

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE TWOPENCE.



Sincerely, *Robt. Jordan*

(See page 628.)

CHRISTIANITY AND STRIKES.

THERE is every sign of the coal strike's coming to a speedy end. Many of the miners have gone back to work, while others, who still keep a stiff upper lip, and refuse reduction, compromise, or arbitration, are feeling the pinch of hunger, and can hardly carry on the fight much farther on empty stomachs. If our opinion were asked, we should say the men had been poorly generalled. All this balloting of the men appears to us an abnegation of duty on the part of their leaders. Those who are relieved from physical toil, and set apart to study and think, are the officers of the labor army; and whenever were battles won by following the vote of the rank and file? Soldiers might choose

their officers wisely, but they are not fit to decide plans of campaign. It is our opinion, though we do not pretend to speak with any authority, that a *general* strike of miners is bad strategy. It looks big, and perhaps it gratifies the imagination; but if it fails, the failure is colossal and disheartening. And what chance has it of succeeding? If the employers are attacked *en bloc* they resist *en bloc*, and their competition with each other is for the time annihilated; on the other hand, the men's resources are soon exhausted; whereas, if their leaders carefully selected the area, and fought there, leaving the rest of the territory in peace, the men in work would be able to support the men on strike, and the employers who were forced to stand idle, losing interest and living on capital, would hanker

after the profits of those who were doing business. One thing, however, must be admitted; the miners are following a sound instinct in demanding that a decent wage shall be a fixed element in price. To dig coal out of the earth is worth a minimum of (say) thirty shillings a week, and if it will not yield that modest remuneration to the worker let it stay where it is, and let the community do without coal altogether. Morally speaking, society has no right to demand that an important industry shall be carried on under conditions involving the misery, and still less the degradation, of those employed in it. Nor is this a wild, revolutionary doctrine; it is eminently conservative, in the best sense of the word; and it will have to be admitted, and acted upon, in the interest of social order. Of course it means an inroad on rent and speculative profit, but that is not an immeasurable calamity.

So much, by way of introduction, on the moral and economic aspects of the matter. Our special object is rather theological. We desire to notice the part which religion plays in the struggle between capital and labor; or, more properly perhaps, between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

Everyone with an elementary knowledge of the social and political history of the last hundred years must be aware that the working classes, as such, have had no help whatever from Christian Churches. Here and there an individual clergyman has spoken a word on their behalf, but the great mass of the men of God have been on the side of "the powers that be," and have insulted and derided the advocates and leaders of Trade Unionism, whom they are still fond of calling "pestilent agitators." Yet the Gospel, and especially the Sermon on the Mount, is stuffed with platitudes about the blessings and virtues of poverty, and the curse and wickedness of wealth. Logically therefore, judging by the letter of scripture, the clergy should have been on the side of the poor, the wretched, and the oppressed. But this is a case in which "the letter killeth," and with an eye to their own interests and privileges, to say nothing of their ease and comfort, the clergy found that "the spirit" of the Gospel meant the preservation of the existing conditions of society. It would be bad for the rich, and well for the poor, in the next life; but, in this life, they were to keep their relative places, and remain content in the positions which Providence had assigned them.

It is not surprising, then, that the Christian Churches—with all their wealth, power, and at least pretended influence—should be idle or unctuously hypocritical spectators of the struggles of labor to obtain a fair share of the blessings of civilisation. They extend just sufficient verbal patronage to labor to save themselves from being howled at, and throw all their real weight in the scale against it. And it is folly to expect any better of them. The religion and the training of the clergy make them what they are, and they can no more alter than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots. Religion is always the consecration of the past; never the spirit of the future working in the present; and the clergy, who, as Sidney Smith said, are a third sex—neither male nor female, but effeminate—are instinctively conservative, thoroughly enamored of what is, and obstinately averse to all radical changes. Their timidity would be quite phenomenal, if they were *not* the third sex; and, like all timid people, they can shriek and yell and curse and foam at the mouth when they are well frightened.

Were it otherwise, were Christianity a real agency for social improvement, and the clergy the moral leaders of the people, we should have seen by this time a tremendous alteration in the condition, and the relations, of all classes of society. There might still be differences, but they would be on a higher plane, and less grievous and exasperating. As the case stands, all the best of the clergy can do is to preach harmless platitudes once a week. One Bishop has been actually haranguing the miners, and only provoking contemptuous remarks about his salary. The truth is, that Christian ministers are, in the main, only fit to preach kingdom-come. That is their proper work, and they are exactly cut out for it.

We are not in love with all the details of the elaborate ecclesiasticism of Comte's Religion of

Humanity, but we are bound to say that a philosophical priesthood, such as he planned, would be better fitted than a Christian priesthood for the work of moral control and social diplomacy. There is an ethical as well as an economical element in most of these disputes between labor and capital; and a philosophical priesthood, vowed to study and simplicity of life, would be able to intervene with some effect. It would be something, indeed, to have the deliberate judgment of a dispassionate though sympathetic tribunal, even though it had—and could and should have—no authority to enforce its decisions. At present, however, all this is Utopian, and perhaps it always will be so. We will return, therefore, to our immediate object, which is to point out the utter uselessness of Christianity in the midst of class antagonisms. It cannot control the rich, it cannot assist the poor. Its chief idea is to stand between the two, not as an ambassador of justice, but as a dispenser of charity. And *this* charity, instead of really helping the people, only serves to obscure the problems to be solved, and to perpetuate the evils it seeks to relieve.

G. W. FOOTE.

WITHOUT GOD.

PAUL, speaking to the Ephesian converts of the time when they were "Gentiles in the flesh" . . . "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," as "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," and to the Corinthians he says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." A sad confession if true, and certainly not of universal application. In the same strain the average Christian supposes that the state of those without his beliefs must be very mournful and deplorable. He is fond of speaking of benighted heathenism and cold and cheerless unbelief. Just as the child fancies life must be poor and empty without his dolls and toys, the Christian fancies that life must be void and vain to those who have put aside his childish superstitions. As the dram-drinker believes he can never get along without his glass and the opium user fancies life not worth having without his drug, the average Christian cannot understand that anything can supply the place of his spiritual stimulants and narcotics. That Atheists should exist at all is sufficiently astonishing, but it is monstrous that they should be contented and happy—nay, find their lives brighter, richer, and happier for having dismissed all supernatural beliefs. And yet to the Atheist this seems perfectly natural. For what is lost when these beliefs are resigned? Imaginary hopes and imaginary fears. The facts remain. As Butler said, "Things are as they are. Why, then, should we desire to be deceived?" No facts are altered because we do not hold the Christian tradition nor the Theistic hypothesis. The change is that we substitute verifiable realities for imaginations and delusions.

Because we must not dream we need not then despair.

For the loss is a gain. In place of dissipation on the imaginary it means concentration on the real. Life is too short to be scattered on delusions. We must attend to certainties. We have no Devil to act as a scapegoat for our evil deeds. We must bear our own responsibilities. We cannot throw them on the atoning blood of a crucified redeemer. We know the law of consequences cannot be escaped in this way. We can trust to no God to relieve the sorrows and the burdens of the world. Others may fancy the evils of this life may be rectified in another one; it is for us to rectify them here and now. In discarding supernatural hopes and fears do we give up aught that bestows worth and dignity to life? On the contrary, these crutches can only be thrown away by the self-reliant. The old skin is not cast until a new one has grown underneath. The common criticism on Freethinkers, that they should not destroy before they replace, is a shallow one. When an error is eradicated by truth, something has been put in its place. In substituting useful service for humanity for the vain worship of God there

is not one sentiment of elevation we need relinquish. Rather are they intensified. The duty near at hand becomes clearer as we give up vain hopes. Instead of hoping for a heaven which one does not deserve, while others are on their way to a hell which they do not deserve, the hopes of the Freethinker are directed to practical issues. We leave to Christians a heaven in which white robes, golden harps and crowns, and never-ceasing songs of Holy, holy, holy, constitute the attractions, and are content with trying to improve this earth for the enjoyment of the human family both now and in future generations. It is this which makes a drain on our cause. Once emancipated from their superstition, men throw themselves into the work of political and social reform. Our ranks have supplied the men fighting the most important battles for secular improvement.

Many Christians have given up the belief in saints and devils. Some have even lost faith in a personal devil. Do they feel an aching void? Do they cry for some substitute to replace their terrible loss? No! they find it an advantage to dispense with delusions. Exactly so does the Atheist feel in dispensing with a personal deity. When it is realised that God does nothing, that prayer is not answered, that all the sorrow and suffering of the world goes on as if there were no all-powerful Father in heaven watching over it all—it is soon felt that such a deity may go; he never will be missed. But if God with his partialities has gone, the universe with its wonders remain. We cannot get away from that any more than we can get away from our own selves. The Atheist, no less than the Christian, can say "My mind to me a kingdom is"—an ever-expanding one, which none can alienate. God is what men have imagined, created in their own image. But the power which made him remains. The supernatural is the imaginary, the natural is the real. As the landscape is superior not only to the rude daubs of the child but to the highest achievement of the artist, so the supernatural, even in its most modern enlightened and attractive phases, is but a poor counterfeit of the real.

Despite Shelley and Swinburne the Christian fancies that to resign his creed is to abandon all poetry. But there is the poetry of manhood as well as the poetry of childhood. Emotions and aspirations that have a permanent foundation in human nature remain though they take a new direction. The simple truth is that all that is of worth in the old religions may be retained by those who are in the words of Paul without God in the world. It is goodness that ennobles life, and goodness has no necessary connection with godliness. Kindness, long-suffering, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, and all other virtues claims as pre-eminently Christian can be shown to have existed before Christ. They neither came in with Christianity nor will they go out with it. They arise from the needs of human nature and will endure as long as those needs remain.

It is the fear of trusting natural morality which does mischief. Men palter with the truth, and pretend to believe that they believe because they fancy danger lies in facing the facts; whereas it lies in shirking them. It is this craven-hearted dread of imaginary issues that keep the old impostures in their place. What a beggarly account of empty pews there would be if we could but withdraw from the churches all to whom the creeds they so glibly repeat find no response within their heart of hearts! It is the hypocrites and time-servers who, by reliance on supernaturalism, help to obscure the natural foundations of morality. Atheists smile at the thought that because without God they are therefore without hope. As they come to be better known it will be recognised that it needs neither hope of heaven nor fear of hell to make life happy and beautiful, and that he who is honest, kind, and true to himself can face life or death without fear or regret, content in working for the enjoyment and improvement of the life that is and the world around him, and hoping to bring a better era for those who enter into his labors when he is at rest.

J. M. WHEELER.

Red-faced Man (at the prayer-meeting)—"I'm a brand plucked from the burning." Old Farmer—"I guess yer speak the truth, brother, for the fire on yer nose isn't all out yet."

FROM MR. CHARLES WATTS.

ON Thursday, August 17, I left Liverpool for Montreal in the "Parisian," of the Allan Line. She is the largest and quickest steamer that runs between England and Canada, and she is always a great favorite with Atlantic travellers, in consequence of her marvellous steadiness. The storm must be very severe to cause her to rock to any perceptible extent. The general accommodations of the vessel were all that could be desired, and the ventilation was so admirably arranged that on rising in the morning the passengers were free from the impression, too often felt at sea, as if one had passed the night in a cupboard. Personally I slept as soundly in my berth in the state-room as I should have done in my own room at home. During the voyage, with the exception of one day, the most placid calmness prevailed; there was less of that terrible malady, sea-sickness, than I had witnessed in any of the twelve passages that I had previously made across the Atlantic. Fortunately for me, I have never had one attack of this sickly terror of the ocean.

The pleasant and expeditious access to the American Continent has now become so well known that it is unnecessary for me to dilate at any length upon the usual incidents of the voyage. Contrary to expectation, we encountered no fogs and but very few icebergs; our progress, therefore, was not retarded by these two great dangers. We were thus enabled to contemplate with comfort such objects of interest as daily presented themselves to our view. Occasionally we would sight a distant sail, at other times we were amused by a shoal of porpoises, or by the appearance of a shark or a whale, and then the sea birds—the graceful gull and the rapidly-flying petrel—would give us their attention, no doubt expecting what they received, a generous supply of biscuit food from the amused passengers. There are other attractions on board, such as quoits, draughts, cards, and chess, and towards the end of the voyage, when, as a rule, all apprehension of sickness is over, concerts and various entertainments are improvised for evening enjoyment.

We had a plentiful supply of the clerical profession on board, including two Catholic priests, and about twelve Protestant clergymen and ministers of various denominations. Some of these gentry appeared to be in no way influenced for good by their religion, so far as propriety of conversation in the retirement of the smoking-room was concerned. On one occasion, I good-naturedly inquired of two of those gentlemen, if they were in the habit of entertaining their congregations with such stories as they related there? "Oh, no," replied one of them; "but we are taking our holiday, and you know we are but men." This I readily understood, and it was also evident to me that their profession had not, in the matter of conversation, made them gentlemen in modesty and refinement of language, for it had never been my fate to listen to such questionable talk as some of those "pious servants of the Lord" indulged in. What a hollow mockery orthodox Christianity is as a factor in human conduct! We had one very devout clergyman on board, and he happened to share my state-room. Every night he occupied considerable time in prayer and Bible reading, and he very kindly asked me to join him in his pious exercises. I assured him that I had more profitable reading than the Bible afforded, as it was a book whose contents I knew fairly well, and that prayer was in no way in my line. This position upon my part gave rise to frequent and pleasant controversies upon the faith which was said once to have been delivered to the saints. One afternoon I heard this good shepherd preach to the steerage passengers. The cabin folks were not troubled much with sermons, except a brief one on Sunday. In addressing his somewhat motley crowd, the preacher urged them to follow Christ, that being the highest duty of every person. "My friends," said he, "Jesus is your friend; if he were here he would be a steerage passenger, for he preferred to be among the poor and lowly." The same evening, when we had retired to our state-room, I suggested to my clerical companion, that if he practised what he preached he should quit the saloon and adjourn to the steerage, where he alleged Christ would

be if he were on board. "Ah!" he replied, "we poor mortals have too much human nature in us, which prevents us emulating Christ in every particular." Upon this point we agreed.

After five days sailing from the Irish coast we sighted land, and had a most enjoyable trip up the magnificent St. Lawrence river, which for beauty of scenery equals, if not surpasses, anything it has been my privilege to gaze upon. In a few hours we reached Quebec, where letters were brought on board. It was there that I learnt that the Secular friends in Montreal had arranged for me to lecture in their city on the following day, Sunday, August 27. On reaching Montreal I received a right hearty welcome from Mr. B. Marcuse, a loyal worker in the Secular cause, and from Mr. George Martin, the honorary president of the local Freethought Club. Unfortunately, my friend, Captain Adams, was in the West; he, however, wrote a very flattering letter of welcome. The *Sunday Morning News* (Montreal) contained the following paragraph:—

"Among the passengers by the 'Parisian,' which reached here yesterday morning, was Mr. Charles Watts, the celebrated Liberal lecturer, who comes here on a visit to Canada, where his labors in the cause of Secularism were so marked for many years. Mr. Watts is well known on both sides of the Atlantic as an able advocate of Liberal ideas, and his return to this country, though only on a visit, is sure to be highly appreciated by his admirers. He lectures to-night in the Armory Hall on Cathcart-street, the subject of his address being that all-absorbing topic, 'Is there a life beyond the grave?' It goes without saying almost that he is certain to receive a hearty welcome."

Despite the excessive Canadian heat, my lecture was well attended and enthusiastically applauded. The Freethinkers of Montreal assembled in full force, and it was gratifying to see a large number of ladies present. I was exceedingly pleased with the success of my first lecture after leaving England. Physically I never felt better than I did on that occasion, and the invigorating sea-breeze of a week had no doubt increased the power of my mentality. Mr. B. Marcuse writes thus to *Secular Thought*:—

"Mr. Watts lectured on Sunday evening in the Armory Hall to an appreciative audience of nearly 500 people, and was liberally applauded. He spoke in his usual good and vigorous style, frequently displaying that peculiar pathetic eloquence of which he is master; sometimes spicing his discourse with a little inoffensive humor. The question whether there is a life beyond the grave was considered from the Agnostic and scientific point of view, and when at the end of the address discussion was invited, only one man, the genial Mr. W. W. Robertson, Elder of the Second Adventists, arose, not to discuss, but to agree with Mr. Watts on almost every point. Mr. Robertson offered to explain what a soul is, and said, 'Mr. Watts is himself a soul—a jolly, good-natured, rubicund, English soul, and it would be well if there were more souls like him.' In this the entire audience seemed to agree."

I am now in Toronto, where to-morrow I attend the Annual Convention of the Canadian Secular Union, previous to going to Chicago to be present at the International Freethought Congress. In my next communication I shall have something to say in reference to Secularism in Canada.

CHARLES WATTS.

Sept. 9, 1893.

A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

NO. XIV.—WITH SOME SOLDIERS OF THE LORD.

THE organised "defence" of the Christian religion is an essentially modern industry. In olden times, when the Church had command of the stake and the rack, it maintained its position by relentless persecution, and a humble, patient trust in Him who doeth all things well. Then, "defence" was unnecessary, as assailants seldom survived the first declaration of their hostility. But times change, even for Churches, and manners change with them. When the accustomed weapon broke in the hands of those who fain would use it, the Church reviled and spat upon the men whom it would erstwhile have burned. For this stage one may with edification consult the pious tracts of, say, a century ago. But at length the bogey-insidel became played out; and in 1870 the era of cultured, thoughtful, courteous pleading for Christ and Him crucified came into vogue with the formation of the Christian Evidence Society.

That Society is but twenty-three years old, and even now it is upon its last legs. Its constitution was early enfeebled by excessive indulgence in rev. secretary, an expensive and innutritious article of diet. The Society started well, and did—in its way—some very good work. Its annual series of evidential lectures at the Hall of Science were given by men of undoubted eminence and ability. Take, at hazard, its course for 1874, when the following were its champions: Rev. G. F. Maclear, D.D.; Rev. Professor Birks, M.A.; Rev. Professor Lorimer, D.D.; Rev. John Gritton; Rev. Prebendary Row, M.A.; Right Rev. Bishop Titcomb, D.D.; and W. R. Browne, Esq., M.A., Trin. Coll., Camb. But in course of time these and other eminent defenders of the faith fell out of the fight, and the Society has long been represented solely by its outdoor guerilla troops. These—at the best of small account—are now fewer and feebler than ever. To whose hands, then, is the cause of Christ confided in these latter days? Who are the Soldiers of the Lord in the closing months of this year of grace? Well, on this point I have lately had some practical experience, which the same I proceed to narrate.

A few weeks ago it was my duty to deliver an open-air lecture on a Sunday afternoon at Stoke Newington Green. Now Stoke Newington is in, or adjacent to, the Parish of Islington, which has twice distinguished itself by refusing to erect within its borders a Free Public Library of which the inhabitants stand sorely in need. Ignorance and bigotry go hand in hand; and Newington Green has long been known to Secularist speakers as a hot corner. On arriving at the spot, then, I was not surprised to find a number of presumably unsympathetic loiterers. These latter-day Soldiers of the Lord were boys and youths in the early cigarette stage, when they snatch a fearful joy from the fragrant weed in their parents' absence. As the lecturer for the day, I was surrounded by several friends residing in the district, and these ladies and gentlemen worked hard to secure a fair hearing for me. But it was all of no avail. As soon as I commenced to speak, the juvenile band began to interrupt by disjointed cries and yells, being incited thereto by some grey-haired bigots who were old enough to know better. The general of the noisy troop appeared to be a person who poses on our platforms as an "opponent," and whose intellectual status may be inferred from the fact that he was formerly a warrior in the Salvation Army. He made a great show of books, and pretended to be taking notes industriously, apparently intending to turn me inside out when I had finished. But the Soldiers of the Lord—possibly distrusting the competence of their champion—adopted the more economical and safer course of preventing me from speaking.

After I had got through a few opening sentences, the youthful band began their asinine interruptions. One sinister individual, who locally rejoices in the *soubriquet* of "Ginger," held up before me a book which has the misfortune to incur his disapproval, and apparently wished to father upon me a work which has been for twenty-five years before the world without the name of the author becoming known. Of course I remained throughout blandly unconscious of the existence of the yelping pack who were baiting me; and now and again, during a momentary lull in the storm, I addressed myself as well as I could to some bystanders on the edge of the crowd. But intelligible propaganda was, of course, out of the question; and I could only trust that the object-lesson in Christian decency and fairness would not be without its effect upon the minds of those who witnessed it.

At length the noise became intolerable, and a sergeant of police came over to me and asked me to desist from speaking, as the meeting was "causing a disturbance." I told him that I would at once conclude; and asked him to bear witness that the disturbance was caused by "Christians," not by the Secularists. This he did not dispute, but insisted that the crowd should disperse. I accordingly left the stand, after doing about five minutes' work in three-quarters of an hour.

My second experience of the Soldiers of the Lord—the last ragged regiment which "defends" Christ in the last ditch of orthodoxy—was at Ridley-road on Sunday morning last. Ridley-road is in the same benighted district as Newington Green, and is being experimentally worked by Mr. Simons and some local friends. I had been informed that organised interruption had been practised also at that station, and determined to see for myself what was being done. Ridley-road is an excellent "pitch," and no com-

plaint against a quiet meeting could be fairly made by the neighbors, the nearest occupied houses being at a considerable distance from our stand. Mr. Stanley Jones was the lecturer last Sunday, and he acquitted himself throughout in the most admirable fashion. The youthful cigarette brigade mustered in force, and acted under the orders of three or four generals. The ex-Salvation Army *savant* was there with his imposing books and his elaborate pencil-notes which always come to nothing. The sinister "Ginger" distinguished himself by putting irrelevant questions to the lecturer, who wisely heeded him not. On the outskirts of the crowd hovered two notorious defenders of the faith, interrupting the speaker by coarse interjections, and encouraging others to do the like. Mr. Jones, during the greater part of his lecture, took no notice of his tormentors, only allowing himself once or twice to be momentarily enticed into a recognition of their existence. For a brief space it appeared that words would come to blows; but happily this was averted by the self-control of our friends. It would indeed have been a triumph for the Cross if a Freethought meeting could have been turned into a free fight. But I suspect that the Soldiers of the Lord are cowards at heart; and, although they talk much about the Blood of Christ, they would fain avoid shedding their own.

And so the Ridley-road meeting, like its predecessor at Newington Green, began and ended in noise.

It is indeed a sorry finale for the latest phase of "Christian Evidence" that the movement which began in 1870 with an Archbishop of Canterbury, rev. secretaries, and clergymen of distinction upon the platform, should have a squalid end with "Happy Jacks," and sinister "Gingers," and ex-Salvation warriors, and cigarette-smoking boys in the gutter. But it is a significant sign of the times. The old crude Christianity, which meant what it said and cheerfully damned all who would not accept it, is supplanted by an "essential" edition which is all things to all men and "nothing to nobody." The Newington Soldiers of the Lord are intellectually incapable of seeing that they are not merely fighting a losing battle—they are in their blind, stupid way fighting for a cause that is already lost.

GEORGE STANDRING.

STEP BY STEP.

NOTHING could well be more instructive than the history of Christianity, when rapidly summarised.

This religion began, according to the New Testament, with one Jesus, who had not where to lay his head, who had to seek his breakfast once on a fig-tree not his own, to borrow or steal a donkey for a "royal" ride, to get the money to pay his poll-tax from a fish's mouth, and left too little to pay for a pauper's funeral.

His doctrines were of the same poverty-stricken order. Men were to take no thought for the morrow, not to seek for food and clothes, but imitate the example of lilies and birds. His disciples are described as penniless, houseless, wandering in deserts, and living in caves and dens, naked or clad in sheepskins or goatskins; persecuted, afflicted, forsaken—as far as this life is concerned, of all men most miserable; having no settled abode, wanderers and pilgrims.

You could not imagine a more poverty-stricken, rugged, and most likely dirty set than the early Christians. Probably Jack Falstaff's ragamuffins scarcely equalled them.

The followers of Jesus were too much taken up with heaven to mind earthly things. They had set their affections on things above; they had renounced the world in reality, not on paper; they had renounced parents, wives, children, and all family relations. The whole pack of them probably could not have raised £5 or its equivalent; and their credit was so bad that nobody would have trusted them. Their first steward, Judas, misappropriated what he got and robbed his fellow beggars.

The early Christians trusted in Providence for everything, for clothes, food, shelter, and even for medical attendance and cure when sick.

Riches, in those days, were bitterly denounced, and rich men told they could no more enter heaven than a camel could go through a needle's eye! Yes, the rich were sent to hell solely for being rich; and the poor

were translated to Abraham's bosom, for no better reason than that they were poor (see Luke xvi.)

The Christians had no time to get wealth; they were to pray always, pray without ceasing; and to be ever on the lookout for the coming of Christ and the end of the world. This was not their home, but some imaginary place called heaven, for which they were required to be ever ready, like servants to attend the ringing of a bell.

So the Church started, so it existed for a time—as long as it really was a Church, I suppose we must say. Then the people grew tired of real poverty and put forward the sham or pretence of it—talked poverty and plunged into all the wealth they could find. And so it has continued.

Where find you richer people than Christians? people more sharp to turn an honest penny? more fond of wealth and show? more ready to rob and cheat and plunder for the sake of gain? I do not know.

And where can you find more greedy wretches than the bishops and clergy? No doubt, here and there you find good and liberal men amongst them, whom even Christianity cannot corrupt. But what of the great mass of them?

Take the Pope in his fairy-palace, the Vatican, decorated with prouder and more insolent titles than any king, emperor, or—any madman. Cardinals and bishops, etc., imitate his example and show their humility by a display of theatrical splendor, their poverty by incalculable wealth!

The Russian and the English branches of the one universal Church of hypocrisy are quite as bad.

The dissenters are of the same character. They all began in poverty, and like trading companies, they have climbed up step by step the ladder which leads to wealth, ease and respectability.

By a system of unparalleled fraud, impudence, and callous unconcern for those they rob, the Churches have built their palaces, gained their credit and—ensured their endless damnation, if the New Testament is anything better than a joke. If Jesus and his apostles were not the veriest fools, the modern parsons must be the most outrageous of knaves.

That may be extremely coarse and vulgar language; but I excuse it on the ground that I use it to expose and stigmatise a coarse and vulgar fraud and imposture. A worse imposture cannot be imagined. Why should I call it by gentle names, or pretend to feel any respect for it?

If Christians will but live as the New Testament directs, I will at least acknowledge their sincerity, even if I laugh at their folly. As it is, I can no more regard them as followers of the New Testament patterns and examples than I can think myself a Roman Catholic or a Jew. I am as much either as the common run of priests and parsons are Christians.

The worst of it is, all their wealth is raised by lying. To cheat their dupes and pick the pockets of their victims, they preach the blessings of poverty and show up the danger of loving the world. "Riches are a danger to you," they cry, "a certain road to eternal fire! Give, give to the cause of God! Rear altars to him and to his mother and saints! Honor God by honoring his servants; bestow upon them the wealth that would sink you in perdition!"

The fools are gulled and swindled by this cry, never being able to perceive that Christianity is "all things in common," or, more correctly speaking, "nothing in common," that is, a general poverty and a universal contempt of riches.

Thus, step by step, the hypocritical followers of Jesus the penniless have made themselves rich and powerful trading corporations, which sell empty promises and hollow names for hard cash and real estate; and when their trade slackens, they raise the wind by blare of trumpets, banging of drums and horrible threats for the vulgar, and asthetic music and sensuous appeals to the eye and ear for the more refined.

All the swindling of the racecourse, the gambling hells, the stock exchange, are as nothing to the ghastly swindlers, the priestly and parsonic cheats. Pope and bishop, and others of the same trade, are really the

most venomous and most loathsome reptiles that crawl the earth.

They are backed up and honored by governments and newspapers, partly because they are useful for keeping the masses in bondage and in a condition of helpless poverty, and partly because government papers find that those disgusting parasites are such favorites with the ignorant multitude, that it is dangerous to offend them! Such are the facts.

Liberator.

JOS. SYMES.

RELIGION: NATURAL, NOT SUPERNATURAL.

SOMETIMES the argument is met with, that man's possession of a soul is demonstrated by his having religious conceptions, which other animals do not have. If religion, it is stated, were a thing springing out of the natural faculties of mind, the animals other than man would possess it also. Man's possession of it, the argument goes on, is plainly the result of a divine bestowal of it upon him, specially marking him, and sealing him to his high destiny.

However, this assertion that religion is a property of man alone is not true. A writer in a late European magazine pays the matter attention. Those who deny the religious sentiment to animals, says this magazinist, deceive themselves. Without doubt this religion is of a very inferior order, but, to be exact, can that of millions of human beings be placed in a very elevated category? Analyse the religious idea, deprived of all its pretences and accessories, and what do you find? Fear and love, from which come submission and many other sentiments, which, according to the quantity, are mixed with the two principal ingredients. Quatrefages writes that "the domestic animals are religious, for they obey those who appeal to them with the rod or with sugar." In another place he says: "There is no difference between the negro who adores a dangerous animal and the dog who cringes at his master's feet to obtain pardon for a fault. Animals run to man for protection as the believer to his God."

The sentiment of the mysterious and supernatural is manifested by a number of animals and has been observed with some attention. Herbert Spencer reports some observations on a large mastiff which belonged to one of his friends. The dog, playing with a cane which had been turned over to him, inadvertently struck the ground very hard with one end of it, and naturally the other end struck with force against his mouth. The animal at that unexpected manifestation showed consternation and, suspecting some sorcery, concealed himself. It was with great difficulty that he could be induced to return to his plaything. "His conduct showed very clearly that the cane, so long as it only exhibited traits with which he was familiar, was not considered by him as an active agent; but as soon as he received an injury from it he was led, for the moment, to class it with animate objects, and to consider it as capable of injuring him anew."

Of course, between the religion of a dog and that of Pascal there are differences, but all the forms of transition agree; savage man, as well as the man who believes himself civilised, furnishes innumerable examples of this, and shows that here, as in other matters, the differences are in degree, not in kind. Animals know the sense of the mysterious; they are fetishists; they ascribe life to the lifeless; and what more than this comprises the religion of our contemporaries? Between paganism or the grossest, most primitive polytheism, and the purest Christian religion, says the magazinist whom we are noticing, the distinctions are few and gradual; not at all specific and fundamental. On the other hand, between the rudiments of religion, past and present, and certain sentiments of the higher animals, the differences bear the same character; the source is the same.

The sentiment of religion is a natural error, not a supernatural perception. It is a mistake growing out of the imperfect faculties of the animal, whether the animal be higher or lower, not an insight or intuition superadded from a foreign source.—*Truthseeker.*

Throughout the whole Bible, no woman ever appears as a wise adviser. If she advises at all, it is as the mother of Jacob advised him into a fraud. Throughout the inspired word woman appears in the subordinate and slavish role which polygamy assigns to her as an article of property, to be bought and sold, given away, fetched, moved, and carried.—*V. B. Denslow.*

A few years ago the Deists denied the inspiration of the Bible on account of its cruelty. At the same time they worshipped what they were pleased to call the God of Nature. Now we are convinced that Nature is as cruel as the Bible, so that, if the God of Nature did not write the Bible, this god at least has caused earthquakes and pestilence and famine, and this god has allowed millions of his children to destroy one another. So that now we have arrived at the question—not as to whether the Bible is inspired, and not as to whether Jehovah is the real God, but whether there is a God or not.—*Ingersoll.*

ACID DROPS.

John Dyson is a preacher. He is also a magistrate, one of the great unpaid, at Barnsley; and his manners are equal to his knowledge of the law. On Wednesday, Sept. 13, one of the witnesses in a certain case was Mrs. Brown, wife of a member of the Barnsley Branch of the National Secular Society. When she stepped into the witness-box she quietly applied to affirm, and being asked by the clerk of the court on what ground, she stated that she had no religious belief. This was sufficient according to the act, but not according to the private notions of John Dyson, who inquired, in a loud and insolent manner, if the witness believed she was responsible to God. Mrs. Brown very properly refused to answer this question, whereupon this phoenix of a magistrate bawled out "Do you hear what I say?" Unfortunately, when the question was put to her again, Mrs. Brown answered "No." "Stand down then," shouted John Dyson, "you are not fit to give evidence on any matter."

The Barnsley Branch has requested Mr. Foote to see what can be done to get John Dyson, preacher, magistrate, and bigot, properly reprimanded. The request is being attended to, and we shall return to the subject in our next issue.

Mr. W. M. Knox, secretary of the Belfast Branch, took part in the Sunday outdoor meetings at the close of the Trade Union Congress. Being a prominent "infidel" as well as a worker in the Independent Labor party, he was specially singled out for attack by the bigoted mob which is making the North Irish capital a byword. He was chased for a quarter of a mile, and the police (good, honest, impartial fellows!) only interfered when the crowd closed in around him with the evident intention of giving him "Belfast." We are glad to say that the Labor party there does not care a straw for religious differences, and welcomes the co-operation of leading Secularists.

People, especially pious people, perpetrate strange freaks when they burst into "po'try." The following recently appeared in the Liverpool *Daily Post* after the announcement of the deaths of a father and mother:

We miss their kind and willing hand,
Their fond and tender care;
We miss their guiding, helping hand—
What is home without them there?
Peace, perfect peace.

It is said that the plot to wreck the train containing the Emperor of Austria was the result of the Roumanian peasants being excited by the sermons of their priests. The introduction of civil marriage in Hungary and the lessening of the power of the priests have left them very sore.

The English chaplain at Victoria, in Mashonaland, has been inciting to the slaughter of the Matabele people. He says they are murderers, and "the divine command should be imperatively carried out at this time" But as he goes on to add, "Mashonaland is indeed a rich country, and will be one of the richest of our colonial possessions," it is pretty evident that he wants the Matabele exterminated for the same reason as Moses urged the divine command to slaughter the Canaanites—that the chosen people might possess their land. The missionary is always the forerunner of annexation. He preaches peace and opens the way for plunder.

St. James's Church, Sutton, Lincolnshire, is typical of the Establishment. It is giving way, and is in sad need of repairs. The fine weather has acted on the foundations, and a contraction of the soil has made the walls bulge out.

Professor James Legge, the well-known Chinese missionary and Sinologist, has been examined before the Opium Commission. He said that very little alcohol is used in China. In thirty-four years in China he saw only one man drunk, and he was not very drunk. It appears that much of Chinese vice has been introduced by Europeans.

The value of open-air preaching is enforced in the *Christian Commonwealth*, which regrets that outdoor meetings are left to Atheists and Socialists, whose principles are being "rapidly disseminated." Our Christian contemporary is of

opinion that "an outdoor campaign by all the clergymen in the Church of England would stir the land with a trumpet blast." Perhaps it would, and perhaps it wouldn't. Our opinion is that the droning style of the clergy would generally excite derision in the open-air and daylight.

The *Christian Commonwealth* is angry with Mr. Grant Allen on account of his article in the *Fortnightly*, and it expresses its feelings under the heading of "Christianity Maligned." The good old wheeze is repeated that it is not real Christianity that Mr. Allen condemns, but "some misrepresentation of it." Real Christianity, however, seems very difficult to get hold of. For instance, our contemporary declares that Christianity does not teach the resurrection of the physical body. Of course not, now that science has shown this to be impossible and inconceivable. But the resurrection of the physical body of man was taught until science gave it the *coup de grace*. We are ready to prove this statement by abundant evidence, from the early Fathers down to Mr. Spurgeon. The fact is that, on this point, Christianity is executing "a strategic movement to the rear."

What a shower of denunciation has fallen on the head of the Rev. F. W. Davis, of Blairgowrie, who preached at Mr. Gladstone and refused to shake hands with him! Judged by human standards, Mr. Davis is an insolent cad; but, judged in the light of his Savior's example, he cuts a very excellent figure. Did not Jesus vituperate his opponents with astonishing vigor? And was not the word "hypocrite," which Mr. Davis applied to those who came to church merely to see Mr. Gladstone, a favorite term of abuse with the Prophet of Nazareth? Bible language and Bible doings are quite respectable until they are imitated, when they incur almost universal censure.

The Rev. Charles Leach, D.D., has discovered that "not a few" of the labor leaders are "lowly followers of the labor man of Nazareth." He does not mention names, and the statement must pass for what it is worth. Even if it is worth all it looks it amounts to very little. "Not a few" is a small proportion of labor leaders in the ranks of Christianity, when it is remembered that this is a Christian country, and that the vast majority of the children of all classes have been brought up in the Christian faith. The really significant fact is that so many labor leaders are *not* Christians even in England. In France and Germany they are nearly all Freethinkers.

The Spiritists have been claiming Abraham Lincoln, and stating that he had a medium living in the White House. This is denied by Robert T. Lincoln, who declares that there is not a particle of truth in the story.

According to a paragraph in the *Christian World*, some Italian priests placed a statue of the Virgin in the broiling sun, to let her see "what it is to be scorched." When the rain came they took the statue indoors, believing that she had terminated the drought in pity for the sufferings of the people. This sort of thing would prevail everywhere if the Pope and the Catholic religion were triumphant.

Josiah Oldfield suggests, in the *Vegetarian*, that the Roman Catholic service is a kind of hypnotism. He compares it to the Spiritist séances.

The *Banner of Faith* dishes up Bishop Moorhouse's old stories about crime in Australia, which it pretends is the result of secular education, forgetting altogether that besides having been made the dumping ground of English criminals, Australia has naturally attracted many of the reckless, and has, moreover, gone through many vicissitudes of fortune. A thorough examination would probably prove that secular education has diminished instead of increasing crime.

The Cambridge churches must be hard up for attractions, since the vicar of one of the churches presides over "St. Luke's Dancing Class." The treasurer is appropriately named the Rev. H. B. Gottwaltz. Possibly the young ladies and young gentlemen of St. Luke's will be taught to dance like David to the glory of God.

Mr. Michie says the Chinese do not hate Christianity, but they hate Christians. This is a very subtle distinction, and we guess it originated in the brain of Mr. Michie. The

Chinese are a practical people, and they judge by what they see. Experience has taught them to mistrust, and even hate, the folk who profess Christianity. They find it, in the concrete, to mean lying, impudence, and wholesale grabbing. Yes, a little Christianity goes a long way in China.

The *Times of Natal* (Aug. 11) states that "There have been only three Matabele converts to Christianity in thirty years." The progress of the gospel is truly divine.

"Wanted, a Gospel for the Age" is the title of a leading article in the *Christian World*. What has become of the Gospel of our old friend Jesus Christ? Isn't it good enough nowadays? If so, he should come again, and give us something up to date. Perhaps the *Christian World* will jog his memory. He promised to come eighteen hundred years ago.

We see by the newspapers that two Frenchmen are in custody in London, charged with obtaining money from Roman Catholics on the continent, whom they offered to supply with "religious relics." Perhaps they are a couple of scamps, but there are a good many respectable people in the same line of business. No doubt their "relics" were just as authentic as those exhibited in Catholic churches, to the great profit of the men of God who conduct the show.

The famous "Dirty Dick's" public-house in Bishopsgate has just been sold by auction for £36,000. It is only in Christian countries that public-houses are so valuable.

The Salvation Army has had many martyrs, but few of them have been quite so heroic as Amy Elliott. This pious young lady sang unto the Lord in Walpole-street, Chelsea, to the annoyance of Mr. Alfred Gaussen, who begged her to desist on account of his wife's illness; but, as disturbing a sick woman was a trifle compared with the salvation of souls, Amy Elliott went on with her singing; and for this "offence," as the carnal call it, that hard-hearted magistrate, Mr. De Rutzen, sentenced her to pay a fine of twenty shillings or to go to prison for five days. Amy the Martyr preferred the five days, and before going to the cells she kissed a number of female Salvationists, who were perhaps burning to imitate her heroic example. There can be little doubt that Amy Elliott deserves to have her portrait and biography in the *War Cry*, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven.

Edward Walters, a clerk in holy orders, and a lad named William Gamble, were charged with an abominable offence in a railway carriage, at Portland-road Station. The jury found Walters guilty. The prosecuting counsel said that Walters, who was a clerk in holy orders, had been known for years to the police, and had been warned by them. Walters was sentenced to one year and ten months' hard labor; Gamble was acquitted. When Walters was arrested he described himself as a journalist.

High ritual in the Established Church has sometimes queer effects on the untutored mind. A couple of young folks who had been at a service the other Sunday were overheard discussing the proceedings. "Hoo dae they aye sing 'Amen!' at the end o' a' the hymns?" "Amen?" "Ay, Amen." "Gosh, I thocht it was 'encore!'"

Two questions and answers are quoted in *Truth* from a catechism for children proposed in the Saffron Walden parish magazine. They are as follows: "What is the Seventh Commandment?—Thou shalt not commit adultery. What is committing adultery?—Wishing to marry another person's husband or wife." *Truth* may be right in asking whether this is "wholesome diet for babes and sucklings." But it is wrong in its sneer at the "imperfect knowledge" of the compilers of the catechism. They can appeal to the New Testament, in which it is said on the highest authority, "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery in his heart." If this were really a Christian country, the Divorce Court would have much more to do than it has now—or it would come to grief altogether through the utter impossibility of getting its work done.—*Dispatch*.

Cardinal Vaughan corrects the impression which has got abroad that he regards the clergy of the Church of England

as real priests. The Catholic Church, he says, does not recognise in the Anglican body the possession of apostolic succession or a valid priesthood. Of course not. All the Holy Ghost there is in the world is cornered by the Papacy. What the Ghost thinks of it is not exactly ascertained. Anyhow, while the Archbishop of Canterbury gets £15,000 a year, he can afford to smile at Cardinal Vaughan's pretended monopoly of the Paraclete.

The Archdeacon of Northumberland wishes the militant Church to be armed with cavalry. In other words, he would have itinerant Evangelists going through the country on horseback. This is only taking a leaf out of the note-book of Wesley, who travelled about 4,500 miles every year on horseback, and got his name up by preaching in every town he passed.

The Church is going to have a "Congress Sunday" before the Birmingham Congress and a Church School Sunday on the second Sunday in Advent. Anent this last the Rev. Stewart Headlam writes a letter to the *Times* (Sept. 18), urging the clergy to "have done with the attempt to keep up their own schools, and to throw themselves sympathetically into the work of the Board."

The curse of superstition is sometimes flagrant. For instance, thousands of Mohammedans go on pilgrimage to Mecca. They live filthily, in violation of all sanitary laws, and a large proportion of them perish. But that is not the end of the mischief. Cholera is spread by the pilgrims to Egypt, and it is carried thence to all the ports of Europe.

Mr. Ernest Hart, editor of the *British Medical Journal*, has conclusively shown in the *Popular Science Monthly* that cholera follows the track of religious pilgrims. Nor can we wonder when we read of the superstitious rites used for the purpose of averting the disease. One of the most widely practised of these is that of passing under the Koran. Two elders stand opposite each other, holding between them a scroll of the Koran, wrapped in a silken scarf. Under this swinging talisman the peasants pass one by one, and then go home, convinced that the cholera will not be able to touch them. The Persians stick to these ancient ceremonials, in spite of the fact that the epidemic is working sad havoc among them. The spirit of fatalism has deeply imbued the Persian, who is naturally very indolent and improvident. While the cholera is daily carrying off hundreds upon hundreds of victims, the philosophic subject of the Shah smokes his pipe, mutters his prayers, and speaks contentedly of the "decrees of fate."

At Valjemo, in Serbia, the deacon of the parish church fell ill after reading Mass, with all the symptoms of poisoning. It was found that the wine prepared for the Holy Sacrament was poisoned, and that had the deacon partaken of it as usual he must have died immediately. But an unusual taste made him careful. Suspicion points to the priest of the parish, and he has been arrested. Poisoning the sacramental wine used to be a favorite priestly game for getting rid of objectionable communicants. The body and blood of the Lord never rejects the poison.

Einsiedlan, in Switzerland, is almost a rival to Lourdes. From fifteen to twenty thousand people flock there every year and adore the "Black Virgin," which is thought to heal all manner of diseases. Cripples go there—at least they say so—and dance home again merrily. We believe, however, that all the "Virgins" in Europe are incapable of curing one malady, which, if they did cure it, would prove their miraculous powers. It is *old age*.

Taking advantage of the British Association meetings, the Bishop of Southwell has been holding forth at St. Mary's, Nottingham, on religion as the complement to science. His discourse was sappy and sloppy. Incidentally he referred to "the cynical doctrine of Secularism." Well, it is not so cynical as the Bishop of Southwell seems in the eyes of the miners, whom he has been favoring with cheap, gratuitous advice. He asks the miners on strike to accept a compromise, and some of them retort that they would like to "compromise" his salary. But that's a horse of quite another color.

The beautiful old law of Charles II. makes it an offence to shave on Sunday, even if the object be to present a clean appearance at church, and two men were recently fined at Bilston for this offence. If Providence is set against Sunday shaving, hair ought to cease to grow between Saturday night and Monday morning.

E. B. Lanin gives an illustration of the religious enthusiasm of the Russians and their desire to extend the knowledge of truth. The authorities every now and then make an excursion into Siberia and bring back a lot of Buddhists, whom they proceed to baptise in spite of their loudly-expressed dissent. After baptising them they say to them, "Now, you dogs, you are Christians, and you can go and pray to your nasty gods as much as you wish, and thank them that you are Christians."

"Lord Rosebery's most formidable rival," says the *Methodist Times*, "has not yet arrived, but he is arriving. He is the son of a Nonconformist minister, and his name is Herbert Henry Asquith." This is a very denominational view of the situation. Our pious contemporary passes by Mr. John Morley as if he were a nobody. And why? Simply because he is a Freethinker. Happily the solid Secretary for Ireland owes no part of his position to Methodist newspapers.

The Bishop of Salisbury has raised £1,000, as a start, to increase the incomes of his poorer clergy. But there are many persons worse off—colliers, for instance, who raise the coals for the clergy to warm themselves by while they compose their elegant sermons on Hell, or the other place, according as they are partial to brimstone or treacle.

There is a Fund for the education of Wesleyan Methodist ministers' children, and it is in debt to the tune of £25,000. As this sort of thing cannot go on for ever, an effort is being made to clear off the debt. The ministers are "to find, directly or indirectly," £17,500 and the laymen £7,500. The *Methodist Times* describes the action of the ministers as "splendid generosity" but as their children get all the education, and they are to raise the £17,500 "directly" (that is, paying it themselves) or "indirectly" (that is, begging it from other people), we are not quite so sure of the "generosity," to say nothing of the "splendid."

The Marquis of Bute has given £800 to the Missions to Seamen's Institute at Cardiff Docks, and it is a very good investment. It will help to keep up the creed, and with it the system, under which the Marquis of Bute gets hundreds of thousands of pounds every year, without the least effort on his own part, simply by sweating all the inhabitants of Cardiff as ground landlord.

Some time ago it was reported that government bonds valued at 1,250,000 roubles, together with gold and silver plate and other precious articles, had been stolen from a Russian monastery. It is now reported that the plunder has been found hidden in the cells of some of the monks. Something else was found too, namely, that "several women were living secretly with the monks."

Exeter Nonconformists are up in arms against the Sunday League's excursions to Devonshire. The railways are being called upon to stop this wholesale desecration of the Sabbath. But they won't. It pays. And even Nonconformists who own railway stock want a good dividend.

Sky-pilotage is a snug business. We notice that the Rev. Archibald Brown, of the East London Tabernacle, has a wife who is recovering from a serious illness, in regard to which he has just the same sympathy we should feel for any other man in the same position. We notice also that he is going off with her on a six months' leave of absence to the South of France—the salary going on as usual, we presume. Lucky Mr. Brown! Happy sky-pilots!

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) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 24, Clerkenwell-green—Morning, at 11.30, "The Book of God." Evening, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C., at 7, "A Search for the Soul."

Tuesday, September 26, Bradlaugh Birthday celebration, Hall of Science, at 8.

October 1 and 8, Hall of Science; 15, Camberwell; 22, Manchester; 29, Bristol.

November 5, Nottingham; 12 and 19, Hall of Science; 26, Tyneside.

December 3, Leicester; 10, Liverpool; 17 and 24, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC., should be written on postcards or the envelopes marked outside.

H. SMITH.—The lines are too purely personal.

H. ROWDEN, sec. Lambeth Branch, has removed to 44 Carlton-road, Kentish Town, N.W.

C. LONSDALE, newsagent, Uxbridge-road, Ealing Dean, London, W., displays a *Freethinker* contents-sheet, and will be happy to supply customers in the neighborhood.

TUTOR.—Thanks for notice and enclosures.

F. R. BIRD.—See paragraph.

A. W.—We have not examined Virtue's edition of Gibbon. No doubt it gives the text and notes accurately.

S. HALE.—No doubt Tacitus, if it was indeed Tacitus who wrote the works bearing his name, had access to public documents; but there is not the slightest reason to believe that he knew of any such documents relating to Christianity. His reference to Christ (taking it to be so) is brief and contemptuous. If what he wrote was based on public documents, so much the worse for Christ and Christianity.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for letters and cuttings.

M. BROWN.—(1) We do not see any principle involved in charging two prices for the paid seats at the Hall of Science. That purses are of different lengths is a simple matter of fact, and where is the "equality" in taxing the poorer to the same extent as the better-off? Abolishing the charge for admission altogether is impossible without an endowment. Voluntary collections never equal current expenditure. (2) You call the one shilling a year subscription to the N.S.S. a "fine to be a member." Have you ever considered the expense of keeping books and issuing certificates? We fear that the policy you suggest, is calculated for a different state of society, and a different human nature from those that exist.

D. HUGHES.—W. L. Davies will be glad to have your corroboration of the statements in his letter. Yes, the price of Mr. Edwards's *Witness of Assyria* is 2s. 6d. We regret the announcement that it was a shilling more.

A. B. C.—(1) We never see the Christian paper you refer to, but we happen to know that its circulation has fallen by fifty per cent. this year. We are quite satisfied with our own circulation. (2) Pleased to hear that, although you are not exactly on our side, you enjoy reading the *Freethinker*, and consider it "a fine journal." (3) A portrait of Mr. Foote appeared in our first Special Number, the first week in January.

J. C. GOODFELLOW.—We have inserted your letter, though we do not admit that readers have any claim to the insertion of letters in criticism of editorial articles.

O. W. WRIGHT.—The first dated printed publication is the *Indulgence* of Pope Nicholas V., granting indulgence to those aiding in the war against the Turks. It is dated 1454. Printing was in existence some years earlier, yet it was not till 1516 that the first printed edition of the New Testament appeared, and that was issued by an independent scholar, Erasmus.—According to Irenæus, Jesus Christ lived to be over fifty years of age. This view is supported in Valpy's *Classical Journal*, No. 49.

ALPHA.—Shall appear. Pull up this week.

J. KENNEDY.—Certainly the Bishops may be conscientious, but it is no sign of conscientiousness for all of them to vote one way on a matter like the Home Rule Bill. Honesty would surely have revealed some difference of opinion, as among other sections of the community. Besides, the Bishops have always opposed good causes in the House of Lords.

A. B. MOSS.—Very sorry to hear of your little daughter's illness, but hope for a speedy recovery.—We regret the printer's blunders in your last article.

E. COTTRELL.—The Christian you refer to is beneath notice. We remember him as a brutal interrupter at open-air meetings.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Glasgow Branch, collected at Mr. Foote's lectures, Sept. 10, £1 12s. 0d.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—F. W. Donaldson, 10s. Further subscriptions to this fund are not solicited.

SHILLING MONTH.—W. Tivey, 2s. 6d.

R. G. S.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. FISHER.—We will insert the advertisement for you with pleasure if you make it more precise. No one would answer it in its present form.

R. FORREST.—We are very sorry to hear of your difficulties at Newcastle, and hope you will soon find a good hall available for special Sunday lecturers. Mr. Foote expects to pay Newcastle and the district a visit in November. He will be glad to chat with a meeting of your members on that occasion.

R. T. JONES.—(1) The verses you refer to in the second Psalm seem clear enough. What point is it you want explained? The verse in the sixteenth Psalm is probably an allusion to the future of Israel. Of course the Psalms were not written by David. They were the hymn-book of the second temple. (2) We recommend Greg's *Creed of Christendom* and *Supernatural Religion*, if you can afford to buy them.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us no 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 Vérité Philosophique—Ironclad Age—Church Reformer—Scarborough Post—Weekly Times and Echo—Sun—Post—Sussex Daily News—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Birmingham Daily Argus—Surrey Independent—Weekly Dispatch—Isle of Man Times—Watts's Literary Guide.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forster, 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.

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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.

The new experiment at the London Hall of Science bids fair to prove a great success. A splendid audience assembled on Sunday night—the finest that has been seen there for a long while; and, although the free seats were well patronised, the paid seats were literally crowded. As the whole of the takings for the four lectures Mr. Foote is now giving will go into the National Secular Society's exchequer, they will help to make up the deficit incurred during the phenomenal summer months.

Mr. Foote's lecture was on "Christ and Democracy," and was to all appearance very much appreciated, the applause at the end being loud and prolonged. A few questions were asked, and one gentleman, who couldn't keep quiet while he was being answered, offered some rather feeble opposition. Mr. R. O. Smith was in the chair, and drew attention to the books of tickets which have been printed for sale. A book of twelve tickets for the threepenny seats is sold for half-a-crown, and a book of twelve tickets for the sixpenny seats is sold at five shillings. It is hoped that they will be bought by comparatively well-to-do Freethinkers, who will give the tickets away to persons who may thus be induced to pay a visit to the Hall of Science. Even when a Freethinker lives at too great a distance to attend frequently, there is no reason why he should not pay for a seat. Having one of these books by him, and feeling he would like to be at the Hall, though unable to go, he can tear out and destroy a ticket if he does not give it away, which of course is the better plan. The books can be obtained at the Hall on Sunday evening, or by post from Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Mr. Foote occupies the Hall of Science platform again this evening, and will deliver his new lecture, "A Search for the Soul." Prior to the lecture he will read Bryant's "Thanatopsis." There will also be vocal and instrumental music. Our London readers are requested to give all the publicity they can to these lectures, and especially to the free admission.

How people are prejudiced against Secular meetings, and how soon they may be cured by coming into contact with

the reality! On Sunday evening, after Mr. Foote's lecture, a gentleman came up to him and said, "I've brought my wife with me, she wouldn't come before, and now she says she wants to come every Sunday."

Some time ago Mr. Foote expressed his intention to give a lecture at some of the principal open-air stations in London. Unfortunately, in one sense, the pressure of other work interfered with this project. This morning (Sept. 24), however, Mr. Foote will lecture for the Finsbury Branch—a very poor one—on Clerkenwell Green, his subject being, "The Book of God." A collection will be taken up on behalf of the London Secular Federation, which is greatly in need of funds.

Visitors to the Hall of Science on Sunday evenings, who are members of the N.S.S., can go up, after the lecture, in the Minor Hall, where they will find books and papers to read and facilities for conversation, no music being allowed on these occasions. The library has been moved into the Minor Hall, which has now a more cosy appearance. We may add that the room is also open on Wednesday evenings to members of the N.S.S. on the same conditions. Mr. Anderson, the club manager, with members of the sub-committee, will be happy to welcome those who are strange to the place.

Several new items are included in the new program of the London Hall of Science Club. In addition to the Minor Hall being set out on Wednesday and Sunday evenings for the use of members of the N.S.S., a Debating Class is arranged for on Monday evenings. Mr. George Standing opens the ball on Monday, October 2, at 8.30 precisely. It is intended to have all forms of opinion ventilated in these debates. On Tuesday evenings an Athletic Class will meet for practice, and on Thursday evenings an elementary Dancing Class, which should be joined by those whose education in this respect has been neglected. As the weather gets cooler, Saturday evening social gatherings will take place. Full particulars can be obtained of the manager, Mr. J. Anderson.

The London *Daily Chronicle* gave an admirable report of Mr. M. D. Conway's discourse at South Place Chapel last Sunday morning on Liberty. This is better than the old conspiracy of silence against advanced causes; still, the *Chronicle* draws the line at the Hall of Science. Drawing the line somewhere is a test of respectability.

Our sub has a long, interesting letter from Joseph Symes, who is happy in his work, though he complains of want of intellectual company. "It is a genuine treat to me to get the *Freethinker* every week." He says he is strongly attracted to Prof. Johnson's leading views, though he has not yet adopted them. "There seem to be inexplicabilities on both sides, and one needs caution." For a number of years, Mr. Symes says, "I have given up *Irenæus* as an absolute fiction." "Things are just awful here commercially. I am glad I always discouraged immigration." He sends his kind remembrances to all old friends, and ends with the exhortation: "Keep pegging away. We are working out a most stupendous Revolution, and should feel proud of it. Our ideas will reign in the next generation but one."

Mr. Charles Watts, as our readers will see from his article in another column, has arrived in America and received a very hearty welcome. Before and after the International Freethought Congress, which is to be held at Chicago from October 1 to 8, Mr. Watts will deliver lectures in the United States and Canada, winding up at New York in time to return to England the first week in November. Mr. Watts will see Colonel Ingersoll at New York and do his best to induce the great American Freethought orator to pay this country a visit.

Mr. Putnam writes expressing deep regret at learning that Mr. Foote cannot attend the Chicago Congress, and promising him "a royal welcome" when he does visit America. He invites Mr. Foote to send a paper to be read at the Congress, and the paper has been written and forwarded.

The *Isle of Man Times* gives extracts from the *Freethinker* account of Mr. Foote's lecture on Douglas Head. Mr. Brown does not quite share our heretical opinions, but he is a lover

of fair-play, and we tender him our hearty thanks for his very manly attitude on this occasion.

With typhoid fever ravaging Worthing, it is wonderful that the English people do not recognise the value of cremation. Those "flighty" French people are very much ahead of us in this respect. Cremation is becoming increasingly popular in Paris. The crematorium at Père-Lachaise has been found too small; additions are being made, and a third furnace, a large hall, and a columbarium will soon be ready for use. The last will contain 10,000 receptacles for the ashes of the dead, the niches being closed with slabs of marble, on which inscriptions can be cut.

Mr. George Anderson has just made another large present of Freethought literature, consisting of our most important books and pamphlets, to be sent in parcels to sailors and soldiers abroad. Previous parcels sent at his expense have been much appreciated by the recipients.

The Freethinkers of Charleroi, Belgium, have instituted a "Temple of Science" at a building formerly used as a Roman Catholic school. The Catholics are much put out.

Imprisonment does not conquer the spirit of German Freethought lecturers. Dr. C. Rüger, who has nearly served out his last sentence for blasphemy, reports, through *Der Freidenker*, that he is ready for engagements.

Mr. Foote's meetings at Dundee were exceptionally large, and extremely attentive and sympathetic. The hall was a very fine one, and probably this had something to do with the numerous attendance. The discussion after the lectures was not particularly edifying. Mr. Adams spoke with sincerity, if with no great effect, and a little knot of Catholics, headed by a suitably impertinent leader, tried to create a disturbance on the second evening, though they had small success in their holy enterprise. One gratifying feature was the sale of a large stock of books and pamphlets, which should help to spread Freethought principles in Dundee.

We hope the new Dundee Branch will go on prospering and to prosper. It appears to be well guided and full of enthusiasm. More than thirty members have been enrolled, and the ordinary Sunday evening meetings show an average attendance of seventy or eighty. The *Freethinker* sells fairly well in the town, and one newsagent boldly displays a contents-sheet.

Mr. A. B. Moss is to debate with Dr. Bates in the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday, October 22, the subject being "Secular Objections to Christianity."

The quarterly tea and soirée of the Battersea Branch takes place to-day (Sept. 24) at 5.30. Tickets (6d. each) can be had at the hall. The general meeting of members, for election of officers and other business, will be held on the following Sunday, after the evening lecture.

The Manchester Branch has a kind of field day this "Sabbath" (Sept. 24). The half-yearly meeting is to be held at 3, and at 5 a tea-party in commemoration of Charles Bradlaugh's birthday. At 6.30 the Dramatic Society will render *Bardell v. Pickwick*.

On Wednesday, November 1, a tea and entertainment on behalf of the funds of the London Secular Federation will take place at the Hall of Science. Tea at 7.30; concert and dance to follow. The tickets, one shilling each, will shortly be in the hands of Branch secretaries.

The London Federation's meetings for the training of young speakers will begin on Tuesday, October 3. Those who have promised to speak or read papers are invited to attend on this occasion. Members of London Branches will be heartily welcome.

A public debate takes place to-day (Sept. 24) in Markhouse-road, Walthamstow, at 3 o'clock, between Mr. W. Heaford (N.S.S.) and Mr. J. Boyce (C.E.S.) The subject to be threshed out is "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?" As the debate is *al fresco*, and the admission is necessarily free, there should be a big meeting. The chair (so to speak) will be taken by Mr. Stanley, a Unitarian.

Mr. Cohen is engaged in a six weeks' "mission" at South Shields. Thornton's Variety Hall has been engaged for the Sundays, and the Free Library Hall for a concluding course of week-night meetings. Free seats will be provided at all the lectures, and some open-air work will be done in the district.

In the *Liberator* Mr. Symes has been writing on the question, "Were the Gospels Recognised Before the Council of Nice?" He says: "I doubt if the whole story of Constantine being a Christian; the Council of Nice, etc., be anything better than sheer fable or downright forgery; but I take the tale at present as it circulates in Church history." From this data he is able to show that all Constantine referred to and relies on in his oration is the prophecies of the Sibyls, which are now admitted forgeries.

We see by the *Liberator* that Mr. Wallace Nelson, after two months' travelling in Western Queensland, is once more in Brisbane, and lecturing to large audiences. We wish him every success.

Tuesday next, September 26, is the anniversary of the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh. A celebration of the date will take place at the Hall of Science. The proceedings will commence at 8, and the admission will be free. Mr. Foote will preside, and the list of speakers includes Touzau Parris, Robert Forder, and George Standing. Mr. Holyoake and others have been invited. We hope the London Freethinkers will muster in strong force.

EUSEBIUS' CHURCH HISTORY.

VI.

THERE are points of great interest connected with the work I have been examining—referring, not only to Church History, but to history in general. Even as the supposed "Father of Church History," so are a multitude of other supposed persons whose names have been handed down to us purely ideal persons. When that is understood, we are a long way towards the solution of many a problem in the science of letters and history.

I have shown that, aside from the bare statement that the Church History was written in Greek, the whole evidence looks to the contrary conclusion, viz., that it was written in Latin and thence rendered into Greek. The same remark applies to "Josephus," to the "New Testament," and to much other early Church literature, absurdly alleged to have been written about 1800 years ago, more or less!

Now I am not asking any of my readers to accept what I say "as gospel," i.e., as sooth or truth beyond all question. The connection between the ideas of Gospel and Truth has been dissolved in my own mind; and it is gradually dissolving in the minds of the clergy who think at all upon the subject. Within even the last few years there has been a change; and it will not long be possible for professors of literature to say, as they have said in effect, "If you deny the New Testament books to be anything but works of art, we shall simply decline to discuss the question; we shall ignore you altogether!" The claims of science are imperative; sooner or later, the disregarded fact will force itself upon attention, and will in turn make the institutions which are based upon its denial themselves objects of disregard.

Now with regard to the general facts of the Revival of Letters. Assuming the *History* to have been composed in Latin, when can we suppose it first to have been known to a reading world? Here we appeal to the Bibliographers: a class of men who have yet an important service to render (provided they can enter on the work with free minds) to the cause of truth and culture. The following facts are from Ebert, one of the industrious German tribe.

The first folio edition, then, of the Latin *History* is believed to be German, though it has no date of year or place. There must be a large number of similar *dateless* printed works extant; and what inference can be drawn from the fact except that the custom of reckoning years from an ideal Incarnation, "A.D.," can only have been coming into vogue less than 400 years

ago? There is much evidence on this point to which I merely allude. But the obvious mistakes or falsehoods in dating many alleged fifteenth-century books are part of the same system of evidence which it is to be hoped some truly open-minded bibliographer will have the courage and industry to lay before the public.

The next folio edition is Dutch, dated 1474. At present I suspend all faith in so early a date, simply because we have not yet ascertained, and probably never shall ascertain, the exact date of the establishment of any Press, whether in Holland or Germany. This, again, is a point that seems to me never to have engaged the attention of students who have exact knowledge, and who, if they cannot get it, would prefer to roughly guess their way back to the *approximate* truth. We have the clearest possible testimony on the part of Renaissance scholars that the Germans and Dutch (Luther and Erasmus are *epochal* names) only began to be a literary people about 400 years ago. Has that statement been understood, and all that follows from it, by my German and Dutch friends? I hardly think so. And yet it is certain that if you cannot discover anything in the shape of a Library until about the middle of what we call the sixteenth century, it is idle to talk of such a book as that under question being known until then.

A Dutch scholar whom I regard with feelings of esteem and friendship, Dr. W. C. van Manen, of Leyden, in reviewing my *Rise of Christendom* and referring to my opinion that Church books cannot be traced many centuries back, consequently that the Church cannot be anything like so old as we have been taught to believe: I say Van Manen pointed to a certain work ascribed to a monk of Hirschau as indicating a certain fund of mediæval writings. But my friend here really puts a weapon into my hands, if I desired to be controversial! Hirschau is one of the Benedictine monasteries, connected with Spanheim, Erfurt and other German cloisters. We are therefore once more thrown back on the question, When did the Benedictines begin to write and to form Libraries? I have been forced by subsequent study to the conclusion that it was at the time of Printing, and not before, that they conceived their enterprise.

The third edition of the Latin *History* is said to be of Rome, and the year 1476; the fourth of Mantua, 1479. I fear the dates can hardly be trusted as genuine. We hear nothing more of "Rufinus" for a long time. But the famous Benedictine of St. Maur, Montfaucon, is believed to have brought to light from the libraries of Italy a great number of the Latin copies, but perhaps only one, if even one, in Greek. Then there was a Venice edition of "Rufinus," dated 1763. The tricks of interested persons in affixing false dates are illustrated by the fact that there is an alleged 1770 Venice edition, which is said to be simply the 1763 edition with the date altered on the title-page.

Any student who looks calmly at the general bibliographical facts, and those relating to the rise of any class of Readers external to the ranks of a limited learned clergy, will, I am persuaded, assent to the necessity of a very sceptic and dubitant attitude in reference to the whole matter. Most assuredly, the *study* of Church History, as distinguished from the blind defence and support of it, is only now beginning. And for my part, I have ceased to fear lest I may have assigned too *late* an epoch for the beginning of these organised fictions, and am rather anxious lest after all I should have fixed it too *early*, as one at least of my friends supposes.

The like reasoning may, and should be applied to the whole of the early Church literature; and it will then be found that we have an induction of *negative* facts, quite irresistible. I mean, it will be no longer possible to *talk* of the Church books having been read or having been written until modern times. That it has hitherto been possible, is because we are all, I presume, in the habit of talking the conventional talk about most subjects, until something occurs which startles us, arouses an attention that we had not before been capable of, and so leads to a distinct perception of what is possible and what is impossible in our theories of a past, wherein we can at best but imaginatively live.

It may be that some of my readers would wish me to expose more fully the frauds of this *History* in connection with "Josephus" and other mock writers. It would be, on the other hand, tedious and tiresome to others to go further into the matter, and in fact a waste of space, if it be once understood and accepted that we have here to do with a gang of unprincipled forgers, who are either themselves monks, or hirelings (some of them Jews) in their employ, who have done their best to support the absurd opinion that the Church was founded on the ruins of an imaginary Jewish empire, and on the dicta of oracular Jewish books, which they will not allow the Jews themselves to be capable of understanding!

Early in this century a German scholar, Kestner, published a prize essay on "Eusebius," which I have read, and which shows remarkable ingenuity in detecting the falsehood of the sources on which the writer is supposed to draw, without giving alarm to the ecclesiastical interest. Of its nature it is a half-hearted criticism; and yet Kestner denies to "Eusebius" as sources such writings as those ascribed to "Clement of Alexandria," "Hegesippus," "Ignatius," "Irenaeus," "Justin Martyr," "Origen," "Papias," "Polycarp," "Tertullian," etc. If the writer or the judges of this essay had really understood their subject in any comprehensive sense, even these discoveries must have been felt to be alarming. I may just mention that one incidental illustration of the fact that "Josephus" is the production of the same gang: there is a passage quoted in the *History* (2, 23, 20) ostensibly from "Josephus," which you will not find in your editions at all. There is another case not of discrepancy with a genuine author, but of emendation of their own inventions, in the story of Herod.

The matter is before my readers. I have never forced it upon the notice of clergymen whose status and living depends on their defence of, or connivance at these abominable falsehoods. Nor can I take the smallest notice of idle cavillers and sneerers, who would take up the time of court with their shallow impertinences and irrelevancies. It is a grave subject and I have written for men who are addicted to grave pleasures. One of these pleasures is the enjoyment of the satisfactory solution of a problem that has long vainly irritated the curiosity, provoked the inquiry and speculation of generation after generation of learned men. And such a conclusion I have reached.

A satisfactory conclusion is not one, of course, that in all its details is perfect and complete. When we consider the number of men who must have been employed in this enterprise, and the amount of knowledge they had the opportunity of concealing, no less than that which they were bound to disclose in spite of themselves, it will be recognised that the evidence can never now be fully adduced. But what is adduced as evidence is wholly, utterly, I fear I must add infamously bad. The more I think of it, the more I try, in compliance with my old clerical habits, to apologise for the deeds of the priesthood, the worse they presently appear. No doubt because I personally have suffered from them; but still, not merely so, I hope.

I am no pedant for veracity. What man is there accustomed to watch the countenances, to listen to the tones and the words of his fellow men, to move with kindness in society and use its genial flatteries and compliments, and to reflect on the many things he must say and do which are not strictly measured by any known scale of truth, but is aware that without the lubrication of falsehood tongues will not work, the world can hardly go on?

But is Society all a mutual lie and grimace? I cannot think so; for the reason that when the mere liar and grimacer is detected, he becomes the object of universal detestation or of amused despite. We instinctively fall back for reliance on good men, good examples, good books. All I have to say is that the *Church History* is a lie and a grimace; and the "Men of Honor" (of whom a venerable archdeacon preached last Saturday in a weekly journal), whether clergymen or laymen, when they know enough about it, will not be able to keep themselves in countenance when the name of Eusebius is pronounced. The

examination of the other Eusebian books will not enable me to mitigate this judgment.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

ROBERT FORDER.

MR. ROBERT FORDER, whose portrait appears on our front page, is one of the best known figures among militant Freethinkers. Having been connected with the National Secular Society from its commencement, and having occupied the post of Secretary during the larger part of its existence, he has been brought into the most intimate contact with all the principal associated workers in the Freethought movement, from the Presidents downward, and it is simple truth to say he has enjoyed the confidence and respect of all.

Mr. Forder is an East Anglian, having entered life at Yarmouth on Oct. 14, 1844. Sent early to work, the best portion of his education (as we suspect the really best portion of everyone's education) has been self acquired. At the age of sixteen he came to "seek his fortune" in London. He obtained employment at a large firm of marine engineers at Deptford, and afterwards in Woolwich Arsenal. At Blackheath he first fell in with, and took part in, theological, political, and social discussion, at first contending in opposition to the Secularist advocates. He was led, however, to think and read what Freethinkers had to say for themselves, and gradually became an ardent Freethinker. This instance may illustrate the good effect of out-of-door work, and that the most unpromising Christian opponent may become converted.

Robert Forder has, during all his career, been an advocate of popular rights, and in 1876 he got into trouble with the authorities through leading in the movement to save Plumstead Common from the clutches of the enclosers, being one of four sent for trial, charged with riotous proceedings in connection with that agitation. The riotous proceedings consisted in breaking down certain palings which had no right to be erected. Mr. Bradlaugh opened, in the *National Reformer*, subscriptions for the defence, and Mr. Forder was acquitted. Mr. Bradlaugh had noted his manly conduct, and in the following year they were brought into an intimate contact, which lasted till the day of Mr. Bradlaugh's death, by the appointment of Mr. Forder as Secretary of the National Secular Society. At first he was only required to devote three days a week to his official duties; but the work of the Society increasing, he was, three years later, employed for the whole of his time. In 1880 he also became honorary secretary of the Laud Law Reform League.

The value of Mr. Forder's services as Secretary of the N.S.S. has been above computation. He has been always ready when needed. He has lectured and organised in all parts of the country, and when at last ill-health compelled him to tender his resignation, he was eulogised by Mr. Bradlaugh in the highest manner, and the Society has ever since unanimously kept his name as hon. secretary, to testify its desire for his continued advice and assistance.

In 1883, when the editor, printer, and publisher of the *Freethinker* were committed to the care of Colonel Milman, Mr. Forder, at the request of the Defence Committee, undertook the charge of the publishing business at 28 Stonecutter-street. He carried it on most successfully during their incarceration, and has since followed his ambition of being an independent Freethought publisher on his own account.

Mr. Forder is a man who makes many friends and no enemies. Nature has denied him a robust physique and a powerful voice, but he speaks with a natural earnestness and eloquence, and always commands attention. He is always alert and ready, always cool, and always good tempered; and these qualities made him invaluable to Mr. Bradlaugh during his long parliamentary struggle. May it be long before we have to write in the past tense of Robert Forder.

NORTH-EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

ON behalf of the above Council I have great pleasure in acknowledging the following subscriptions:—Proctor (Sunderland), 10s.; Bennet (Blaydon), 1s.; Whanier (Bedlington) 5s.; J. B. (Newcastle), 2s.; South Shields Branch, 6s.; Cramlington Branch, 3s. As the Council is preparing for an active propaganda, I earnestly urge our richer friends to forward their subscriptions at as early a date as possible.—JOSPH BROWN, hon. sec., 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Judaism as a whole has never been anything but a religion of blood and thunder; of which the votary offered the one for fear of the other.—*Wm. Renton.*

I want nothing to do with a religion that makes a life hereafter bright and blessed at the expense of life here. A heaven in the hand is worth two in the bush. Let us give everything to earth, nothing to heaven. Millions for improvement, not a cent for salvation.—*L. K. Washburn.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

DOWN WITH THE BISHOPS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your article in this week's *Freethinker*, under the above title, appears to me to lack the essential quality of fair-play which usually I see in what you write. There is the fact before us, that the seventeen Bishops and two Archbishops voted against the Home Rule Bill. But it is not just to them to say, "It would be idle, therefore, to assert that they were animated by conviction." Would it not be as idle to assert the contrary? The reasons which you infer influenced the Bishops to vote as they did, may have had a share in causing them to so vote; but apart from such, is it not just as probable that there were other reasons which much more strongly impelled them to do as they did? I agree with you in thinking that there should be no Bishops in the House of Lords, but, seeing that they are there, I see no valid reason for refusing to them the exercise of the powers appertaining to the position they have. To accuse them of voting otherwise than as they felt it to be their duty to vote is surely very unfair. They are men of culture and intelligence, and have, I have no doubt, considered the question with as much, if not more, unprejudicedness as Mr. Gladstone or any of his subservient henchmen; and why you should find fault with them for voting oppositely to the views of Mr. Gladstone, and not find the same fault with Mr. Gladstone is to me something of a puzzle. Mr. Gladstone, you will observe, is almost as much of a sacerdotalist as is any of the Bishops. If we concede to him the acting in a conscientious way, why should we not concede the same to the Bishops? You will not advance the cause of Freethought by the expression of such opinions. I am not in favor of the existence of a House of Lords; I am not even in favor of the having hereditary titles of honor; although I may be in favor of the having of a second chamber. But at the present time, I am (being what Mr. Gladstone has described as a Dissident Liberal) glad we have a House of Lords. Why, let me ask, should the Home Rule Bill be, as you seem to think, regarded as a blessing by Irish Catholics? Would Home Rule, such as the Bill desiderates, tend to the progress and benefit of Catholicism? If so, then no Freethinker should support it in any way whatever. I oppose Home Rule, as embodied in Mr. Gladstone Bill, because it is a retrograde movement, not calculated to in any way advance the welfare of the British nation. The broadening of the basis on which national life depends, the enlargement of the powers of the people in social and municipal matters—these are the points on which real progress depends. The Home Rule program, in so far as it has been embodied in a Bill, only removes power from London to Dublin. It changes the seat without altering the basis on which government rests; and, by the very nature of the scheme, will retard joint progress being made by the different portions of the British Isles.

J. CUMMING GOODFELLOW.

[Mr. Goodfellow misses our point. We do not wish to discuss Home Rule with him, at least in the columns of the *Freethinker*. If he thinks the unanimity of the Bishops was due to political conviction, he must be particularly ingenuous. He appears to admit the honesty of the Bishops the moment they give a vote in harmony with his own predilections.—EDITOR.]

OBITUARY.

M. Benoit Malon, the founder of the *Revue Socialiste*, who died Sept. 13, at the age of 52, was a Freethinking Socialist of the literary and intellectual class. He was one of the founders of the International and a member of the Commune of 1871, and has left many works on the economics, religion, morality and history of the Socialist movement.

MRS. FRANCES IDA RICHARDSON, who died at Brighton on July 30, aged 28, has chiselled upon her tombstone the famous motto of Thomas Paine—"The world is my country, mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion." She was a well-educated woman, and had hopes of standing upon the Freethought platform. Caring herself for the *Freethinker*, she took extra copies weekly, and circulated them amongst her friends. Her home was a model of comfort and cheerfulness, and her loss is deplored, not only by her husband, but by a large circle of friends and acquaintances.

For my part I would rather a man would tell me what he honestly thinks. I would rather he would preserve his manhood. I had a thousand times rather be a manly unbeliever than an unmanly believer. And if there is a judgment day, a time when all will stand before some supreme being, I believe I will stand higher, and have a better chance of getting my case decided in my favor, than any man sneaking through life pretending to believe what he does not.—*Ingersoll*.

I deny that any man is under the obligation to love his enemies. I believe in returning good for good, and for evil the doctrine of Confucius—exact justice, without any admixture of revenge.—*Ingersoll*.

THE UPRIGHT MAN.

THE president of the Anthropological Section of the British Association, Dr. Robert Munro, defining anthropology as a science embracing all the materials bearing on the origin and history of mankind, went on to describe the direct and collateral advantages which the erect position has conferred on man. He concentrated observations successively on the following propositions:—(1) The mechanical and physical advantages of the erect position; (2) The differentiation of the limbs into hands and feet; (3) The relation between the more perfect condition of these organs and the development of the brain. Traversing Mr. Alfred R. Wallace's hypothesis on natural selection, he said there was a probability that many of the present tribes of savages were in point of civilisation in a more degenerate condition than their forefathers, who acquired originally higher mental qualities. There must surely be some foundation of truth in the widely-spread tradition of the fall of man. The progress of humanity was slow, but in the main steadily upwards. No doubt the advanced centres of the various civilisations would oscillate as they still did from one region to another, according as some new discovery gave a preponderance of skill to one race over its opponents. Thus the civilised world of modern times came to be fashioned, the outcome of which had been the creation of a special code of social and moral laws for the protection and guidance of humanity. Obedience to its behests was virtue, and that, to use the recent words of a profound thinker, "involves a course of conduct which in all respects is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence." In place of ruthless self-assertion it demanded self-restraint. In place of thrusting aside, of treading down all competitors, it required that the individual should not merely respect but should help his fellows. Its influence was directed not so much to the survival of the fittest as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It repudiated the gladiatorial theory of existence.

EDGAR FAWCETT ON INGERSOLL.

IN the published speeches of Edgar Fawcett, the well-known novelist and poet, appears the following. He is speaking of the coming poet: "I have little doubt that this age of ours will be satisfactorily expressed by but one sort of poetic intelligence—the sort that is now expressible in concrete terms by such a personality as that of Robert G. Ingersoll. I think that Mr. Ingersoll, through his splendidly eloquent utterances, his abhorrence of shams, his merciless logic, his warm love for humanity, his reverence for the great achievements of science, and his incomparable courage in pointing out the absurdities with which so-called revelation abounds, will prove an absolute beacon-light to the American poet of the future. Deprived of its gods and goddesses, its supernatural love, its pietisms, its genuflections before a deity whose anthropomorphic existence is to be imagined solely through the intensity of his cruelties toward mankind, poetic literature will find in the prose poetry of such men as Herbert Spencer, Lecky, Huxley, and our own wonderful Ingersoll the stimulus and watchword of its unborn renown. Two fairies will stand at the cradle of the great coming American poet. Their names will be *Science* and *Agnosticism*. They will be, if you please, his two calm, gracious, yet severe muses, their locks filleted by no Greek or Roman laurel, yet radiant with the light of love and charity. They will bear him priceless gifts—an intellect from which all twilight of superstition has been swept, a heart alive to every impulse of kindness, a spirit pregnant with all fine and sweet moral truths as the heaven of space above him will be pregnant with its burning stars."

A BIBLE NAME.

Old Pete Robinson, who lived at Worsham, Va, was a pious negro, who jogged along with his wife for many years, naming a new baby every year until seventeen unbleached olive branches bore Scriptural names. Then came a surprise. One morning the Presbyterian minister, while taking his constitutional, met Pete. "Good morning, Peter. You seem to be very much pleased with something." "Yes, sah, I is. You see, de ole 'oman 'creased de family las' night." "Ah, indeed!" "Yes, sah, dar's two mo' little lam's ov de Lord." "Indeed! And what will you name them?" "Gwine name 'em both arter de Lord; gwine call 'em Messiah and Halloway!" "Messiah and Halloway! Where did you get that name Halloway?" "Hi, man! Don't de Lord's pra'r say, 'Halloway be Thy name?'"

The Pastor—"Miss Ethel, you should be engaged in some missionary work."

Miss Ethel—"Oh, I am, and have been for some time past!"

The Pastor—"I am so gratified to hear you say so. In what field are you engaged?"

Miss Ethel (proudly)—"I'm teaching my parrot not to swear."

THOU SHALT NOT BEND.

In faith thou lack, bend not thy back; bow not thy head to the holy hymn,
Although it swell as a golden bell and die in the vaulted distance dim;
Take not the tale of a priestling pale for the godlike truth that is throned on high;
With head unbowed in the cringing crowd, thou shalt not bend to the Sacred Lie.

If thou be free as a man should be—if hate thou bear to the tyrant band,
Reject each gaud, each gilded fraud, each bauble gay in the royal hand;
For the breath of a king is a blighting blast—it blows and the flowers of Freedom die—
With head unbowed in the cringing crowd, thou shalt not bend to the Kingly Lie.

And if thou love, all else above, the peerless pearl of the People's Cause,
Thou wilt despise each paltry prize, and brave the ban of the leprous laws;
Though the base-born brood of power and pelf in princely chariots pass thee by—
With head unbowed in the cringing crowd, thou shalt not bend to the Gilded Lie.

Think'st thou the Dead, whose hero-bed is oft bedewed with a nation's tears,
Inscribed their name on the roll of fame, by a *life that limped thro' a lane of fears?*
Nay, nay! with a fearless front and free—with a noble fire in the flashing eye,
They never bowed with the cringing crowd—they never bent to the Ancient Lie. P. LUFTIG.

MIRACLES AND LIES.

"It is strange," a judicious reader is apt to say, upon perusal of these wonderful histories, "that such prodigious events never happen in our days." But it is not strange, I hope, that men should *lie* in all ages. You surely have seen instances enough of that frailty. You have yourself heard many such marvellous relations started, which, being treated with scorn by all the wise and judicious, have at last been abandoned even by the vulgar. Be assured that those renowned lies, which have spread and flourished to such a monstrous height, rose from like beginnings; but, being sown in a most proper soil, shot up at last into prodigies almost equal to those which they relate.—*Hume's Essay on Miracles.*

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.O.: 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "A Search for the Soul" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 5.30, tea and soirée (tickets 6d.) Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 5.30, public tea (tickets 8d.); 7.30, free entertainment.

Camberwell—81 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, R. Forder, "The Veracity of the Jews—a Reply to Archdeacon Sinclair."

Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street: Monday at 8.30, West London Branch business meeting.

Finsbury Park Branch, 11 Blackstock-road, N.: Friday, Sept. 29 at 8, members' general meeting.

Wimbledon—Hanfield-road Coffee House: 7, a lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, H. Snell, "Is there a Moral Governor of the Universe?"; 6.30, A. Johnson, "Slavery in all Ages."

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. James will lecture.

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, a lecture.

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, G. W. Foote, "The Book of God"; members' meeting after the lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. J. Hunt, "Gods, Ancient and Modern."

Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, St. John, "Theism and Atheism"; 3.30, R. Rossetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Sept. 28, at 8.30, F. Schaller, "A Rational View of Christianity."

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus: God, Man, or Myth?"

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Conflict between Science and Religion"; 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "What must I do to be Saved?" Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, A. B. Moss, "Civilising the Gods."

Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Sam Standing, "Secularism."

Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, C. James, "The Philosophy of Atheism."

Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, W. Heaford will lecture.

Midland Arches (corner of Rattle Bridge-road): 11.30, a lecture. Mile End Waste: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Miracles of the Bible: are they True?"

Newington Green: 3.15, Sam Standing, "The Unknown God"; at Milner Lodge, 18 Waterloo-terrace, Upper-street, at 9, members' meeting of the Islington Branch.

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Creed of a Man."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, H. Snell will lecture.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 3, debate between W. Heaford (N.S.S.) and J. Boyce (C.E.S.) on "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, A. Lewis will lecture. COUNTRY.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, Mr. Keast, "Christian Evidence."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 8. H. Alison, 11, "Jesus and his Teachings"; 7, "Anthropology and Theology"; 2.45, Sunday-school.

Failssworth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, Mr. Percival, "Religion, Philosophy, and Ethics."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, James Cowie, "The Republican and Monarchical Forms of Government"; 6.30, W. G. Unkles, "Smallpox and Vaccination."

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, Mr. Ackroyd will lecture.

Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7, business meeting; 7.30, T. Pearson, "Exposition of Anarchy."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 3, logic class, L. Small, B.Sc.; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Greasy Piety."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 3, members' half-yearly meeting; 5, tea-party, in commemoration of Charles Bradlaugh's birthday; 6.30, dramatic club, "Bardell v. Pickwick" Tuesday at 8, debating circle, C. Pegg, "A Familiar Chat about Dickens."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' monthly meeting; 7, T. Blacklock, "Man Intellectually Considered."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, chess club; 7, miscellaneous evening.

Sheffield: 3, Members and friends meet at tram terminus, Heeley, to start for Ruskin Museum, walk in the neighborhood, and tea at a friend's house.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, important business meeting.

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, J. Brown, "Christ as an Exemplar and a Teacher."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Southampton—Avenue: 3, H. Courtney, "Secularism."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Sept. 24, Barnsley. Sept. 25 to Oct. 31, on tour. Nov. 4, South Shields; 5, Blythe.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 24, m., Victoria Park; a., Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 24, m., Westminster; a., Victoria Park; e., Kilburn. Oct. 4, North Camberwell Radical Club; 15, Hyde Park; 22, m. and e., Camberwell; 29, Westminster. Nov. 5, Chatham.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Oct. 1, Camberwell. Nov. 28, Camberwell.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Sept. 24, m., Battersea; a., Regent's Park

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

ST. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—Sept. 24, m., Finsbury Park. Oct. 15, Victoria Park; 22, Hyde Park; 29, Chatham.

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A little love the gods decree
For you and me a little time,
When shall the clay-cup cease to be,

A little while of time we play
A comedy of errors,
A farce; a little time they say

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HERVEY'S MEDITATION.

Two Herveys had a mutual wish
To please in separate stations,
The one invented sauce for fish,

BREVITIES.

Communion with God is a sort of
divine courtship.

Man was not the first sinner, but God,
in making man liable to fall.

Nature is the volume from which all
of our knowledge has been translated.

The original sin was not in eating of
the forbidden fruit, but in planting the
tree that bore the fruit.

All the proverbs of Solomon did not
keep him out of Mormonism. Sol. wished
the people to do as he said but not as he
did.

One of the religious journals tells an
amusing story of the Rev. Dr. Macgregor,
of Edinburgh, who, once, entering one of
the Scotch pulpits, found that owing to
his short stature he could not see over
the edge. However, he proved himself
equal to the occasion. Standing on tip-
toe he gave out the psalm beginning—
"Lord, from the depths to thee I cry,"
and then sat down to consider the case.
But consideration gave no relief; he had
to stand on tip-toe all through the
sermon.

Tommy—"Doesn't it say in the Bible
that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath,'
mamma?"

Mamma—"Yes, dear."

Tommy—"I don't believe it, anyhow."

Mamma—"Why, dear?"

Tommy—"I shouted at Billy Buckeye
to-day, and he answered me with a soft
tomato, and I've been mad clear through
ever since."

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