

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE TWOPENCE.



MATTHEW ARNOLD.

(See page 676.)

THE REV. TOM MANN.

To be or not to be? That is the question. Is the young and aspiring labor leader, Tom Mann, to become Prime Minister of England or Archbishop of Canterbury? From the fuss made about him just now in the newspapers, one would think he had the choice of either position. He has been extensively interviewed, his very so-so pulpit homilies have been reported at great length, sub-editors have grasped at the latest news about him, and judiciously hinted that further details may appear in the "next edition." The choice of Hercules is nothing to the choice of Tom Mann, who is very much longer than the old pagan demi-god in making up his mind. Hercules made his choice, and a good one, on the spot. Tom Mann wants at least a fortnight—perhaps because he has, like Hamlet, such a lot of mind to make up.

All the newspapers say—and Tom Mann lets them say it—that he was always *religious*. Well, if he was, he managed to disguise himself very successfully. He was thought to be anything but religious when he went about, a few years ago, amongst the Northumberland

and Durham miners, trying to make out that Charles Bradlaugh was an enemy of the people. We are ready to give the names, if Tom Mann asks for them, of several persons whom he has since then, and up to quite recently, given to understand that he was a Freethinker. Still, we do not wish to press this too heavily. It would be cruel to injure his prospects unnecessarily if he does elect to enter the Church.

Tom Mann is asserting very loudly at present that he will have nothing to do with any Labor Movement which is not based upon religion. In the same breath he declares that the Churches are nests of hypocrisy, and that the last thing they think about is the welfare and elevation of the people. His stock sermon has been published, and we have read it carefully—we may even say patiently. It is far from brilliant; it is, in fact, rather dull and diffuse. But the burden of it is clear enough. Its one note is "Hypocrisy!" Tom Mann denounces all the Churches indiscriminately, and the task is not difficult. His trouble will begin, as a *religious* man, when he tries to get the Churches to do better. They will stand a lot of denunciation. It has been administered to them for centuries by stronger and more eloquent reformers than Tom Mann. The

truth is, that the only way to affect the Churches is to attack their basis. Destroy the theology on which they are based, and they must either alter to suit the times or vanish into limbo. As far as they have altered, as far as they have become less dogmatic and more humane, the change is entirely due to the spread of scepticism in society; and that is due to the growth of Science and the propaganda of Freethought.

Whenever was any Church reformed from within? Erasmus tried it, and what was the result? Martin Luther saw it could not be done in that way. He seceded and shook the Catholic Church from the outside. By and bye his Church, the Protestant one, wanted shaking just as badly. And it got it, from the outside again. Shaking a Church from the inside is a very risky business; it is apt to entail the fate of Samson upon the operator.

Supposing that Tom Mann has a real idea of becoming a curate, and wearing a long coat, a short hat, and a white choker; what does he expect to gain for himself or other people? If he becomes a parson, he will be hedged in by all sorts of forms and considerations. Let him be ever so anxious about the interests of labor, he will necessarily have to keep in touch with his clerical colleagues, unless he flouts and defies them, in which case he will be kept down and worn out. However high his estimate of himself, he can hardly think himself a second Luther. He will find more than his match in the Church dignitaries. Many of them are abler than he is, and more eloquent, besides having the additional advantage of a far superior culture. Let him become a parson, and he will sink into comparative obscurity. The moment he dons the uniform of the Black Army he is a lost man. All the profit of his accession will be reaped by the Church. It will have captured one labor leader, and will set itself to capture another; thinking, of course, by this means to stave off Disestablishment and Disendowment.

It is a dangerous thing to go amongst the wolves to reform them. They will make you one of themselves or devour you. And he who does not know it is foolish enough to deserve his fate.

On the whole, we incline to think that Tom Mann will not become a curate. To do so would be to join the historic enemy of English progress, for the Church has never faltered in its opposition to every radical reform. Tom Mann may be only winking at a good advertisement. After the Church Congress he took the whole platform himself. When he has had his fill of attention he may step down and cry "Enough! The turn is served." If, however, he bids a Bishop bring the uniform, he will have gone over to the enemy. He will be in the Church's ranks in the day of battle, when the Liberal and Radical hosts fight the Armageddon of religious equality. He will have to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, he will have to swallow a surfeit of formulas, and at the finish of it all who will care a button for the Rev. Thomas Mann?

G. W. FOOTE.

REMNANTS OF PAGANISM.

SIMILARITIES between the rites and customs of Roman Catholicism and Paganism have often been pointed out.* It may be doubted, however, if either their extent or significance are generally recognised. Their scope is far wider than the ordinary Protestant is aware, many of the practices characterised as remnants of Paganism being as integral portions of the Greek Church as of the Church of Rome. Moreover, the Protestant is apt to forget that his own sacred books were, till within four hundred years of the present time, in the sole custody of the monks and priests of the semi-Pagan Church to which he objects.

Among the items particularly proved to have been Pagan by the authorities mentioned in my footnote,

are several adopted by modern Anglican Ritualists. Worship to the East is evidently derived from sun worship. The use of lighted candles,* incense, splendid garments, prayers for the dead, are also Pagan. Other particulars, such as the sprinkling of holy water or a mixture of holy salt and water at entering and leaving places of worship; the hanging of votive offerings before shrines; the canonisation of deceased worthies; the adoration of these saints and their images, and the ascription of miraculous powers to these idols; the setting up of little oratories, altars, and shrines in the streets and highways, and on the top of mountains; the worship of relics; the carrying of images and relics in procession with lights, music, and chantings, are all Pagan.

Apuleius, in book eight of his *Melamorphosis*, describing the mysteries of Isis, says: "I beheld maidens strewing flowers, followed by a great number of persons of both sexes bearing wax candles, in order to propitiate the Lady Daughter of the Stars. Then came boys in white, chanting a melodious hymn; next a crowd of the religious, male and female, with pure white dresses; the women wearing white veils on their heads, the men in linen robes, with their hair shorn. Some beating their breasts, others bearing palms and pyxes, the mystic symbols of Our Lady of Help. Finally, the long succession of images, altars, and sacred vessels, is closed by a priest, from whose shoulders hangs an embroidered cloak known as the Olympian stole. This priest carries on his bosom the ineffable and indescribable symbol of the Supreme Divinity." In previous articles I have shown how thoroughly Pagan were the sign of the cross and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper † The passage might serve as a description of a Catholic procession.

Monks, nuns, monastic cells, bells, saint and relic worship, fasting and prayer, flowers and lights, were in use among Buddhists before the rise of Christianity. One item which is very striking is the practice of tonsure or the shaven crown, which was put by Gautama Buddha upon his own son Rahula, as a mark of his dedication to the holy life. Can it be conceived that a practice like this would be adopted by Christian priests and monks unless the very essence of their faith had been derived from a preceding religion. Mr. Ferguson, the eminent authority on ancient architecture, asserts that the details of the early Christian Church were borrowed *en bloc* from the Buddhists, and that nine-tenths of the institutes and forms of Latin Christianity were from Buddhist sources ‡

My purpose is not to dilate upon the resemblances to Paganism remaining in Christianity, which may be sufficiently studied in the works mentioned, but to inquire into their significance. Look at some familiar facts. The names of our week days commemorate the Pagan gods of our Teutonic or Scandinavian ancestors. Of our principal religious festivals, the names and customs connected with Easter and Whitsuntide are entirely Pagan; while Christmas is at least generally known by its Pagan name of Yule Tide, while its customs, from the Yule log to the roast beef, reminiscent of the sacrifices to Odin, and its sacramental plum puddings and mince pies, and its games, presents, evergreen decorations, and kissing under the mistletoe, have nothing Christian about them. Do not such facts suggest that the triumph of the Christian Church over Paganism was neither so complete nor so early achieved as is usually represented? When we come to look at the historical and monumental evidence, we shall find that Paganism was never overthrown in fair fight; that, although Christianity was mainly spread by the sword, it has remained in Europe till quite modern times; and that, as the English Church is a compromise between Catholicism and Calvinistic Puritanism, so the Christian Church is a compromise between a Semitic faith and Paganism.

J. M. WHEELER.

* The Temple of Daphne is said by Ammianus to have taken from the wax candles which were left before the image.

† See *Freethinker*, April 10, July 3, 10, August 21, 1892. Also J. M. Ragon on *La Messe et ses Mystères*.

* Among others by P. Muscard, in *Roma Antiqua et Recens*, 1667; Joshua Stopford, in *Paganism*, 1675; Dr. Conyers Middleton, in his *Letter from Rome*, 1729; J. Poynder, in *Poperly in Alliance with Heathenism*, 1835; and by ex-priest A. Meagher, in *Paganism and Romanism Compared*, 1842.

‡ *Rude Stone Monuments*, pp. 499-503. See also my *Footsteps of the Past* and Arthur J. Lillie's books on *Buddhism and Christendom* and *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*.

AMERICAN NOTES.

AT last I am in Chicago, and upon the eve of the Great International Freethought Convention. Everything seems ready for the event, and I hope in my next communication to be able to report a grand success. Congresses are the order of the day just now in Chicago, and it is evident that the Freethinkers of America are determined that their gathering shall not be wanting in practical results. The reception given me by personal friends has been most hearty, and they feel proud that a representative of English Secularism is among them on this important occasion. The Americans, when they "catch on," are more enthusiastic in their personal greetings than the English are; at least, this has been my experience. Many, indeed, were the sincere regrets that Mr. Foote did not accompany me. Some friends had travelled five hundred miles in the expectation of seeing and hearing the President of the N.S.S., who may rest assured that he will receive a warm welcome when he does cross the Atlantic. I explained to the disappointed delegates how the affairs at home demanded the presence and services of my colleague, but that they may expect him over at an early date.

Of course one of my early visits, after arriving in Chicago, was to the World's Fair. I was anxious to "take that in" before the Convention began. Great as were my expectations as to the exhibition, what I saw in the vast buildings far exceeded my highest anticipations. Even had I the power, the time and space at my disposal would prevent me giving anything like a description of the Fair. I should suppose that nothing like it has ever been seen before, and it will probably be a long time before we shall see its like again. "The White City," as it is very appropriately called, is perfectly unique. Whilst walking through the grounds and gazing upon the magnificent buildings towering high upon every hand, it is next to impossible to realise that all these are of a mere temporary character, that a few years ago the ground on which they stand was vacant, and that in another year or two most of them will have been pulled down, and the materials employed in their construction carted away. They give one the impression that they have been standing where they now are for centuries. It seems as if we were moving about in an oriental city, or in a fairyland of romance. From whatever standpoint you view these colossal structures, the result is the same—grandeur which captivates the eye, and stirs the heart to its very depths. Wonder and admiration are combined while you contemplate them, and the result is a feeling that perhaps was never experienced before. The great point, of course, is their size, but when is added to the grandeur of all, the sun, with its resplendent rays falling upon the many domes, and the square miles of roof, the scene becomes perfectly entrancing. The dingy dome of St. Paul's, the meretricious architecture of the Parliament Houses at Westminster, and the huge boathouse-looking structure which we in England call the Crystal Palace, all fade into insignificance before the World's Fair buildings at Chicago. True, they would not stand long the wear and tear of time, but one does not realise that while gazing upon their magnitude. And then the number of objects is so great that as soon as you remove the eye from one it falls upon another, even perhaps more magnificent still, until the effect is sometimes quite bewildering in its beauty. The ancient seven wonders of the world, if brought all together, would not in many respects equal the "White City" of 1893.

Unfortunately, America has recently been suffering from one of those commercial panics which, I am informed, usually visit her once in about twenty years. She was less able to withstand the crisis on this occasion, in consequence of two events—namely, the result of the last general election, and the excitement caused by what is known as the "Silver Question." Politically, the people in the United States are divided into Democrats and Republicans, the principal point of contention between them being Protection *v.* Free Trade. At the last election the Democrats were

returned by an immense majority, and they are Free Traders. It is expected that the present government at Washington will carry certain Free Trade measures and thus upset the Protection tariff, which originated and is still supported by the Republican party. This, it is alleged, has caused a stagnation of trade and a grave uncertainty in the market—merchants will not buy, fearing the consequences of the threatened Free Trade policy. To this is added the financial crisis caused, it is contended, through the free coining of silver which the Republicans are in favor of, and to which the Democrats are opposed. The intrinsic value of a silver dollar is about sixty or seventy cents. Thus when silver certificates have to be redeemed in gold, which appears to be the case, the great depression in the value of silver becomes a very serious matter for the treasury. For instance, as a hundred dollars in silver only have been deposited for one of these hundred dollar certificates, to redeem these in gold involves a loss of say forty dollars in the hundred, or forty per cent. And under what is called the Sherman Act this is still going on. The Democrats are now seeking to repeal this Act, while the Republicans are fighting for all they are worth to retain it. This briefly is the present commercial condition of America. What will be the ultimate issue of the struggle is more than I can venture to predict.

"The Parliament of Religions," which has now been sitting for some time in Chicago, is the all-absorbing question in religious circles. Various opinions are given as to the result of this attempt to establish a "Christian Brotherhood." In my opinion the holding of such a parliament is most unfortunate for Christianity and the best thing that could have happened for Freethought. The question, however, is of sufficient importance to us as Freethinkers, that I purpose to devote, after our convention is over, a special article to the subject. In the meantime I append the views taken of this parliament by two leading American papers. The *Democrat* of Grand Rapids says:

"With the organisation of the 'Brotherhood of Christian Unity' for the avowed purpose of Christianising the world, comes the very natural suggestion that there must be more of real brotherhood among Christians before they can expect that the devotees of other great religions will be won to the faith sought to be inculcated. With the exception of Christianity, the world's great religions present themselves as solid movements of faith and creed. Of course there are 'schools' in all of the great churches. The Jews have the liberal and the orthodox branches, and similar divisions exist among the other religions. But there is no such a multiplicity of denominations as among the Christians. And until there shall be fewer branches, each claiming to be 'the' church, the new movement will have but little influence on the religions of the Orient."

A pious journal of Philadelphia writes very emphatically upon the subject. It exclaims:

"If the so-called Parliament of Religions at Chicago is for any other purpose than to be a sensational side show to the big Fair, it is a purely Agnostic purpose. It is to destroy the old conviction that there is a single absolutely true and perfect religion revealed from God, and to substitute for it the Agnostic theory that no religious belief is more than an expression of the universal and ceaseless effort of men to discover the undiscovers. That being so, Christianity cannot argue with other religions and compromise with them, accepting something and giving something. It can only say, This is the truth of God uttered by God himself, and there is no other religious truth possible. Accept it or reject it at the peril of your soul. God does not argue with men. He commands and they must obey; and Christianity is that Divine command, or is no more than a delusion and a superstition. If it is not Divine and absolute, but uncertain human groping for truth like other religions, the story of the Incarnation and the Resurrection is a fable and the doctrine of the Atonement is a myth. How, then, can Christians come together with Buddhists, Brahmans, Mohammedans, Jews, and Zoroastrians to discuss their religion with them on equal terms? How can they treat them otherwise than as infidels who are the surer of damnation because they have seen the light of heaven and turned away from it? In Chicago hospitality to all religions indicates Agnostic indifference to them all."

CHARLES WATTS.

Chicago, Sept. 29, 1893.

"Who were the foolish virgins?" brought the prompt answer from a wise little girl—"Them as didn't get married."

THE EUSEBIAN LITERATURE.

VIII.

It seems necessary to show a little more in detail how the great Romance associated with the name of Eusebius was contrived and foisted upon the world. The monks studied ordinary human nature; they were aware that people will greedily swallow almost any nonsense and falsehood that comes recommended by some fine-sounding name; while anonymous wisdom falls into neglect. They must have a "Name to hang upon"; and to this day the compilers and readers of Church History hang upon the names of "Eusebius," "Jerome," and the host of their imaginary compeers.

Let me turn in the first instance to my bookish readers (the question *must* be decided by them) and report some literary facts which have hitherto escaped general notice, and which are nevertheless of cardinal importance. I have said much of late on the probable priority of the Latin over the Greek in the whole system of the Church literature; and the corresponding probability (or to me certainty) that this literature was composed in the monasteries of the West. Is this argument understood? Never should the remark in the Complutensian Polyglott (*i.e.*, Polyglott of Alcalá in Spain) that the Latin text is *Jesus*, while the Hebrew and the Greek are the two thieves, one on either hand.

Now let me point out analogous facts in relation to the Eusebian books. 1. The *first* Notice of such a name is in the Latin list of Illustrious Men or Catholic writers, dated in year xiv. of the Prince Theodosius. He is here simply described as "Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea of Palestine." The list of books is the most important matter; and it is added that "he flourished chiefly under Constantine the emperor, and Constantius, and that he got his surname" (which is generally given, in the genitive, *Pamphili*) "on account of his friendship with Pamphilus." I hope I have made it clear to my readers that every word of this is mere fiction, in disguise of Renaissance activity.

2. Again, the monks advertise their Eusebius in a "Library" ascribed to Patriarch Photius of their 9th century: another "name to hang upon," as that of the author of the schism of West and East. All fable again; but the keen-sighted student may discover in the fable the reasons why the critical history of that schism has never been written. But in reference to Eusebius, will my more studious readers consult chapters 9—13, 27, 39, 118, 127 of the "Library"? It is wholly monkish, and will give them a better insight into the tricks of the system than a long disquisition of mine. It is now alleged that Eusebius was an Arian and a blasphemer: the whole tale of the Arian heresy being the invention of the same gang, with a view to provide a background to Catholic heroes and Catholic dogma. This book must also be treated as a production of the Revival, somewhat late. It contains many things of a most instructive nature, which I must leave for the present.

3. Then we come to the lexicon of Suidas which is dated falsely 1100 A.D., and which is another repertory of the monkish romances. This compiler agrees with the Jerome list of "Illustrious Men" about Eusebius, only that he, too, adds that Eusebius adhered to the Arian heresy.

Let me repeat the phrase of Uncle Toby, "Never mind about the dates" set down to these books. You will find, when all is understood, they can't be other than modern; that is to say, they fall within the last 400 years.

But, as I never deal in bald assertions without proof, permit me, in answer to a very able correspondent, to consider the History of the Christian Library, as it were, from both points: the fabled beginning, the actual end. The story of the libraries of Paris or London contains the whole question, Can I make this in anywise clear to those who are still groping and fumbling in the mazes of this crafty system?

First, then, the fable about the Library of Cæsarea must be discredited. What is that fable? Refer, if you will, to cap. lxxv. of the illustrious Catholic writers, and compare Photius c. 118, and Suidas article on Pamphilus.

Pamphilus! The all-friendly! The name is as allegorical as any in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, as Eusebius or Hieronymus himself. Well, this allegorical gentleman is described as a priest, intimate friend of bishop Eusebius, and a prodigiously bookish creature, like Dominie Sampson! "He burned with such passionate love for the divine library that he wrote down the greatest part of Origen's volumes with his own hand. These are kept to the present day in the Library of Cæsarea! I have found in his handwriting XXV. of Origen's *Exegeseis*, which I embrace and keep with as much joy on the treasures of Cræsus! If it is a joy to have one epistle of the martyr, how much more so many thousand verses which he seems to me to have signed with the vestiges of his blood!"

This Latin passage reads to me like French-Latin. But let that pass. Those who have gained some ear for the true monkish style will smile as they listen, and will call up the grimace (the tongue in the cheek) with which this "round one," as the folk say of a certain kind of tale, has been indited; while those who hold with me that the List of Catholic Writers cannot be earlier than the sixteenth century, will deduce the conclusion that *no allegation of the antiquity of the Christian Library can be traced higher than that age of publication.*

I regard this point as of cardinal importance; and would submit it to all the tests which my bookish friends can bring to bear upon it; because the settlement of this question is most certainly the settlement of the whole question. I include the *Library* of Photius and the *Lexicon* of Snidas. Unless my friends shall find some fatal stumbling-block in the evidence, I shall be justified in asserting that the tale about a library at Cæsarea crammed with "infinite volumes," and said to be extant 1200 years before libraries began to be formed in Italy, in France, or England, is indeed a very "round one." And it is the offspring of a Round Table and a secret conclave of Fathers (Aboth, Abbots), to which I have so often called attention.

I foretell that with the bursting of the Cæsarea bubble there will burst also the bubble of the Alexandrian Library and its destruction, and a number of other idle tales about destroying Goths and Danes and the like, which were invented on the one hand to prop up the lie that the Christian Library was ancient; and on the other hand to excuse the disconcerting fact that there was so great a famine and void of books in the early sixteenth century.

Let me direct attention to one of the little known books, which contains what some people call crucial statements. It is the Latin work, *De Rerum Inventoribus*, ascribed to Polydore Vergil of Urbino, Archdeacon of Wells, alleged to have been written in Urbino and London; the first date is given as 1499, the latest may be about 1550. It is significant that the book has been purged by the Inquisitors, and that the only edition approved by the Church of Rome is that of the late date, 1676.

Now this writer, albeit he writes in the manner of a secular priest and has little cant about him, nevertheless shows in every page that there is a great darkness behind him, and that he is, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, the tool of the Benedictines in his capacity as historian. Yet he cannot get on, with them or without them. There is *no bridge* between him and the old times of Rome that will bear his weight; and by adopting the fantastic chronology of the monks, he gives way to a great delusion.

Note this: He says no one has written on Human Inventions since Pliny (*Natural History*, book vii.) Polydore now dares to do so, at the interval of more than 1500 years; Can anyone with his eyes open believe such a statement? What of the state of human knowledge and progress during that inconceivable time? What possible evidence was there for such a lapse? There was evidently a missing link in knowledge, and forgery has supplied its place.

Then we find him leaning on his "Saint Jerome," itself a suspicious title, for he was not so called in the List of Catholic writers; in one place Polydore uses the epithet *Sanctus*, in another *Divus*. I would merely hint that these things point to an ante-dating, when the year 1499 is given; and in any case I could not use the

book as evidence for the state of Libraries before about the year 1540. Then observe how significant is the evidence.

He writes of Books as if they were to most people novel inventions. He quotes his monk, "St. Jerome to Marcella," for the sentiment, "They are the effigies of minds, true and eternal monuments." He then quotes a sentiment from Plutarch's *Lives*; quotes Diogenes Laertius for the statement that Anasagoras was the first to write and publish a book; another bit from Gellius about Pisistratus, whereupon, under monkish influence, he runs down the "vainglorious" Greeks and their literary boasts.

Then comes that thumping lie, from the same quarter, the lie that perverts the vision of the learned world to this day: that "Josephus" has proved clearly that the Greeks are very recent, and that the Hebrews, Egyptians and Chaldeans were the most ancient publishers of books. Then we have the tales about Athenian books, and those in Egypt under the Ptolemies (all burned!) Then from Strabo is quoted the statement that Aristotle was the first collector of a library, and the teacher of the kings of Egypt in this matter. There follows the allusion in Pliny to a fine library at Pergamus, and to that founded at Rome by Asinius Pollio; who thus "*made the minds of men a Republic*" remarks Polydore. Well said! The monks never taught him that!

And now, what of your Renaissance Library, Polydore? There are many in Italy, he says, but in universal opinion that of Urbino, founded by the late Duke Frederic, is by far the most celebrated. Not a word more. And he rapidly passes on to extol the "new way of writing" which has been discovered; so that "more is now printed in a day by one man than many could write in a whole year."

I say the negative evidence in this writer and his contemporaries is absolutely crushing against the tale of a Cæsarea Christian Library, or of an ancient library in any part of Europe. In the part of this work devoted to the Rise of the Christian Republic, he uses Eusebius and others of the mock-illustrious of the notorious List; and it is perfectly clear that he is the very first secular priest—humanist at heart—who has undertaken a general sketch (and that of a very meagre description) of the libraries and literary culture of Europe, and this at the alleged distance of some 1500 years from the Christian beginning; and what does he report? There exists a Latin Bible, which contains a false story of the Hebrews and their place in culture; and a few books written by the same faction in support of the same false theory, a very few books, not one of them but of quite recent origin. You cannot possibly travel beyond this scholar of Urbino into the darkness; and unless you can determine the age of his copy of Pliny you cannot say how distant we are from the time when fine spirits desired to weld the minds of men into a great Republic by means of good books!

If this half-hearted defence of monkery was written in London about 360 years ago, now let the news go forth from London that the whole system—Libraries, Fathers, Doctors, Saints—is an utterly exploded bubble. Do but study the Evidences!

EDWIN JOHNSON.

A CLERICAL VISITATION AT BIRMINGHAM.

THE Church Congress assembled at the old hardware village known as Birmingham last week, and for which 4 000 tickets were taken, relieving the guarantors for £6,000 to pay the expenses, of all anxiety. The streets, at certain hours of the day, presented an extraordinary spectacle, numbers of thin, pale-faced, black-coated men of all ages and sizes moving in all directions, with one hand holding papers and the other engaged in embracing policemen, inquiring the way to somewhere—not the kingdom of heaven. For the first time in its history the city, the only one without a bishop or cathedral, is visited by bishops and clergy, expounding their various views to half a million of people, who have only one parson to every 4 500 souls, while at the very lowest estimate there ought to be one to every 3 000. On Sunday, October 1, sixty pulpits, in city and suburbs, were occupied by sixty strange preachers from

all parts, each taking a separate text, but all agreeing and declaring the city to be as described in the figures herein set forth. Bad as things are in other benighted towns, this city is, as Mr. Toole would say, "the very wust'un." They find banks and buildings, streets and mansions; but one thing needful is missing—not many church spires to be seen. Of this "half million of human souls," to say nothing of other souls, "in the churches and mission rooms there was accommodation for but 64,000, and only 120 clergy." In one parish there were 40,000 *poor* souls—clerks' and workmen's souls. The Bishop of Worcester tried to start a fund some time since, but in one parish of 12,000 there were "only *two* subscribers to the fund." Only two! The bishop preached from "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." The main lesson it taught was eternity, not comforts and enjoyments of this world, which the men of the world simply devoted themselves to—"making the best of this world." This he contrasted with "the apathy of Christians." What he wanted them to do was to give their money to the poor, so as to square the working men, who would then welcome them as friends, not only in this world, but "welcome them into everlasting happiness." Surely that must be a good investment. This looks generous, urging the rich to help the poor, but further on it turns out that the object is to "supply the clergy in poor parishes" with funds to supply the poor souls with the blessed gospel.

After eighteen centuries of untold wealth and learning at the command of the Church of Christ, this is the bishop's report of how matters stand to-day. "Just think of those enormous parishes of 10,000, 20,000, and 40,000 souls, and no *rich* people to help them." Then he contrasts where he is preaching, in the suburbs—"There in Summerfield, comfort and luxury; in Birmingham, men, women, and children in misery, rags, and starvation." This under Christian rule! And this is the remedy: A collection, the proceeds to be handed over "to the poor clergy," who will see to its distribution. The object of all their efforts is to bring large populations under Christian influence, "if only the funds are provided."

The Dean of Norwich speaks out finely. "There is not another body under the sun that could grapple with the enormous problems that were pressing themselves upon the attention of the nation." He informs us that besides "making rivets and screws," there was for the half-million—every man, woman, and child—"a place in heaven"; but if they were to occupy them, "they must be prepared by the Church." He also mentions the encouraging fact that there were "at the present time five million Englishmen who never crossed the threshold of a church." He calls this an "appalling fact," which no doubt it is if they have all to be "prepared by the Church" to join the screw and rivet makers, each having "a place in heaven." He also explains that the thing is to be done as Mahomet settled the mountain difficulty. "If they did not come to the Church, the Church must go to them," the latter being undoubtedly the alternative that will have to be adopted; but it may be doubted if the inhabitants of the slums will appreciate much beyond the "distributions" of the poor clergy out of the bishop's fund.

While all this eloquence is being employed to encourage the building trade, a "working man" threw cold water on the whole business by saying that "if the people would only *use* all the churches there *were* in Birmingham, there would be no need to build new ones." Some member of the building trade should look after Mr. R. Williams, and get him converted from that view of the extension fund. From a builder's point of view he is clearly in error. The Bishop of Lichfield was the utterer of equally dangerous words to the church-building fraternity, for he said that Jesus "when on earth went amongst the people as one of themselves," and "the common people heard him gladly"—so there would be no churches wanted at all! It is only fair to say that the bishop did not recommend the beautiful example to be followed, but desired contributions to restore old and build new churches to accommodate the remaining half million—less the 64,000 already provided for. The Dean of Windsor pointed out the great changes since the days of the apostles, "vast and striking." The Dean of Gloucester has been a great traveller, and finds our city spoken of "all over the world" as the home of British industry and enterprise, but "there was one thing lacking—no one spoke of it as the city of God." The work before them was to subscribe to the bishop's fund and "create a

Christian Birmingham worthy of that title." Just fancy all the merchants, manufacturers, gentlemen, and clergy of the Midland metropolis, selling all, giving it to the poor, and following Jesus! May I be there to see.

There is a good deal of talk about Christian union and relation to Nonconformists, but enough is also said to show that the Church itself is hopelessly divided beyond all human help, and the descriptions by the different parties of each other is what a friend calls "a caution for snakes." The Dean of Worcester tells us plainly "as he himself knew," that the Noncons. could not do their work, they differed in matters "vitally essential." One rev. brother, vicar of St. John's, Harborne, offered, on October 2, to join in prayer "against the errors which they have reason to fear will be disseminated at the various gatherings." There is a collection of divergent elements at the Congress that prevents this clergyman from taking part, the Church being "torn asunder by sacerdotalism on the one hand and infidelity on the other." He even compares the vestments of some "like the ridiculous mincr shows that accompany a travelling menagerie." Union of Noncons. seems a long way off in that case.

The Rev. T. B. Pollock described religion taught in our Board schools as "a huge hotch-potch of religions." Ministers of rival religions "competed with one another for the possession of the children, for whom they were charged one penny a-piece." No doubt he spoke the general sentiment when he said, Let us have Church schools if any at all. It occurred to no one that the only way out of the difficulty is the Secular method. On the contrary, he wanted "the whole teaching" to be "religious work by religious people for religious aims," going the whole hog, bristles and all. The present head of the Educational Department he regarded as an insult to the Church, and the Government as an enemy of Church schools and religious education. It is manifest he is unable to see any iniquity in sending in the bill for Church schools to those who repudiate them and their claim. The main difficulty is, that if sustained by the public, it will claim "control"; that's the rub; thereby hangs a tale. They like the public funds, but not the public administration! Parish Councils are to be watched for the same reason; being publicly elected, they may want control over the administration of public funds belonging to the parish.

It was very good of the lady who read a paper on Kindness to Animals, that older religions were very much in earnest about, that she should mention that fact at a Christian meeting, urging imitation of the ancient and false faiths. Earl Nelson urged that the way to lead the unbeliever and the infidel to hear what they had to say was to have the churches open all day free, and get them into the habit of subscribing regularly as a duty instead of paying pew rents and shutting the churches up. That's how they used to do in days of old—when and where he did not tell us. But in showery weather an open church might be handy as an umbrella. Canon Knox-Little said if they opened shop free, the vicar wanted to know where on earth the money for expenses has to come from? "His answer to that was, Ah! where in heaven will they come from?" From the pockets of loving and religious hearts. If the clergy did their duty "they would not leave them in the lurch." But "if they supplied a religion almost darker than the struggle of the week day they could not expect support."

It is amazing what efforts are being made for "Christ's poor," as the bishop calls the people where they are short of parsons, as though the rich people were not in far more imminent peril of being lost. Why, it is easy enough for the "blessed poor" to get to heaven, but for the rich to get through the gate is as difficult as a brewer's horse to get through his leather collar. But perhaps the money-bags would not pay for "the poor clergy" to visit their wives and families as well as themselves, to "bring them under Christian influence." I suggest that the first attempt to "create a Christian Birmingham worthy of the title" should begin in the suburbs, and the rich having become "perfect," the results of the sale would dispose of all the financial difficulties about dealing with the slums.

The idea of approaching attempts to deprive the Church of its funds were duly denounced, as "it is emphatically the Church of the poor, the Church of the working men." Great preparations have been made for these very interested poor people to send out to the country the voice of the great democracy, that first repudiated Church Rates, in

defence of their national property. It is a grim joke to appeal to such people to defend the application of national funds to pay the expenses of one sect of Christians only. If one-third of this vast community votes in favor of the parsons, the remaining majority of the half million will not recognise it as "the people of England."

Although we are short of "church spires," we are told that we look after the lives of the people better than some more pious cities, for even in Manchester, that has a bishop, the average life is only 28, against the 43 of all England.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

ACID DROPS.

Hugh Price Hughes's paper, the *Methodist Times*, gloat over the death of the *National Reformer*, and roundly asserts that "Atheism is on its last legs in England." After some rather late and hypocritical praise of Charles Bradlaugh's "splendid battle for the poor and despised," it goes on to say that the democracy never had any sympathy with his Free-thought; in partial proof of which it cites "the fact" that the circulation of the *Reformer* was never so large as at the height of Charles Bradlaugh's political struggle. But this "fact" is no fact at all, for the *Reformer* reached its highest circulation during the time of excitement that followed the imprisonment of the editor of the *Freethinker* for "blasphemy." And it is worth bearing in mind that the *Reformer* lost its circulation steadily as it became more political, despite the growing popularity of Charles Bradlaugh as a successful member of the House of Commons.

It is not true that the "democracy" supported the *Reformer*. Nine out of every ten of its subscribers belonged to the Freethought party. Consequently it is absurd to say, now he is dead, there is "no reason why they should buy an Atheistic newspaper, and, as a matter of fact, they refuse to do so." When you meet with the phrase "a matter of fact" in Mr. Hughes's journal, you may look out for a good thumping falsehood. The people who bought an Atheistic paper in Charles Bradlaugh's time buy one now. Mr. Hughes knows this very well, but he pretends to be ignorant of the existence of the *Freethinker*.

"Atheism is on its last legs in England." This is as true as Mr. Hughes's lie in five chapters—his story of the converted Atheist shoemaker, which he has the base impudence to put forward, not as a piece of fiction, but as a record of actual facts. Atheism is not on its last legs in England. By way of evidence we turn to the Rev. S. D. Headlam's annual address to the Guild of St. Matthew, which is printed in the October number of the *Church Reformer*. Mr. Headlam is at least an honest man, and he says it is "very foolish" to suppose that the demise of the *Reformer* means the death of Atheism. He admits that a good many Atheists have gone into the Socialist movement, but he sees that they are still Atheists, and that there is "a very large number" of them in the Socialist and Radical camps. Mr. Headlam goes even farther. He asks this very striking question:—"If you will run over the names of the dozen people who, during the last ten years, have done the best political and social work in the direction in which we in this Guild would wish to see work done, can you name two who are acknowledged Churchmen or even professing Christians?"

So much at present for "Atheism on its last legs." And now let us notice the shameful avowal of the *Methodist Times* that "If he [Charles Bradlaugh] had been a Christian, like John Bright, his influence would have been a hundred times greater, and he might have been a Cabinet Minister twenty years ago." Supposing the last part of this statement to be true—as it probably is—what does it prove? Why, two things. First, the wretched bigotry of Christians; and, secondly, the splendid courage of Charles Bradlaugh. They kept him out of the House of Commons because he was not a Christian, and he dared the worst they could do rather than abandon the advocacy of his deepest convictions.

Mr. Hughes talks the stupidest nonsense in saying that "the death of the *National Reformer* is only one of the many signs that Atheism has no serious hold of the masses of the English people." Its death is a sign of nothing but the death of Charles Bradlaugh. It was essentially his organ, and trying to carry it on after his death was really trying to

carry on a new paper. To take a somewhat parallel case—What would *Truth* be worth in the open market if Mr. Labouchere were to die? Very little, we fancy. But would that be a sign of any decay in Radicalism?

Another orthodox paper, the *Christian Globe*, is also of opinion—or at least it says so—that the demise of the *Reformer* “is but another proof of the decline of Atheism,” and it finds consolation in reflecting that “People will not longer tolerate the cheap sneers at Christianity which used to find an appreciative public years ago.” The only reply we will give is, that the *Christian Globe* is basking in a fool’s paradise. “Profanity” is far from dying out; it is actually invading the ordinary newspapers. What we will do more, is to reproduce the *Christian Globe’s* statement that Charles Bradlaugh “had the strength, the courage, and the enthusiasm of a Luther.” It took the Christians twenty years to find that out. Perhaps in another twenty years they will be compelled to recognise that Charles Bradlaugh’s principles are not only living, but quite “respectable.”

Mrs. Besant is concluding her Autobiography in the *Weekly Sun*. In the penultimate instalment she quotes the following severe passage from Charles Bradlaugh:—“I very deeply regret that my colleague and co-worker has, with somewhat suddenness and without any interchange of ideas with myself, adopted as facts matters which seem to me to be as unreal as it is possible for any fiction to be.” This was written when Mrs. Besant joined the Theosophical Society.

Mrs. Besant has kept clear in her Autobiography of the *Freethinker* and blasphemy and all such horrid things. Her only reference to Mr. Foote is the statement that he “distinguished himself by the bitterness of his attacks.” This is just like the high priestess of Theosophy. She regards criticism, especially when it is trenchant, as an “attack.” Mr. Foote, however, has never “attacked” Mrs. Besant. He has always written in the highest terms of her personal character; but, as a public teacher she is open to criticism, and Mr. Foote is justified in exposing her Theosophy as she used to expose Christianity.

What but the most severe criticism is of any use in the case of one who can write thus of Madame Blavatsky?—“She put her hand over my head, not touching it, and I heard and felt slight taps on the bone of my skull, each sending a little electric thrill down the spine.” It is no wonder Mrs. Besant’s composition is loose in the relation of such rubbish. We are glad that Mrs. Besant had to cease being a Secularist before she could write such a phrase as “the bone of my skull.”

The Rev. J. G. Greenough has been holding forth at Reading on Secularism. He remarked that “he had nothing to say to Freethinkers like Mr. Foote who simply raved and swore.” This will be news to Mr. Foote’s audiences and to the readers of the *Freethinker*. Evidently the first half of Mr. Greenough’s name is appropriate.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is a cool hand. He says that most of the Bishops gave more than they receive. Will he complete the information by stating how they make up the difference?

The *Fish Gazette* appeals to “every lover of his countrymen” to “provide the means of grace” for fishermen. It says the Mission at Great Yarmouth, built at a cost of £2,000, is “very much prized by the men.” After which it prints the following:—“One of the most regular members met with sudden death last year—James Breeze, mate of the smack *Diamond*. After attending services twice on the Sunday, he sailed on Tuesday, but the *Diamond* has never been heard of since.” This is not meant to be satirical, but what satire could go farther?

It is said that Pope Pecci has the bulk of the Pontifical funds, which, since their last embezzlement, he looks after himself, invested in this country in banks and house property, and that his income arising therefrom amounts to nearly £5,000,000. Religion still offers fine ground for the exploitation of the people.

John Fitz-Joseph Downes, a colored religious journalist, is charged with obtaining money by worthless cheques. The

cheque-book was obtained from Miss Lillie Anderson, an actress, with whom he had discussion on articles on Christianity which he had contributed to magazines.

The nursing sister who committed suicide at the Brompton Hospital for Consumption by injecting morphine, is described as very religious. She frequently had long conversations with the clergyman. No wonder the usual verdict was given.

One scientific man, at any rate, turned up at the Church Congress. It was Professor Stokes, who read the inevitable paper on Science and Faith. According to the reports he talked a lot of platitudinous nonsense. For instance, he said that true science was never antagonistic to true theology. Of course not. How can one *true* thing be antagonistic to another *true* thing? The Church Congress must be thankful for small mercies if it prizes such testimonies as this.

The Church Congress wound up with a blast against Cremation and a denunciation of Zola as a “corrupting” and “infamous” writer. Well, it is probable that Zola will be read long after every sermon-writer of the Church Congress is forgotten. We should like to see Zola take the cheek out of these zealots of the Black Army. One of his trenchant letters, reminding the parsons of what they put into children’s hands when they give them the Bible, would be very refreshing.

“Father” Ignatius contributed an element of liveliness to the Church Congress. Believing that the Rev. Charles Gore, the editor of *Lux Mundi*, is a heretic, the “Father” tried to stop his speaking. The chairman took Mr. Gore’s side, and there was a scene, in which an inspector and two policemen played a part. Fortunately no blood was shed. It was only an exhibition of ill-temper.

“Father” Ignatius circulated a leaflet at the Church Congress, declaring that the Rev. Charles Gore is “not a fitting person to even sit in an assembly of Christians.” The leaflets were distributed at the door by a pretty young nun. Poor girl! She would be better occupied in a home of her own, nursing a baby or getting her husband’s dinner, than in taking part in religious squabbles.

On the closing day of the Church Congress a paper on “Quietness” was read by Archdeacon Perowne. It seems to have produced a great effect. Some time afterwards the president was hissed, howled at, and treated with cries of “Shame” and “Traitor.”

Ten persons were crushed to death in their efforts to escape from a church in Mexico, the roof of which caught fire from a rocket sent up during a religious festival. Many others sustained severe injuries.

The Rev. A. J. Harrison’s advice to the Atheist to say to himself well, there may possibly be a God, and then to commence to pray to the possibility, reminds us of the saying which Voltaire, in his satire, puts as an address from Spinoza to the Deity. “Mais je crois, entre nous, que vous n’existez pas.” But I believe, between ourselves, that you do not exist. It also reminds us of the sceptic, who is said to have prayed in these terms: “Oh God, if there be a god, save my soul, if I’ve got a soul.”

Mr. Athelstan Riley, who has been so zealous for introducing more religious dogma into the London Board Schools, went out some years ago to Greece to promote a union between the Anglican and the Greek Churches with a view to “preparing for the impending struggle of Christendom against the gathering forces of the Evil One. On his return in 1887, he published a book on *Athos, or the Mountain of the Monks*, these gentlemen being the kind of people he admires. In it he describes their churches as set round with frescoes depicting the Last Judgment and the torments of hell. These pictures are said to have been the means under God of converting the Bulgarians. Perhaps Mr. Athelstan Riley would like something similar on the walls of the Board Schools.

Mr. W. T. Stead suggested the magic lantern as the best means of upholding Christianity. His advice seems to be acted upon rather extensively. We see that Mr. Josiah Nix—the gentleman who evangelises on Methodist lines at

Epsom during the great race week—has been making a great impression with the magic lantern in Soho. When the Garden of Gethsemane scene was turned on the audience was "hushed into awestricken and sacred silence," in the midst of which a lady "sang softly" an appropriate tune. Such is the Methodist trick of appealing to the "spiritual" element in human nature. Some people—but they are horrid, matter-of-fact sceptics—would call it the *superstitious* element.

A converted prize fighter figured at this meeting, and the *Methodist Times* reporter, whose biceps are probably flabby, was tempted to exclaim, "The power that can work that miracle can do anything." Hardly! It can't make the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes express regret for having concocted that lying story about the Atheist shoemaker.

The Christian Socialists, like the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, who try to make out that Jesus Christ was a Social Democrat, should have a settlement with the writer of an article in the *Christian World* on "The Philanthropy of Christ." According to this writer—"The gospels do not indicate that Christ's philanthropic activity was an attack on the social inequalities of his time. His teaching never roused nor fed social ambitions, and there is no sign that he desired any speedy social reorganisation." The Christian Socialists and the writer of this article are equally cocksure of the very opposite conclusions drawn from the gospels. What, then, is the use of pinning our faith to the Oracle of Nazareth when, after a lapse of nearly two thousand years, his professed followers are at loggerheads as to what he meant?

When the English entered Sebastopol, on Sept. 8, 1855, they went to the cathedral and stole what they could lay hands on. Four of these articles are in the possession of the Rev. J. R. Mills, of St. Michael's Vicarage, Coventry, who lent them to an Ecclesiastical Exhibition at Birmingham for the benefit of the Church Congress. Perhaps, as they belonged to a parson, there was no need to label them "Stolen."

Christianity is a notable stealer of dead men's reputations. Shelley, for instance, was damned in his day as a heretic and a villain; but now that his reputation is established, Christianity tries to claim him as her own. True, he was not a Christian, but he *would* have been one if he had lived longer! Such dishonest stuff has been gravely talked by Professor Douglass Reid, and is reported in the *Christian World*, apparently with approval. By and bye the poet of Atheism will figure as a saint in the Christian calendar.

The Rev. John Hunter, of Glasgow, has the reputation of a "great" preacher. One of his recent sermons is on Angels. From beginning to end he never states whether he believes that such beings exist. He hints that they "may only be the creatures of the devout imagination," but, on the other hand, he says that "there is far more in the universe than is ever clear to the vulgar or merely critical eye." The preacher may be a very good *hunter*, but he doesn't start the *game*. Angels or no angels, that is the question, and Mr. Hunter does not answer it.

Mr. Hunter is of opinion, or at least he professes to be, that "the severities of the universe are the severities of Love," spelt with a capital. Cyclones, earthquakes, volcanoes, and microbes, are sent by Love! No doubt it is easy enough for Mr. Hunter to preach this in a country where natural convulsions are matters of ancient history. But a good deal of "face" would be required to preach it over in America, where the cyclones have just swept away thousands of people as though they were flies. If this is Love, what is Hate?

The Anarchist Pallas met his fate with astonishing fortitude. The crime for which he died was in most people's opinion abominable, and it was certainly very foolish. But he was not an essentially bad man. His head seems to have been turned by brooding over the evils of society and the wickedness in high places; and as force was used to oppress the people, he thought it right to use force against the oppressor. According to the reports, he was an Atheist, but there is nothing remarkable in that. Most of the continental reformers are Atheists.

The chief sensation at the Chicago Parliament of Religions was caused by a Japanese priest, the Rev. Bishop Shibal, of the Shinto sect, who confessed he had organised a sect against Christianity. He declared that Christianity in Japan had brought riot, bloodshed and rebellion in its train, and in 1837 the government was forced to drive out the Christian missionaries in self-defence. He said to-day forty millions of Japanese "stand upon the basis of international justice and await further manifestations as to the morality of Christianity." This one clear, trumpet voice shook to pieces all the beautiful soft-soap bubbles that had been blown by the promoters of the religious parliament.

The measurements of the traditional tomb of our mother Eve at Jeddah give some idea of her supposed height (says *Sala's Journal*). On entering the great gate of the cemetery, one observes on the left a little wall three feet high, forming a square of ten or twelve feet. There lies the head of our first mother. In the middle of the cemetery is a sort of cupola, where reposes the middle of her body, and at the other extremity, near the door of egress, is another little wall, also three feet high, forming a lozenge-shaped enclosure; there are her feet. In this place is a large piece of cloth, whereon the faithful deposit their offerings, which serve for the maintenance of a constant burning of perfumes over the midst of her body. The distance between her head and feet is 400 feet. How we have shrunk since the creation!

The compositor on the *Jewish Quarterly Review* made one of those nice little slips that occasion so much editorial profanity. The contributor was lamenting the degeneracy of modern Israel, and indulged in the usual Latin quotation, *O tempora O mores*. Imagine his indignation upon reading "O, Tennyson, O, Moses! The Law of Moses is no more the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." This was almost as bad as one of our American exchanges which, instead of printing that the doctrine of Zoroaster were very obscure, put "were very obscene."

Professor Barnard, of Lick Observatory, expects that three years will be required to complete the series of photographs he is making of the Milky Way. The work is progressing rapidly, and the Professor is confident that when it is finished, the results will revolutionise the old conception of the Milky Way. He expects to reveal the presence of over 500,000,000 suns.

Fancy J. O. having to visit all the satellites of all these suns! No wonder he delays his second coming to earth! Perhaps he has got lost in the Milky Way.

The Birmingham Christians must be a nice lot, judging by what the Special Commissioner of the *Church Times* says of them. He says: "A well-known Church worker in Birmingham tells me that there is a peculiarity here. If a class is formed by a cleric who has the gift of speaking straight to the hearts of an audience, the people will come and listen to him, but only on condition that men shall alone be admitted. They will not tolerate the presence of women. This may be lacking in politeness, but practically it is a fact." The quack announcement "To men only," which seems to hint that the text will be taken from the Song of Solomon, is, it appears, necessary to get a good Church audience in the Midland capital.

A local Methodist magazine at Jersey writes as follows of a begging sky-pilot: "If Pastor Hunt can only pump his water [he has just had a well dug by his parishioners] as well as he has pumped his flock," etc., etc. "For sanctified audacity," it adds, "and telling people they *must give*, he is not to be equalled in a day's march."

There has been a miracle worker at Sunderland, in the person of the Rev. J. W. Jopling, minister of the sect of Faith Healers. Mr. Jopling reminds us of early times and Jesus Christ, by uniting in his own person the functions of preacher and medicine man. Like his master, he says, he has only to rebuke a fever, and it flies. He claims to have cured typhoid fever, blindness and small pox, and that hundreds could corroborate his statement. At a recent meeting of the Faith Healers it was announced that the Holy Ghost would preside, but no vote of thanks was passed for the way in which he conducted himself in the chair.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Thursday, October 12, Gladstone Club, 43 Grange-road, Bermondsey, at 8.30, "Christ and Democracy." Admission free.

Sunday, October 15, Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road, S.E., at 7.30, "A Search for the Soul."

October 22, Manchester; 29, Bristol; 30, Bath.

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 communications 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.

G. NAEWIGER.—Never mind such critics. Sorry to hear of the fate of your advanced local paper.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: West London Branch, 10s.; J. Umpleby, 10s.; O. Lockhead, £1; parcels of clothing from Mrs. M. and Tutor.

W. H. PACKWOOD.—Mr. Bradlaugh never edited the *Freethinker*, and never had anything more to do with it than you have. Mr. Foote has presided over its destinies from the first number.

T. SHIRES.—Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy* was sold for forty years before it was prosecuted. Mr. Bradlaugh only sold it when it was prosecuted, as a challenge to the authorities, whom he regarded as infringing the right of free publication. When the danger was over he discontinued the sale, leaving the pamphlet to find its proper level.

O. DOEG.—Mr. Foote has again and again signified his readiness to meet the Rev. W. W. Howard in debate at Liverpool on the question raised in Mr. Howard's pamphlet entitled *Has Man a Soul?* Mr. Howard asserts that man has a soul distinct from his organisation. Let him prove it. Mr. Foote is not so foolish as to attempt to prove a negative, but he is willing to argue that Mr. Howard's evidence does not sustain Mr. Howard's position. This is clear enough, and scarcely needs to be repeated.

W. HOLLAND.—All in good time.

E. HOWARD (Failsforth).—Mr. Holyoake's *Principles of Secularism* and Mr. Foote's *Philosophy of Secularism*; also the revised Principles and Program of the National Secular Society.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) The disagreements of scientists do not affect the incredibility of the Creation story of Genesis, if we take its language honestly, as our forefathers did. (2) We prefer to wait until the new edition of Huxley's works is completed.

J. BRICE.—A letter addressed to Mr. M. D. Conway, South-place Institute, South-place, Finsbury, London, E.C., will find him.

W. BALCK.—Such cuttings are always welcome.

H. K. S.—Mentioned, but not specially in our line.

O. E. SMITH.—Mr. Foote intends to bring out an entirely new edition of his *Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought*. It was written in his salad days, and has long been out of print. You say you have recently obtained a copy and read it "with delight." Well, there was a good deal of heart put into the work, but on the other side there was plenty of room for improvement. Pleased to have your high opinion of *Bible Heroes and Bible Romances*. The latter is now being completed. Thanks for enclosures.

A. T.—Mr. S. Hartmann is a German. We are not alarmed at the fact that his command of English is not perfect. Let his supercilious critic try a competition with him in the German language. It displays no greatness of mind to prefer good spelling to good sense. Mr. Hartmann is a valued vice-president of the N.S.S. and is likely to remain so, though his English spelling is no better than Shakespeare's.

F. O. WHITE.—Your suggestion cannot be dealt with till after the next Directors' meeting. Meanwhile it is to be hoped that the Branches will do their best to give support to the Hall of Science scheme, which "holds the field."

E. TOLEMAN GARNER's address is now "Glendale," Alexandra-road, Selhurst, Surrey. He is open for indoor lecturing engagements during the winter.

J. EVANS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. H. CHEESMAN.—Thanks, but Mr. Foote has something better to do than attend your lectures. You must find an audience for yourself.

E. E. T.—We are obliged to you for your bright and cheerful letter. The N.S.S. is getting every year a large number of lady members. It is a good idea of yours to read from the *Freethinker* to the villagers. Let us hear how your experiment progresses.

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—Reading Observer—Church Times—Christian Herald—Commonweal—West Ham Herald—Retford News—Dundee People's Journal—Nature Lover.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *The Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

EVERY copy of this week's *Freethinker* contains a prospectus of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited). Attached to the prospectus is a share application form. We beg every reader who can afford to take one share, or more, to fill in the form and forward it to the Secretary. If all do their duty now, the Hall of Science premises will soon be rebuilt, and the National Secular Society's headquarters will be at once worthy of the cause and worthy of the memory of Charles Bradlaugh.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The first month's experiment at the London Hall of Science closed on Sunday evening. The audience was still larger than before. A steady increase Sunday after Sunday culminated in a splendid meeting that reminded the old workers of the exciting times of hard struggle and bitter persecution. Evidently the news of these gatherings had travelled far, for the light-fingered fraternity had got wind of them, and the chairman (Mr. R. O. Smith) gave the audience a hint to look after their valuables. Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Dawn of Humanity" was highly relished and enthusiastically applauded. Two Christians offered opposition, one of them being a well-known rowdy figure at open-air meetings. The merriment of the audience at his expense, during the lecturer's reply, would have been painful to a person of common susceptibility.

Mr. Touzeau Parris occupies the Hall of Science platform to-day (Oct. 15) both morning and evening. The free admission to the gallery in the evening is to be continued, and we hope the hall will be well filled. Mr. Parris's lectures are sure to be interesting and instructive.

The Wednesday evening free lectures at the Hall of Science were opened by Mr. Foote, who discoursed on Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," with selections. There was a good audience and a good collection for the working expenses. During the winter a great variety of lectures will be provided on Wednesday evenings. All sorts of advanced causes will be represented on the platform. The admission is free, opportunity is given for discussion, and the meetings should be well attended.

We are glad to hear that our colleague, Mr. Charles Watts, has been as successful with his lectures in the United States as he was in Canada. In reporting his lectures at Grand Rapids, Michigan, *The Eagle* says: "The immense audience

which packed Powers' Grand Opera House, which has a seating capacity of nearly 2,000 people, both morning and evening of last Sunday to hear the great debater, Secularist and Agnostic, Mr. Charles Watts, now of Birmingham, England, must have been gratifying in the extreme to the speaker, testifying as it did to the hold which he, either on account of his genial good nature, or the religion he teaches—for he said in the evening that he appeared before them as a religious man as he defined the term—has upon the people of Grand Rapids."

The Grand Rapids *Democrat* also writes: "Mr. Charles Watts, the famous Freethinker and lecturer, delivered two addresses yesterday in Powers' Opera House, and for both the house was full to overflow. In the evening every seat down stairs was occupied and many stood, while in the first gallery the seating capacity was not large enough. Mr. Watts is an eloquent speaker and a logical thinker, and his discussion of "Religious Fanaticism" was a masterly effort."

On Wednesday, November 1, a tea and entertainment will take place at the Hall of Science in aid of the funds of the London Secular Federation. After the entertainment there will be a dance for the younger folk. The tickets are one shilling. It is the duty of the London Branches to endeavor to make the gathering a great success by disposing of the tickets, which are also obtainable at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote has promised to attend and give a reading.

The Lecturers' Class at the Hall of Science, under the auspices of the London Secular Federation, has commenced, and it is intended to assist and encourage young members of the party who are willing to take the platform for the propagation of our principles. Arrangements have been made for meetings every Tuesday at 8 p. m.; and members of the London Branches are invited to attend, and take part in the discussion which follows the reading of papers by aspirants to platform honors.

Several important matters are set down for consideration at the Conference of London Branches, which will be held at the Hall of Science on Thursday, October 19. The agenda will be sent to Branch secretaries; and each Branch should make a point of being represented. All members of London Branches are invited to attend this meeting, and discuss matters relating to our organisation.

The *Brixtonian* gives a good and fair account of the recent debate at Loughborough Junction between Mr. James Rowney and Mr. W. Mist, a local Christadelphian lecturer. The reporter ranks the Secular debater a good deal higher than the Christian, and speaks of Mr. Rowney as "a tough antagonist or a superficial Christian apologist to encounter."

The Humanitarian League is arranging for the delivery of lectures in London, one of which is to be given next Friday (Oct. 20) at 8 p. m., at 32 Sackville-street, W. Mrs. C. Mallet is the speaker, and her subject is "Dangerous Trades." Admission free.

Hull Secularists who find any difficulty in obtaining the *Freethinker* since the death of Mr. W. Grayson, of High-street, will be able to get what they want by applying at Mr. Naewiger's, 22 Osborne-street, where they will find a good stock of all kinds of advanced literature.

The North Eastern Secular Federation Council meets this afternoon (Oct. 15) at 3 o'clock in the Eldon Hall, Clayton-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Very important business has to be transacted, and every member of the Council should attend.

A debate will take place in Finsbury Park next Sunday at 11.15, between Mr. F. S. Paul, and Mr. Dunn of the C. E. S. Subject: "Is there a God?"

Our readers will rejoice to hear that Mr. G. J. Holyoake is recovering from the effects of his latest accident. A year ago he got under a bus at Charing Cross; a fortnight ago he was knocked down by a cab in the Whitechapel-road, and severely hurt. Lying in bed, and full of pain, he dictated a humorous letter to the *Co-operative News*. It speaks volumes for the veteran's courage and irrepressible spirits, but we

hope he will not court a *third* disaster. The number is unlucky. At Mr. Holyoake's age, and with his eyesight, a friendly arm is necessary in busy thoroughfares.

The *Daily Chronicle*, noticing Leslie Stephens' Life of Marlowe, in vol. xxxvi. of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says: "Marlowe's heterodoxy was most dangerously pronounced for the days in which he lived. Francis Kett, a fellow and tutor of Marlowe's college, had been burnt for harmless mysticism at Norwich in 1589, and it is not at all unlikely that if "Kynde Kit Marlowe" had not been stabbed he would have shared Kett's fate and figured along with Giordano Bruno as a 'Freethought Martyr.'"

There's a deal of human nature in most people, including policemen, if you can only get at it. One of the best things in the *Daily Chronicle's* account of the administration of its relief fund is the report of an incident at Leigh. Forty policemen were drafted there to keep the peace, and as there were really no heads to crack the policemen took to filling empty stomachs. Superintendent Higinbotham was the treasurer, and a brawny sergeant was found getting ready the soup and bread. Tables were set out in the station yard; where the children were fed first, then the women, and last the men. If this sort of thing goes on we shall have the millennium upon us before we are ready for it.

Harry Marten, the Republican and "regicide," who put his signature to the death warrant of that crowned liar Charles I., figures in the new volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Carlyle describes him as "a right hard-headed, stout-hearted little man, full of sharp fire and cheerful light; sworn foe of cant in all its figures; an indomitable little Roman pagan if no better." Under the Restoration he was imprisoned in Chepstow Castle, where he died. He was a wit and no Puritan, and always on the side of liberty and humanity. His religious views were very heterodox.

Another patriot in the same volume is Andrew Marvell, a true friend of freedom, as incorruptible as the sea, and a brilliant writer. He sat for Hull, and the corporation voted £50—a large sum in those days—for his funeral. But the Church parson would not allow a tombstone to be placed over his remains. Good old Mother Church! She has always been the harlot of power.

An interesting ceremony took place last Saturday at Boulge, near Woodbridge, Suffolk, where Edward Fitzgerald, the translator of Omar Khayyam, lies buried. In 1888, William Simpson, of the *Illustrated London News*, visited the grave of Khayyam in Persia, and brought home seeds from a rose tree that grows thereon. These were carefully planted by Mr. Thistleton Dyer, of Kew Gardens, and rose slips from them, grafted on an English rose, were transferred to the grave of Fitzgerald. Mr. M. D. Conway spoke on the occasion, and there were Mr. W. Simpson, Mr. Clement Shorter, Mr. E. Clodd, Mr. Quaritch, and other admirers of the English and Persian poets present. Mr. E. Gosse and Mr. Grant Allen contributed poems for the occasion.

The *Two Worlds* (Oct. 6) prints the critical exposure of the Theosophical Society, delivered by W. Emmette Coleman at the Psychical Congress at Chicago.

Mr. Foote's *Will Christ Save Us?* is now on sale at our publishing office. We have also just issued a new edition—the first from our office—of Ingersoll's *Oration on the Gods*, which is one of his very finest efforts. This edition is well printed on good paper, and bound in a neat stiff wrapper. It is an excellent pamphlet to circulate for propagandist purposes.

At a meeting of some colored brethren it was decided to make a collection. The president concluded to pass the hat himself, and in order to encourage the others, he put in a ten cent piece. After the collection, during which every hand had been in the hat, the president approached the table, turned the hat upside down, and not even his own contribution dropped out. He opened his eyes with astonishment and exclaimed, "Fo' goodness, but Ise ebun lost de ten cents I started wib!" There was consternation on every face. Who was the lucky man? That was the question. It was evidently a hopeless case, and the situation was summed up by one brother, who rose in his place and said solemnly, "Dat 'pears to be a great moral lesson rodu' heah somowhar!"

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

THE world may breathe more freely; a load which has weighed on it for centuries has been lifted—and by our old friend Mr. Logan, of Bristol.

Mr. Logan has a Sunday afternoon Bible class, to which is invited all and sundry. I wandered in last Sunday, and listened with interest while Mr Logan let himself out on the subject of "the unpardonable sin." It was a really clever piece of rhetoric. He commenced by daringly reading a newspaper account of a local murder committed by a woman rendered insane by the fear that she had committed this sin, and Mr. Logan candidly admitted that this "spectre"—to use his word—had driven to crime and death large numbers of people. Some had said the sin against the Holy Ghost was this, others maintained it was that, but he averred it was neither, but simply "sinning against light." Said he, "whenever a man does what he knows to be wrong, or avoids doing what he knows to be right, he sins against the Holy Ghost." How simple! What a wonder no one thought of it before! When question time came I pointed out that all sin—as I understood the term—was comprehended in the wilful doing of wrong and of leaving undone right, and asked him whether, seeing that everybody thus sinned to a greater or less degree, his interpretation did not bring *all persons* into the awful category of sinners against the Holy Ghost. Mr. Logan fenced the question by proceeding to explain that some sins were committed thoughtlessly and on impulse, but I held him to the point, and he finally admitted virtually that all *had* sinned against the Holy Ghost.

The cream of the lecture is to come. This worst of sins was never to be pardoned, but that did not mean that it was to be punished eternally, only that it had to be expiated by some punishment here or hereafter, and could not be forgiven as other sins were. Heaven would not be the same to those who had thus sinned. Such sinners were in "danger" of eternal damnation, but this was not to be their fate. How nice! And after all the fuss and bother for centuries about such a trifle! When this came out, quite a rustle of relief swept over the congregation, like a cool breeze over a field of scorched wheat.

I was unkind enough to suggest that in making our estimate of Mr. Logan's revelation, we should consider whether it was likely God would allow hundreds of poor pious souls to go insane and commit crimes over this doctrine, and leave it to Mr. Logan, eighteen hundred years afterwards, to clear up the difficulty and make the world feel comfortable.

Mr. Logan's reply was that had the matter been cleared up before, there would have been no need of his lecture that afternoon. As to the likelihood of the thing, it was sufficient to say it had been done.

Then we all went home happy.

A. GUEST.

A REMARKABLE BIBLE.

Mr. HAYES, of the Allan Library, writes:—One of the sights in this library is an old German Bible. The curious colored engravings are quite a study, some of which may be remarked upon. The Garden of Eden has a church in it, with a well-built stone wall round it, with Adam and Eve driven through a door of masonry after their fall. Cain is killing his brother with a huge jawbone, after their united sacrifice on a well-made table with turned legs. Noah's ark is a very small affair, with a mermaid and merman, she with the never-failing looking-glass and comb. The building of the Tower of Babel is looked after by a veritable clerk of works, with what are meant for the Irish laborers of those days, the hodman and the mortar-mixer. Abraham receives the angels in a fine stone-built mansion, with a church and a castle close by. The angels are three pretty girls in colored dresses. Abraham's sacrifice of his son is prevented by the angel laying hold of the end of an enormous scimitar. A windmill and castle are in the background. Jacob deceives his father, who sits on a very high-backed *uneasy* chair, by a narrow strip of hair placed loosely on the back of his hand. Esau is just at hand, with bow, arrows, and hunting-horn. Jacob's ladder contains three lady angels, there being room for no more; he is asleep close to a large fortified city, with people and a row-boat. Potiphar, with a crown on his head, and his wife, appear to enjoy the sight of Joseph being driven by blows into a prison surrounded by a moat. Pharaoh dreams his remarkable dream with his crown on in bed. The poor infants ordered by the king to be cast into the river are manfully breasting the waves, while the cruel king and his wife are enjoying the sight from a tiny stone bridge. When

Moses was rescued by the king's daughter he was afterwards shown to the king, and the child is snatching the crown from Pharaoh's head, who appears to be strolling about his garden in his dressing-gown. Moses, in presence of the burning bush, is shown to be tugging most uncomfortably to remove a heavy boot from his foot. He is surrounded with pigs and sheep, while his dog is barking furiously at the burning bush. The plagues of Egypt are strangely represented. The frogs are crawling up the wall, sliding about the glazed windows, hopping about the table, with the king and family calmly looking on. The other plagues are fearsome sights; while the manna from heaven is more like large oranges than anything else. Two of the spies are bending under the weight of a single bunch of grapes. Aaron is being buried in a modern churchyard, with tombstones in it. Moses' last rites are performed in a long, narrow box, by two angels with huge wings and spades. Jephthah's deep grief is shown by his cutting off a large slice of his martial cloak with a very big sword. The Amalekite is offering Saul's crown to David, who has already one on his head. Absalom hangs by the tips of his hair to the branches, with several warriors running at him with tilted spears in soldierly order. David is placed in his coffin, far too short for him, by attendants in mourning cloaks. In Solomon's judgment the rival mothers are dressed *à la mode* of the fifteenth century. Elijah is carried to heaven in a very small child's cart. David is harping with a large, hairy hat on, and has three dogs, one a French poodle, which are disporting themselves in a very cosy room with a settee in it. The furnace of the Hebrew children is made hotter by the use of a large pair of bellows in the hands of one of the victims of its fierce blaze. Daniel is shown to be rescued from the lions' den by an angel lifting him out by a tuft of his hair. The New Testament is but sparingly illustrated. The Revelation is indescribable; the chief characters are awful-looking creatures. Hell is shown as an enormous dragon's mouth, into which popes, cardinals, kings, etc., are being driven. Such were the means used to teach Scripture knowledge in ancient times. This old Bible is a real study.—*Methodist Times.*

"AFTER HIS OWN IMAGE."

In the beginning of all things, about year number one,
Just after he finished the moon and the sun,
God said to himself, "I think if I can
I'll make me an animal, and call the thing man."

So he fashioned him one to a style of his own,
And placed him in Eden (a garden) alone;
Where the trees bore strange apples of knowledge and life—
But the man would not rest till he made him a wife.

So he made him a woman and left them alone;
But woman and man soon made men of their own,
Which made God quite angry; and, curious to state,
He took them from Eden and nailed up the gate.

A failure so early to one who's so great
Must have put him, I think, in a terrible state;
For if sun, moon and stars, all turned out just right,
Why should success in his man be so slight?

But, as it appears, he could hit on no plan
To make him a better or more pleasing man;
So this failure of God's increased with a will,
And statisticians tell us it's doing so still.

God has tried to improve man again and again;
He has used burning sulphur, hailstones, and rain;
He has sent down his son to die on a tree,
But the failure's as bad as a failure can be.

The sky-pilots tell us that "God in his might
Can turn stones to bread, and day into night";
But listen, ye clergy! tell me, if you can,
Why he made such a thundering mess with his man?

P. T. WHELAN.

FULFILLING PROPHECY.

We are told in the nineteenth century that God has the Jews persecuted simply for the purpose of establishing the authenticity of the Scriptures, and that every Jewish home burned in Russia throws light on the gospel, and every violated Jewish maiden is another instance that God still takes an interest in the holy Scriptures. That is their doctrine. They are "fulfilling prophecy." The Christian grasps the Jews, strips him, robs him, makes him an outcast, and then points to him as a fulfilment of the prophecy; and we are to-day laying the foundation of a future persecution, we are teaching our children in the Sunday-schools the monstrous falsehood that the Jews crucified God and the whole nation consented. They crucified a good man. What nation has not? What race has not? Think of the number killed by the Presbyterians; by the Catholics. Every sect, with, maybe, two or three exceptions, have crucified their fellows, and every race has burned its greatest and best. And yet we are filling the minds of the people with hatred of the Jewish race.—*Ingersoll.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE apostle of Culture, as Arnold has been termed, was born at Laleham, Dec. 21, 1822, his father being the well-known master of Rugby, Dr. Thomas Arnold, by whom he was educated, together with his friend, the sceptical poet, Arthur Hugh Clough, with whom he went to Oxford. He won the Newdigate prize for poetry, and it was as a poet he first made his mark. His is the poetry of reflection. In his *Thyrsis*, and *The Gipsy Scholar*, are traces of the conflicts of doubt and faith which Arnold and Clough fought together. In the fine chant of *Empedocles on Etna* (1852), the issue appears in the philosophy ascribed to Empedocles, which is that of the Secularist sceptic. Since

Nature, with equal mind,
Sees all her sons at play,
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweep man away.

The part of the sage is to make the best of the world as it is "not fly to dreams, but moderate desire."

In 1865 appeared his *Essay in Criticism*, dealing with such men as Heine, Spinoza, Marcus Aurelius, etc., in the spirit of his definition of criticism as "disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." The phrase "sweetness and light," which he borrowed from Swift, well described his own characteristics.

In his *Literature and Dogma* (1873) he made apparent the gulf between culture and orthodox dogmatic theology. He does not scruple to banter the belief in a personal God, and spoke of the Trinity as "a sort of magnified and improved Lord Shaftesbury with a race of vile offenders to deal with . . . a younger Lord Shaftesbury, on the scale of his father . . . then, finally, a third Lord Shaftesbury, still on the same high scale, who keeps very much in the background, and works in a very occult manner, but very efficaciously nevertheless."

The work of course aroused many critics, to whom he replied in his *God and the Bible*. From his early training, Arnold retained an affection for the Church, and a hope of stopping change where it never can be stopped. But he did much to spread the gospel of Freethought, and will long be looked back on as a writer of distinction who formed a transitional link "between two worlds—one dead, the other powerless to be born." He died April 15, 1888.

OUR LAWSLEEVED LORDS.

WHAT is the union of our Church and State?
Our priests are mostly lackeys of the great.
A bishop, is a prince, a lord, a peer,
A man of several thousand pounds a year,
Whom kindly Providence permits to hive
A copious family, and make it thrive;
Chosen to fill his see on no pretence
Of courage, foresight, science, eloquence;
A schoolmaster, an ignorant cadet,
A priest with kinsfolk near the Cabinet,
A pompous don of bloated, stupid face,
These Paul and Peter! occupy your place.
They prate of Jesus Christ. But not a word
For justice, right and truth is ever heard
From the Right Reverend Bench, on whose soft perch
Roosts the fine linen of the English Church.

T. ROGERS.

NORTH-EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

The Council of the above organisation will meet on Sunday Oct. 15, at 3 p.m., in the Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Important business, relating to the financial position of the Federation, and also other important matters, such as increased propaganda work, will be brought before the Council. A full meeting of delegates and vice-presidents is requested. I beg to acknowledge the follow subscriptions: Mr. White, South Shields, 5s.; Mr. Martin Bell, Newcastle, 5s.—JOSEPH BROWN, Hon. Sec., 86 Durham-street, Bentineck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

ULSTER BRANCH QUARTERLY REPORT.

Twelve Sunday evening meetings were held; average attendance at each was 55, being an increase on last year's average of 48. The unusually good weather in summer months caused a considerable falling off in the audiences. Sale of literature shows a slight falling off, being only 7s. as against 8s. 5d. last year. Mr. J. M. Robertson gave three lectures at beginning of quarter, which were well attended. Eight anti-theological papers were given by members, and one on a political question. One paper was read by a Christian opponent. On two occasions the debates on papers had to be adjourned to allow full discussion. The treasurer's report showed the financial position to be hopeful, the balance in his hands at end of quarter being £4 2s. 1d. Number of members on roll at end of quarter, 38.

HOW GORILLAS EVOLUTED.

MR. R. L. GARNER, who has been to Africa to study chimpanzee language, says the following story of the origin of bushmen and gorillas is told by the Galoi tribe.

They say that Einyambie (God) had four sons who lived with him in some aerial abode, and three of them came to the earth, leaving the oldest one with Einyambie. On their arrival here they held a big palaver as to what mode of life they should adopt.

The oldest of the three wanted to build a town and plant some fruit, but the other two preferred to live in the forest and subsist upon the wild products of nature. Accordingly they separated, and the oldest went and built him a town and planted some bananas and manioc, while the other two roamed about through the primeval bush and ate such wild fruits as they could find, but they had no fire.

After some talk about the matter, it was agreed that the older of the two should go to the brother in the town and ask him for fire, while the younger should remain in the bush and gather up sticks of dry wood to burn.

The one who had gone to the town soon returned with fire, and the two got on quite well for a time, but when the wet season came on they found it more difficult to procure food, and at last it was decided that the elder should again visit the town to ask their brother to supply them, and the younger brother should remain to keep up the fire; but the youth went to sleep and let it die out, so, when the other returned with food, they had no fire to cook it.

This vexed the elder very much, and a quarrel ensued, in consequence of which they separated. The youngest brother was left alone in the deep bush, and thus cut off from all fellowship with his brethren he wandered about until he became wild and fierce, and for want of clothing was exposed to the weather until a coat of hair grew all over him, and in this wise came the gorilla into the world.

The next older brother, on leaving the remote forest, took up his abode near the town, and by this means came in contact at times with his brother in the town, from whom he learned a few useful things, and thus became more wise and civil than the one left in the bush; and from this one came the "bushman," while the progeny of the one who built the town are the people of the world. Such is the origin on earth of these three kindred races, as told by the sages of Galoi.

You will observe that this novel has no woman in it, and her being remains a question in Galoi.

ORIGIN OF BELIEF IN WITCHES.

THE question is, then: How did this marvellous delusion arise? Three causes, I believe, produced it.

1. To quote Lecky, the historian: "A religion that rests largely on terrorism will engender the belief in witches or magic; for the panic which its teachings create overbalances the faculties of the multitude." This is true; a cruel religion, as Christianity became when it began to rest more and more on the basis of eternal punishment and the wrath of God, will inevitably be haunted by the fear of evil spirits. Therefore it is that the religion of Zoroaster and that of Brahma have been free from the reproach of the persecution of witches and sorcerers.

2. The support from the Bible. Now, there is no doubt at all that the Bible does support the doctrine of evil spirits and witchcraft. And this fact alone is sufficient to destroy the orthodox theory of what Dr. Briggs calls "biblical inerrancy," or freedom from error, for not one person out of one hundred now believes in the reality of possession by evil spirits. There is, I say, no doubt that the Bible does teach this doctrine. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," was the repeated command in the Levitical law; this command was the foundation stone upon which the putting to death of witches rested. We all know the story of the Witch of Endor, as told in the twenty-eighth chapter of the first book of Samuel.

Again, the Devil afflicted Job in various ways, one way being the sending of a tempest which destroyed Job's sons. Great atmospheric disturbances were always ascribed to Satanic agency, although a nice distinction prevailed. When the destruction was great, it was ascribed directly to Satan; when small, to angels, the word angels being used in a double sense, as messengers of evil and messengers of good. To come to the New Testament. Philip baptises Simon the sorcerer; and Saul of Tarsus finds in Paphos a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew named Bar-Jesus.

—J. H. Long in the "Popular Science Monthly."

OBITUARY.

The death of Mr. Ford Madox Brown removes one of the last of the Pre-Raphaelite school. He was a man of genius and of singularly high character. With a strong, well-knit body, a grand head, and most genial manners, he was an extremely attractive personality. In politics he was a Republican, and in religion a Freethinker.

HELL'S PLAYING OUT.

HELL's playin' out! No matter what the preacher folk may say,
 Tho' tryin' fer to keep it hot, it's fadin' ev'ry day.
 The place where sinners sizzled in the tortures o' the damned
 Has kinder been made over like and sorter cooled and ca'med.
 The pit o' burning sulphur over which they used to shake
 A feller ever' Sunday so's to keep him wide awake.
 An' the awful smell o' brimstone an' theimps 'at shrieked 'ith
 glee,
 They ain't one-half so terrible as what they uster be.
 Some people say it isn't right to let the fires die;
 They'd ruther keep 'em goin' jest to hear the sinners fry;
 "What good is heaven goin' to prove," they ask, "fer me
 an' you,
 If ever'body else gets in to share the glory too?"
 I'd ruther that the Lord 'ud save us all among the blest,
 Ner damn a soul, not even his who wants ter damn the rest.
 I'm glad the fire's playin' out, jest awful glad, and yit,
 I s'pose fer souls that want a hell, that's what they orter git.

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, Touzeau Parris, "Socialism and Individual Liberty" (free): 6.30, musical selections; 7, Touzeau Parris, "The Genesis of Life" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday (in the Minor Hall) at 8.30, discussion class, Mr. Garton, "Is State Socialism Moral?" Wednesday at 8.15, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Medicine" (free).
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, W. S. de Mattos, B.A. (Fabian), "The Causes of Industrial Depression" (free). Monday at 8, A. Johnson, "Assyria, Babylon, and Israel" (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club (members wanted).
 Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, T. Layman, G.S.M., "Fallacies of Neo-Malthusianism."
 Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "A Search for the Soul." Friday at 7.45, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.
 Islington—Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-street: Thursday, Oct. 19, at 8, J. M. Robertson, "Christian and Pagan Myths."
 South Essex Secular Society, 33 and 35 Salway-road, Stratford: 7.15, Maurice Russell (W.H.S.B.), "Work on the School Board."
 Walthamstow—Workmen's Hall, High-street: 7, R. Rosetti will lecture.
 Wimbledon—Hartfield-road Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, a lecture (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gate: 11.15, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "How Science can Tell the Age of the Earth."
 Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Religion as it is and as it might be."
 Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Oct. 19, at 8, a lecture.
 Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, a lecture.
 Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Civilising the Gods"; 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Day of Temptation in the Wilderness."
 Kilburn—High-road (corner of Victoria-road): 6.30, St. John, "God and his Friends."
 Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, St. John will lecture.
 Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Resurrection."
 Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, John Harkis, "The New Ethic."
 Bath—Corridor Rooms: 8, Mr. Keast, "Christian Evidences."
 Belfast—Crown Chambers Hall, 64 Royal-avenue: 7, M. Kane, "Proofs of Life After Death."
 Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, J. Booth, "Body, Mind, Soul, and Spirit."
 Brighton—Eagle Assembly Rooms, Glo'ster-road: 7, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."
 Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, F. J. Boorman, "Has Christianity Made for Progress?"; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, J. J. Taylor, "Is Unbelief Immoral?"
 Falsworth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2, 6.30, P. Percival, "Shakespeare—the Modern Drama."
 Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, Synoptikos, "The Light of Asia"; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Science of Man—I." (lantern illustrations with special slides).
 Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, recreative evening.
 Ipswich—Co-operative Hall (small room), Cox-lane: 8, meeting of members.
 Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 3, logic class, L. Small, B.Sc.; 7, Mr. Smith, "Gods."
 Manchester N.B.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: 6.30, Greevz Fisher, "Is Marriage Sacred?" Tuesday at 8, debating circle, J. W. Watts, "The Art of Being Miserable." Dancing on Monday from 8 to 10.30.
 Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, J. Whitehead, "Why I am a Socialist."
 Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, chess club; 7, miscellaneous evening.

Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street; 7, members' meeting.
 Salford—S. D. F. Club, 43 Trafford-road: Sam Standing, 3, "The Influence of Church and State on Labor"; 7, "The Rising Sun of Socialism."
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: R. Harding, 3, "Individualism v Socialism"; 7, "Is Radicalism Reasonable?"
 South Shields—Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane: C. Cohen, 11, "The Scientific Basis of Mora's"; 7, "Science and Supernaturalism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Brighton (on the Level): 3, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus and what did he Teach?"
 Ipswich—The Knolls Promenade: C. James, 11.30, "Christ and Democracy"; 3, "What must I do to be Saved?"
 Salford—Broadway: Saturday, Oct. 14, at 7, Sam Standing, "The Independent Labor Party." Sunday at 11, at Trafford Bridge, Sam Standing, "The Worker, at Home and Abroad."
 Rochdale—Town Hall-square: Monday at 7, Sam Standing, "Some Mistakes about Secularism." Tuesday at 7, Sam Standing, "Some Truths about Christianity."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Oct. 15 to 31, on Tour. Nov. 4, South Shields; 5, Blythe.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Oct. 19, Hammersmith; 22, m., Kingsland; e., Kilburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 15, Hyde Park; 22, m. and e., Camberwell; 29, Westminster. Nov. 5, Chatham; 19, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Oct. 15, Hall of Science; 22, Liverpool. Nov. 2, Wellington Hall, Islington; 26, Camberwell.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Oct. 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, Salford; 16, Rochdale.

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

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THE CLERK'S REVENGE.

A rather amusing episode took place in one of the parish churches in Lancashire a few years ago.

The minister was going through the service in the church one Sunday afternoon, when the clerk ventured to ask him if he would kindly cut the sermon short, as he had got an invitation to tea at the house of a friend.

The minister, knowing he was very anxious to go, thought he would play him a trick. So, instead of shortening his sermon, he preached for more than an hour and a half.

By this time the old clerk was at boiling point. Thinking he had been made a fool of, he was anxious to do the parson one in return. So he bawled out from the top of his voice—

"Psalm 119. Fro' eend t' eend; he's preached all day and we'll sing all neet."

HUMOR IN THE SCHOOLROOM.

A Toronto school inspector named J. L. Hughes, has put together in the *Canadian Magazine* for July, a number of good stories. The following samples are culled from his paper:—

"Who made you?" asked a primary teacher. The little girl addressed evidently wished to be accurate in her reply—"God made me so long"—indicating the length of a short baby—"and I growed the rest."

"Boys," said a teacher, "can any of you quote a verse from Scripture to prove that it is wrong for a man to have two wives?" He paused, and after a moment a bright boy raised his hand. "Well, Thomas," said the teacher, encouragingly. Thomas stood up and said, solemnly, "No man can serve two masters." The question ended there.

A school teacher who had just been telling the story of David, winds up with, "And all this happened over two thousand years ago." A little cherub, its blue eyes dilated with wonder, after a few moments' thought, exclaims, "Oh, dear, marm, what a memory you must have!"

I believe in turning our attention to things of importance—to questions that may by some possibility be solved. It is of no importance to me whether God exists or not. I exist, and it is important to me to be happy while I exist. Therefore I had better turn my attention to finding out the secret of happiness, instead of trying to ascertain the secret of the universe.—*Ingersoll.*

THE WAYS OF ROME (AND MODERN BABYLON).

After reading Mr. F. Ryan's article on the attempt of the Church of Rome to suppress what it decides, through the Congregation of the Index to be heretical writings, I was reminded of the same spirit, as rife among Protestants, but owing to the loose organisation of the sects, their attempts at suppression are not quite so effectual; but the following true case from a Christian evidence paper, shows the same tactics are pursued. "Answers to Correspondents—To George—We are very glad to hear you are dissatisfied with the evidence for Freethought, and strongly advise you to burn or destroy the books you mention, and carefully study *Paley's Evidences, Row's Manual*, etc., etc., and write us again." Here is the same spirit of intolerance and bigotry at work in one case, as the other.—THOMAS MAX.

A clergyman on his way to church on Sunday saw two lads with their lines and rods by the side of a stream. The good man was fond of sport, but true to his creed and cloth.

"Boys," said he in a stern tone, "do you not know what day this is? Have you not been taught that it is a sin to—"

At this point down went the float with a jerk.

"Pull him up! pull him up!" broke out the parson. "You young fools! don't you see you've got a bite?"

Dr. Macleod and Dr. Watson were in the West Highlands together on a tour. While crossing a loch in a boat in company with a number of passengers, a storm came on. One of the passengers was heard to say:

"The two ministers should begin to pray, or we'll a' be drowned."

"Na, na," said a boatman, "the little ane can pray if he likes, but the big ane must tak' an oar."

It is generally admitted that a beadle is a pretty good judge of the social qualities of a minister, if not of his theological acquirements. A Glasgow correspondent was discussing with one of these functionaries the other day the "points" of a young licentiate, who is at present supplying the pulpit of a cleric absent on holiday, when the beadle summed up his exalted opinion of the youth in these words—"He's a gey guid ane for staunin ye a dram when ye gang up tae his lodgings wi' messages!"

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