Piggott, for instance, closes his sordid life by blowing his brains out, we feel that he has done a wise and just action in ridding the world of his presence.

Finally, we may consider the question of whether suicide should be punished. It cannot be punished if successful. We can only punish the attempt. Now if punishment is intended to deter from "crime," it is useless and therefore wrong, to punish in this case. Persons on the point of committing suicide are beyond the reach of any motive that the law can apply to them. You cannot threaten a man with worse than death, and the suicide is inflicting that upon himself. It would be well, therefore, to sweep away the foolish barbarities of our law upon this subject.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### BENEFIT OF CLERGY.

IN remote districts the man of God is still a petty God Almighty, but his position is vastly different from that enjoyed in the ages of faith when the Church dictated to the State, and the law of God held sway over the law of man. This is strikingly shown in the legal custom of claiming "benefit of clergy," which was only abolished in the year 1828. Sir Henry Summer Maine has suggested to many minds the bearings of law on social evolution, and I know no matter that would more forcibly bring this home than would a history of "benefit of clergy," which arose from the desire of men of God to get rid of all subjection to secular authority. Of course they found scripture authority for their exemption from the civil law. Did not the Word of God say "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm"? (1 Chron. xvi. 22).

Privilege of clergy, says Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, in his *History of the Criminal Law of England*, chap. xiii, vol. ii., p. 459, "consisted originally in the right of the clergy to be free from the jurisdiction of lay courts, and to be subject to the ecclesiastical courts only." He compares it to the privilege European British subjects in India still possess in some cases of being tried by tribunals different from those by which natives would be tried. The illustration suggests that the clergy were really a dominant alien class, which in the middle ages they often were, being sometimes not only appointed by the Pope, but themselves Italians.

Bracton, our first great legist, dated in the thirteenth century, gives the following account: "When a clerk of whatever order or dignity is taken for the death of a man or any other crime and imprisoned, and an application is made for him, in the Court Christian by the ordinary [an ecclesiastical sent by the bishop at every gaol delivery], the prisoner must be immediately delivered up without making any inquisition." He is, however, to be kept in the bishop's or king's prison if the ordinary wishes, till he has duly purged himself from the accusation laid upon him. The only thing necessary to purge himself was for the prisoner to make oath by God and the gospels that he was guiltless, and he got off scot free. What little learning there

was in the ages when Christianity was dominant was engrossed by the men of God, and being thus indispensable to rulers, and having spiritual powers of excommunication at command they could dictate their own terms. Ability to read was made the simple test that a cleric was entitled to "benefit of clergy." As the lawyers became gradually differentiated from the clergy, they took up the test which gradually extended as education spread. Lawyers being as necessary to monarchs as clergy their claim was of course allowed.

For a long while the clergy were very jealous at the extension of the privilege to others, but they had made reading the test, and they had to abide by it, especially as the crown, receiving forfeiture, instead of a prisoner's death, by which nobody could gain, was rather ready to stretch a point. In 1455 a man claimed "benefit" and read well and fully, but the Archdeacon of Westminster refused to take him on the ground that he was not a true clerk. This raised a difficulty which was only got over by finding a more complacent ordinary. The men of law, "the Devil's own," were by this time able to hold their own against the men of God.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, who knows—none better—the absurdities of law, and who has called the Blasphemy Act "a ferocious statute," thus summarises the state of affairs. He says (vol. i., p. 463): "Till 1487, any one who knew how to read might commit murder as often as he pleased, with no other result than that of being delivered to the ordinary to make his purgation, with the chance of being delivered to him "absque purgatione." That this should have been the law for several centuries seems hardly credible, but there is no doubt that it was." Even after 1487, a man who could read could commit murder once with no other punishment than that of having M branded on the brawn of his left thumb, and if he was a clerk in holy orders he could, till 1547, commit any number of murders apparently without being branded more than once." Under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, various offences such as murder, highway robbery, rape, and burglary were excluded from clergy,† and in the eighteenth century many more were added. As to whether a prisoner could claim benefit, and under what conditions led to much legal pedantry. Sir J. F. Stephen says: "Hardly any branch of the law was so technical and so full of petty quibbles as this. The detailed statement of them makes a large part of Hale nearly unreadable."

When death was the punishment alike of theft and murder, the most important distinction drawn by law was whether offences were clergyable or not, and for a long period the principal improvements in the law were in this direction.

All women (except, till the Reformation, professed nuns) were for centuries excluded from the benefit of clergy, because they were incapable of being ordained. They acquired a similar privilege only in 1692, after the Revolution. Thus in cases of a joint robbery by man and wife, it often happened that the law of gavel-kind was parodied—

The woman to the bough,  
The man to the plough.

That is, the woman was hanged and her partner escaped with a T on his thumb. Donne tells of a culprit convicted of a non clergyable offence prompting a prisoner for a clergyable one in reading his *neck verse*,‡ the verse that was to save his neck. Doubtless the law contributed to spread a superficial knowledge of reading. Chief Justice Fortescue (1394?—1476?) is recorded to have granted clergy to a man not able to read, but only to spell. Sir Thomas Smith, in his

\* Pardon me, Sir James, with great respect I submit that there may be just the shade of a shadow of a doubt if, after all, "the law" as found in Bracton, and also the laws ascribed to Edgar, Ethelred, and Canute, may not have been merely, like the Brahminical code of Manu, the canon law which ecclesiastical judges wished the civil law to resemble.

† 4 Henry VIII., c. 2, said that robbers and murderers "bear them hold of their clergy, and live in manner without fear or dread." But this act and subsequent ones made an exception in favor of those actually in holy orders.

‡ Marlowe, in *The Jew of Malta*, has "within forty feet of the gallows conning his neck verse." Butler, in *Hudibras*, alludes to singing a psalm at the gallows—

And, if they cannot read one verse  
I' th' psalms, must sing it, and that's worse.



*Commonwealth of England* (1565) says: "If the condemned man demandeth to be admitted to his book, the judge commonly giveth him a Psalter, and turneth to what place he will. The prisoner readeth so well as he can (God knoweth sometime very slenderly); then he, the judge, asketh of the bishop's commissary, 'Legit ut clericus?' The commissary must say legit, or non legit. If he say legit, the judge proceedeth no further to sentence of death; if he say non, the judge forthwith proceedeth to judgment." Usually the 50th Psalm (of the Vulgate, our 51st) was chosen, and the first verse was the neck verse: "Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam: et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam."

An old song has the following—

If a monk has been taken  
For stealing of bacon,  
For burglary, murder or rape,  
If he could but rehearse  
(Well prompt) his neck verse,  
He never would fail to escape.

"Prior to its abolition," says Judge Stephen in his Commentaries, "clerks in orders were discharged in clergyable felonies without any corporal punishment whatever, and as often as they offended, the only penalty to which they were subjected being a forfeiture of goods." That such a law should have remained on the statute book until the present century deserves bearing in mind, for it throws a vivid light on the ignorance of earlier times, and on the advantage which the men of God were prepared to take of that ignorance. Of course, the law by gradually multiplying the number of offences which were non-clergyable, removed the worst anomalies. When in 1777 the Rev. William Dodd was condemned to death for forgery, few thought the sentence would be carried out, although forgery was non-clergyable. Dodd was hardly used, for, like many another criminal, he meant to make up the money for which he forged the Earl of Chesterfield's bond, and he had a reasonable expectation of doing so. Dr. Johnson, in visiting him in prison and endeavoring to procure his release, acted the part of a man. But Dr. Dodd was no worse used than thousands of other poor criminals who, in the last century, were put to death for less offences than his, and his execution shattered for ever the common belief in the immunity of the clergy before secular tribunals.

J. M. WHEELER.

## CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIANITY.

[CONCLUDED.]

It may be seen in our article upon this subject in last week's *Freethinker*, that the Congregationalist authors have a very free and easy way of dealing with the Old Testament. The explaining-away method which they adopt would have shocked their pious ancestors, and it should convince the orthodox devotees of to-day how very fallible and deceptive the Hebrew records are. The "improved" interpretation that they put upon the Bible is sufficient proof that its alleged truths are not self-evident, for if they were, their meaning would appear the same to all who believe them in every country. But this is not so; the nature of the interpretation given to the writings of the Bible depends upon the education and ability of those who interpret them, and thus the "sacred" books are placed on a level with acknowledged human productions.

In many minds there has arisen a great difficulty in dealing with the Old Testament, in consequence of the references made to it by Jesus. But the Congregationalists endeavor to get over this difficulty by saying that he quoted "on the authority of current editions," as we do the writings of Chaucer and Shakespeare. There is, however, no analogy in the two cases. When we quote from the eminent writers mentioned, the question of authorship is not involved. The works attributed to Chaucer and Shakespeare would be valuable to us whoever wrote them, as the principal consideration to be observed is, what is written, not who wrote it. Besides, we are not omniscient, while

Christ is supposed to have been all-wise, and he quoted Old Testament writers in the belief that they wrote the words ascribed to them. If he were mistaken upon this point, it shows that his knowledge was limited. We are reminded by these reverend M.A.'s that Jesus used the language of his age, and spoke as others of his time did. We grant this, supposing he ever spoke at all, but this is another blow at the old orthodox position. In speaking of Jesus the fourth gospel states, "Never man spake like this man," and this evidently implies that he spoke with greater authority than ordinary men. But if the language he used was like that employed by others, and if he were unacquainted with the authorship of the books from which he quoted, wherein was his superiority in the matter? Such pleading upon the part of these Congregationalists confirms the theory of the human character of Christ, and it contradicts the idea of his "divine nature."

As regards the New Testament generally, we learn from these M.A.'s that the writers of the gospels were in no better position, as historical recorders, than were those who wrote the Old Testament, and that the gospels are wrong in their order of appearance. It is stated that Mark should have taken the first place and that Matthew and Luke derived their inspiration from him. "The sweet Bethlehem stories" are no longer regarded as being essential to the faith. This must be very discomfiting information to the thousands of earnest believers in the "Miraculous Conception" and the divine protection of the infancy of Jesus. Then we are asked to compare the four authorised gospels with the apocryphal ones, which we are told "show to what lengths the pious imagination will go when it is not held in check by a regard for knowledge." We confess that in the gospels of the New Testament "pious imagination" goes far enough without seeking for more of the same article among the apocryphal writers. There is a very little "regard for knowledge" shown by men who could tell us that a child could be born without a human father; that a man could be in two places at one time; that a sick person could possess hundreds of devils; that the dead could be restored to life after decomposition had set in; that five thousand men could be fed on five loaves and two fishes, and when the men were "filled" twelve baskets of the fragments were left. It is to be regretted that the secret, "how the thing was done," was not handed down to posterity. If "a regard for knowledge" had been shown in this particular, some benefit might have been experienced by the thousands of starving people who have died in "Christian England" since that prolific meal was partaken of.

It is news to us to be told that the objection that there are two Christs in the gospels "has received a crushing blow." This blow, we are informed, has been inflicted by the German writer, Wednt. But whatever has been accomplished in the German tongue we have the English gospels which we can read for ourselves. The two distinct characters given to Christ in the New Testament are thus put by Mr G. J. Holyoake: There is "Christ the Gentle, and Christ the Austere; Christ the Gentle—submitting, loving, suffering, serving; Christ the Austere—imperious, frowning, dark, terrible, punishing. Christ the Gentle said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' and Christ the Austere said, 'The believer shall be saved and the unbeliever shall be damned. The former said, 'Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you'; and the latter said with equal emphasis, 'Whoever shall deny me before men I will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven,' and he also said, that 'in the end of the world he would send his angels to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' Now, his gentle words distil like the songs of morning over the earth, and you think that mankind are about to welcome the dawning reign of love, and you exult as you think you behold the rays of the sun of salvation shooting up in the eastern sky; when anon you start and shudder at the sight of the hideous 'worm that never dies,' crawling before your path and the heavens first grow dark, and then lurid, with the



flames that are never quenched. You listen, and you hear a voice of affection saying, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God'; then there breaks on the astonished ear the menacing and Draconian warning. 'Whoever shall offend one of the little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.' In assuring accents you are invited to 'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life,' and the next moment reason is appalled and paralysed by those ominous words, 'He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned'—cast into the dark pit large enough to hold a world, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; where you may hear, and that for ever, the shriek—perhaps of your child, perhaps of your father."

The conflicting nature of the gospel writings is acknowledged by the Congregationalist writers, for they state "It cannot be denied that we meet with different types of teaching in the New Testament," and to suppose that all the writers of the book were of one mind is "only confusing, and reducing the ideas of the New Testament to a minimum." Still, the true believer is assured that he is safe, for "We need not be alarmed if the voices do not always speak in unison." Here is conceded the fact, which during many generations Freethinkers have endeavored to make clear to the orthodox mind—namely, the contradictory nature of scripture. But it has hitherto been urged by theologians that the contradictions were simply apparent, and only seemed real to the sceptical mind. Now we have nine reverend M.A.'s granting that the Free-thought contention was the correct one. We are indeed advancing at a rapid rate, and leaving orthodoxy behind.

It may have been, we are told, a "mistake to appeal to our Lord as an authority on extraneous matters which he never undertook to teach." We admit that if Jesus is considered only as a man, with limited information, he is not to be blamed for not teaching his disciples the art of literary criticism and the facts of science. But he is supposed to be more than man; he proclaimed himself to be "the light of the world," that the prophets referred to him, and that he would revisit the earth, although he confessed that he did not know when he would come the second time. The errors into which Christ fell upon scientific questions, political economy, and the domestic duties of the human family, deprive him of the character of a "divine person." The lame and impotent conclusion arrived at by the Congregationalists is that "The New Testament can only be an inspired book for readers who are inspired." This is a conclusion we think that Christians in general will not share. But in the name of common sense, what does such a conclusion mean? All men are inspired more or less; and there are hundreds of sceptics whose inspiration has been of the loftiest kind, and yet the New Testament, as being the "word of God," was no book for them. If it is meant that the gospels and the epistles can be thought inspired only by believers, then it becomes a question of "blind faith," not of intellectual discrimination.

Not being able to maintain the claims of Christianity upon the old grounds of faith, these Congregationalist writers have adopted a line of argument which is thoroughly erroneous. They have transferred the "kingdom of God" from heaven to earth, despite Christ's statement, "My kingdom is not of this world." We are certainly surprised to be told that "Home missions gave a new impulse to municipal and industrial reforms. The Sunday-school initiated a national system of education." Not the slightest attempt is made by these M.A.'s to prove these statements. Impartial readers will know it is now a matter of history that the Church has been, and still is, the bitterest opponent to all real "municipal industrial reforms," and also to our present system of national education. We are prepared to prove from historical records that all great improvements in the social, political, and scientific phases of life, have had to be won in face of a most persistent opposition offered by professed believers in Christianity. Further, we are ready to show that the New Testament does not contain the

germs of modern progress, and that many of the teachings ascribed to Christ discourage the fostering of many of the elements that are essential to the civilisation of the world.

CHARLES WATTS.

#### EUSEBIUS' CHURCH HISTORY.

##### IV.

IN arguing against the Greek original of the "Eusebius" writings, I have been merely carrying forward a work which was long ago begun by certain able scholars, but left incomplete. It is not Hardouin alone, who, both as a religious man and a Paris *savant*, treated the Greek literature of the Church with perfect contempt as an obvious imposture; other clergymen of the same Order have made some sallies in the same direction. The wonderful "Athanasius," despite his name and the devout defence of him by the Benedictines of St. Maur, has received some deadly hurts. It is common now to refer to the "Athanasian Creed so-called"; suspicion cannot be put to sleep again; but if any candid and competent scholar will write a monograph on the whole Athanasian myth, he will be certain to pursue that phantom into the shades of some cloister of the West. If the campaign be persevered with, the whole List will soon be disposed of.

I will refer, in passing, to the manner in which our Hody and Bentley dealt with another of these historic Greek historians, "Joannes Malalas," one of the same gang with "Eusebius." They unmasked him; and they detected behind his mask another Latin, that is another monk of the West. Unhappily, these discoveries are little known, and have had, therefore, little effect; partly because they lie buried from the majority in the Latin, partly because the men who were competent to make them were afraid to follow them up and to enter upon that large and sweeping view of the subject, with which attention to minute points of detail should have been accompanied.

"Oh! this dreadful destructive criticism!" the weaklings exclaim. "Destructive criticism" is a nonsensical and a disingenuous phrase. As well call a judge who tears to pieces the flimsy defence set up for a "long firm," who have wrought incalculable mischief and misery by their conspirate frauds, a destructive critic! In the present condition of society there is sore need of some destructive critics to counteract the swift and stealthy advances of various impostures. And when we see before us not occasional flaws and blemishes in a great symmetrical system of divine Truth, but one great looming structure of falsehood, "gross as a mountain, open, palpable," we must make it impossible for good men to range themselves any longer in the ranks of the conservatives and defenders.

I shall now endeavor—setting aside those philological arguments which are suitable only to the learned and leisured class—to bring home the truth to a jury of plain business men and laymen, who desire to understand the case, and to see justice done.

I say then that this *Church History* is, in any language whatever, utterly false. It pretends to be what it is not, and it conceals what it really is. The only class of men who know anything about its composition allege that one person was responsible for its contents. On the contrary, the whole church is responsible for it. Dean Milman, who was by nature an open-minded man, asked, "What credit are we to attach to the tales of this 'saintly bishop of the time of Constantine?' When that myth of authorship is exploded, the question takes the form, 'What credit are you to attach to the Church itself which has supported the myth of authorship to the present day?'"

But set aside that story. What do you mean by history? Broadly, you mean a plain tale of matter of fact, that can be *proved* to your satisfaction by testimony in a court of justice; or you mean some kind of dreaming or *faërie*, some novel, romance, or other specimen of the powers of human invention; or you mean a mixture of fact and of invention. If the tale be a written one, you say it is either a Register of events that occurred in space and time, or it is Fiction



so constructed as to look like a Register ; or again, it is a mixture of Register and of Fiction.

Again, you say broadly, This tale is of something that happened to the teller in his waking hours and in his sober moments ; at least it may so have happened. There is nothing against it in common experience. Or you say, this tale is of something that happened to the teller in his dreaming hours of day or night, when he was shut off from the world of common perception and experience, like the poet of Bedford Gaol. These things did happen, and they did not happen : in the private dream-life of the mind they were true ; in the common waking life of men they were never seen to be thus and thus.

In short, the only credible tales in a court of justice are those which square with common experience. You cannot admit the evidence of ghost-seers, whether you believe them to be honest or dishonest, simply because the visibility of ghosts is not, never has been attested by the universal sense and judgment of mankind. Private persuasions cannot be made matters of public credibility. And if a man steps into the witness-box and affirms that he can make neither an earthly beginning nor an earthly end to his story, that from first to last his evidence relates to the superhuman, and ghostly and the supernatural, he must be stopped at once. You are not met to try such questions, which, after the discussion of ages, remain as much in suspense as ever.

Suppose that for the defence of such a story fifty witnesses are called, or a hundred, or any number whatever,—all dressed in the same habit, all members of the same order and profession : the question of testimony would not in the least be affected. A story which is inadmissible at the lips of one is not the more admissible because it is repeated and echoed from the lips of a thousand. The impartiality of a court of justice might be overawed and overcome by so formidable an array ; but the only opinion that could be justly pronounced would be that if an organisation, however vast and influential, agrees in the repetition of an inadmissible tale, it is so much the worse for the organisation. It is placed in a false position, which it can neither maintain nor retreat from without discredit.

The same men who produce the canonical Gospels as the true and authoritative account of the Rise of Christendom, produce this *History*, which must be regarded as an Introduction to the Gospels ; for it is not dependent on them. Both in the one and the other you are told that the History of the Founder of the Church begins in the sphere of mystical theology : "In the beginning was the Verbum, *Verbe*, or Logos," a transcendental being, a Son of God. But you are not trying the value of mystical theologies and spiritualistic theories ; nor does it aid your intelligence to be told that these theories are founded on certain interpretations of the Scriptures of the Jews—interpretations which by their learned men, and by all who understand the scope of the Hebrew language and poetry, are and must be decisively denied. Let this mysticism be set aside as being *no* evidence, or sophistical and false evidence ; then the case cannot proceed ; the story of the Founder has *no* beginning, consequently can have no progress.

But, it may be urged on behalf of a powerful party interested in those proceedings, that mystical theology may have been an after-thought. What, then, is the evidence relating to the birth and early life of the Founder of the Church ? The answer is, No such evidence is adduced, either in this History or any other source. You cannot amputate the story in that way. Either it must be accepted, or it must be rejected, in its integrity. Men of the greatest learning and brilliancy in the ranks of the heretics, no less than of the orthodox, have been utterly deceived when sitting down afresh to write the story of Christ after their pleasure they have supposed they could extract the mere human being from the envelope of mystical theology.

Note what is said about the names Jesus and Christ. The monk in his wretched jargon says that Moses calls the high-priest of God *Christos*, understanding thereby some divine thing ; and that Moses gave the name of *Jesus* to his successor, whom he knew to be a typical

and symbolical successor. The former name of this destined successor was *Naués* (or *Nauses*, or *Anses*, in various MSS.), which name his parents gave him. But Moses called him *Jesus* by way of glorious distinction greater than that of a royal diadem : because this very Jesus the son of *Naués* bore the image of our Savior, who was the only destined true successor of Moses.

Well, here we are plunged again into the very thicket of intricacy and mysticism and frivolous play on words. The monk points you to no Register, but to literary device and fiction for the name of the Founder. And what *illiterate* literature is this ! What must have the state of Hebrew been when they could blunder over a short name in this fashion ! They make out of the Hebrew *Jeschua Anses* and so write it in their chief MSS. ; then they find out their mistake, and denounce it under their usual masks. "Jerome" is made to say that "Rufinus" and the rest are false. The true spelling is *Bee*, and *that* means Savior, and *that* was the name of *Josué son of Nun* before God changed the word ! "There is no sense in *Ansé*," says the monk. What is our plain man, sitting in his jury-box, to make out of all this ? He wants a witness to plain matter-of-fact, and he is treated to verbal twists and shocking bad etymologies, of which a modern school-boy would be ashamed ! Did you ever hear before of its being necessary to forge the name of a person before you can say what the conditions of his life were ? You must learn the meaning of *Verb*, and *Savior*, and *Anointed*, before you can advance the matter of fleshly fact.

I need not follow the monk into his verbal discoveries of *Christos* in the Hebrew scriptures. Let me say that if *Christos*, *Christ* is made to stand for the Anointed One, it is bad Greek. Consult the learned Bishop Pearson on the Creed if you doubt my word. This world-famed name of the ideal Founder : a monument of low trickery practised on the noblest language that human art has ever devised. I cannot refer to these matters without something like a shudder.

What is the word in Latin ? It is *Delibutus*. And if, for the sake of really understanding what we are talking about, when we refer to "the Christ" we were to substitute the phrase "The Delibute" or "The Verb," we might begin to feel the impossibility of conceiving of the origin of Christianity as other than the deliberated day-dream of a faction and small knot of literary men, whose astounding success can only be explained by the utter prostration of the intelligence of the world.

But is there not, some earnest inquirer may ask, some sort of evidence for the actual fleshly life of a person called "Jesus of Nazareth" ? What have M. Renan and a host of other biographers been about when they described the life of a being "who dwelt among us" ? I must answer the question firmly, though by no means coldly or callously ; because even among the readers of a journal like this there may be many who cannot bear to see a fond and an almost universal illusion of the Western world destroyed. But No ! the answer must be, most positively, No ! The place *Nazareth* in the gospel is another coingage of the monks, to make a correspondence with a word in a Hebrew prophet which means nothing of the kind. And in this Eusebian History there is no mention of Nazareth at all. But in discussing their Genealogies of the Founder, forged, as usual out of the Hebrew books, they forge a tale to the effect that there were certain persons called *Despotici* or *Desposyni* (!) *i.e.*, Relatives of "the Despot," who hailed from Nazarei and Kochaba, Jewish villages, and who had kept the order of the Generations partly in memory and partly in Diaries, and explained it as far as possible !

Well, I do not think the Court of literary or common-sense critics I have ventured in imagination to constitute, could remain much longer in session after disclosures like these. You have met to try in the most serious spirit, a mere question of matter-of-fact, and these gentleman of the black habit indulge you in dissertations on mystical theology and types, and symbolical persons ; and when this kind of alleged evidence is ruled out, betake themselves to verbal quibbles and false etymologies, and bad



exercises in grammar and philology. They have not made out any case for their church, but they have made a very strong case against themselves.

E. JOHNSON.

### LOOKING FOR JESUS.

SOME, under the *nom de plume* Job, ask if men, by searching, can find God? Can anyone by that means find God's Son? It is wonderful what large possessions we think we have till we discover that our minds are like Adam's body before he adorned it with fig-leaves.

When very young, I thought I found Jesus, then I thought I lost him, and now I can't find him. Like that ancient learned apostle, when a child I thought, spoke, and believed as a child. But now all the pretty stories of the early days appear to be what a lady who speaks the foreign languages calls Taldariddles. They seem to have developed wings and have soared away. What a disappointment to dream you are worth thousands, and then waken and find yourself like Diogenes, the owner of only a tub. We start life with our heads full of what we think are genuine ideas, and later on discover they are for the most part illusions or delusions. The scientific name for them is pseudo ideas, which, being interpreted, means false ideas. Some people seem able to retain fast hold of the nursery tales all their lives. They are like

Olympian bards who sung  
Divine ideas below,  
That always find us young,  
And always keep us so.

Jesus was safe enough till I remembered what I read about him in one gospel was not what I read in another. That's how I lost him. But after giving up these, I sought outside for a consistent Jesus. Turning over the leaves of Josephus, I found an account of one who was a man (if that was a proper name to call him) and that he was followed by some of the upper circles of his time. But alas! one day a sad calamity overtook Josephus. I found him a rank impostor, or that some rogue made him look like one. Ultimately it became clear that someone had played tricks with the venerable historian.

I found a true bill against some person or persons unknown, guilty of forgery, and very blundering clumsy forgery too. Time rolled on, and nothing turned up to re-establish Jesus, till the other day I got Prof. Graetz *History of the Jews*. In that he relates how two historians record every incident under the rule of Pontius Pilate. But the singular thing is, that neither of them mention a word about Jesus, or anything he ever said or did. That seemed to end the fruitless search. But still later a gospel is discovered which says he was not a man at all, but something different altogether. One remarkable thing about him was, that although they pierced his side and drove nails into his hands, he felt no pain! He was what they call a spiritual Son of God. No wonder the Jewish historians did not see him, as only spirit can see spirit. Matter-of-fact historians never see invisible things. It is only kindred spirits that ever unite or recognise each other, as Emerson writes—

Spirit that lurks each form within  
Beckons to spirit of its kin.

Those who cannot take in the spiritual Jesus now in heaven, will have to wait the discovery of another old gospel that tells of a suffering carpenter's son working at the bench from morn till night, and preaching on Sundays somewhere down in the east country. It is said that everything comes to them that can wait.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

### AN EPITAPH.

Under this marble, or under this sill,  
Or under this turf, or o'en what they will;  
Whatever an heir, or a friend in his stead,  
Or any good creature shall lay o'er my head,  
Lies one who ne'er cared, and cares not a pin  
What they said, or may say, of the mortal within;  
But who, living and dying, serene still and free,  
Trusts in God, that as well as he was he shall be.

—Pope.

### THE DEATH OF THE DEVIL. (Translated from Beranger by James Thomson.)

For the miracle that I'll retrace  
Quickly as the sketcher paints,  
Glory be to the Saint Ignace,  
Patron of all our little Saints.  
By a trick which really would seem most  
Infernal if ever Saints misled,  
He has made the Devil give up the ghost:  
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Satan found him going to dine:  
Drink, or own yourself second-best:  
Done!—but he poured in the Devil's wine  
A powerful poison potently blest.  
Satan drinks, comes the colic quick;  
He swears, he writhes, he dashes his head  
At last he bursts like a heretic:  
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

He is dead! the monks all cry,  
None will purchase another *agnus*:  
He is dead! the canons sigh,  
Who will pay now for an *oremus*!  
The conclave shook in mortal fear,  
Power and strong-box, adieu! they said,  
We have lost our Father dear:  
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Love won't serve us as Fear of old,  
Whose gifts have overfilled our hands;  
Intolerance is almost cold,  
Who will kindle again its brands!  
If Man escapes us, slips our rope,  
Truth will begin to lift her head,  
God will be greater than the Pope:  
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Ignatius runs to them with the cry,  
Give me, give me his place and power;  
No one was frightened of him, but I—  
I will make even the monarchs cower;  
Robberies, massacres, plagues, or wars  
Everywhere, O I'll flourish, he said;  
God may have what I fling out of doors:  
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Ah! *brave homme!* cried all the court,  
We bless thee in thy malice and hate:  
And at once his order, Rome's support,  
Saw its robe flutter Heaven's gate.  
From the angels tears of pity fell;  
Poor Man will have cause to rue, they said,  
Saint Ignatius inherits Hell:  
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

## ACID DROPS.

Christian Socialism does not flourish in France. Its leader, the Comte de Mun, has been rejected at Morbihan. The electors couldn't understand the value of Papistry, Aristocracy and Socialism rolled into one. They preferred something plainer and more straightforward.

An essay on inspiration by the Rev. T. G. Rooke, late president of Rawdon College, near Leeds, is reviewed in the *Methodist Times*. "We recognise the Bible as inspired," Mr. Rooke says, "just because, and just so far, as it inspires us." Upon which the reviewer (the Rev. T. Law) remarks that, "Such a definition of inspiration equally fits Wordsworth's Poems or Emerson's Essays." Precisely so. And now, having settled the hash of Mr. Rooke's theory of inspiration, perhaps Mr. Law will set about making one of his own. When he tries that his trouble will begin.

Jabez Balfour and nearly all the rest of the Liberator fraternity were very pious. Hobbs was no exception. According to *Truth*, he gave a peal of bells to a Congregational church in Croydon, and they used to play with remarkable precision, but, strange to say, since Hobbs' appearance in the dock they have gone utterly wrong. Mr. Labouchere commends the matter to the attention of Mr. Stead and other Spookologists.

Poor old Paul! We sincerely pity him. He seems to have had a pretty hard time of it in preaching the gospel after he had that sunstroke near Damascus. It is also reported by the Jews that he was declined without thanks by the girl he



wanted to marry, so that he became a woman-hater as well as a Christian. Be that as it may, it is certain that he was very strong on the duty of women to keep their places. Wives, he said, were to *obey* their husbands—which they always do as long as they *must*. But the progress of liberty and justice in modern times has turned Paul into a very old-fashioned teacher, on this point especially. Ladies often skip the word "obey" in the Marriage Service, where Paul's language is incorporated; and when the ladies flatly rebel against anything, it takes more than the men to make them do it. For this reason, perhaps—at any rate, for *some* reason—a Wesleyan conference in the United States has decided in favor of striking the word "obey" out of the Wesleyan marriage service. Yes, the ladies are winning, and poor old Paul has to take a back seat. Perhaps he will get a little sympathy from his old rival Peter, who called woman "the weaker vessel"—a strange utterance for a man who had a mother-in-law in the house.

In France, the great necessity is female education. This was seen by Paul Bert and Gambetta, who wished "our girls and boys made one by the understanding before they are made one by the heart. Clerical reaction will always find devotees while young girls are reared by convent-bred women, while their brothers and lovers read Diderot and Voltaire, Littré, and Letourneau.

Mr. E. T. Cook, editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, said to an interviewer—"I'm afraid all Christians are not non-gamblers. Who is it that supports the Stock Exchange? It is always said, truthfully or not, the country parsons."

Clericals know how to enjoy themselves. The hardworked men of God rush off to Lucerne and other places where godly picnics are organised, and under the pretence of seeking the Lord together they have a jolly time, boating, driving, climbing, and living on the fat of the land. Meanwhile, what becomes of the ministers' wives? That is the question. And the answer is this, if we may trust a sharp writer in the *Christian World*: The ministers' wives are slaving at home with the babies. We agree with this writer that it is a very unjust arrangement, and we also agree with his proposed remedy. "Let the ministers," he says, "stay at home for a season and take care of the children, with closed lips—if they can. . . . The ministers have had their innings; now, gentlemen, will you kindly make room for those who are emphatically your better halves?"

With reference to Annie S. Swan's lecture on Courtship and Marriage, a writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* says that "she might also have denounced with excellent effect another type of husband—the man who leaves his wife at home, runs off to some popular holiday resort, and nestles down in the midst of a crowd of brainless girls. Everyone who has stayed in a large continental hotel is familiar with this creature. The saddest part of it is that *in so many cases this type of husband is a minister.*" This is almost good enough to go under our late cartoon, "The Worship of the Curate."

There is a Church living in Devonshire with a "charming residence," and its population is only ninety. But no one wants that living. And for what reason? Why this. The income is only £80 a year. It is difficult to find a parson who will take that figure to save ninety souls from hell.

The Bishop of Chichester has been fulminating against Board school education. He knows that episcopal salaries depend on blind reverence inculcated in early youth, so he declares, "in no other schools than those of the Church be trained in the truth of God by the Word of God." The comment is the appeal for funds which follows. The truth of God by the Word of God must be backed up by £ s. d., and by the instruction of little children in dogmas at the expense of their secular education.

The Bishop of Chichester, by the way, is ninety years of age. But he still holds on to his screw, and if he can earn it in no other way, is always ready to say a word against Board school education.

Together with the suicide epidemic there has been an epidemic of sudden deaths among the clergy. Canon Casanova, Canon Hanson Sale, Dr. Fuller of Bexley, the Rev.

F. Cox of Clifton, and the Rev. W. J. Smith, editor of the *Rock*, have all been called suddenly to the judgment seat of God. This, says the *English Churchman*, is a warning that our days are but as a shadow.

The Rev. T. C. Collings, of the Church Army at Spitalfields, has been lecturing at Leicester on the wonderful things the Church Army is going to do for the working man. "In the east of London," he said, "the Salvation Army has failed"; but "never was there such a glorious opportunity for the Church, since Mr. Bradlaugh was dead and Mrs. Besant was gone," and the people are waiting for Mr. Collings to step into their shoes. "His dear friend, Tom Mann, had told him that it would be a sad day for England if ever the industrial classes turned their backs on religion." Tom Mann must surely have meant the Church of England.

The Church has always known the power of clothes. The *Church Army Gazette* says it has been found in several parishes that nothing is more effectual in getting a drunkard out of a public-house than the sight of a Church Army captain in cassock and surplice. It seems to make them feel that the Church Army is a distinct Church movement. The Army therefore advertises for old cassocks and surplices as a means of aweing sinners into reverence.

The Church Army is taking a leaf out of Booth's book, and fixes Ember Week, Sept. 17 to 24, for a week of self-denial, when they invite "our poorest well-wishers" to join in self-denial. The Archbishop of Canterbury will perhaps do with a bottle less hock, while the poor Army workers take their tea without milk or sugar.

Harvest Thanksgivings, especially in relation to hay, are rather absurd this year. Accordingly, the Rev. E. C. Carr, vicar of the fashionable parish church of Kensington, announces a Thanksgiving Day simply for Sept. 29. The English harvest, he says, has been poor, but the year has brought us blessings in some form or other. Apparently, therefore, God is to be thanked that matters are no worse, so as to put him in a good temper for next year.

Mr. H. C. Lea, the historian of the Spanish Inquisition, writing in the *English Historical Review* on "The Taxes on the Papal Penitentiary," cites many instances proving that "it was universally understood in all the lands of the Roman obedience, that pardon for sin in the forum of conscience was to be had in Rome for money." But all religions have been pretty easy towards the well-to-do.

A *Weekly Sun* writer says that many of the West-end tailors are Socialists, and "I am sorry to say," he adds, "that the great majority are sceptics in religion." We do not share his regret.

Sir Edward Watkin's Tower Company has declared a dividend of three per cent., though the Tower is not yet finished. What dividend will it return when it is open for business? It will beat the Tower of Babel hollow in the matter of height, and eclipse it utterly as a paying concern. Not that the Tower of Babel never *did* pay. Being constructed by pious imagination, it didn't cost much, and the returns were nearly all profit. Yes, but what was the return? some will inquire. Well, it helped to bamboozle the people, and that was worth a good deal to the Church.

The Christian papers have commented on the death of Alderman Abel Heywood, of Manchester, and celebrated his old services on behalf of the free press. They tell of his going to prison for selling the *Poor Man's Guardian*, but they forget to say that Henry Hetherington, who conducted that paper, was a thorough Freethinker, who had the honor of being imprisoned for "blasphemy."

We desire to put on record the fact that Abel Heywood acted courageously when the *Freethinker* was prosecuted in 1882-3. He ordered it to be supplied and done full justice to in his distributing establishment, and there was no difficulty in obtaining this journal in the Manchester district.

Oscar Tyrrell, like poor Fred, was alive and is dead. He spent but seven months in this wicked world. His parents were Peculiar People—that is, good, honest, orthodox Christians; and when the child fell ill, they would not call in a



doctor. For this neglect they were rebuked by the South Essex coroner, who said that he knew of one of the Peculiar People who called in a veterinary surgeon to his pig. Yes, said Mr. Tyrrell, but "the Lord has not told us about animals. There is no promise about them. It is to his people." And the Lord keeps his promise by letting his people die under the prayer treatment.

Children are getting awfully profane in this age of "godless education." During a recent thunderstorm two children of a friend of one of our friends were caught in Waterlow Park and drenched to the skin. When they arrived home, and their mother was changing their clothes, one of them—a five-year older—said, "Mamma, if God wanted it to rain, he needn't have turned the tap full on while we were in the middle of the Park."

There are two and a quarter millions of Christians in British India. This is the result of three hundred years of missionary work. How small it is will be seen from the fact that the normal increase of the non-Christian population is three millions per year. India will become Christian, at this rate, some time after the Second Advent.

The *Athenæum* noticing *Round the Black Man's Garden*, by Zelig Colville, quotes a passage declaring that the reason the Methodists got into power in Madagascar, was because the Prime Minister wished to get rid of his too powerful brother. So he turned Christian, and married his queen with Christian rites that he might have the excuse of exiling his brother as a heathen. Later on, finding the Methodist missionaries too strong, he patronised the Church of England as a counterpoise. The missionary societies never let us behind the scenes in this fashion.

The following curious side-light upon missionary enterprise is supplied to me from the Punjab:—"I notice in your paper a reference to the cost of converting Jews. It reminds me of the cost of converting the heathen in these parts. The missionaries at Kangra have been at work since 1846, and have converted in that time one adult. The Moravian missionaries at Lahoul have been at work about the same time and have converted one Lahouli and one Ladaki (adults). Of course they do better business with infants, some of whom are voluntarily brought to the mission by their parents, while others are sold in times of scarcity. You will be interested to hear what becomes of them. The children are brought up, of course, in the tenets of Christianity. When they arrive at marriageable age a board forthwith assembles and decides which maiden shall be given to which youth. The marriage is then consummated. Thus more little Christians are bred, just as you would foxhounds and horses, and so the Church of God increases." This is an entirely new view of the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts. But why, I would ask, cannot this method of multiplying the saints be practised as well at home as in *partibus infidelium*?—*Truth*.

Christians who believe in returning good for evil, are crying out that the *lex talionis* shall be applied to the Chinese for the murder of Swedish missionaries. Mr. A. Michie points out in the *Times* that the right of Christians to penetrate the interior of China and set up their establishments there, has been forced by our gunboats on an unwilling people. Missionaries, and those who send them, ought consequently to be aware of the danger. The Swedes are said to have had warning that they must remove, of which they took no notice.

It appears from the *New York Times* that the American Mission to Christianise the Jews contrives to secure converts at only an average cost of 15,000 dollars per head. Only 15,000 dollars to secure the soul of one of the race that gave Christians their Savior and their God. The London Missionary Society will tell you it is dirt cheap. But cheap or dear, converted souls are extremely rare and of dubious quality when secured—if secured they can be considered when they are so liable to revert to their ancestral faith.

By the way, Rabbi Wise, whom we have quoted with approbation in our *Jewish Life of Christ*, says in the *American Israelite*, which he edits: "There is not one passage in the sacred scriptures (Old Testament) which by a fair and scientific exegesis . . . can be understood to refer to the

coming of a personal Messiah of any kind; certainly none to refer with any degree of certainty to the Savior of Christian dogmatics. The whole messianic scheme, with the institution of salvation, is a matter of speculation without any foundation in the Old Testament."

The *Jewish Chronicle* (Aug. 25) says that Mr. Athelstan Riley's statement that distinct denominational religious training is given by the London School Board in the case of Jews is "as far from the truth as possible." The Jewish religion is not taught to Jewish pupils by the School Board at all, nor in school hours. But the premises are lent to the Jewish Association for Jewish instruction, which takes place on Sunday or some week-day after school hours. This puts a different complexion on the matter.

In Switzerland the question whether animals should be rendered insensible before being killed was put to the referendum, and the popular vote was in favor of prohibiting all other methods. As this will interfere with the divine method of slaughter laid down by Moses, the Jewish papers cite it as an instance of the *Judenhässe*.

The Rev. J. M. Denistown has put forward a book, entitled *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel; a Miracle of Truth or a Miracle of Falsehood*. As John's Christ says that all who ever came before him were thieves and robbers, charity towards his predecessors might incline one rather to the latter alternative.

M. Betham Edwards, in her *Roof of France*, tells of an appeal she made on behalf of humanity to a Breton priest. She says: "I was once so shocked at the cruel treatment of calves at a country fair that I boldly stopped the curé in the middle of the road and entreated him to preach against such wickedness. 'Madame,' was his reply, 'it is no sin'; meaning, I suppose, that diabolical cruelty to animals did not come under the head of offences against the Church." The priest might have added with Paul, "Doth God care for oxen." It is satisfactory to know that the French government prohibits the cruelty ignored by so-called ministers of religion.

The Rev. Henry Coplestone Guyon, of Lamyatt, Somerset, is a strong believer in the Solomonic wisdom about not sparing the rod in dealing with children. Personally he prefers a whip, and has just been fined eighteen shillings at the Wincanton Sessions for horse-whipping a boy. Alas that the men of God should thus be punished for exercising their God-given privileges.

"General" Booth lets his followers make themselves a social nuisance, and when arrested, as is the case of "Lieutenant" Dobson last week, declines to give an undertaking that the nuisance will not be continued, and allows his lieutenant to go to prison for a month, rather than pay a fine of forty shillings.

When Dr. St. George Mivart put forward his famous articles on "Happiness in Hell," he bounced that eminent Catholic theologians were with him in his contention. Since the Congregation of the Holy Office, the modern representative of the once terrible Inquisition, has put all his articles on the *Index of Prohibited Books* as "contrary to faith and morals," he has, like a good Catholic, announced his full submission to the condemnation, and the eminent theological Jesuits who got him to try and pull their chestnuts out of the fire, will also lie low for a season.

Visitors to the Isle of Skye at this season of the year will do well to beware how they comport themselves on the "Sawbath." It seems that the hospitable natives of that region, when they see a stranger who holds other views than their own on the meaning of the Fourth Commandment, think nothing of "heaving half a brick at him." A foreign tourist told Mr. Labouchere that he recently experienced this treatment at Portree, while taking a photograph in the town on Sunday morning. The missile whizzed past his head, and on his expostulating with the individual who had thrown it, the latter announced his intention of kicking over both the artist and his camera, though he did not carry out his threat. It appears from this, therefore, that "Thou shalt not take photographs on Sunday" is the latest clause which Sabbatarian zeal has added to the Decalogue.—*Star*.



**MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

September 3, at 3, Douglas Head, Isle of Man; 10, Glasgow; 11 and 12, Dundee; 17 and 24, Hall of Science, London. October 1 and 8, Hall of Science.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC., should be written on postcards or the envelopes marked outside. Otherwise they are sent on to Mr. Foote.

E. W. W.—Glad to hear your newsagent's sale went up six copies through the display of contents-sheet. Your letter is attended to by our publisher, Mr. Forder.

A. J. H.—Cuttings are always welcome.

RINALDO.—Get the lady to read Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*. If she can follow that she will soon have sympathy with Freethought.

SHILLING MONTH.—W. Wood, 2s. 6d.

T. BARNETT.—Samuel Fox has written himself, and there the matter may rest. The hat question is hardly worth a long debate. Thanks for cutting.

W. WOOD.—Of course it is better late than never, except when you are too late for the train. Thanks for your good wishes.

G. HERBERT, 7 Derby Road, South Wimbledon, will be pleased to hear from any friends in the neighborhood willing to form a Branch of the N.S.S.

MARCELLINUS.—Molkenbuhr was a learned Franciscan, and Doctor of Theology, who early in the century wrote a number of dissertations on points of Church history. The book in which he contends for the Latin origin of the Bible is entitled *Problema Criticum: Sacra Scriptura N.T. in qua Idiomatic Originalitur ab Apostolis edita fuerit?* Paderborn, 1821, p. 149. It is not in the British Museum.

MANY correspondents remain unanswered owing to Mr. Foote's absence.

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—La Vérite Philosophique—Ironclad Age—Shields Daily Gazette—Freethinker's Magazine—Melbourne Herald—Star—American Sentinel—Port Hope Weekly Guide—Independent Pulpit.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

In our next number will appear a portrait of Thomas Paine, engraved by Wm. Sharp, from the painting by Romney. A sketch of the author-hero's life will also be given.

Mr. Touzeau Parris, whose lectures are always solid and instructive, will on Sunday occupy the platform of the Hall of Science, taking as his uncompromising subject "Christianity a Fraud." We trust there will be a good attendance.

A Conference of London Freethinkers will be held at the Hall of Science in October under the auspices of the London Secular Federation. Branches intending to send resolutions for the agenda should lose no time in preparing the same and forwarding them to the secretary, Mr. E. Pownceby. Only members of the N.S.S. will be admitted to the Conference, therefore all Freethinkers should join a Branch at once.

Mr. Pownceby will be glad to receive further names of young men willing to read papers in connection with the class to assist would-be lecturers.

Freethinkers in the neighborhood of Kingsland and Dalston should put in an appearance at the meeting in Bidley-road, near Dalson Junction on Sunday morning, as there is an organised attempt to disturb the meeting at this new station.

Outdoor lectures are started at the Broadway, Wimbledon, where Mr. A. Johnson opens the ball next Sunday evening at seven. If the weather is unfavorable the lecture will be given in the hall of the *Courier* Printing Works. Mr. G. Herbert, 7 Derby-road, S. Wimbledon, will be happy to receive the names of any willing to start a Branch of the N.S.S. in that district.

The Battersea Branch commences its indoor lectures this Sunday evening, Sept. 3. Mr. G. H. Baker will occupy the platform, his subject being "The End of the World—when?" He will also give songs and recitals from his own pen. As admission will be free, there should be a crowded audience. Mr. H. Snell lectures on the following Sunday, and will also give a dramatic recital. Social gatherings are held after the Sunday lectures.

Tynesiders will please note that the first Smoking Concert of the Newcastle Branch will be held at Yielden Café, New Bridge-street, on Thursday, Sept. 7, and that the debating class will meet a fortnight later.

Immediately after the Congress at Chicago, a Freethought political campaign will be commenced in the States by Samuel P. Putnam, president, and John B. Charlesworth, secretary, of the Freethought Federation. They will travel and work together in the interest of the Federation, organising election districts wherever possible, and will give lectures upon Freethought topics.

Mr. J. D. Shaw, of Waco, Texas, keeps up his *Independent Pulpit* in a very creditable style. In the number for August, Mr. J. P. Richardson, who always writes vigorously, deals with Science and the Bible. Grace Danforth writes on "Women and War," and D. Court on "Religion versus Progress." Mr. Shaw's own articles and "Notes and Comments" are always to the point.

The *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, contains an article by "Antichrist," "On Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History: is it a Modern Forgery?" "Antichrist," on entirely different lines to those pursued by Prof. Johnson, contends that it is. Like many another coincidence, the simultaneous appearance of these attacks on the Father of Christian History is not so curious as to need the supposition that the Devil has simultaneously inspired them. Our sub, who keeps in communication with many Freethought writers, has acted as Satan on this occasion.

*Secular Thought*, of Toronto, has a new title-piece, with a portrait of Captain Robert O. Adams, who appears a fine-looking, manly fellow, with a frank, intelligent face. The editor, Mr. J. Spencer Ellis, keeps it going with lively matter.

Mr. Foote's meeting on Douglas Pier Head will take place at three o'clock on Sunday. A report of this first breaking of Freethought ground in the Isle of Man will appear in our next issue.

**RELIGION AND FEAR.**

Christianity with its eternal hell is a vile slander on Nature, the mother of us all. True, there is always pain somewhere in the world, but it is so divided among different individuals, that no one person can suffer more than a few years at most. Our condition is wretched, we admit, but not so bad as the preachers would have us believe. We should be restrained from evil doing by the fear of the natural consequences of misconduct, but we should not be paralysed by the fear of eternal torture.

The strength of religion lies in the weakness of humanity. As a drowning man will grasp a straw, so will a dying race embrace any religion, however absurd, that promises eternal life. Religion has no foundation in fact. It is grounded entirely on fancy. Nevertheless, it is so firmly established that it is considered, by many good people, perfectly indestructible. There are millions to whom the idea of blank annihilation is the most horrible of all thoughts, and to these religion is indispensable.—*Independent Pulpit*.



## FREETHOUGHT VERSUS CHRISTIANITY.

BEFORE the religionist can with any fairness condemn the Freethinker he ought to be able to furnish some proof of the soundness of his own position. The educated Christian, for instance, knows perfectly well that his own faith is but one among many faiths, each claiming "divine inspiration" or "divine origin." Yet he will not admit that any one of the others is in this respect true. Of course they cannot all be true, and at the best all must be false but one. That one the Christian says is his, in saying which he ignores the fact that every other believer says the same for his particular faith. This "divine origin" is the backbone of all religions; and deprived of it, as they all are by the analysis of science, they are resolved into ancient and ignorant conceptions of nature upon which have been formulated erroneous or faulty ethics. The Mahomedan, the Buddhist, and the Parsee, possess practically the same *locus standi* as the Christian, nevertheless the Christian looks upon these as infidels to the true faith, all the time forgetting that this is precisely what they do with him. The Christian places his Scriptures before the Talmud, or the Koran, or the sacred writings of the Zendavesta; but the faithful followers of either of these books look upon the Christian's faith as myth and fable, and upon the Christians themselves as deluded. But with the Freethinker it is distinctly otherwise. For he, in discarding all religions, calls upon any one believer to produce proofs of an invincible qualification in his creed justifying his assertion of superiority. Failing to discover such qualification he disbelieves. While in his estimation the Brahmin, or the Dervish, may be as near the truth as the Christian; he may also be as far from it. And the Christian who does not forget that others may be as sincere as himself, will yet not admit with them he may be following a will-with-a-wisp. It is here that amid opposing faiths the most enviously correct position is that of the Freethinker, who stands upon the logical ground of practised criticism and justified condemnation.

From the foregoing we may argue, without desiring to appear arrogant, that the Freethinker is a superior personage to the Christian—at least if the exercise of reason is commendable. And the teaching of religion itself is that God has endowed us with reason in addition to free will, that being endowed with such attribute we may think out a course of moral conduct for ourselves and be judged accordingly. The reasonable free will, therefore, which culminates in the denial of the alleged "true faith," must not on these lines be condemned. Emboldened by science and knowledge, which are his by real right of reason, who can wonder that the Freethinker assumes a more or less militant attitude toward religious superstition, believing it to be directly antagonistic and detrimental to progress? Freethought *must* be thus militant to do good, and if it is with hard blows that the Freethinker fights the monster of Unreal Faith, if—

With strong speech he tears the veil away  
Which hides Nature, and Truth, and Liberty,

the believer should in fairness credit him with the fervor and zeal which are born of honesty of purpose.

Freethought can only live in a mind divorced from prejudice and allied instead to broad and lofty aims. In endeavoring to propagate Truth the Freethinker hazards all. He must be prepared to face at times the most cruel social ostracism, and this is the unkindest cut of all if this be the only life. His absolute liberty of thought gives him the right to criticise and to question all things however "sacred." His doubt is more commendable than the Christian's blind belief, for it is usually the precursor of investigation. Moreover, belief is satiated with its parrot-like repetitions of illogical words and impossible formulæ; while doubt, which does not necessarily lead to denial, usually questions everything. Lord Lytton makes Margrave's attendant ask, "Do you believe in that which you seek?" "I have no belief," is the answer; "true science has none, for it questions all things and takes nothing on credit. It knows but three states of mind—denial, conviction, and the vast interval between the two, which is not belief, but the suspension of judgment." And scepticism is doubt—doubt before the alleged transcendental or supernatural elements in religions; it is doubt concerning all things not proved to be true; honest and fearless thought and unbiassed judgment in the presence of that which is affirmed but not proved. The Freethinker begins well when

he says, "Question all things, and hold fast that which is true."

The more distinctly irrational or absurd incidentals in religion often serve to strike the first chord of doubt in the mind of the believer who would without them have remained a quiet devotee before the shrine of dogma and priestcraft. It is thus the Christian secedes, either partly or wholly, and it is a fact that the ranks of Freethought are largely made up of those who were once earnest believers, but who have tried the faith and found it wanting. It is significant also that, while it is true that Christians become Freethinkers, Freethinkers seldom become Christians. If in this matter reason, which is alike extolled by both, is the directing factor, it speaks eloquently as to that form of thought in which lies the greater truth. Of course there are Christians who are wise enough to refrain from laying any sort of claim to intellectuality, clinging instead, with blatant effrontery, to mere platitudes of worship. They believe just so far as their credulity gets the better of their common sense, and are invariably bound to their faith by all the petty idiosyncracies and barbarisms of belief which society and the law will allow them to retain. The blustering Salvationist believes in a physical flaming hell, a personal Devil, and utter damnation in its unadulterated form for wicked sceptics. Such bigots in Christianity endeavor to rob us of life's reality by prating of another existence they know even less about than this. Winwood Reade says: "They believe themselves to be the aristocracy of heaven upon earth; they are admitted to the spiritual court, while millions of men in foreign lands have never been presented. They bow their knees and say they are miserable sinners, and their hearts rankle with abominable pride. Poor infatuated fools! Their servility is real, and their insolence is real, but their king is a phantom and their palace is a dream." And of the head and front of this unreasoning faith, Lefèvre, in his *Historical and Critical Philosophy*, thus refers: "A capricious God who takes pleasure in creating man in order to try him . . . the goodness of this God leaving to man the option of evil; the vengeance of this God overwhelming man, from whom he has withheld his grace; guiltless man stricken with an original fall, from which he is unable to recover even by his very merits; God sending a Redeemer, his own Son, who takes flesh in an embryo, conceived without sin by an immaculate mother; this God the Son dying, though immortal, endowed with a perishable human nature, and yet co-eternal with the Father; the Father and the Son united by another God named the Holy Ghost, who has been the father of the Son of the Father, and who, partaking of both, is co-eternal with both; these three chimerical persons, perfectly distinct and diversely worshipped, yet forming collectively one and the self-same God, at once Father, Son, and Intermediary—the ravings of a diseased brain!"

Instead of these things the Freethinker calmly relies on intellect, and all that is beautiful and ennobling in nature. For nature lends no helping hand to the falsehood and fraud of religion. The true study of nature produces no terror, while belief in almighty vengeance and a horrible futurity is but the believer's penalty for blind acquiescence in all that survives of the faith of his progenitors. What is the hope of heaven of which so much is made, but the hope of attaining a condition of alleged happiness, coupled with the knowledge of countless millions who have failed? Can this be happiness to any but the base and cowardly? Most certainly this hope is a poor weight to put into the scale against the mighty power of scientific knowledge which heals disease and allays pain. While the Christian is wasting his time in the open-mouthed contemplation of the "Lamb of God which passeth all understanding"; of that place of ridiculous action, senseless platitudes, and unmeaning praise, that paradise with "golden streets" and "jewelled crowns" reserved for the sheep of *his* flock, for *his* selfish circle exclusively; the Freethinker is actuated by a nobler hope, for he strives to hasten that period when the perfectibility of human nature will be realised throughout the world, and earthly life—the only life we know—will possess more of beauty and of happiness, making a very doubtful heaven hereafter unnecessary, and not endangering its possession if Eternal Justice be a fact. If "heaven" exists, let us remember that neither belief nor unbelief will alter it.

But Feuerbach says that "Religion is a dream of the human mind." And there is surely every evidence that this is so. Why then does not the Christian wake and



think? Why not put aside *self* for the moment, and discard as an old world theory a creed which alleges personal satisfaction for the few hereafter, while the vast majority must be eternally condemned? Why not think seriously whether man's life will be made better by knowledge, by work, by noble duty, by high aspirations—or by blind faith? Reason, while destroying superstition, seeks instead to enthrone in the human mind a desire for constant progress; it shows the way for mankind to march toward ever brighter fields of investigation, and ever greener pastures of intellectual food, and it is because of these things that the doubter calls upon the believer in the name of Reason *to think!* To think, so that before this grand and mighty universe of worlds he should at least stand awe-stricken! To remember in the face of his ignorant babblings that if the infinite and the omniscient *does* exist personified in *his* God, then surely can no favor be found for his arrogance of speech. To consider that there has never been a creed formulated which has been capable of explaining any of the mysteries of life, or of eliminating any of its evils. To observe the incongruity in his claim for "divine inspiration" when it is alleged that the same being who called into life countless worlds and solar systems, also coined his Bible of absurdities, contradictions, and indecencies! To ask himself whether he can be near the truth when he boasts that his Christianity has opened the book of Nature: has reformed, educated, or humanised, in any fashion befitting a "divine" creed. To admit that his millenium promised for the near future, has, after two thousand years of waiting, not been vouchsafed. To concede his religion to be one of the promises broken, divine threats futile, and prophecies unfulfilled. These discrepancies make it difficult for the Freethinker to believe what is claimed by Christianity as true, and easy for him to understand at once the ignorance, effrontery, and bitter animosity so persistently displayed by his meek and lowly brother in Christ. Were Christianity consistent it would at least follow its profession of forgiveness. But it does not do so, and the Freethinker views its shortcomings hopefully. From his standpoint of moral and intellectual elevation he knows that the war between religion and reason, between Christianity and Freethought, is not over yet. He views the strife between these two, and traces in the blood gouts from a monstrous superstition the ebbing away of its life.

A. T. W. F.

## CHRIST IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT.

(A Dialogue between up-to-date Christian and Secularist.)

SCENE—Park. Outdoor Labor Gathering.

*Christian.*—I am glad to see that you are taking so active a part in the labor world. I was under the impression that you mostly attended anti-theological meetings, where religion is mostly attacked.

*Secularist.*—Not so, my friend, for you will find that the destruction of theology is not our only work. On the contrary, we take active interest in all phases of advanced thought and action, and it will be seen upon a little investigation on your part, that the Secularists take a prominent part in the many schools of the present labor movement; and in fact many of the leaders are pronounced Atheists.

*Christian.*—The latter part of your statement is to be deplored, for, good as these Atheists or Secularists may be, they have one fault, and that is, they have no ideal to hold up before those whom they wish to instruct. To make the labor movement a success, you must show to the crowd a person who can be followed through thick and thin; a person who led a blameless life, practised that which he preached, and died for that which he held to be true. People will follow such a leader, and such a leader can easily be found in the person of Jesus Christ. In fact it means that Jesus Christ must be in the labor movement.

*Secularist.*—I beg to differ with you when you state that the labor movement ought to be religious. Theology has already done enough harm since its introduction into the world; and if the present labor struggles are to be in any way successful, theology must be kept out. Admit religion into the movement, and call for three cheers for Jesus Christ; you then at once become the cause of splits, and the success of labor will be indefinitely postponed. As to the inability of the Secularist to hold up any person to the crowd to be blindly followed or worshipped as the embodiment of everything that is good—this is true, for the Secularist holds that no man exists or exists!—be he Jesus, Buddha, etc.—who was or is perfect; and hence our reason why we do not prate so much about the Ideal Man. Our ideals are principles, which are eternal, and they are based on justice. If the labor movement cannot move without having theology mixed with it, then all I can say is

that the movement will *not* be successful. And by the way I cannot see that Jesus was right in many things that he did and said, and in fact I hold that he is out of place altogether in the present march of labor.

*Christian.*—That is to say that the labor movement should be secular? I think that it would be a failure, for a labor movement without religion would be like a body without life. It is religion that gives life, it is religion that spurs us on to achieve our ambitions, it is religion as taught by Jesus Christ which will mean the success of the labor movement.

*Secularist.*—So you wish the labor movement to adopt the teachings of Christ, and practise them too. Let us examine some of this Christ's teachings. How would these make the labor movement a success: "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (Matt. v. 39, 40); "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. . . . Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on," and an illustration follows as to sparrows and lilies, who are supposed to be fed by a heavenly father, and continues "take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" (Matt. vi. 19—34). Somewhere else we are told to sell all we have and give to the poor. Could these few quotations be carried out? No, they are antagonistic to the labor movement, and no amount of smoothing their corners can make them fit. The attempt to do so would be an absurdity.

*Christian.*—Leaving these quotations alone, was not Christ's whole life an example worthy to be followed by all reformers his withdrawing from home ties, his acceptance of poverty, his steadfastness to principle, his offering up of life for that which he held to be true?

*Secularist.*—You exaggerate somewhat, for Christ was not such a great man as you endeavor to make out. 1st, His "whole life" barely extended over three years. His withdrawing from home ties was more on account of being too well known (and in consequence could not perform miracles) rather than for principle's sake. Are we not told that a prophet hath no honor in his own country? 2nd, His acceptance of poverty. He could not have been rich being only a working carpenter's son, and the statement of his "accepting poverty" is somewhat far-fetched. No doubt it paid better (and less work too) to go about preaching. 3rd, His steadfastness to principle; I do not think that you have any fixed idea as to what Christ's principles were. He certainly propounded some ideas which were absurd; he allowed himself to be called Son of God; he commenced his public career with the notion that he was to occupy the throne of his father David; foretold his speedy coming on earth to judge the world; recommended poverty, celibacy, etc. 4th, Offering up his life: For what? Not for the poor, but for his self-deluded notions as to his messiahship. This act was practically suicide, and it would not be wise to follow in his footsteps. He evinced little bravery (if any) during his life, and his mental struggles in Gethsemane showed him to have been more of a coward than a hero. No! Your Christ in the labor movement would mean downright failure to the cause. Do you not think that you have perhaps magnified Christ's few qualities too much?

*Christian.*—You stagger me with your assertions regarding Christ, and you portray him in a light hitherto not noticed by me. I shall have to read his life over again.

*Secularist.*—Do. And you will find he is not that perfection, goodness, and high-mindedness which you attribute to him. The labor movement cannot follow such a leader, ideal, or whatever you like to call your Christ. He was only a poor frail mortal after all. Throw superstition aside, the world in bygone days once believed in their Mars, Jupiters, Neptunes; they are gone now. Christ is the one who is supposed to lead the labor movement now. He too will soon be a thing of the past. If the labor movement is based on reason, then superstition cannot have anything to do with it. If reason is not sufficient to assure success, then the cause is in a very bad way, and failure certain. Study these things, and you will find that Christ must not be in the labor movement—there is no room for him.

G. E. CONRAD NAEWIGER.

## HOW TO HELP US.

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



## THE REASON WHY.

THEY come and go; they ebb and flow  
Like waves, these mortals; and the weeds,  
The sand, the shingle of their deeds,  
Lie scattered in the depths below.  
Some fine old secrets—out of reach—  
Are doubtless hidden in that beach.

Our minds may track the ages back  
Till all grows dim; and even there  
Man's skill was haply laying bare  
The remnants of the former wrack;  
And finding—what he always finds—  
That men made gods to suit their minds.

And O! the scorn when these were borne  
From temples crumbling underground.  
But after, when *their* gods were found,  
Men used them up for grinding corn;  
And said, it might be with a groan,  
"There is no deity in stone."

And that is why the modern eye  
Turns up to God the Father, Son,  
And Holy Ghost; who all are one,  
Yet three, which no one can deny.  
To make one image look like three  
Is past the skill of sculptury.

So, therefore, you who rent a pew,  
And buy the things for which you pray,  
Be calm! Whatever time may say,  
One thing we know it cannot do.  
Wherever truth may relegate him,  
No man can ever excavate him.

COTTONOPOLIS.

## BOOK CHAT.

In the September *New Review* Karl Blind has a paper on "Shetland Folklore and the Old Faiths of the Scandinavians and Teutons," in which he deals with many interesting survivals of nature worship.

A curious book and one which it is easier to laugh at than to criticise seriously is *Philistines and Israelites: A New Light on the World's History*, by H. Martyn Kennard (Chapman and Hall; 6s.: 1893). Mr. Kennard has done much for the study of archæology in Egypt, and is evidently *au fait* in what is known of ancient Egyptian history; but his new light on the world's history is so startling that it must evidently be received with great caution. Mr. Kennard sees that the Bible is in many respects an untrustworthy guide to ancient history, and that its statements must be modified and corrected by the monuments. This is what he attempts. Evidently the work of reconstruction is a difficult and often a conjectural one. On the negative side, it seems to us, Mr. Kennard's case is sound. There could have been no independent, isolated kingdom holding Judea, the gate of Asia and Africa, and the road between the great powers of Egypt and Babylon; Judea and Israel, instead of being independent kingdoms were probably tributary provinces of a great empire.

Knowing the obscurity which arises from territorial designations, as Britons, Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, may all be included as Englishmen, Mr. Kennard tries to keep race steadily in view. He finds in ancient history but two great races, sometimes termed Hamitic and Semitic, or Egyptian and Babylonian, but which he prefers to call Cushites and Elamites. Josephus, the Jew, long ago said that his nation were the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, who, as we know from the monuments, invaded Egypt and held that country over five hundred years. Evidently no petty tribe could have done this. The journey of Abraham into Egypt may represent the migration of a Cushite horde from Chaldea. At length the Hyksos were driven out, and their retreat Mr. Kennard identifies with the Biblical exodus; and since Apepi, the last Hyksos king, did lead his forces out of Egypt, our author would identify him with Moses, whose name however he derives from the Assyrian sun-god Masu, of whom he says Apepi was a worshipper.

Mr. Kennard cites a statement in the Harris papyrus, "Ramses erected in the land of Zahi (Philistia) a Ramesseum to Amen, in the city of Kanaan, a statue of the god was set up in its holies in the name of the king." Here, then, he says, "we have an authentic record, which proves beyond a doubt that the worship of Amen was followed in Palestine." He holds that the Bible writers purposely suppressed reference to the Egyptian cult, and cites from the Palestine Exploration Quarterly Statement, April, 1892, an inscription recording that the worship of Osiris, Horus, Isis and Bast, flourished in Palestine down to the third century A.C. He also shows that

the rule of Ramses XII. extended from Thebes to Ecbactana, and consequently extended over Palestine. In David, who overcomes the Philistines, he discerns the grand vizier of Ramses XII., named Nisbin Didi, high priest of Amen. The periods, he points out, are identical, but it seems to us Bible chronology is so hopelessly at fault that any such identification is questionable.

This attempted identification of the Bible characters with those recorded on the monuments seems to us Mr. Kennard's besetting sin. It is natural, in an attempt to reconstruct history, to seek such identifications, but we must always be cautious about our ground. The task of reconstruction from occasional monuments and dubious legendary documents must always be a difficult one. In Psalms like the seventy-second, Mr. Kennard discovers a confirmation of his views. He says, "Such an eulogy could hardly apply to a petty king of Judea, reigning over a community of Hebrews, which no historian or commentator has been able to find. We must not forget that David was high priest of Amen, so that it is only natural that he should conclude his prayer in the name of that deity."

Mr. Kennard follows Dr. Brugsch in considering Shishak as Assyrian or Elamite. He might do well to see what Mr. Edwards advances against this position in his *Witness of Assyria*. Many of these ancient matters seem to us so obscure, that beyond antiquarian interest it would hardly be worth while investigating them but for the claim of dominion that has been set up on behalf of the Bible. Mr. Kennard, knowing how in the past kings were identified with gods, gives from this standpoint many new interpretations to the old book. Thus, when we are told that Zedekiah "did evil in the sight of the Lord his God," he interprets this last phrase as referring to Nebuchadnezzar. Such new renderings may be in accordance with the new light drawn from ancient monuments, but it will be long ere they displace orthodox interpretations while these are taught in the schools.

*The Humanitarian* for September reaches us from Messrs. Sonnenschein and Co. (6d.) It is edited by a lady with a tempestuous past—Victoria Woodhull Martin, who contributes the opening article on "The Principles of Finance," which does not, in our opinion, display an adequate knowledge of the subject. The next article is on "The Educational Crisis" by Dean Gregory, who advocates the extension of voluntary schools in the interest of religious teaching. It is a relief to turn to the next article on "Sex-Bias" by Ellis Ethelmer. The writer is somewhat "high and mighty" in criticising Darwin and Spencer, and makes Bacon ask "Who ever knew the truth put to the worst in a fair encounter?"—whereas it was Milton who asked the question, his precise words being, "Who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?" Still, the article on "Sex-Bias" is a spirited advocacy of woman's rights. Dr. W. B. Richardson proposes a scheme for the employment of discharged prisoners—a matter that deserves a great deal more attention than it receives. Even more valuable, perhaps, is the article by J. Rice Byrne on "The Effects of Posture upon the Health of School Children." It seems pretty evident that short sight and bodily distortion are produced by unsuitable desks and seats. Lawrence Irwell advocates the dietetic claims of maize, and E. Fournier D'Albe puts "A Plea for an Organic Philosophy," which is a piece of poor sentimentalism, not even worth the brief space it occupies. On the whole, we cannot quite see that the *Humanitarian* justifies its title. The contents may be worth sixpence, but they are not exactly what a *Humanitarian* would expect.

Dr. Kenealy, the advocate of the Tichborne claimant, was a born crank, who, forty years ago, wrote curious books on mythology and religion. One of his fads was what he called the Naronic Cycle, a period of six hundred years, at the end of which a new Messiah came. He counted from Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Khongis Khan, to Kenealy. Curiously enough, a German Dr. Brodbeck, who is going to the Chicago Parliament of Religions, has put forward a pamphlet entitled *Every Six Hundred Years Comes a New Savior*. For Moses he substitutes Christna, and for Khongis Khan Francis d'Assisi; and for 1800 he places the Religion of Idealism. Otherwise his scheme is similar to that of Dr. Kenealy.

As supplementary to Prof. Rudolf Seybel's work on the relation of Buddhist Legends to the New Testament, Dr. Hubbeschleiden has published a work with the title *Jesus ein Buddhist*.

FUTURE FEARS.—All my fears and cares are of this world; if there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it.—Burns.

We are told that the ancient Egyptians honored a cat when dead. The ancient Egyptians knew when a cat was most to be honored.



ONE OF J. B. LOWELL'S STORIES.

One day a man came into the office who was a neighbor of Lowell's in Cambridge [Mass.] Lowell told us that his parents were Millerites—that is, believed in the second coming of Christ and the approaching end of the world. The mother was a devout believer, the father holding the same faith, or for the sake of domestic peace pretending to hold it. Late one night, when there was a very heavy fall of snow on the ground, the old woman was awakened by a noise from the downstairs, which she at once supposed meant the end of the world, and she accordingly woke her husband up, saying, "John, the Lord's a-comin'. I hear his chariot wheels." He replied, "You old fool, to think the Lord would come on wheels when there's such good sleddin'."—*E. S. Nadel, in "Critic."*

NO PASSES.

It is thus an American railway company makes known the fact that it does not grant free "passes." A placard has been issued headed—"In those days there were no passes. Search the Scriptures!" and then follow sundry delicate hints extracted from *Cruden's Concordance* :—

- "Thou shalt not pass."—Numbers xx. 18.
- "Suffer not a man to pass."—Judah.
- "The wicked shall no more pass."—Nabum i. 15.
- "None shall ever pass."—Mark xiii. 30.
- "Though they roar, yet shall they not pass."—Jeremiah
- "So he paid the fare and went."—Jonah i. 3.

DEATH.

Death stands above me; whispering low  
I know not what into my ear :  
Of his strange language all I know  
Is, there is not a word of fear.

—LANDOR.

*Great Thoughts* (Aug 26) has a portrait and biography of Robert Owen, which will be of interest to admirers of the good old Socialist, though neither the likeness nor the notice are as good as they might be.

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, Touzeau Parris, "Christianity a Fraud" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)  
Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, G. H. Baker, "The End of the World: when?" (also songs and recitals by the Lecturer from his own pen (free); 9.30, dancing.  
Tuesday at 8.15, social gathering (free).  
Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, A. B. Moss, "The Religion of Cant."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Johnson, "Rough Notes on Design."  
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, a lecture.  
Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Ancient Saints and Modern Sinners."  
Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, H. Snell will lecture; members' general meeting after the lecture.  
Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, a lecture.  
Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, A. Guest, "Recipes for Happiness"; 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "What must I do to be Saved?"  
Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Sept. 7, at 8.30, C. J. Hunt will lecture.  
Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Life of Christ."  
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus: God, Man, or Myth?"; 3.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.  
Wednesday at 8, St. John will lecture.  
Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, St. John, "Curiosities of Superstition."  
Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Christian Religion."  
Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, a lecture.  
Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, O. James, "What must I do to be Saved?"  
Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, a lecture.  
Mile End Waste: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Man and his Relations."  
Newington Green: 3.15, a lecture.  
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Women."  
Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, F. Haslam will lecture.  
Victoria Park (near the fountain): lectures at 11.15 and 3.15.  
Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

Wimbledon Broadway: 7, A. Johnson, "The Jesus Myth" (if wet, in the hall of the Courier Printing Works).  
Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, S. H. Alison will lecture.

COUNTRY.

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I've heard sech amazin' news;
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Going to work an' change its views,

So that babes that die a-bornin'
Haint without th' means uv grace;
An' if that's so, those I've buried
May not be in a bad place.

How my wanderin' thought's go flyin'
Down th' path uv bygone years,
Till I see, through sobs an' sighin',
Wretched mothers bathed in tears!

How I watch, with achin' bosom,
Pain's sharp finger daily trace
Lines uv horror deeper, thicker,
On my darlin' wife's wan face!

See her cheeks robbed uv their roses!
See white threads come in her hair!
Miss th' merry, girlish laughter!
Hear the pathus uv her prayer!

Oh! it comes back like a nightmaro,
That hot, stifin' arternoon,
Long in June time, when I found her
Ravin', crazy as a loon!

How her blazin' eyes glared at me
When she give that awful yell!
Screechin' dreadful things! repeatin'
" Oh, I want to go to hell!

Let me go and find my babies!
Let me go—I hate th' Lord!'
An' sech turrible blasphemies
As before I never heard.

Wall, her sufferin's is ended,
Twenty years ago, ur more;
But she died in th' asylum,
An' I wi h we'd knowed before
How that that thare Presbytery
Was a-goin' to change its mind;
'Twould uv saved a lot uv trouble,
An' God would uv seemed more kind.
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