

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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GOD AND THE MINERS.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

TALMAGE ON THE BIBLE.

TALMAGE is the Spurgeon of America. He has all the English preacher's vogue as well as his orthodoxy. But he resembles Spurgeon with a difference. He is distinctly American. No one equals the Yankee at “tall talk,” and what Yankee equals Talmage in this species of composition? The oracle of the Brooklyn Tabernacle licks creation in that line. Here is a specimen of his spread-eagle eloquence, taken from the sermon we are about to criticise:—“The black and deep-toned bell of doom hangs over their heads, and I take the hammer of that bell, and I strike it three times with all my might, and it sounds Woe! Woe! Woe!” Perhaps it does, but Talmage is wrong in his spelling. What the bell of doom, so impudently struck by this mannikin, really sounds is doubtless “Woh! Woh! Woh!” It wants the presumptuous spouter to leave off playing the part of God Almighty. Over in America, as well as here in England, the Bible is meeting with misfortune. Christian ministers are showing up its blunders and inconsistencies. Its foes are now of its own household. Talmage is not

frightened, however; he keeps a stiff upper-lip; and, it must be admitted, he has a good deal of upper-lip to keep stiff. Since he visited the Holy Land his faith is strong enough to swallow whales. Now he knows that what the Bible says is true. He has seen the place where it happened.

But faith is a tender plant. Talmage says it is easily destroyed. “I can give you a recipe for its obliteration,” he cries; and it is this—“Read infidel books; have long and frequent conversations with sceptics; attend the lectures of those antagonistic to religion.” Yes, faith is a tender plant. The believer is a hot-house production. He dies in the open air. The Bible can be read by Freethinkers, and it confirms them in their scepticism; but if a Christian reads infidel books he is lost. Hearing the other side is fatal to his faith. It is Talmage who states so, and, as old Omar Kayyam says, he knows, he knows.

Somewhat paradoxically—but who expects logic from the pulpit?—the great Talmage declares, “I do not believe there is an infidel now alive who has read the Bible through.” He offers a hundred dollars reward to any infidel “who has read the Bible through

twice"—which discounts his certainty that no infidel had read it through *once*. A good many infidels might apply for that hundred dollars, but Talmage will never hand it over. An infidel's word is not good enough—not for Talmage. "I must have the testimony," he exclaims, "of some one who has seen him read it all through twice." A very safe condition! for who has ever *seen* any man read the Bible through? And if the witness happened to be an infidel—as is likely—Talmage would want the testimony of someone else who had seen him see the other man reading. Talmage is not very wise, but he is not exactly a fool, and he and *his* money are *not* soon parted.

There is an "infidel" in America who *has* read the Bible through. His name is Robert G. Ingersoll. Talmage should discuss the Bible with him. But he won't. He knows what his fate would be in such an encounter. "And they gathered up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full."

There is also an "infidel" in England who has read the Bible through. *More* than one, of course, but we know this one so intimately. He was shut up in Holloway Gaol for knowing too much about the Bible. During the first eight weeks of his sojourn there the "blessed book" was his only companion. It was the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. That prisoner read it through from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse in Revelation; read it through as Talmage *never* did, for there were no distractions, no letters to answer, no morning and evening newspapers, no visitors dropping in. It was a continuous, undisturbed reading, and the man who did it would be happy to let the public decide whether he does not know the Bible as well as Talmage.

Talmage has a very poor opinion of infidels. He thinks that "bad habits" have much to do with scepticism. His narrow little mind cannot understand how any one can differ from him without being wicked. Still, for decency sake, he makes exceptions. "Mind you," he cries, "I do not say that all infidels are immoral." How kind! How generous! No doubt the infidels will shed tears of gratitude. They are not *all* immoral. Some of them may be nearly as good as Talmage. Certainly some of them are not so avaricious. Infidel speakers don't insist on having fifty pounds paid in the ante-room before they mount the platform to deliver a lecture.

It appears that Talmage once knew a "pronounced infidel." He was the father of one of the Presidents of the United States. Talmage accepted an invitation to spend a night in his house. "Just before retiring at night, he said, in a jocose way: 'I suppose you are accustomed to read the Bible before going to bed, and here is my Bible from which to read.' He then told me what portions he would like to have me read, and he only asked for those portions on which he could easily be facetious."

Talmage gives himself away in this observation. He contends that God wrote the Bible. Why then did God write it so that you could *easily* be facetious about it? It is not so *easy* to be facetious about Homer, or Plato, or Aristotle, or Dante, or Spinoza, or Shakespeare, or Bacon. There is no humor in the Bible, no wit, and only a little sarcasm. We do not laugh *with* it, but *at* it, which is the most fatal form of laughter. It is awfully solemn, but dreadfully absurd. There are things in it to tickle an elephant. Surely it is strange that God should write a book that lends itself so easily to ridicule.

The Spurgeon of Yankeeland goes on to speak about the "internal evidence" of the Bible. This he says is "paramount," though he takes care to skip off as quickly as possible to outside testimony. He cites a number of persons trained up as Christians in favor of the "supernatural" character of the Bible. The first is Chief Justice Chase, of the Supreme Court of the United States—against whom we put a great jurisprudent like Bentham, and a great judge like Sir James Stephen. The second is President Adams—against whom we put President Lincoln. The third is Sir Isaac Newton—against whom we put Charles Darwin. The fourth is Sir Walter Scott—against whom we put Byron and Shelley. The fifth is Hugh Miller—against whom we put Sir Charles Lyell. The

sixth is Edmund Burke—against whom we put Thomas Paine, or, if that will not do, Lord Bolingbroke. The seventh is Mr. Gladstone—against whom we put John Morley. "Enough! Enough!" says Talmage. We say so too. Our names quite balance his names collectively. The game of "authorities" can be played on both sides. But is it worth playing at all? Is a great name a substitute for argument? Is authority as good as evidence? Should the jury decide according to the eminence of the pleader's friends, or according to his facts and the force of his reasoning?

Taking advantage of his congregation's ignorance, or exposing his own, Talmage declares that "The discovered monuments of Egypt have chiselled on them the story of the sufferings of the Israelites in Egyptian bondage, as we find it in the Bible." Now, to put it mildly, this is not true. We are also told that "the sulphurous graves of Sodom and Gomorrah have been identified." To put it mildly again, *this* is not true. We are told next that "the remains of the Tower of Babel have been found." This is not true. Assyrian documents are also said to "echo and re-echo the truth of Bible history." This is not true, according to Professor Sayce, who knows more about Assyrian history than Talmage knows about all things whatsoever. The witness of Assyria repeatedly contradicts the Bible story, not merely in small matters, but in important features. The fact is, Talmage does not know what he is talking about; or, he *does* know what he is talking about, in which case he is playing a very dirty trick on his hearers' credulity.

With respect to the Pentateuch, it does not trouble Talmage whether it was written by "Moses or Hilkiah or Ezra or Samuel or Jeremiah, or another group of ancients." He declares that "none of them wrote it," for "God wrote the Pentateuch"—that is to say, they "put down only what God dictated; he signed it afterward." But where is the signature? And what a paltry way is this of evading the question at issue! It is all very well to say that the writers of the Pentateuch were "Jehovah's stenographers or typewriters." What we want to know first of all is, who they were, and when they lived.

It is useless to follow Talmage any farther. Suffice it to say that he winds up by warning young Christians against a "Voltaire cyclone" on the one side, and a "Tom Paine cyclone" on the other side. There is something worse than either—a Talmage puddle. The young man who sports in that is only fit for—well, Exeter Hall, or Colney Hatch. G. W. FOOTE.

AN ACCOMMODATING BOOK.

LUTHER, following Erasmus, well called the Bible a nose of wax, that could be twisted into any shape and turned in any direction you please. The most extraordinary characteristic of God's wondrous work is its complaisant pliability. It can be adapted to any phase of belief, any variety of doctrine, you like. Men of God forced to resign other claims are expatiating on the adaptability of the Bible to human needs. And truly it has been wonderfully adapted to their exigencies. It teaches something totally different to-day to what it taught to our fathers. We have found that days mean long periods, everlasting a short time, and hell is rapidly becoming a place of delight. This is the advantage of having a revelation written in Hebrew and Greek. It reveals exactly what you like, and if you don't happen to like what it literally says, you can always go to the Hebrew or the Greek, and get a new rendering; or, if the worst comes to the worst, you can say the literal lie is a figurative truth. Are you a Calvinist? You may quote that "the Lord has made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." Do you deny Calvinism? You can quote "whosoever will may come," unheeding that "No man can come unless the Father draw him." You may believe that "there is no respect of persons with God," or that "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated," and you may take as your model this Saint Jacob, who cheated his brother, lied to his dying father, and robbed

his uncle. Are you a republican? You may quote Samuel on the evil consequence of having kings. Are you a monarchist? You may quote Peter, "Fear God and honor the king." Are you a fraternal democrat? You may cite the saying, "All ye are brethren." Are you an aristocrat? You may quote Paul, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. The powers that be are ordained of God." Do you hold that all should have equal rights? You may quote that all are made of the same blood. If, on the other hand, you hold that slavery is a necessary institution, you may quote the injunction, "Slaves, obey your masters with fear and trembling." Do you believe in marriage? You may quote the epistle to the Hebrews marriage is honorable in all. Are you inclined to asceticism? You may quote Paul that it is good not to touch a woman, or the praise of eunuchs by Jesus. Are you a Mormon? You may cite the examples of the polygamists, Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon.

Do you want to show that Christ is God? You may find him expressly called so in the beginning of John. Do you want to show he was only a man? Turn to Mark, and you will find that he says there is none good but one, that is God, and that of the last day the Son knows not but only the Father. Turn to John again, and you find him saying, "I and my Father are one." You may find that he was the son of Joseph and descended from David, and also that his mother was with child of the Holy Ghost.

Do you believe in final salvation? You may read in the first epistle to Timothy that God "will have all men saved." Do you believe in two separate eternal states? In Matthew you will find that the wicked go to everlasting punishment and the righteous into life eternal. Do you believe that you enter heaven at death? You may console yourself with the thought that Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." If you believe, on the contrary, that the dead remain in their graves till the resurrection at the Judgment Day, you may reflect that Jesus descended into hell instead of going to Paradise, and that at the last trump the dead are to be raised and called to judgment. If you believe the world was created in six days, you can quote that "the evening and the morning were the first day." But as this belief has been shattered, you had better quote "A day with the Lord is as a thousand years."

Do you believe the book is inspired? You may quote "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." If you cannot swallow this you may have the new rendering, "All scripture that is given by inspiration is profitable." You may hold that God is merciful, gracious, and long-suffering, or that he is a consuming fire, and angry with the wicked every day. You may believe he is not willing any should perish, or that he "hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." If you are sceptical about divine providence, you may find scripture to countenance your doubts. Does not Job ask "Can man, by searching, find out God?" Does not the author of Ecclesiastes say "One thing comes alike to all, and that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, as the one dieth so dieth the other, yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity"?

In short, the undateable collection of tracts called the infallible word of God is such a hodge-podge, that texts may be found in it for any and every variety of opinion. The word of God is like Paul, "all things to all men." The Yankee candidate for office is said to have said, "Them's my sentiments, and if you don't like them they can be altered." This is exactly the position the men of God take up in regard to the Bible. It can be accommodated to anything. Their attitude is well depicted in our cartoon of last week. In the face of the exposed errors and contradictions, they can no longer uphold its infallibility, but in lopping this off they remove their own seats. The moment you question the literal accuracy of the word of God, you are on the road to reject the scriptures entirely. Admit a single line of the Bible was not dictated by God, and the authority of the book is overthrown; for by this admission you submit the infallible word of God to the judgment of human

reason, and with the authority of God's word will disappear the authority of God's ministers.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA.

THE Christian world in America, as in almost all other countries, is in a state of ferment. People are everywhere becoming dissatisfied with old creeds, and are showing a strong inclination to break away from the orthodox fold. Heresy cases are common, and heretical opinions are being ventilated among all classes of society, even in the orthodox assemblies. The religious atmosphere is redolent of liberal and Freethought views, so much so, that the old landmarks of the Christian faith are seldom to be found in the realms of modern thought. What the outcome of this progress of scepticism will be it is not difficult to predict. Just as the unsettled state of men's minds in Roman Catholic times was a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation, so the present condition of unrest can but herald a great and tremendous change in the direction of Freethought. The signs of the times are significant, and the impartial observer of the trend of the thought of the present day, will be able to read and interpret them aright. In England this is perhaps more apparent than it is in America, yet in the latter country it is obvious enough, and those who do not see it must be wilfully blind to what is taking place before their eyes. The Briggs heresy case, I find, is far from being settled, and it is but one of many such theological disturbances which indicate clearly the prevalence of advanced Secular views in the orthodox Churches. On account of his heresy, Dr. Briggs was deposed from the ministry of the Presbyterian church, and his appointment to a Professorship, in a nominal Presbyterian college, has been vetoed by the General Assembly of the Church. But heretics occupied his chair, and the result will most likely be the severance of the Seminary from the denomination. This result was foreseen, and it was predicted that it would so affect the funds of the Institution, that it would be compelled to close its doors. The reverse has proved to be the fact, for subscriptions have poured in from all sources, and the financial condition of the college, it is alleged, was never in such a flourishing condition as it is to-day. Nor is there any lack of students who are seeking to train themselves for the Presbyterian ministry under the heretical and tabooed professor, who has himself been declared unfit to preach in consequence of his "infidelity." In this denomination there are hundreds of ministers who both sympathise with Dr. Briggs and entertain the same views as he does. At first it was thought that these would leave and start a new and a more liberal denomination, but, with two or three exceptions, they have decided to remain, and no doubt we shall shortly hear of many more cases of heresy, unless the great Presbyterian Church of America consents to be no longer considered orthodox. The popularity of the views enunciated by Dr. Briggs is clearly shown [in the fact that such leading denominational papers as the *Interior*, of Chicago, and the *New York Evangelist*, have both espoused his cause and defended his position throughout the whole of the controversy. The higher criticism, as it is called, may be considered therefore really to have secured a triumph.

What is this higher criticism? Simply this—that the Pentateuch, now called the Hexateuch [for the book of Joshua is now added to the other five books], was not written by Moses, nor in fact till hundreds of years after his death; that hardly any of the Psalms were written by David, but are the production of a much later age; that many of the so-called prophecies were given after the events described, and that the greater part of those hitherto supposed to predict the coming of a Messiah had no possible reference to Christ; that the book of Isaiah owes its origin to two different men who did not live at the same time; that a large portion of the book of Daniel is not authentic; and that the "inerrancy" (this is the new word now employed for truthfulness) of the Bible can no longer be maintained. In a word this higher criticism alleges that the Bible

abounds in erroneous statements. This is surely a great sceptical advance, and that in a Church that professes to be bound by the "Westminster Confession of Faith." Moreover, that very "Confession" is now undergoing revision by the Presbyterians of America, so it is probable that a new and more liberal creed will be the result.

In Canada the progress does not appear to be so marked as in the United States, yet even there the hard old Scotch Calvinism is fast breaking up. Dr. Grant, the Principal of Queen's University in Kingston, but one of the ablest men in the Presbyterian Church, has espoused the cause of Dr. Briggs, and has stated plainly in some published lectures, delivered to the students of the University, that the Bible abounds in errors. He even went so far as to invite the great, heretic to lecture in the University on that wry question of the "errancy" of the Bible, which lecture was given to the students who listened with profound attention while the orthodox notions in reference to the Bible were condemned.

Among the Methodists in Canada, Dr. Workman, a professor in the Victoria University, two or three years ago delivered a lecture explaining away all the so-called Messianic prophecies, and showing that none of them had any reference to Christ. For this he was removed from his chair in the University, but was neither expelled from the denomination nor deposed from the ministry; and, despite his extreme rationalistic opinions, he remains still a minister in the Church that is supposed to be based upon the teachings of John Wesley. More recently an old opponent of mine, the Rev. A. M. Phillips, preached in Toronto a series of sermons on the Atonement, that might have been delivered in a Unitarian chapel, so heterodox were they in their doctrine. He stated that the Jewish sacrifices were copied from the heathens, that they had no divine sanction, and typified nothing whatever. He explained away completely the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement. The authorities in Methodism took up the matter and appointed a committee to confer with Mr. Phillips and to examine him as to his theological position. They professed themselves quite satisfied with his position, notwithstanding his heresy, and Mr. Phillips, after preaching Unitarianism in a Methodist chapel, was retained as a Methodist minister. It was said at the time that heresy existed to such an extent in this denomination, that had the reverend gentleman been expelled, many others would have left the chapel who were in perfect agreement with him as to the fallacy of old orthodox notions.

One of the ablest men in the Congregational Church in America, is Dr. Lyman Abbot, the successor of Mr. Beecher, and the editor of a paper entitled *The Outlook*, formerly called the *Christian Union*. Dr. Abbot recently delivered a series of lectures on "The Evolution of Christianity," now published in book-form, in which he treats the Christian religion as a natural development of religious thought. He has preached for the Unitarians, and his views seem to differ but little from theirs on most theological points. To the same body belong Munger, Gladdens, and Bradford, all of whom are far from being orthodox. Dr. Heber Newton, author of *The Use and Abuse of the Bible*, still continues to write and preach heresy in the Episcopal Church, despite the remonstrances of the Bishop.

Thus I find during my present visit to Canada and the United States, that Freethought views are making rapid progress on the American continent, not only among the masses, but even in churches reputed to be most orthodox. As in the Old Country, so on the other side of the Atlantic, what was once regarded as Christianity can find but few expounders among really intellectual men. The alleged "divine" faith is being humanised more and more, and the supposed infallible Bible is discovered to be extremely fallible upon most of the questions it treats upon. This to me is very gratifying, for it indicates the approaching disappearance of a theological supremacy that has robbed life of its noblest features; and it heralds the advancement of mankind towards a period of personal dignity and mental freedom.

CHARLES WATTS.

Grand Rapids, Mich., Sept. 21, 1893.

THE EUSEBIAN LITERATURE.

VII.

I PURSUE the Eusebian question a little further, being desirous especially to show that the whole question of Church literature is involved in it. It seems necessary, in consequence of remarks that frequently meet my eye, that I should repeat my leading propositions. The Church literature can no longer be treated as the work of independent witnesses, or recorders of matter-of-fact; that assumption has been hitherto blinding to the student, and utterly baneful to the cause of science.

The Church literature is the result of an organisation of literary men; of the only conceivable organisation of literary men who can have been concerned in the matter: namely, the oldest order of the Christian priesthood. Not a scintilla of evidence has been alleged against these propositions, or is likely to be alleged. When my friends have once digested those propositions, they will understand that it is improper any longer to talk of *my theory* or *my* astounding "views."

It is simply that I have seen, of course in my mind's eye, what any fairly studious person may and must see, if he simply steps behind the scenes of Church story. For it is a scenery, and a drama that we have all been trained to look upon as the representation of an ancient actuality. The illusion has been most powerfully abetted by one of the most eminent Freethinkers of our time, by Ernest Renan. He did not go behind the scenes; he did not suspect the existence of a great stage apparatus and mechanism. For myself, I discovered it by what may be called an accident of studious life.

One of the German critics (I think it was Holtzmann) said a few years ago, that Christianity was from first to last a Book-Religion. Another (I think it was Weiss) flatly contradicted him, saying, "I thank God it was not so!" You cannot say a word upon any subject that interests, but somebody will hysterically contradict you before they know what your meaning is. It reminds me of a chairman at a Lincolnshire meeting of Methodists, who had hardly opened his mouth, before they shouted Hallelujah! He observed, "My friends! wait till you know what I am going to say." It reminds me of a studious young correspondent, who tells me that he was in the company of some learned "infidels," to whom he endeavored to explain Mr. Johnson's opinions; but they absolutely refused to listen to him! The British population is largely composed of—impetuous persons!

The reference to Mr. Symes gives me an opportunity of thanking him for the pains he has taken to make my results known and understood. And here I may interest some of my readers by a not irrelevant mention of another Australian, a veteran in science and letters, a vice-chancellor of Sydney University, with whom I have had the great privilege of holding many (to me) most instructive conversations. On arriving in London he wrote me that he had recently, by some sort of accident, picked up my *Rise of Christendom* in Australia; that he had begun the perusal with the prejudices of "all the world" (such was his phrase); but that he ended with the conviction that I had made out "a very strong case."

The corroboration of my friend was of peculiar value because in years gone by he had studied with the historian Finlay, at Athens, the so-called Byzantine literature, and was perplexed by the fact that a literature alleged to extend over some thousand years was all of one cast. And yet (said my friend) there is no more flexible language than the Greek. He was satisfied with my explanation that this monastic stuff was in fact of one cast, and produced during a comparatively short period.

The name Eusebius recalls that of Constantine; and I wish I could repeat, in his own words, the hints which Dr. — gave me on this subject. "It is hard," he said on one occasion, "to convert the world from a great folly," or words to that effect. However, I shall do my best, in his absence, to give my readers the benefit of all that my friend has taught me. The gratitude I feel towards him can only be understood by

those who know how rare is the virtue which prompts a man of science or letters to come forward and take his stand by the side of the exponent of a new opinion simply because he believes it to be true.

To resume, Christianity is a book-religion, and only bookish men can possibly understand it. I do not, of course, mean men of mere mental maw and memory, but men of judgment, who have given some attention to the probable story of books and libraries, and the transmission of documents from earlier to later times. What can be made of a writer who, after denying that Christianity is a book-religion, offers to the public a volume of many hundred closely-printed pages, full of nothing but bookishness from end to end?

I own that in common with nearly "all the world," I believed that the memory of a beloved teacher lingered long among the humble folk of Syria, and that this memory was the foundation of the tradition which has come down to us. It was this belief which retained me for many years within the Christian Church. I know it now to be unfounded. The whole question resolves itself into the History of Literature; even as the History of Literature resolves itself into that of the writers, printers, and publishers of books.

There can be no doubt that the most powerful minds among us have been hypnotised and stupefied on this question; and only now is the awakening to begin. Let me give the last illustration that occurs to me. I have been reading lately, once more, in the Essays of John Foster, one of the most powerful and least fallacious of English thinkers. He was, indeed, a deep ploughman in certain fields of thought, a most searching sceptic, whose writings, so devout and even awe-stricken in tone as they seem to be, nevertheless undermine Christianity, at least in my opinion. But a doubt never seems to have crossed his mind as to the genuineness of what are alleged to be the Christian records.

John Foster is said to have been born in 1770, and I understand him to say that a great awakening of the mind from a state of long stagnation occurred during about the period 1800—1830. Since Foster's death, there has, we all know, been great intellectual activity, especially in Germany, directed to the solution of the great problem; and the result is acknowledged failure. Why? Simply because the question of the Christian books has been begged from the outset of the inquiry. I should be glad to know any German critic who has set himself to answer without prejudice the questions, *Who wrote the Christian books? Where and in what age of the world were they written?*

I hope these observations may be found useful, in preparation for a new start upon the Eusebian question; and if there be difficulties, or what seem inexplicabilities in the minds of any of my readers, I should be glad to know exactly *what* they are; otherwise I cannot properly meet them. I am doing my best to make myself intelligible, and surely all friends of the truth should act in like manner by me. Mere silence or benevolent neutrality will not content myself nor any one who has really understood the momentous deductions that must be made from the facts I have laid before the public.

I love the calling of the teacher, and would use all my force to persuade the members of my old profession that they can no longer honorably defend this system of ideas. If that be thought a vain endeavor, and if it must come to stern warfare between the sectaries of religions and those of science, I would aid to shorten that warfare, by pointing out to assailants the very heart and citadel of a system of falsehood.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

Willis—"Does your pastor stick to his text when he preaches?" Wallace—"Oh, yes; he sticks to it about an hour and a half, as a rule."

Mr. Bennet is a bright and well-preserved old gentleman, but to his little granddaughter, Mabel, he seems very old indeed. She had been sitting on his knee, and looking at him seriously for some moments one day, when she said, "Grandpa, were you in the Ark?" "Why, no, my dear," gasped her astonished grandparent. Mabel's eyes grew large and round with astonishment. "Then why weren't you drowned?" she asked.

AN OLD MIRACLE (*Numerically*) CONSIDERED.

"And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers" (Numbers xi. 31-32). We are here given to understand that the wrathful Boss of all Israel, in a fit of anger (because his famishing people desired a change of diet, although he had promised twelve months previously that they should have a supply of flesh every evening, and manna every morning (Exodus xvi. 12-13), deluged with quails an area of 4,000 square miles to a height of 3 feet from the ground. Dishonest commentators of the Adam Clarke kidney, misrepresent the area as being 24 miles in radius, and that the quails came down and flew about at a distance of 3 feet from the ground. But their object always was to reconcile impossibilities and to make falsehoods appear truths.

Let us see. A days day's journey is 24 scriptural miles of over 10 furlongs each, and is equivalent to 33 English miles. Adding to these 33 miles—say 2½ miles more to allow from the centre to the skirt of the camp—and we have a radius of 35½ miles. But as this distance extends in every direction (around a square encampment covering an area of 20 or 30 square miles), we get an area of 71 miles long by 71 miles broad, that is, 4,000 square miles, after making due allowance for the space occupied by the camp itself, or 12,185,958,400 square yards. These are covered by 15,485 million cubic yards of quails. The quail resembles the partridge in color, and is about as large as a blackbird, starling, snipe, or the thrush, and its solid contents would not vary much from 6 cubic inches; therefore a cubic yard of quails would contain $\frac{27 \times 1,728}{6} = 7,776$.

This enables us to compute, pretty accurately, the total Godsend at $12,185,958,400 \times 7,776 = 94,758,012,518,400$, or, in round numbers, at 95 billions. Again, assuming 4 quails to 1 pound avoirdupois, we arrive at the gross weight thus: $94,758,012,518,400 \div 2,240 \times 4 = 10,575,621,040$ tons. This weight, divided amongst the 3,000,000 Israelites, would be an allowance of 3,525 tons for each man, woman, and child. How's that for pressure? And again, supposing 3 per cent. of this weight was feathers, there would be an ample quantity to furnish every individual with 4,230 full-sized feather beds of 56 pounds weight each. And further, if all these unquestionable quantities of quails were laid out in single file, head to tail, allowing each bird to measure 6 inches in length and 6 inches in girth round the breast, they would reach 358,932 times round the earth; and the sum of the files would form a belt 11½ miles broad. Thus, $\frac{94,758,012,518,400}{6 \times 1,760 \times 25,000} = 358,932$, and $\frac{358,932}{6 \times 3 \times 1,760} = 11\frac{1}{2}$. But

as there were 4 acres to every 5 persons, the task of picking up all the lot in a reasonable time was a thousand times beyond all possibility. Yet even on this occasion the Jews verified their notoriety for avarice, for we are told that 10 homers was the least quantity anyone gathered. We shall now calculate how much the average Jew packed into his capacious bags. A homer is 75 gallons, and of course 10 homers are 750 gallons. This quantity would be sufficient to load 10 or 12 costermonger's barrows. But we may safely assume that the average take was double the least—this would be 1,500 gallons—a quantity that would occupy a person two days and one night (allowing a few hours for rest and refreshment) in gathering them at the rate of 45 per minute—and this is the only reconcileable feature in the whole story. No person with a due regard to justice and truth, can read the cruel motives that induced Jehovah to perform this supposed stupendous miracle, without wondering why the Christians have adopted for a God this despicable and disgusting deity.

You may search mythology through and round
But a dirtier deity can never be found.

While for falsehood and filth, the Bible is the book of all books.

P. W. BALDWIN.

Teacher (to class of boys)—"What do you understand by *divers diseases*?" Snaffles—"Bad colds, sir."

ACID DROPS.

The *Methodist Times* damns "the filthy stuff by which M. Zola disgraced his genius some years ago." "Filthy" as it is, we dare say the Methody critic has read every word of it. The pious denouncers of "filth" have generally a pretty extensive knowledge of the article. But as they have presumably read also the blue, purple, and black parts of the Bible, it is wonderful how they manage to work up so much indignation. Plain-spoken as he is, Zola is always a stern moralist; he shows vice in all its hideousness, and depicts its natural retribution. But where is the moral of the story of Lot and his daughters, of Judah and Tamar, of the Levite and his concubine, or of the jealousy trial in the fifth of Numbers? Besides, no one proposes to put Zola into the hands of children, whereas the Bible is forced upon them in the public schools.

The Methody critic rejoices that "if any scoundrel presumes to publish Zola's earlier works in this country he will forthwith be clapped into prison." Well, why not serve the publishers of the Bible in the same way? Ferocious virtue should at least be impartial.

Mr. J. Mawdsley, the leader of the Lancashire cotton operatives, has been provoked by Archdeacon Wilson, of Rochdale, into some vigorous denunciation of the sky-pilots. He says he may be ignorant, and unfit for his post, but he is able to "reckon up the hypocritical humbugs who pass as spiritual leaders," and he promises them "a short shrift" when "the workers recognise their power."

Black champions of Christianity are getting quite common in England. One of them is Charles Higgins, who on Sunday last was holding forth in Hyde Park. Some disturbance took place, as appears to be usual at this evangelist's meetings, and Mr. B. H. Pointon received proofs upon his face of Higgins's muscular Christianity, after which he was hustled by the crowd and robbed of fifteen shillings. The sequel was the black champion's appearance at Marlborough-street Police-court, where Mr. Newton ordered him to pay £3 or go to prison for a month. This is what a black evangelist gets for "trying to conduct a Christian meeting."

St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, was thrown into a great commotion on Sunday evening. Monday morning's papers told of a "dastardly outrage" and an explosion with a "terrific report." They also praised the cool courage of one of the Franciscan fathers who was preaching. This man of God averted a panic which might have resulted in a fearful loss of life. But lo and behold, the "explosive" turns out to have been a cracker, thrown into the cathedral by a couple of small boys. This is what frightened that pious congregation. They were in the very presence of God, nay, safe in the everlasting arms; but they were frightened, yea, miserably frightened, by a cracker! Such is the sustaining power of religion!

During the sitting of the Parliament of Religions, Prof. Briggs has been lecturing at Chicago on the errancy of the Bible, showing the old book makes mistakes in science, history and philosophy. Altogether orthodox Christianity is hardly likely to profit by the assembly of a Religious Parliament.

Another delegate, Dharmapala, a Buddhist from Calcutta, asked the Parliament of Religions how many of them had read the life of Buddha. Five hands were held up, four of them women, who were perhaps thinking Sir E. Arnold's *Light of Asia* was meant. "Five only," said the Buddhist; "yet you dare to judge nearly five hundred millions of people. You preach a God of love," he continued, "but in your actions you are selfish. You make of an ignorant or unsophisticated man a perfect hypocrite. You have used the story of a life-crushing, bloody Juggernaut to secure the means to save alleged heathens. Juggernaut has been popularised by Christian missionaries, and yet a committee composed of eminent Englishmen has declared that the Christian idea of Juggernaut was a myth, that death and blood were repulsive to our people. This Christian story has been exploded. It has gone into oblivion."

Dr. Adolf Brodbeck, one of the German delegates to the Parliament should stay over to the Congress of Freethinkers.

He proclaimed that the only religion now worth considering was the service of humanity, and expressed his non-belief in any future personal immortality. He calls himself a humanitarian. He was not permitted to finish his discourse, as acceptance of godism and immortality of some sort was considered the parliamentary basis.

Canon Fisher, of Bournemouth, has been exceedingly shocked. "Only a fortnight since," he says, "on his way to church on Sunday morning, a boy offered him a newspaper for sale! Steady, concerted action must be taken," he adds, "to put that kind of thing down." And he states the reason why, too. Already, according to him, "the sea and cliffs are tempting enough to keep many persons from church, and they did not want Sunday newspapers to increase the temptation." Probably the worthy canon, when he said this, did not fully appreciate what his contention implies. In effect, he suggests that it is bad enough for the clergy of Bournemouth to have to contend against the rival attractions which the Creator has provided outside the churches, but that with Sunday newspapers also in the field against them the clerical case would be hopeless indeed. Against God Almighty and the newsagent combined, in short, how can even the most eloquent dignitaries of the Church hope to hold their own?—*Truth*.

The Catholic Church at Dover had fifty pounds' worth of communion plate. The officials are now looking about for it. The thief who went off with the sacred silver cares more for the police than he does for the Devil.

Fifty pounds' worth of silver plate would have made Judas Iscariot's mouth water. All he got for selling Jesus Christ was thirty half-crowns—£3 15s. It was a beggarly price for God Almighty.

The Sergeant-major at Hamilton has given orders that the wife of a man, who is on the married establishment, shall attend church on Sunday. *Truth* says there is nothing in the regulations respecting the attendance of Mrs. T. Atkins at church, and unless the Sergeant-major is prepared to mind the baby, his edict should be rescinded.

A pamphlet containing the report of a nice scandal in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church at Calcutta reaches us from India. Joseph Obadiah, of the London Mission, whose wife was a teacher under the Zenana Mission, accuses the Rev. Sarbanda Dass, a Hindu convert and minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Diamond Harbor, of adultery with the said wife, the accused being himself a married man. The proceedings, as may be imagined, form a very edifying scandal. Some warm love letters are published and counter-charges made. Even the witnesses seem tarred. One who was inspector of schools under the Christian Vernacular Society, admitted he was dismissed for drunkenness. If Obadiah and Dass are representative Christians, the natives must have a low opinion of Christian morality.

In Bombay also the missionaries have a little scandal, the Rev. Clarence Arthur Ellis, European manager of the Bombay depot of the Church Missionary Society being accused of failing to account for the sum of 1,200 rupees, which he should have handed over to the Rev. W. G. Peal, secretary of the Society.

Cow worship in India has had its uses. Agriculture being carried on by oxen, it has prevented depopulation by wholesale slaughter in times of famine. The sacred animal has, however, been the occasion of many disturbances and disputes, and the Cow Protection Society that has been formed throughout India is likely to spread the bad feeling already existing between Mohammedans and Hindus.

The Sunday League's recent excursion to Plymouth is described by the *Western Morning News* as being "in defiance of the laws of nature and of God." Our Sabbatarian contemporary is no authority on either branch of this subject. Anyhow, it need not play the hypocrite, by preparing a paper on Sunday to be sold on Monday morning, and then denouncing people who seek a little amusement on the same day.

"An Atheist's suicide" was a heading in the papers one evening last week. A dozen other suicides were

recorded at the same time, but the reports were not headed "A Churchman's suicide," "A Baptist's suicide," "A Catholic's suicide," and so forth. As so many Christians take their own lives, it may be that the newspapers are past noticing it; while, from the novelty of the thing, they give an Atheist's suicide a special headline.

Pious magistrates are always the severest, and the justices who at Kendal last week sent a man to fourteen days' imprisonment with hard labor for begging a small sum, to obtain a bed, were prominent members of the Quaker and Plymouth Brethren sects.

The Rev. Edward Henry Elliott, who is only thirty-five, but a confirmed inebriate, has been committed to prison for a month at Wolverhampton.

The solicitor who represented the clergyman charged with seducing Alice Sarah Hockley, a servant at the Metropolitan Asylum, where the clergyman is supposed to be chaplain, had undertaken to pay 2s. 6d. per week for the child's maintenance pending the adjournment of the case for a month.

Two prominent members of the Salvation Army at Rochdale have eloped, and are supposed to be now in America. The man has left a wife and a boy of eight, whose money-box he emptied before his departure.

A servant girl having recently come from a very quiet situation to one a great deal quieter, where nothing of an exciting nature was transpiring, remarked to her mistress: "This is an awfu' quate place; it's terrible dull; there's nae fun ava—no' even the Salvation Army."

Twenty women preachers have been showing the inferior sex how to thump the pulpit gracefully at Cardiff. When the ladies take to the black business, the third sex will have to go. But they must first get a revised version of Paul's injunction, "I suffer not women to speak in the churches."

Miss Bickersteth, the authoress of *Japan as we Saw it*, is the daughter of one bishop and the sister of another. She gives a nice specimen of her own training in her book. After the earthquake of Nagoya, she quotes the following with obvious approval: "It is a fact that gives one a feeling of awe that of the Christians sprinkled amongst this number so few were killed, so few wounded, and so few suffered in any way. In many cases theirs were marvellous instances of escape. Houses left standing when all around were in ruins, so as to cause the heathen themselves to make comments as to why this should be so. We are bound to acknowledge that God took care of his own." What a dear old God! He has no concern for the Japanese till they get dipped in the name of himself, his son, and the pigeon.

"The missionaries make trouble wherever they go." Such is the testimony of Sir Lepel Griffin before the Opium Commission.

In the North West Province of India, there is said to be a tombstone inscribed, "Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Blank, who, after twenty years' unwearied labor as a missionary, was accidentally shot by his attendant, Kitnagar. *Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*"

The Sculcoates (Hull) Board of Guardians had before them last week the case of a young girl, aged 17, a member of the Young Women's Bible Class connected with St. Mary's Air, St. Hull. A married man, one eminent in the church and a Sunday school visitor, seduced her, and having a poor home, she was obliged to ask the guardians for temporary shelter. A postcard was read which had been received from her betrayer, offering to meet her mother in church to arrange matters, to avoid scandal. The Vigilance Society made the vicar acquainted with the case, but he desired it to be hushed up, and the name of the girl's betrayer has not been published, though it is freely canvassed in the district.

The Rev. John Hunt, of Thornton Heath, is a muscular Christian who doesn't turn the other cheek to an antagonist. He got into a row with an Oxford-street jeweller, and told him "if you put your hand on me, I will trim you round the shop."

Our pious contemporary, the *Record*, regards the demise of the *National Reformer* as a "proof that the type of Atheism of which Mr. Bradlaugh was so tireless a propagandist is losing ground." It is really nothing of the kind. The Freethought cause is as lively as ever, and better organised, and the *Freethinker*, at any rate, is a long way off its funeral. If the *Record* were better acquainted with the Freethought party, it would know that its journals depend very much on the personality of its conductors. Good writing alone is not sufficient. A Freethought paper, to succeed, must be directed and pushed by a man of high standing and great influence in the party. Charles Bradlaugh's paper was Charles Bradlaugh's paper. It was bound to die when he left it. That it has lasted so long is a proof of the force of his personality and the devotion of his followers.

There must be changes in a fighting party like ours. Our success is not to be judged by one fact or a few facts. It is to be judged by a general survey of our movement. This is a test which we may stand with more than serenity—with cheerfulness.

The Liberty and Property Defence League sends us a batch of tracts, amongst them being one by Lord Halsbury, which is headed, "Security of Contract, Freedom of Labor, and the Right of Private Judgment." The last clause is exceptionally good. Lord Halsbury is just the right man to hold forth on the right of private judgment. As Sir Hardinge Giffard, he baited Mr. Bradlaugh for years, doing all the dirtiest work of the bigots. He also prosecuted Mr. Foote, and besought the jury to defend their holy religion by the strong arm of the law. We congratulate the League on its "liberty" champion.

The Rev. Canon Smith, vicar of Swansea, has been preaching at the parish church from the text "His strange work" (Is. xxviii. 21). He instanced the Bank Holiday accident at Aberavon, the railway disasters at Treforest, the drownings at Horton, and a number of similar calamities as proofs of God's "strange work." Strange work, indeed, and a stranger deity. Strangest still that men should meet to praise the author of their misfortunes. Canon Smith recognises that faith is founded on fear, and to get God properly revered he must be put forward in his old character of Devil.

The Portsmouth people have had a visit from the Catholic Truth Society, and Canon Foran has been telling the people "They needed the presence of monks and nuns in these evil days, that they might keep shining before them the high ideal of Christian perfection." Across the water, at Gosport, Miss Ellen Golding, the Rescued Nun, was at the same time detailing her sufferings during twenty-five years' enforced convent life. Immorality, disgusting language and poisoning goes on, she declares, within the convent walls, and she believes her own life was only spared because a sum was paid for her that would cease on her death. The Rev. C. Tanner moved a resolution that provision should be made for the registration and inspection of nunneries in the United Kingdom, which was carried unanimously.

We do not suppose nunneries are the filthy places described by Aretino, but certainly the nuns are not always as innocent as supposed. A patient in a foreign hospital had brought to him a pack of cards to beguile the tedious hours with Russian patience, a game played *solus*, of which, by the way, M^{de} Blavatsky was very fond. A nun entered, and demanded the cards. He refused to give them up, whereupon she said she believed they were transparent obscene cards. The patient, a foreign Freethinker, who told this himself, fired up, and said he was not acquainted with such articles, though evidently she was.

America boasts one more Messiah, in the person of Mr. Henry B. Foulke. He says "John the Baptist was a forerunner of Christ. Madame Blavatsky was a reincarnation of John the Baptist," and she has pronounced Mr. Foulke the new Messiah. Foulke was president of the Krishna branch of the Theosophical Society at Philadelphia. The *Boston Globe* devotes over three columns to an interview with the crank. Among other things, he said "Blavatsky, as we all know, was a man. She had the exterior form of a woman, but she could never have married and borne children. In all her manners, habits, actions, she was a man. She smoked cigarettes. She was impudent and vulgar. She had bad habits. But, in spite of it all, her's was a divine

mission." There can be no doubt of this, since she chose Foulke as her successor.

The *Standard* of Sept. 29 gave a very interesting article on the little-known sect of Yezidis, or Devil-worshippers of Mesopotamia. These people, with an eye to the power that can do them most harm, pay their adoration to Satan. They keep at their temple seven white cows dedicated to Sheikh Shems, that is the sun, and the building to which they are attached is known as "The Sanctuary of the White Cow." They have a Bible which only one family is allowed to read—as *cohens* only read in the Jewish Synagogues. Their service is held at night in a huge cave. Their emblem is the peacock, which they say was the form in which the fallen angel tempted Eve in Paradise, and it is through a peacock Satan will regain his position in heaven.

The service witnessed by the writer in the *Standard*, was the initiation of a novice into the order. He had been kept like Moses, Elijah, and Jesus fasting forty days, and was laid at the foot of the altar beside the dead body of a brother, whose place he was to take. Raised by the priests, he prostrates himself before a bronze peacock, and is put in a mendicant's robe, with one black cord round his waist, and another round his neck. This cable tow must never leave him, and is buried with him. He then passes before the others, all of whom spit in his face. He then lights a wick, and passes it round; the procession is reformed, and the party emerge to daylight where, when the Yezidis see the peacock, they fall prostrate upon the ground, uttering a shriek which re-echoes through the valley.

While the Archbishop of York was preaching at the Chapel of Ease, Liverpool-road, Islington, last Sunday evening, a terrible groaning noise was heard, and suddenly a sash was lifted and a skeleton's head and shoulders appeared at the window. Several ladies fainted and had to be carried from the church. The attendants rushed outside to the graveyard to find the skeleton, but it had vanished. Perhaps old Lazarus has come back again.

Another panic has occurred at a Jewish synagogue in Warsaw. A false alarm of fire was raised, and a stampede ensued, in which eleven women were injured and a child was suffocated. Woe to the weak! when religious people are striving to keep out of heaven.

Providence means business at Misson, in Nottinghamshire. Three months ago the Vicar, the Rev. F. W. Keene, was injured by lightning, and his life was despaired of. He recovered, however, and went off for a holiday. On the very day of his return home his church was struck by lightning and half destroyed. He arrived in the evening to find his gospel-shop an utter wreck. Something will have to be done to put Providence in a good temper, or Parson Keene will have to follow Jonah's example and flee from the presence of the Lord.

During a heavy thunderstorm, the church at Pinchbeck, near Spalding, Lincolnshire, was struck by lightning, and fire was set to the timbers of the roof of the tower under the lead covering. God should protect his own houses better.

Harvest Thanksgiving Services have, as usual, been all the rage lately. The sky-pilots do nothing for the harvest, but they chip in at the finish as though they had benevolently superintended the whole business. Even the Salvation Army goes in for its share of the pickings. At Douglas, Isle of Man, the Salvationists advertise that they "want" a lot of things for their Harvest Festival. The list includes over a hundred items, and among them are "gold" and "watches." We did not know that the farmers grew such articles.

St. John's-wood Chapel is supported by the Marylebone Vestry. The Sunday attendance varies from seven to fifty, the pew rents yield £4 10s. a year, and the gas bill is nearly double that amount. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Church Committee recommends the vestry to reduce the salary of the incumbent to one guinea per annum, which is evidently considered to be a guinea more than he is worth. Of course the Bishop of London declines to interfere. The time will come when there will be no necessity for his inter-

vention. Everybody knows that the dear old Church of England is doomed.

"A modern philosopher," the *Christian World* says "has complained that if the Archangel Gabriel were seen flying near the earth, some one would try to shoot him." Very likely; and the sporting parsons would be on the job. It would be awkward for Gabriel. But how much worse it would be if the Paraclete were flying about as it was at the baptism of Jesus. Fancy a fatal pot shot, and the third person of the Trinity figuring in a pigeon pie! It is too awful to contemplate.

High Church and Low Church have vied to make the black Congress at Birmingham a big affair. But after all the public have little concern with the clerical palaver. Whether advocating episcopal extension or condemning the Parish Councils Bill, they make it evident it is their own interests with which they are chiefly concerned.

The *Birmingham Daily Mail* gives some of the humors of the preparations for the Church Congress. The clergy were anxious to find hosts, but some are very particular. One reverend gentleman made a personal inspection of as many as 150 houses where he might have been entertained, but none came up to his standard. Another took exception to the design on the toilet service. In one case a man of God said he should not attend the evening meetings, but go to the theatre instead. Another wrote: "I shall not care to attend any of the evening meetings, and dinner at 7.30, is just what I should like."

Henry S. Cochran, chief weigher at the Philadelphia Mint, has stolen 134,000 dollars' worth of bullion during the last five years. He was a trustee of the First Presbyterian Church, and took part in Salvation Army meetings.

Dr. MacKenzie, having to give evidence in Caerphilly Police-court, objected to kiss the Book. He said it was dirty. The clerk asked him if he wished to swear like a Scotchman by holding up his hand. Dr. MacKenzie said he would rather affirm, but the clerk replied that he could not do so, having previously stated that he had no religious objection to the oath. "Kiss the book and finish with it," said the Bench, whereupon the doctor kissed the "dirty" volume, and went on with his evidence. It is getting pretty well time to abolish the oath altogether.

The recent discussion between Dr. Clifford and the Rev. J. Urquhart on the "inerrancy" of scripture has brought a number of solicited letters to the *Christian Commonwealth*. Among them is one from the Rev. Archibald G. Brown, who says the Bible is infallible in every word. "Faith in Christ and doubt about the Pentateuch," he says, "is impossible." Dr. Adamson, on the other hand, says "there are lies in the Bible," and Prof. Sayce that Oriental archæology is dead against the infallibilists; the Assyrian inscriptions, for instance, having shown that "the chronology of the book of Kings is hopelessly wrong."

Dr. Parker takes part in the discussion indirectly. Speaking directly, he never discusses; he dogmatizes. It is safer. In the course of his last sermon at the City Temple he remarked, with touching imbecility, that the Bible expert he honored was his mother! After that he melted into gush about the "dear, sweet old book." But in a lucid interval he observed that, "What used to be called infidelity outside is now called the higher criticism inside." Dr. Parker's advice is "Give the Bible time." We say ditto. "Give it time!" It is found out already by thousands, and in "time" it will be found out by millions.

St. Mary's, Balham, is advertising for a new Church school teacher. It takes 6d. per week from all pupils, and offers the munificent sum of £55 a year!

What is the matter with Tom Mann? He is privately reputed to be a Freethinker, but he seems to think it pays to coquet with religion. Recently, at Westbourne-park Chapel, he talked about a "shocking materialism" which the labor movement threatened to develop. Is there any more "shocking materialism" than pandering to what you don't believe for the sake of success?

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 8, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :—
11.15, "What to do with the House of Lords" (free). At 7,
"The Daybreak of Humanity" (free; reserved seats 6d. and 3d.)
Thursday, October 12, Gladstone Club, 43 Grange-road,
Bermondsey, at 8, "Christ and Democracy."

October 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.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Nov. 12, Town Hall,
Birmingham; 19, Manchester; 26, Birmingham. Dec. 3 and
10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Birmingham.—All com-
munications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply
is required a stamped and addressed envelope must be
enclosed) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.
- T. ELLIOTT.—Thanks for the information. Branches ought
not to let unknown and untried persons lecture for them.
- A. DUNDAS.—Cuttings are always welcome. We note your
suggestion.
- X. Y. Z.—Readers do us a service by sending newspaper
cuttings on which we can found a paragraph.
- J. KNEEN.—Glad to find our Douglas Head lecture has brought
the N.S.S. at least one new member from Douglas. Some
day or other the experiment may be repeated. We are not
acquainted with the Mr. Lees you refer to. Miss Vance
will forward your member's certificate.
- A. REYNOLDS.—See paragraph.
- J. WIGELSWORTH.—Pleased that you think our Summer Number
"grand." See "Acid Drops."
- J. HARKIS.—See paragraph.
- F. A. DAVIES, writing from Dover, which he says is entirely
given over to Beer and Bible, throws a little light upon Dr.
A. J. Harrison's attitude towards the Thirty-nine Articles.
Dr. Harrison stated at Exeter Hall, in reply to Mr. Davies,
that he had sworn adherence to the Articles, but he did not
believe them.
- ST. JOHN.—Apply to the Principal Librarian in writing for a
reading ticket for the British Museum Library.
- C. MASKELL.—Not worth attention.
- T. LEWINGTON.—Any manual of Astronomy will give you the
information. The stars were not "brought there," so there
is no necessity to discuss "who brought them?"
- E. T. NICHOLL.—See paragraph.
- H. COURTNEY.—Such scurrilous leaflets may be galling, but it
was always the fate of our party to be libelled. We do not
believe that such leaflets do us any real injury; their malign-
ity is so obvious to anyone who has a reasonable share of
brains; and persons below that standard are not likely to
become Freethinkers. It is well to cultivate a spirit of
philosophical indifference to the rancor of the fanatics of
the gospel of charity.
- G. SCOTT.—You are not a member of the Battersea Branch. We
prefer official reports of such matters.
- P. WHELAN.—Shall appear.
- W. TIPPIN.—The Watts-Marchant debate has not been pub-
lished. Mr. Foote lectures at Newcastle on Nov. 26. Glad
to hear your newsagent (at Stocksfield) will display the
Freethinker.
- J. G. BARTRAM.—See paragraph.
- J. BARNES.—Thanks for getting your newsagent to display a
contents-sheet. Mr. Forder will attend to the rest.
- N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:
D. Baker, £1 1s.
- R. LAWRIE.—Inserted. We regret the necessity.
- J. SKINNER.—Shall appear.
- W. H. CHEESMAN.—All right; fire away. But we don't recol-
lect discussing with you on Miracles. When and where
did it take place? We are open to learn.
- J. WOOD.—Shakespeare's will was doubtless drawn up by an
attorney, who began with the usual pious flourish. It was
universal in those days. A glance at the wills of eminent
religious men of the same age will show the difference
between a mere form and a definite expression of Christian
belief. After a careful study of Shakespeare's writings, and
writings about him, we are convinced that he was no
Christian.
- W. M. KNOX.—Next week.
- T. MAY.—Will try to find room.
- L. THWAITES.—Mrs. Besant is not a Spiritist. The nonsense
you refer to is beneath contempt. Your father's death was
public news, and the Spiritists are making use of it accord-
ing to their wont. They brought up Charles Bradlaugh's
ghost at a Birmingham séance, so your father's ghost is
in good company.
- LECTURE NOTICES, ETC., should be written on postcards or
the envelopes marked outside, and be sent to 14 Clerkenwell-
green, London, E.C.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a
reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply
stands over till the following week.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—
Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel
—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming
Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—
Lucifer—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Tablet—
Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—
La Vérité Philosophique—Ironclad Age—Church Reformer
—Clevedon Mercury—Birmingham Daily Mail—Standard—
Boston Globe—Allahabad Pioneer—Glasgow Weekly Herald
—Weekly Bulletin—Sun—Marylebone Mercury.

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THE HALL OF SCIENCE SCHEME.

It will be remembered that Mr. George Anderson
promised to give £300 if the number of shares in the
National Secular Hall Society (Limited) were made up
to 3,000 by the end of July. The following corres-
pondence relates to this matter.

14 Clerkenwell-green, E.C.
Sept. 14, '93.

DEAR SIR,—I was sorry to have to inform you that we were
unable to make up the number of shares in the Hall of Science
scheme to 3,000 by the end of July, which was the condition
of your offer to give the sum of £300. You are aware, how-
ever, that we very considerably increased our share capital
under the stimulus of your promise. I think you will also
admit that we labored under heavy disadvantages; such, for
instance, as the phenomenal fine weather, so greatly prolonged,
which played havoc with indoor meetings, and the numerous
commercial failures, by which many of our people suffered
severe financial injury. In the circumstances, therefore, I
venture to ask you to extend your offer to February. This
would enable me, during the more fruitful winter months, to
continue my appeal to the Freethought party with a reasonable
prospect of complete success.—Yours truly,
G. Anderson, Esq. G. W. FOOTE.

Sept. 17, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—In answer, I fully recognise that the causes you
state must have interfered with the taking of shares. In
looking over the list of shareholders, I find that very few have
taken more than ten shares—only three ran up to a hundred
each; from which I judge that many of Mr. Bradlaugh's more
wealthy friends have not yet responded.

Two things, I think, should be done. Have the matter
brought before the more wealthy friends of Freethought as
soon as gentlemen have returned from summer resorts; also,
the money will only be required when building operations
begin, which cannot be this year, and as numerous share-
holders have only taken one to five shares, I feel that many of
these will increase their holdings.

I estimate that the building operations will require between
two and three thousand pounds, if proper advantage is to be
taken of providing good cellarage, which is most necessary to
a public institution, besides which there are the payments to
be made to the late tenant from whom we purchased; so that
if we are to start free of debt we ought doubtless to have a sub-
scribed capital of four thousand pounds before we begin
building.

I am willing to give you the further time you ask, namely,
till end of February, 1894, on condition that by that time you
have 4,000 shares taken, and a sum of 2s. 6d. paid on each
share taken between now and then.

I trust that you may be successful, and that by Christmas,
1894, the friends of Charles Bradlaugh will be able to sit down
in their renovated Hall where his voice was so eloquently
heard so often.—Yours truly,
G. W. Foote, Esq. GEORGE ANDERSON.

After thanking Mr. Anderson for the extension of
his offer, I have to ask the Freethought party to see
that it is not lost. Next week's *Freethinker* will
contain, in every copy, a prospectus with a share-
application form. In the meanwhile, let every Free-
thinker settle what he can do, and let him fill up the
application form next week. It is highly desirable
that the rebuilding should be begun in the spring.
G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Shoreditch Town Hall is only a few minutes' walk from the Hall of Science, and on Sunday evening last the Sunday League began its winter season there. Despite this counter attraction, Mr. Foote had another splendid audience. Mr. Forder presided, and announced that a collection would be taken up for the locked-out miners' wives and children, an object to which the N.S.S. Executive, though short of funds, had voted one guinea. After the collection, which realised £4 17s., there was a little discussion. Mr. Foote delivers the fourth and last lecture of this special course this evening (Oct. 8), his subject being, "The Daybreak of Humanity." Freethinkers should make an extra effort to bring their Christian friends on this occasion. We hope to see the hall packed in every corner.

The Sunday morning free lectures at the London Hall of Science opened with a capital audience, and the collection was far above the average. Mr. Foote lectured on "The Coal Strike and its Lessons." Mr. R. O. Smith presided. Mr. Foote lectures again this morning (Oct. 8) on "What to do with the House of Lords."

The Bradlaugh birthday celebration at the London Hall of Science was to have been reported in the *Daily Chronicle*, but somehow no notice appeared. We suspect it was "barked." However, a good report appeared in the *Morning Leader*, and was reproduced in an abbreviated form in the *Sun* and other journals.

Mr. Charles Watts sails from New York in the "Alaska" on October 28, and he will arrive in Liverpool about Nov. 4 or 5. His first lecture after his return will be in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday, November 12.

The *Boston Investigator* has a good article on the Congress now sitting in Chicago, which it hopes will make no attempt at alliance with any Christian bodies which may fall in with its items of a free Sunday, and church taxation. It says: "We must recognise that Christianity as a religious faith is back of every religious evil which we are trying to correct, and it seems to us to be the shortest and surest way to reformation to destroy the faith in which these evils flourish." He concludes with the hope that "whatever else the Congress does, it will declare itself anti-Christian." In this the good old *Investigator* certainly voices the opinion of the immense majority of English and Continental Freethinkers, and a certain half-heartedness which characterised the American Secular Union when its headquarters were at Philadelphia, rendered it necessary that thus much should be said.

Senor Adolfo Maglia, whom we met at Paris in '89, and on his visit to London in the following year, when he was under sentence for blasphemy, is, we notice, the representative of several of the most important Spanish Freethought Societies at the International Congress at Chicago. Senor Maglia has made many sacrifices for the cause of progress in Spain, and we are pleased to note he is put forward in such a representative capacity.

The Wolverhampton Branch holds its annual meeting this evening (Oct. 8) at 7, at the Midland Tramway Coffee House, 35 Snow-hill. Every member should attend. Arrangements are to be made for a good winter's propaganda, and for co-operation with the Birmingham Branch.

South London friends will note that Mr. Foote lectures on Sunday, Oct. 15, at the Camberwell Secular Hall on "A Search for the Soul." It is a long time since his previous visit to Camberwell, and it will be some time before he can visit it again.

Freethought propaganda has of late been carried on vigorously at Wimbledon, and a Branch of the N.S.S. has been established there. The open-air lectures by Mr. James Rowney, Mr. Harry Courtney, and others, have caused a good deal of excitement. The local *Independent* has given fair reports and comments. The Christian opposition, as we see from the reports, is too apt to take the shape of singing as near as possible to the Freethinkers;

Mr. Harry Courtney, who was ill some time ago, is now completely recovered and "on the war path." On Sunday he lectured at Wimbledon, and disposed of every copy of the *Freethinker* he took with him. By means of collections at his meetings, Mr. Courtney has been able to send £2 13s. 6d. to the miners' relief fund.

The Aberdeen Branch has been quiescent during the late phenomenal summer, but it is waking up again, and we hope the members will attend the new course of Sunday evening lectures. Mr. John Harkis, secretary, 38 Spittal, will be glad to hear from members in arrear with their subscriptions.

The Newcastle Branch has lost the services of Mr. Forrest as secretary, his employment have necessitated his removal to Durham. The members should muster in strong force at the monthly meeting, on Oct. 29, to elect a new secretary. Meanwhile they should note that the Sunday evening lectures are resumed, and made as attractive as possible. Mr. Foote visits Newcastle at the end of November, and he hopes to find that the members have rallied round the committee and begun a good winter's work.

The Pope, having refused to recognise the right of the King of Italy to nominate the Patriarch of Venice, the Italian government has decided to refuse its exequatur to the Bishops nominated at the Papal Consistories. Pecci ought to know, that in quarreling with the Italian government, he is the earthen pot jolting against the metal one.

The new Hall of Science Debating Class met at 142 Old-street, E.C., on Monday evening, when Mr. Geo. Standing opened a discussion on "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" It was spirited and adjourned. On Monday evening next it will be resumed by Mr. Garton, who will open from the Individualist's standpoint. Members of the N.S.S. are invited to attend and take part in the discussion.

Next Thursday (Oct. 12) Mr. Foote lectures on "Christ and Democracy" at the Gladstone Club, 43 Grange-road, Bermondsey. The bigots have tried, but failed, to prevent the use of the Club hall by the Freethinkers. Mr. Foote's lecture will be followed by others during the winter season.

An adjourned meeting of the Finsbury Park Branch will be held at 11 Blackstock-road, Finsbury Park, on Friday, October 6, at eight o'clock. Members are requested to attend, as important matters have to be discussed affecting the welfare of the Branch.

Mr. George Anderson sends us a letter he has received from a soldier at Colchester, who has been reading some of the Freethought literature which Mr. Anderson has had forwarded to warships and barracks. The writer styles himself an aggressive Atheist. He finds the *Bible Handbook* very useful in discussion with Christians. With respect to Mr. Foote's *Letters to Jesus Christ*, he says:—"I could not help feeling amused with his wit, as well as struck by his lucid and powerful reasoning. He is a sort of smiling whirlwind to Christianity."

Will Christ Save Us? was to have been ready at the end of August, but it was unavoidably delayed. The sheets are now in the binder's hands, and the pamphlet will be on sale next week with the *Freethinker*. Besides the articles which appeared in these columns, the pamphlet contains about as much fresh matter. The whole is carefully written, and Mr. Foote intends to send out press copies, just to see whether the old conspiracy of silence is still unbroken.

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.

PARABLES OF HEAVEN.

I HAVE always been curious about heaven. Partly to satisfy this curiosity and partly to seek a little diversion from mere earthly affairs, I lately turned up the parables of Jesus on this subject. I found them very entertaining, though Jesus left me more mystified than he found me. Considering that he must have spent some considerable time in heaven, his information is meagre and confusing. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

There is more of it, but it only goes to show that, after all, the kingdom of heaven is very similar to the earthly kingdom. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which is indeed the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree."

It would be distressing to find heaven so small, were it not for the cheering reflection that it will grow. It may, in fact, become a tree—a mustard tree. Should, therefore, some stray sceptic get, accidentally as it were, to heaven, he may, I presume, be scripturally regarded as "up a tree." It is, of course, very desirable that this subject should be treated reverently, and, lest we should forget such an important consideration, we will pass on to the next parable.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

It is a truly remarkable kingdom. It leavens the whole, prior, presumably, to its being baked, in a place that I hesitate to mention. This question has to be treated with proper delicacy, owing to its sacred character.

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found he hideth," etc.

There is something about that heavenly treasure beats me. I cannot explain what they keep hiding it for. What, I wonder, does the man who hide it say when he finds it gone. Probably suspecting that the party who found it has again hidden it, he may start out once more to seek it; unless, in the meantime, it occurs to him that a treasure so apt to disappear is not worth troubling after.

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls," etc.

In the previous parable the kingdom was like unto treasure; now it is like the man who seeks the treasure. Herein we see the great beauty of Christ's teaching. If you have any difficulty in comprehending what he means, you may twist the thing round and try again. No one can complain that he did not attempt to make the kingdom of heaven well understood. Those who could not get a clear idea of it from the mustard seed illustration might have better luck when it became a question of treasure.

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind," etc.

It would appear from this parable that heaven catches both good and bad until the final sorting out. Therefore, if we should happen to be taken in that net, we may yet disport ourselves among the elect for a brief period, until we get spotted and unceremoniously chucked out.

This parable contains a valuable hint to Freethinkers. Above all things try to avoid the "net"; if you have any desire to escape being cast into a "furnace of fire" where there shall be "wailing and gnashing of teeth"—(if you have any). "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea Lord." Were they liars? Yea Lord. J. M.

Teacher (examining a class of little boys in scripture)—
"What did Jacob say when he saw the bridal train, the men leading the camels, laden with costly presents?" Pupil—
"The Campbells are coming, hurrah, hurrah!"

In a Scotch church, the clergyman was one day giving notice that on the following Sunday the rite of baptism would be administered to children. One of the elders of the church, who had the misfortune to be almost stone deaf, imagined the vicar was announcing the adoption of a new hymn-book, and just as the worthy pastor had said, "All of you having children and desiring them to be baptised, will please bring them next Sunday," rose in his seat and added, "Any lady or gentleman who has not yet got one will be supplied by me for ninepence each, or with extra strong backs one shilling."

WATCH AND PRAY.

[If the above-named injunction, so frequently impressed upon Christians, had been reversed, and made to read thus, "Pray! and watch—the result;" things might have been different.]

AND so—— thou prayest softly. Thou
Hast asked the infinite to bow
And hear thee babble!

Could the brain
Of mortal man conceive a train
Of thought more impudently vain
Than this? That one poor grain of sand
From life's wide surface, lifts his hand,
And calls on the immutable
To shift his purpose, change his will.
With calm assurance!

Will yon sky,
Against whose brazen arch the cry
Of billions, cursed by every pain,
Has hammered ceaselessly and vain,
Be softened, that thy plaintive plea,
Thus offered up on beuded knee,
May gain admittance?

Will thy god,
Who heard the moan of nations, trod
By tyrant masters; saw the slaves
Sink manacled to countless graves;
And war's red ravage heap its slain
On every hill, and every plain,
And nothing said: have ought to say
To thee, because thou deign'st to pray?

Can'st thou suppose that he who rends
The cities' hearts with earthquakes; sends
The cyclone fraught with ruin's breath;
The plague and famine white with death;
The storm, which hurls with one fell shock
A hundred ships on shore and rock,
While shrieks and groans and terror's prayer
Rise wild, but useless, on the air;
Can'st thou suppose a god like this
Is troubled by thy woe or bliss?

Alas! my brother:—This belief
Was dangled in the arms of grief
And nurtured at the breast of fear!
And priesthoods hummed it in the ear
Of trusting ignorance and hope,
Still striving fretfully to grope
For things unseen. And when at last
The breath of reason blew her blast
On learning's trumpet—tore the tale
Of mystic fable like a veil
From dogma's dominance—What said
Earth's cowed and mitred? Ask the dead?
The dead whose tortured bodies fell
As thick as rain-drops from that hell,
The Inquisition. Question well
Those fair brave women who, in shame
That MEN would shudder but to name,
Were torn and broken, till their breath
Grew mercifully hushed in death.
And when thou hearest what they say
Of what they suffered at the spleen
Of those who bade their fellows pray,
And think, "these things had never been
Had God so willed it."—Think again!
And ask thyself if all the shame
And woe accomplished *in his name*
Were impotent to move him; vain
To rouse his pity or his power
In that foul time, that awful hour,
When streams of blood and tears ran red
Between their banks of ghastly dead!
What hope, or thought, or chance can'st thou
For one mad moment entertain
Of luring him to lull thy pain,
Or hear thy supplication now?

COTTONOPOLIS.

Little Minnie had a new frock. When she went to bed her mother told her to say, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep." "I pray the Lord my clothes to keep" said little Minnie, nor could she be induced to alter this improved form of prayer.

A clergyman was about to announce the banns of marriage. He had got as far as "I announce the banns of marriage between—" when he could not find the book containing the particulars. The clerk, seeing his difficulty, with the intention of telling where the missing book was, said, "Between the cushion and the desk." The congregation had hard work to keep their faces straight!

IMMEDIATE PRACTICAL OBJECTS OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

[The following Program has been drawn up by a special sub-committee of the N.S.S. Executive, the President sitting *ex officio*. It has been approved by the Executive, and ordered to be printed, under the Principles, in the Society's prospectus, according to a vote of the last Conference.]

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches and organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Tests and Disabilities in schools, colleges, municipalities, parliament, the executive, and the judicature.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments, supported by the State.

The opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for purposes of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of state and municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, as fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommensurable dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of Criminals, so that Gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

The promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

HEARING WADDY PREACH.

The *Modern Review* (Sept.) tells the following anecdote:— "It was at Leeds assizes, and one day Mr. Justice Fitzjames Stephen re-entered the court after luncheon, long before it was otherwise necessary to do so, in order to read over his notes. A solitary jurymen was there munching his midday sandwich. "A fine day, my Lord," remarked this individual to his lordship, somewhat to his lordship's surprise. "Yes, sir," the judge answered, with his wonted gravity; "it is a very fine day." "Has your Lordship ever heard Mr. Waddy preach?" asked the irrepressible juror, reckless of the worse than Serbonian bog which was waiting to receive his remains. "If not," he continued, "I shall be most happy to give your Lordship a seat in my pew next Sunday." The judge's face darkened as he looked from his notes, and in an awful voice growled, "No, sir, I have not heard Mr. Waddy preach, and please heaven, I never will unless conveyed thither by superior force!"

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE meeting held at the Hall of Science, Sept. 28. The President in the chair. Present: Messrs. S. Hartmann, R. O. Smith, G. Standing, J. M. Wheeler, C. J. Hunt, J. Samson, T. Parris, G. J. Warren, E. Bater, J. Potter, T. Gorniot, G. Ward, W. Trew, C. W. Martin, E. H. Lloyd, C. Steel, G. H. Baker, and R. Forder, hon. sec.

Minutes of previous meeting and those of Organisation Committee were read and confirmed, and the cash statement was accepted.

Mr. Gorniot moved, and Mr. Bater seconded, "That the sum of one guinea be voted to the fund for the relief of the distressed wives and children of the miners"; carried. It was resolved that a collection should be taken for the wives and children of the miners after Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday.

Mr. Foote reported that a largely attended meeting was held on Sept. 26, at the Hall of Science, in commemoration of the birthday of Mr. Bradlaugh.

The Shilling Week Fund having been audited by Mr. Hunt, the net amount was reported to be £29 7s. 3d. for N.S.S., and £13 6s. 9d. to the Chicago Delegation Fund.

The committee appointed for preparing a statement of the "Immediate Practical Objects" of the Society presented their report, which, on the motion of Mr. Warren, seconded by Mr. Baker, was ordered to be printed in the next issue of the *Freethinker*.

The question of the tenancy of the Hall of Science was then considered and agreed to for another year, with a request to the directors to reduce the rent £50.

A motion of the Battersea Branch to send out notices of the business of the Executive was negatived; and a proposal for more social gatherings was remitted to the Organisation Committee.

R. FORDER (Hon. Sec.)

HOW IT STRIKES A JAP.

The harmony of the proceedings at that remarkable assemblage, "The World's Parliament of Religions," in Chicago, at which four thousand persons were present, was slightly disturbed by the speech of Mr. Harari, a Japanese Buddhist priest, who, after sarcastically thanking his American hearers for their kindness in sending missionaries to Japan, confessed that his countrymen felt at times "rather perplexed" by certain divergencies which they had observed between Christian doctrine and practice. Foremost among the grievances enumerated was the treaty wrung out of Japan when she was "yet in her youth," under which legal cases are decided by foreign authorities, always, as Mr. Harari said, "unfavorably to us." A few months ago the School Board in San Francisco enacted a regulation that no Japanese should be allowed to enter the public school there. Last year the Japanese were driven out wholesale from one of the territories of the United States of America; and business men in San Francisco were compelled by some union not to employ Japanese assistants or laborers. Then there are some in the same city who go in processions hoisting lanterns marked "Jap must go." Moreover, the Japanese in the Hawaiian Islands are deprived of their suffrage; and even in Japan some Western people erect before the entrance of their houses a special post upon which is the notice, "No Japanese is allowed to enter here." "When we are in such a situation," continued the Japanese Buddhist priest, "is it unreasonable—notwithstanding the kindness of the Western nations, from one point of view, who send their missionaries to us—for us intelligent heathen to be embarrassed and hesitate to swallow the sweet and warm liquid of the leaven of Christianity."—*Daily News*.

NUNNERIES AS REFORMATORIES.

In one of E. C. Grenville Murray's "Queer Stories," from *Truth*, he tells of a young lady who, when disappointed by the good looking vicar of St. Allsobs marrying the richest widow of his congregation, resolved to become a nun. She made the household uncomfortable by giving herself the airs of a martyr when asked to eat meat on a Friday or on the feast of the blessed St. Bagobonos. At last her parents gave in and permitted her to be a bride of Christ in the Nunnery of St. Urtica, near Kilburn. The convent contained two sorts of inmates, those who had taken vows for life, and those who had been placed there as a punishment for unruliness of behavior. Unprepared to devote herself for life, she found she had got into a kind of reformatory institution which blended the discipline of the House of Correction with the performances of a private chapel. She had to resign her fine clothes for a kit of blue worsted stocking, a sackcloth chemise, a serge gown, and clumpsole shoes. Her fare was porridge in the morning, soup and potatoes at midday, and in the evening porridge again. What time was not occupied in chapel and bed she had the life of a maid of all work, and when she was refractory there was a big, rawboned sister who did not hesitate to administer personal castigation. When released she was perfectly tractable and docile, and without feeling any further call towards the religious life.

BOOK CHAT.

Messrs. Putnam and Sons have published an *Inquiry into the Truth of Dogmatic Christianity*, by W. D. Harden. Mr. Harden got into a controversy with an American Catholic Bishop on the character of Judas. Mr. Harden argues that if Jesus was God he could not be betrayed, and if Judas was a traitor, Jesus was not God. He further contends that the Church has exerted and still exerts a baleful influence.

In Renan's last volume of the *History of the People of Israel*, which he happily lived to complete, bringing it down to the time of his works on the Rise of Christianity, he speaks of the angelology and demonology of the Jews as having its main source in Persia. He says: "Sensible people, the Sadducees, rejected these exotic influences, but the populace was too strong. Christianity at its birth was fated to be tainted with these chimeras. We may reject it, but who knows if it would have been possible without them?"

Mr. Arthur B. Moss, whose name is favorably known to our readers, issues through Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's-court, an original drama, in a prologue and four acts, entitled *The Land and the People*. The drama, in addition to a sensational plot interspersed with amusing dialogue, deals with social topics in a manner likely to be acceptable to the masses rather than in the classes. In the hands of good actors, it could hardly fail to please a popular audience.

Where Three Empires Meet is the title of a book by Mr. E. F. Knight, telling of his travels and adventures in Kashmir and Western Tibet, where the territories of Russia, China and England, are in contiguity. He was struck by the resemblance between much of the Buddhist ritual and that of the Church of Rome. The Buddhist lamas, he remarks, looked like Early Christian bishops. They wore mitres, and carried pastoral crooks. There were shaven monks, holy water, beads and rosaries, and incense. These resemblances have frequently been noted, and the probability certainly is that Christianity as the younger system may have derived both its monkery and ecclesiasticism from the older system of Buddhism.

Messrs. Appleton and Co. will publish simultaneously in England and America, a *Memoir of Edward Livingston Youmans*, the Freethinking founder of the *Popular Science Monthly*. The memoir is edited by Prof. John Fiske. Youmans was the first to introduce Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley and Proctor to American audiences, and the volume will contain interesting correspondence with these scientists.

Cassell and Co. are about to publish a story of evolution, to be entitled *The Quickening of Caliban*.

Messrs. Williams and Norgate will this winter resume the issue of their Theological Translation Library, and, as we suggested some time ago, start with a translation of Weizsacker's *Apostolic Times*. Professors Cheyne (of Oxford) and Bruce (of Glasgow) will edit the new series, which will comprise translations of Harnack's *History of Dogma*, Hausrath's *Times of the Apostles*, and Killet's *History of the Hebrews to the Time of Jeremiah*.

The Autobiography of Mary Smith, Schoolmistress and Nonconformist, is specially interesting from her correspondence with the Carlyles. In one of her letters to Mrs. Carlyle she mentions how she had once dared to give a course of Sunday evening lectures to women on such subjects as the training of children, thrift, cleanliness, etc. She says: "But oh! what an outcry was raised against me by the religious world! All parties agreed with each other in denouncing my little effort to interest and enlighten women. 'To think,' they said, 'of my beginning an address on a Sunday night without singing and prayer! Such a thing was awful and unheard of.' My girl, who was much attached to me, every time she went out came back with such a sad face, saying mostly, 'Oh, Miss Smith, what things folk do say about you. It's no use my replying that it's very good what you say. They won't believe me.' But I troubled nothing. The working men urged me to keep on, believing it would do good. They offered me the hall, with gas and fire, free. The women also urged me to continue my addresses."

Mr. W. B. Woodgate, M.A., has published *A Modern Layman's Faith*, through Longman. He believes in the Bible, but not in miracles; so he suggests Elijah used petroleum to get his fire on Mount Carmel, and Elisha used a magnet to make the axe-head swim. He may have got these ideas from our Comic Bible Sketches.

"Ah," said Mrs. Partington, "people won't believe the word of God nowadays. You may write 'knickerbocker' over the good old days, for their glory is departed."

OBITUARY.

DIED, at 39 St. Mungo-street, Glasgow, on the 26th inst, Christopher Laurie, 53 years of age. He was for over twenty years a regular attendant at the Secular meetings in Edinburgh and, till his illness, in Glasgow. His children, who are all Freethinkers, were educated without religious instruction. There was no religious ceremony at his funeral.

A RATIONALIST of light and leading has departed in the person of Dr. Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol, who died on October 1, at the advanced age of 76. Dr. Jowett held the position of Regius Professor of Greek since 1855, when he was appointed by Lord Palmerston. In that year he put forward a work on Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, Romans and Galatians, in which he gave free play to the rational interpretation of scripture and which raised an outcry against his appointment. He, with Mark Pattison, was instrumental in getting out the celebrated volume of *Essays and Reviews* which in 1859 was taken as the manifesto of the Broad Church. As Master of Balliol he was the guide, philosopher, and friend of many distinguished pupils, among whom may be mentioned Profs. J. H. Green, Nettleship, and Toynbee. He occasionally preached at the University or Westminster Abbey, his discourses being far more founded on Plato than the Bible. In his last sermon he dwelt on the merits of Spinoza. In his views Jowett was hardly to be distinguished from the Deists. He was recognised by the orthodox as their great enemy within the camp, and to his own age was known by his influence on the advanced minds of his time, though to posterity he will be chiefly known by his fine translation of *The Dialogues of Plato*.

ANOTHER though a lesser light passed out on the same day in the person of Dr. H. W. Crosskey, for many years Unitarian minister at Glasgow and Birmingham. Though Dr. Crosskey never got beyond the advanced Unitarian position, he did much to popularise the facts of science and the cause of education. He was one of the founders of the National Education League. Though not eloquent, he was an able lecturer, distinguished, like Dr. Jowett, for "sweet reasonableness," and his death will be felt as a loss to liberal-minded Birmingham.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "What to do with the House of Lords" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "The Daybreak of Humanity" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday at 8.15, Agnes Henry, "Woman's Position Under Anarchy" (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, C. James, "The Philosophy of Atheism" (free). Monday at 8, A. Johnson, "China: Ancient and Modern" (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "The Age of the Earth"; musical selections before and after the lecture.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 4.30, members' meeting; 6, tea, etc.

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, S. H. Alison, "His Satanic Majesty."

South Essex Secular Society, Enterprise Club, 33 Salway-road, Stratford: 7.15, W. Scott, "What we can know; what we can never know" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, J. Rowney, "Prophecy." Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Oct. 12, at 8, St. John will lecture.

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Lucretius Keen, "The Mosaic Cosmogony."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Is there a God?" 3.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, H. Courtney, "The Meaning of Secularism."

Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, St. John, "Christianity and Progress."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, St. John, "Curiosities of Superstition."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. Johnson, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

Victoria Park (near the band-stand): T. Thurlow, 11.15, "Slavery"; 3.15, "What must I do to be Saved?"

Wimbledon—Broadway: 7, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, James Dow, "The Ethics of Anarchy."

Belfast—Crown Chambers Hall, 64 Royal-avenue: 7, W. M. Knox, "The Parliament of Religions."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, J. Greevz Fisher, "Is Marriage Sacred?"

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, connective readings by members and friends.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, members' monthly meeting; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, concert and dramatic entertainment (free).

Failsforth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, P. Percival, "Subjective Immortality."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, members' impromptu speeches; 6.30, J. Cowie, "Christians and Toleration."

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: A. B. Moss, "The Drift of Darwinism"; 3, "The Bible and Evolution"; 7, "The Evolution of the Devil."

Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7, business meeting.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 3, logic class, L. Small, B.Sc.; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Socialism and Liberty" (Fabian lecture).

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints' W. Heaford, 11, "Christian Evidences: what are they Worth?"; 3, "Religion in Relation to Insanity"; 6.30, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?" Tuesday at 8, debating circle, Thomas Griffiths, "Keats."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' fortnightly meeting; 7, Hall Nicholson, "The Established Church and National Progress"

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham-street, 3, members' quarterly meeting; 7, vocal and instrumental music, etc.

South Shields—Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane: C. Cohen, 11, "Christianity and Modern Thought"; 7, "The Rise of Christianity"

Wolverhampton—Midland Tramway Coffee House, 35 Snow-hill: 7, annual general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Brighton (on the Level): 3.15, E. Calvert, "The Soul."

Jarrow—Nixon-street: 3, C. Cohen will lecture.

Nottingham—Sneinton Market: 11, J. Hooper, "Free-thought Heroes."

South Shields—Market-place: Tuesday at 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Oct. 8 to 31, on Tour. Nov. 4, South Shields; 5, Blythe.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Oct. 8, a., Hyde Park; e., Lambeth.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Creden-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 8, Grimsby; 15, Hyde Park; 23, m. and e., Camberwell; 29, Westminster. Nov. 5, Chatham; 19, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Oct. 8, Leicester; 15, Hall of Science; 22, Liverpool. Nov. 2, Wellington Hall, Islington; 28, Camberwell.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Oct. 8, Lewisham Liberal Club; 22, Hall of Science; 29, Camberwell. Nov. 12, Camberwell; 14, West Norwood Reform Club. Dec. 10, Camberwell; 17, Deptford Liberal Club.

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

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

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