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THE CHURCH IN DANGER—TOM MANN TO THE RESCUE.

“The Church must be brought into line.”—TOM MANN.

HARVEST THANKSGIVINGS.

It has always been the policy of the clergy to mix themselves up with everything of importance. At one time it was impossible to move without their company. Their fingers were in every pie. When a child was born they gave it a name; when young people were to be married they tied the knot; when the dead were buried their services were once more indispensable. They bossed the schools and colleges, they were the private tutors of princes and young nobles, they prayed over and blessed the foundations of notable buildings, they took part in the coronation of kings, and they not only asked the blessing of God on the deliberations of Parliament, but actually preached sermons to the members. At present, however, the clergy are not so much in request. Owing to the secularisation of life, which is an inevitable mark of civilisation, children can now be named at a registrar's office, brides and bridegrooms can be spliced at the same establishment, and the dead can be buried without religious rites in the unconsecrated parts of cemeteries. All this, of course, is very annoying to the men of God, who have to smile as well as they can while their trade is being ruined.

One of the offices of the Church was presiding over agriculture. Not that the clergy ploughed and sowed

and reaped. Oh dear no! They looked after the mystical part of the business. They sang a hymn over the ploughman's labors, they dropped a prayer with the seed in the furrows, and they praised the Lord when the harvest was garnered. All the work was done by other people, and the clergy took all the credit they could for the result. They were like the meat-roasting power of the meat-jack—indispensable to the proper finish of the operation. Or perhaps their function is better illustrated by the following story.

An English nobleman, travelling in Italy, was taken possession of at a certain city by a perfect crowd of attendants. One seized this article, another that, and conveyed them to his lodgings. At the finish they all stood in a row awaiting their remuneration. At the end of the almost interminable procession of expectants stood an infirm, venerable looking old beggar, quite incapable of carrying anything. “Well,” said the nobleman, “and what did you do?” “Signor,” answered the old fellow, with a profound bow, “I also was there.”

The clergy were like that old beggar. They did nothing, but they were there. And they were always there, too, for their little bit at the finish.

Harvest Thanksgiving Services have been just in season. Even in a great metropolis like London, where heaps of people don't know whether potatoes

grow above ground or under it, the churches and chapels have had their special little say to the Lord on account of the crops. True, the harvest has not been a miraculously good one, but whose fault is that? Not the clergy's. Of course not. They did their part all right. They battered the ears of Omnipotence several times a week. *Their* agricultural mixture is always efficacious. If the harvest is a poor one, the responsibility lies upon other shoulders. Besides, the Lord doesn't owe us any harvest at all; whatever we get is a benefaction; and we must be thankful this year in the hope of something better next year. If the "Father" gives us stones for bread, we must mumble them as though they were Bath buns, lest we put him in a temper to give us stones again, yea and again, yea verily and for ever and ever.

Even in Holloway Gaol, when the present writer was accommodated there, the chaplain preached a Thanksgiving sermon, though the price of provisions was not a burning question in his congregation. It was inferrable from his remarks that the harvest was not luxuriant, yet he observed that if there were none at all they should be equally grateful—as they probably would have been in the circumstances. Then they sang about the corn and wine and oil, with a plaintive note on the middle substantive; and, streaming back to their private apartments (well protected against burglars), they took their dose of corn in the shape of prison pudding, and their dose of oil in the shape of an unctuous smear on its upper surface.

This year's harvest, as everybody knows, has not been a good one, with the exception of fruit, which Adam was turned out of Eden for eating, and hops, which the Lord gives us for brewing beer. Who shall pluck out the heart of this mystery? Science is baffled, and we must have recourse to Theology, who is always ready with an answer, especially when Science is dumb. And what does Theology say? Let us hear her through the telephone of the Rev. J. R. Cotter, who hails from Essex. According to this oracle, our indifferent harvest is a sign of God's displeasure. England has forsaken God, and God is forsaking England. Atheists are admitted to parliament, Christian teaching is excluded from our schools, a Catholic college is established at Maynooth, and the High Church party is gaining an evil triumph over good old Evangelicalism. And for all these things God is bringing us to account. Hence the Irish famine, the Indian mutiny, the Chinese war, disasters at the Cape, strikes, lock-outs, ships going to the bottom, and England borrowing £3,000,000 from France to save her credit, in defiance of the divine command, "Thou shalt lend to many nations and shalt not borrow." Hence also this bad harvest, and if we do not turn from our evil ways "the harvest will become more and more inferior."

Such is Parson Cotter's diagnosis. And what is the immediate remedy? The true worshippers must beg of their ministers to obey the command, "Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests." Well now, *that* is easy enough. We are ready to give the priests rope enough to gird themselves, or to effect a more drastic operation; and to encourage them in lamenting, we are ready to give them something to cry about. Suppose we take advantage of the bad harvest to serve them as the coal owners served the miners, and offer them a twenty-five per cent. reduction. They would lament *then*, and if Providence did not hear them it would never hear anything from this planet.

We have no doubt that Parson Cotter is sincere in his jeremiad, for a designing man would hardly make such a display of absurdity. Whether he is naturally foolish, or his brains are simply addled by theology, is a question we are unable to determine. We venture to point out, however, that he makes Providence as foolish as himself. If the High Church clergy, for instance, are the chief sinners, the Lord should decimate *them*, say by lightning or cholera, and not punish sailors, miners, and poor people who suffer from the dearth of the necessities of life. It is all very well to preach a vicarious atonement, but when it comes to castigating the humble for the sins of their "superiors" it is time to cry "Halt!" Such a doctrine is only fit for knaves and fools.

G. W. FOOTE.

PAGAN SURVIVALS.

WHEN Voltaire was at Rome he bowed before the head of Olympian Jove. Questioned as to his motive by the scandalised ecclesiastic, he answered, "I pay my court to him in the day of his adversity in the hope that he will remember me when his turn comes round again." Possibly he thought Paganism rather dormant than dead. If so, he could have found some facts to bear him out.

When did Paganism die? Church historians represent it as virtually becoming extinct in the fourth and fifth centuries. The Epistle to the Colossians (i. 23), attributed to Paul, says that the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven." In the same spirit the dialogue with Trypho, ascribed to Justin Martyr, says (c. 117), There is no race of mankind among whom the faith in the crucified Jesus is not planted, while Tertullian (*Apolog.* c. 37) says they were extended all through the Roman world. This in the second century! The attempted revival of Paganism by Julian is supposed to have been its last dying kick. Facts, however, do not bear out the ecclesiastical story.

M. Beugnot set himself with industry to write a history of the destruction of Paganism. He found that the monumental evidence does not square with the Church histories. For instance, the historians say Constantius prohibited the practice of Paganism under penalty of death; but Beugnot shows, from the evidence of inscriptions that the temples were open and sacrifices offered, not only in Rome, but throughout the Western Empire. He could find no better explanation than that the laws may have been drawn up, but not promulgated. It is a striking fact, and one dwelt on by those who would exonerate the Church from the charge of persecution, that although severe laws against Paganism are embodied in the Theodosian code, there is no record of any trials under such laws.

Constantine himself, after his death, according to Eutropius, received the honor of apotheosis and the appellation of "Divus." Claudian, dated in the fourth century, and Rutilius in the fifth, show us that Paganism alone prevailed in Italy in their time. In Rome itself the oldest church is said to be that attached to the so-called house of Clement. When excavated it proved to be a temple of Mithras. The Catacombs contain paintings which J. H. Parker, the great authority on Roman archæology, ascribes to the eighth and ninth centuries, yet some of these are evidently Pagan. There is, for instance, the names of the gods Deuspater and Sabazios. There is a representation of a body being taken off to the shades, like the rape of Proserpine by Pluto. Parties are represented feasting in heaven. In the vault of the chapel in the Catacombs of St. Callixus, Orpheus is represented as the central divinity. Even the commonest representation, that of the Good Shepherd, is not certainly Christian, since there are Good Shepherds of undoubtedly Pagan origin.* The emblems of the X P may or may not be Christian, and the same may be said of the cross, fish, anchor, and other "Christian" symbols. Mr. Parker says that in the Catacombs are scores of Pagan inscriptions. "The theory of the priests and their followers is that all these were carried down to the Catacombs as old marble, to be used again; this appears to me extremely improbable." I should think so indeed.

The Pantheon at Rome has the suggestive inscription that, "having been impiously dedicated of old by Agrippa to Jupiter and all the gods, was piously consecrated by Pope Boniface IV. to the Blessed Virgin and all the saints." Perhaps for Boniface IV. we should read Boniface IX.? The question of date is difficult, but all the evidence shows that Paganism extended down to a very much later time than Church historians allow; nay, that Roman Catholicism is but a modification of Roman Paganism.

Etruria, which Christian historians have represented as completely converted during the reign of Constan-

* Smith and Cheetham's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* says: "The Hermes Kriophorus of Pagan art certainly supplied the original type of the Good Shepherd."

tine, appears, by the testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus (xxvii. 3) and that of Zosimus (v., xli.), to have been a stronghold of the art of divination in their time, and to have supplied all Italy with diviners. Villani, in his *History of Florence*, records that all through the Middle Ages a statue of Mars stood on the banks of the Arno, a tradition prevailing that if the statue were dishonored evil would befall the city.

In mediæval Rome there remained many traces of Paganism, Pierre Barbo, Paul II, 1464-71, suppressed the Roman Academy under Pomponius Lætus as Pontifex Maximus, alleging that its members had erected altars to Romulus, and had exchanged their baptismal name for high sounding Roman appellations. It was charged against his predecessor, Pius II, 1458-1464, that in speaking of the death of Pope Nicolas he represented him as gone "to the celestial choirs, there to quaff nectar and the fruit of the vine." Erasmus also reports a sermon preached in his hearing before the warlike Pope Julius II, and his Cardinals, in which the Pope was compared to Jove, and the death of Christ to the self-sacrifice of Decius. All the mediæval writers and those of the Renaissance mingle Christian and Pagan mythology. To this day Italians swear by the body of Bacchus, as we say "by Jove." We shall find that evidence from other parts of Europe confirms that derived from the capital of Christendom.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE DELUSION OF PRAYER.

PRAYER, in a theological sense, is a petition or request addressed to a personal being termed God. The nature of the supplication presented is determined by the mental characteristics of those who supplicate, and by the circumstances surrounding their lives. Sometimes prayer takes the form of a confession of sin and an appeal for divine mercy and forgiveness; and at other times it is an expression of adoration or of thanks for blessings received. It forms a great part of what is called Christian worship, in which everything relating to various subjects is repeated again and again, as if the Christian's God were entirely uninformed as to what was going on among, and totally ignorant of what was necessary for the welfare of, the human race. Evidently praying folks will not go without anything they think they require for the want of asking, for they pray morn, noon, and night, and their requests are as contradictory as they are numerous. These devotees believe not only that God can, but that he does comply with requests thus addressed to him. It is reasonable to suppose that, if God hears all the requests sent to him, he must be sorely puzzled at times by their conflicting characters. Hence we ask:

Why should we pray to God most high,
Omniscient Lord of earth and sky?
Our every want does he not know,
Or are his kind compassions slow?
Must we then importune, and tease,
And cringe, and fawn, before we please?
Can God enjoy the groan, the tear,
Fit only for the despot's ear?
To God our wants why should we tell
When we are sure he knows them well?
To grant them will he still delay
Unless we sigh, and groan, and pray?
If God be so supremely kind,
Omniscient both in deed and mind,
Why vainly, impiously try
To change the Monarch of the sky?
The Jew, he prays that God would bless
His chosen people with his grace;
He prays that Israel's seed may be
As sands encircling yonder sea;
That Christians who have gone astray,
And wandered in a dangerous way,
May all to Jacob's God return,
And deeply their transgressions mourn:
Then Jacob's God will take them in,
And purge them from their deadly sin.
The Turk devoutly, humbly cries
Before the ruler of the skies;
That God is one, and great 's his view,
And Mahomet his prophet true;
He prays that God his faith would spread,
And make the *Alcoran* be read;

The world its sacred truth embrace,
Or perish all the sceptic race.
The *Brahmin* and the *Hindoo* pray
That all may of the Shaster say,
"Thou art alone the book divine,
In which true faith and doctrines shine."
Good *Catholics* sincerely pray
Their holy Church may win its way;
That heretics of every nation
Believe in transubstantiation:
While *Protestants* the Lord implore
That he would slay the scarlet whore,
And end her horrid, barbarous reign
Of deeds of blood and martyrs slain.
All godly, pious people pray
The Lord to keep them in their way;
Lest he their welfare should forget
Or at their silence take the pet.
Now *all* these holy fervent prayers
Enter the great Jehovah's ears;
To grant them all, were he to try,
'Twould puzzle the ruler of the sky.
If we our various duties do,
Love justice, wickedness eschew,
The God of mercy and of love
Such conduct surely will approve.
Is he not humblest, wisest, best,
Who lets the sovereign ruler rest,
And thinks his plans so wise, so high,
That he can't mend them if he try?

Jesus is said to have taught his disciples to pray in secret, not openly in churches, or in streets, "as the hypocrites" do. His words are "when thou prayest, enter into thy closet: and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. . . . Use not vain repetitions." Christians, however, in this, as in many other particulars, practise the very opposite to what Christ is credited with teaching. It is quite true that the Bible sanctions the delusion of prayer, for we read: "Pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you" (Jeremiah xxix.); "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John xvi.); "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi.) In the epistle of James it is said that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Of course that which is "effectual" must avail to some extent, but as we are told "there are none righteous, no, not one," where does the "effectual prayer" come in? It is stated that Elias prayed that there should be no rain, and a dry season of three years and a half followed. He then prayed again, and down came the rain. If this story be true, we doubt that his mind was in a sound state, and we cannot think very highly of the God who would listen to such requests. James also states that the elders' "prayer of faith" shall "save the sick." Such saving faith, it is very certain, is a scarce article in these days. Sometimes, it is true, the Peculiar People think they have a little of it, but when they act upon the delusion imprisonment is frequently the reward they receive for acting according to their faith. It is worthy of note that whether the case of Elias be true or false, rain or fair weather is not now obtained by prayer, although the desire for each in turn is doubtless sincere on the part of farmers at least, to whom a bad season frequently means bankruptcy.

That the custom of such praying is based on a delusion is evident from the fact that we have fine weather without praying for it, and bad weather in spite of prayer. Other things besides rain and sunshine are concerned in the production of cereals and fruits. Although prayers are offered up in every parish, frost, blight and insects do their destructive work, depriving the laborer of his reward. Seed time and harvest time may never fail, but the seeds rot and the harvest does not ripen. Assured as we are, that the condition of the atmosphere and the laws of growth are parts of a great unalterable system of nature, how can we reasonably sanction the teaching that they are dependent on a form of words addressed to God? If men still persist in using such forms, we can only excuse the folly by believing that they are either ignorant or misled. Assuming that the clergy are fairly educated, where is the morality of their leading their congregations to expect change of seasons by prayers when they know prayers cannot affect it? If the clergy are not aware of this, is it not a case of the blind leading the blind?

The clergy abound in this country where hospitals for the cure of the sick are kept up at an enormous cost. If the method of cure prescribed by James is a reliable one, much of the outlay and suffering in connection with these institutions could be averted by the elders of the church applying the New Testament prescription. Are the clergy in this matter unsympathetic or shall we say of them "O ye of little faith"?

The Bible bears testimony to the delusive nature of prayer. We read in the Psalms (xliv.) that God "knoweth the secrets of the heart"—we need not therefore tell him. In Daniel (iv.) it is said that God will do as he likes; it is therefore useless to petition him. And in Malachi (iii.) it is stated "I am the Lord, I change not"—therefore his intentions cannot be altered. If God is the Supreme Governor of the universe, existing evils are part of his plan, and Christians should submit, and with due obedience exclaim "Thy will be done." Besides, prayers to God are illogical even from a theological standpoint. They destroy his supposed attributes, inasmuch as they imply either that God does not know what is the best thing to do, or, knowing that, he is not inclined to do it. This is a reflection on his knowledge or on his goodness, moreover it is an impeachment of the perfection of the "divine government." If the order of things were perfect, prayer could not improve it, and any deviation or change from the original plan must be either an improvement or a modification, which in either case would destroy the stability of the operations of nature. Most of our readers are doubtless acquainted with Montgomery's "Psalm of Life":

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their songs rejoice
And cry—"Behold he prays."

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death,
He enters Heaven in prayer.

Here is a new reading—

Prayer is the worn-out *roué's* voice,
Who see that in his ways,
He now no longer can rejoice,
So gives them up and prays.

Prayer is the murderer's latest breath
When lifted into air;
From dangling in the rope of death
He slips to Heaven in prayer.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded).

THE EUSEBIAN LITERATURE.

IX.

LET me return to the advertisement of Eusebius in the notorious List of illustrious Catholic writers. It is alleged that he "*published (edidit) infinite volumes.*" As to the form of the statement, it is not good Latin; it is the kind of phrase a man might employ who meant to say by exaggeration, an "infinite number of volumes." Again I suspect a French scribe: the French are rather fond of such use of the word infinite.

Then as to the substance of the statement, does it not remind of the talk elsewhere about the books which might be written on Christ, so numerous that the world itself could not contain them? Undoubtedly those statements proceed from the same faction of literary men. Taken in connection with the inflated fable about the Library of Cæsarea, with its 30,000 volumes, what inference can be drawn but that they are striving to deepen the impression of a vast literary culture in the Church at a time when there was none at all?

Then again, they endeavor to make us feel how precious must the few Eusebian books be, which have come down to us, these fragments from the wreck of the great Cæsarean Library! These impressions are utterly false, as the lists of books extant in the monasteries during the sixteenth century show; and above all the fact that Eusebius is during that age only beginning to be heard of.

The evidence is most striking, and quite irresistible. I have already referred to Polydore Vergil, who states that he wrote his treatise on Christian Origins in London, in the time of Henry VIII., and who admits that he is the first writer since Pliny who has dealt with inventions and discoveries, and who is practically the first secular to use some of the Eusebian works for the purpose. He does not refer to a *Life of Constantine* among them. That silence might not in itself be conclusive; but the corresponding silence of his contemporary, John Leland, the king's librarian, is, to my mind, quite decisive against the book.

Leland has a chapter in his *British Writers* (c. xvi.) on Constantine the Great. He points out that his *Life* has been written by Aurelius Victor, and Eutropius and Pomponius Laetus, whom he extols to the skies. He quotes a few lines to prove that if the emperor was not a British writer, he was at least a learned man; nay, he ventures the little conjecture, on his own authority, that Constantine *was* a writer. Leland was a learned simpleton; and if he had heard of the Eusebian *Life*, he would certainly have named it. His ignorance is the more remarkable because the preceding chapter is on St. Helena, where he repeats the monkish tale that she discovered the Cross of Christ the Almighty (*Opt. Max.*) and the Four Nails on Mount Calvary.

These tales have been so long suppressed in our Protestant system of education, we are apt to forget that they are of the essence of Christian story, of quite equal authority with the New Testament itself. And again we are apt to forget that the Christian story is throughout Roman Catholic, and that we are bound in consistency either to retain or to reject the whole. The time must be at hand when it will be understood in our schools that British History is Roman Catholic History; and that the proper teachers of it are the Roman priesthood.

I am not one of those who forebode the re-establishment of their power in these islands. But the Anglican clergy are helpless without the Roman tradition; and those who feel with me, that the influence of both orders is a great hindrance to the cause of sound education, will, I hope, perceive that these antiquarian matters are really of practical interest in reference to the controversies and struggles of the future.

Let me show that the tale about St. Helena and Constantine the Great is an English affair. Our criticism of Christianity may, in fact, be made to hinge upon this once-celebrated, though now seldom-recited legend. It may perhaps be a digression that will save our time if I give a brief analysis of it. According to the best opinion I can give, this legend could not have been *read* by any English person before the time of Henry VIII.; and probably could not have been *listened* to before that reign.

St. Helena appears as the 15th in the List of British Writers alleged to have been drawn up by the king's librarian in that reign, and only printed at Oxford about 200 years ago. You will ask, *Was* she in fact a British Writer? and smile in forecast of the answer. The royal librarian, writing of a time of which he knew absolutely nothing certain, merely says that she had a fine literary education, and that therefore she demands a place among our illustrious men. He proceeds to trace out the family and life of this Diva, this heroine, as he calls her.

He imagines her to have been the daughter of old King Cole or Coil, who reigned in Britain after the removal of a tyrant with a long Greek name. Her mother's name has not been discovered. As to her education, you may understand that in the time when Romans divided the empire of the island with Britons, it was easy for her to obtain a good knowledge of Letters. Because the Romans were the inventors of the Latin tongue, and the professors of learning in general.

There follows one of those funny passages, one of those "curiosities of literature" which will provoke a passing smile from some, but from others serious query on the question (already decided in my own mind) whether we have any true story of our land and language before the time of the Tudor princes. Says the Tudor librarian, of a time, be it remembered about

twelve hundred years before his own: "I believe that the British tongue was partly Hebrew and Greek, partly barbarous before the advent of Cæsar, like the French; and that by long custom, when the island had been hardly reduced to a Roman province, it had become *Sesqui-Latin*."

Here is a man who had very little Greek, and no Hebrew at all; who did not know what he was talking about in that respect. His contemporaries were in the same plight. I am not laughing at them in their ignorance; but am merely desirous to point out, in the interests of science, that from the Tudor to the Victorian era, you cannot find a solitary English scholar who has given a rational account of the Hebrew language and of its relation to the Greek. The ridiculous falsehood was circulated that the Hebrew was the oldest tongue in the world; that the all-accomplished Greeks were but of yesterday. You will find more of this delirious nonsense in Gale. I would that I could point out an Englishman who was sane in this matter!

But the Tudor librarian is a very good Latinist; writes all this bosh with an elegant style. The immense influence of the Latin tongue is the gauge of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, and should never be forgotten. It is not the Harlot herself, it is her beautiful dress, her fascinating manner, that captivate us!

The tale continues. On the death of old King Cole, Helen becomes queen, and weds Constantius, legate of the Romans. Then the question is discussed, whether the lady had been a stable-girl, and the concubine of Constantius? The story is denounced as a lie, on the authority of Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Pomponius Laetus, and Baptista Egnatius, who have all written lives of Constantius and Constantine with great good faith, and who have passed over the tale in silence. One Ambrosius only has stated that she was a stable-girl, but a good one!

It is then suggested that the Jews, in their infamous malice, invented the tale in allusion to the stable wherein Christ was born, and where they saw that the holy woman had erected a beautiful basilica! The credulous librarian quotes in support of this theory the opinion of two writers who are undoubtedly Benedictines in disguise, namely, "Aldhelm on Virginité" and Bede in his *Historia Anglicana*. One calls her a courtesan, the other a concubine. In the "older and more Latin author," the librarian reports, there is no word of such a stigma.

He pronounces an eulogy on Helena as an eminent Christian, tells how her son Constantine was baptised by the Bishop of Nicomedia (another of the Eusebii), and hints that many writers told wondrous "prestiges" about Constantine's lover! But he has no time to enter upon the "vast field" open to him on the subject of Helena's praises. He mentions her building of churches at Tabor, Nazareth, Bethlehem. But still no solitary word about any historical work under the name of Eusebius or of any alleged *Greek* biographer at all. We are bound to conclude that the monkish tales about St. Helena and her son had been sketched in Latin, that Eutropius and a few other writers had been garbled by the same hands; but that the whole fable about Cæsarea and its wonderful Greek scholars and historians was actually unknown to one of the most learned men of Europe about 350 years ago.

I believe, moreover, that every work he had read relating to the Christian religion, he had read in the Latin alone; and he gives constant proof that these Latin writings were quite recent, or that they were in course of concoction. The dupe of the literary tricksters of the monasteries visited by him, he has himself been the instrument for duping the learned world.

He took for granted that any book said to be ancient was ancient; being in that respect no more soft-headed than those who in our day so greedily accept Mount Sinai MSS., or inscribed bricks and stones of alleged immense antiquity, without doubt or hesitation. In this way Leland came upon a Latin *Life of Pope Silvester*; which, he says, was free from the lies to be found in *more recent* writers; not suspecting that the *improved* edition is the *later*. So irrational is the appetite that we call credulity!

Well, here he finds, in this entirely anonymous

book, a few Letters of St. Helena Augusta, written with taste and elegance; as became a lady who had learned to write pure Latin among the most learned of the Roman nobility! The credulity of Leland appears to me to be genuine, not affected, throughout his work: which is one of those Latin books that should be regarded as of cardinal importance, and to be mastered by all who would understand the origin of Christian and historical literature.

To sum up on this head. In the list of illustrious Catholic writers, the Eusebian *Life of Constantine* is not named. It is merely said that he flourished under that and the preceding emperor; and it is pretended that he wrote in Greek as well as in Latin. There is no recognition of such a writer at all by any secular scholar till Henry VIII.'s reign; and even at that date it cannot be proved that the *Life* was extant. Lastly, the tales then in circulation about St. Helena and her son had been written in Latin, read in Latin by men who did not dream (in my opinion) of the need of Greek books for the understanding of the Christian legends at all; who, perhaps, were ignorant of the fabrication of them which was going on.

I may venture to assure my readers that these are arguments of extraordinary strength; but they can only be *fully* appreciated by those who can turn over and over again, with circumspect attention, the few Latin books to which I have referred.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

COLONEL INGERSOLL EXPRESSES HIS VIEWS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS.

ALTHOUGH he was not invited to take part in the deliberations, there is probably no man in this country who is watching more closely the proceedings of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago than Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, the leading American Agnostic, says the *New York Herald*. A reporter for that paper had a talk with him last week about this meeting in which so many churchmen of all denominations have figured."

"The Parliament of Religions," the reporter volunteered, "was called with a view to discussing the great religions of the world on the broad platform of tolerance. Supposing this to have been accomplished, what effect is it likely to have on the future of creeds?"

"It was a good thing," answered Colonel Ingersoll, "to get the representatives of all creeds to meet and tell their beliefs. The tendency, I think, is to do away with prejudice, with provincialism, with egotism. We know the difference between the great religions, so far as belief is concerned, amounts to but little. Their gods have different names, but in other respects they differ but little. They are all cruel and ignorant."

"Do you think likely," the scribe asked, "that the time is coming when all the religions of the world will be treated with the liberality that is now characterising the attitude of one sect to another in Christendom?"

"Yes, because I think that all religions will be found to be of equal authority, and because I believe that the supernatural will be discarded and that man will give up his vain and useless efforts to get back of nature—to answer the questions of whence and whither. As a matter of fact, the various sects do not love one another. The keenest hatred is religious hatred. The most malicious malice is found in the hearts of those who love their enemies."

"Bishop Newman, in replying to a learned Buddhist at the Parliament of Religions, said that Buddhism had given to the world no helpful literature, no social system, and no heroic virtues. Is this true?" was the next question.

"Bishop Newman is a very prejudiced man," said the Colonel. "Probably he got his information from the missionaries! Buddha was undoubtedly a great teacher. Long before Christ lived Buddha taught the brotherhood of man. He said that intelligence was the only lever capable of raising mankind. His followers, to say the least of them, are as good as the followers of Christ. Bishop Newman is a Methodist—a follower of John Wesley—and he has the prejudices of the sect to which he belongs. We must remember that all prejudices are honest."

"Is Christian society, or rather society in Christian countries, cursed with fewer robbers, assassins, and thieves

proportionately than countries where 'heathen' religions predominate?"

"I think not," said Colonel Ingersoll. "I do not believe that there are more lynchings, more mob murders in India or Turkey or Persia than in some Christian states of the great republic. Neither will you find more train robbers, more forgers, more thieves in heathen lands than in Christian countries. Here the gaols are full, the penitentiaries are crowded and the hangmen are busy. All over Christendom, as many assert, crime is on the increase, going hand in hand with poverty. The truth is, that some of the wisest and best men are filled with apprehension for the future, but I believe in the race and have confidence in man."

"How can society be so reconstructed that all this horrible suffering resultant from poverty and its natural associate, crime, may be abolished, or at least reduced to a minimum?" I asked.

"In the first place we should stop supporting the useless. The burdens of superstition should be taken from the shoulders of industry. In the next place men should stop bowing to wealth instead of worth. Men should be judged by what they do, by what they are, instead of by the property they have. Only those able to raise and educate children should have them. Children should be better born—better educated. The process of regeneration will be slow, but it will be sure. The religion of our day is supported by the worst, by the most dangerous people in society. I do not allude to murderers or burglars, or even to the little thieves. I mean those who debauch courts and legislatures and elections—those who make millions by legal fraud."

"Is it possible for men to be good and honest without the help of Christianity?"

"Christianity is not a help," was the Colonel's reply. "Christianity offers to sell crime on a credit. It says to the bank cashier: 'Be honest. Don't you steal a cent, but if you do steal the entire bank God will forgive you in Canada just as quickly as in the United States.' Christianity does not make men good. Good men have given Christianity the good reputation it has."

"What do you think of the Theosophists? Are they sincere—have they any real basis for their psychological theories?"

"The Theosophists may be sincere. I do not know. But I am perfectly satisfied that their theories are without any foundation in fact—that their doctrines are as unreal as their 'astral bodies,' and as absurd as a contradiction in mathematics. We have had vagaries and theories enough. We need the religion of the real, the faith that rests on fact. Let us turn our attention to this world—the world in which we live."

Before our talk began Colonel Ingersoll had taken up a pamphlet in which he was soon absorbed. He read on to the last page and exclaimed:

"The fellow who wrote that gives Bishop Potter some hard blows."

I looked at him questioningly.

"It's just this way," said the Colonel. "Bishop Potter, in advocating the opening of the World's Fair on Sundays, dubbed the fourth commandment 'a venerable relic' and Sabbath observance as 'a scarcely less venerable tradition.' Now this hardy pamphleteer pertinently asks: 'Why did Bishop Potter for so long read the commandment to the people of Grace Church, New York, as one of God's commandments?' Does he not now require it to be read by the clergy of his diocese? Has it been stricken from the decalogue in the new prayer book? And are all the commandments omitted as being, like it, only 'venerable conceptions' and 'traditions?' I guess those are pretty tough questions for Brother Potter to answer."

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (5) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

ACID DROPS.

For three years the *Freethinker* found a place on the table of the Reading Room in the Miners' Institute, Pelton Fell, near Chester-le-street. No accident happened in the Institute, and there was no particular outbreak of crime in the district. But the "infidel" paper vexed the soul of a local curate, the Rev. Bagot Stack, who went about arousing the fanaticism of the religious part of the community. Three months ago, at the quarterly meeting, a private whip-up of those adverse to the *Freethinker* resulted in its exclusion, but the vote was only carried by a majority of two. One of these was curate Stack, who happened to be six months in arrear with his subscription, and was forced to pay up before he was allowed to speak.

In order to turn the tables upon curate Stack the local Secularists stirred up the more tolerant part of the community, and as there was a prospect of the *Freethinker* being restored to the Reading Room table, the vicar rushed to his curate's assistance. The Rev. Hugh H. Birley issued a circular to the members, styling himself their "faithful friend and pastor," and begging them to use their influence and record their vote "against the admission of this paper." Parson Birley is in no way connected with the Institute, and many of the members resent his gratuitous interference.

Parson Birley says that "the moral teaching" of the *Freethinker* is "most poisonous," and prints the last two words in big letters, as though the size of the type proved the truth of the statement. He also appeals against this journal to "all who have the moral welfare of our young people at heart." His object of course—and it is a dirty and disgraceful one—is to convey the impression to those who have not read the *Freethinker* that its articles and paragraphs are obscene or indecent. Now we have issued thirteen volumes of the *Freethinker* and each of them is as big as the Bible. We give Mr. Birley the whole thirteen to pick from, and we defy him to produce anything of the character he suggests. On the other hand, we undertake to find hundreds of passages in his Bible which are quite unfit for "young people," and which we even defy him to read aloud to a mixed congregation.

If orthodox teaching is wholesome of course our teaching is poisonous. But that only means, after all, that we are opposed to Christianity. On the score of morality, pure and simple, apart from theological doctrines, we are quite willing to let our writings be submitted to an impartial test. Mr. Birley should have the common honesty to indicate what is immoral in the pages of the *Freethinker* or in our various books and pamphlets. Imputing immorality by means of suggestion is the most contemptible form of slander, and we are sorry to say it is much affected by ecclesiastics.

Mr. Birley is a minister in a Church which is going to be Disestablished and Disendowed. He is too great a coward to discuss the teaching of the *Freethinker*. His policy is to call the paper names with a view to prevent its being read. This is very mean, but it implies a compliment. Mr. Birley fears the *Freethinker*, or he would never take all this trouble about it; and his anxiety to prevent its being read shows that the reading of it is fatal to Christianity.

We don't try to prevent people from reading the Bible; on the contrary, we beg and pray them to read it. Let any honest man compare our attitude towards the Bible with Mr. Birley's attitude towards the *Freethinker*, and he will have little difficulty in concluding which side is sure of the truth of its principles. He who hates investigation knows he is in the wrong.

We learn that the various Christian sects at Chester-le-Street joined in forming a Christian Evidence Society, and obtained the services of Mr. George Wise for what was billed as "an anti-infidel crusade." The bills were headed "Look out! Look out!! Look out!!!" Well the public may have looked out, but they did not look in. Mr. Wise never had a full house at any of his thirteen lectures, though the admission was free, and sometimes his audience numbered about twenty.

The Rev. H. Le Pla, in a sermon at Kingsland Congregational Church, said that "whilst Secularists claimed as their

object to brighten the world, they could give no actuating motive, no practical help." Secularists have *humanity* as a motive. If Mr. Le Pla has a stronger, deeper, and more comprehensive one, let him disclose it.

Duke Alfred—our Duke Alfred—has become the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Unfortunately he doesn't inherit any "grace of God." The late Duke Ernst dropped that part of the business on ascending the throne. However, the new Duke will get on all right without it, especially from the pecuniary point of view. He has found about £15,000 in cash at the Castle, and some base, disloyal wretches are asking how much of it he has sent to the Miners' Relief Fund.

The Bishop of Southwell is ready to distribute money to the starving miners' families "if forthcoming." He doesn't say how much he is prepared to give himself. It reminds us of Sidney Smith's saying that when A is in trouble B goes and asks C to help him.

The Bishop of Winchester has been preaching at Dorking about spiritual hunger. We beg to remind him that bodily hunger is a much sterner fact. His lordship talks about a faithful clergy giving up their lives for the people. Well, they don't give up their livings. They stick to the fleshpots pretty tightly.

Feed my sheep, said Jesus Christ. Not when they have typhoid fever, says the Rev. J. Lancaster, the vicar of Holy Trinity, Worthing, who writes to the *Harrogate Advertiser* to say that he has "much pleasure" in finding himself "in the lovely air of Harrogate." From that safe distance he invites subscriptions for the poor Worthingites.

It was at Hull that the last dockers' strike took place, and we hear that there is still a great deal of want in the town. Yet we note that vigorous begging is going on there for Sunday-schools in India!

Father Smith is collecting money for St. Mary's Knaresboro'. On his collecting cards he offers one hundred masses for all who will fill a card before the first of March. A more appropriate date would be the first of April.

Mr. P. H. Wicksteed has been lecturing on "Hillel and Jesus." He does not think the Jewish Rabbi was at all a type of the Christian idol, but he has to allow that Hillel preceded Jesus in inculcating the Golden Rule, a rule which, by the way, was taught by Hindu, Chinese and Greek sages, long before either Hillel or Jesus was heard of.

The Rev. A. Whelan, a Roman Catholic preacher, says that "Charles Bradlaugh, that much misunderstood leader of atheistic belief, in his inmost soul yearned after God." Charles Bradlaugh cannot hear this; if he did he would yearn after the Rev. A. Whelan, to give him a good castigation.

William Fletcher, a herbalist in the cathedral city of Lincoln, had the temerity to keep his shop open on Sundays, in disregard of the pious Act of Charles II., which is a dead letter in London and other large towns. He pleaded that he sold necessaries, but the maximum fine of 5s. was imposed.

The Protestant missionaries seem to have been outwitted in one of the Fiji islands. The tribe of the Soluva, says the *Moniteur de Rome*, were considering whether they should embrace Christianity. They met at the foot of the Koroirera mountain, and were about to sacrifice to their gods, when a cross appeared in the sky between two figures, one of which was the Virgin Mary. Perhaps it was a firework trick of the Catholic missionaries. Anyhow these gentlemen were sent for "to teach them the *real* faith."

The difficulty of converting the Jews is proverbial. Only the very hard up are bagged, and some of those have been baptised over and over again. The Buddhist visitors to America have, however, secured a wealthy Hebrew of New York named Charles Strauss at the first haul of their net. He has entered the Buddhist Church, pledging himself to renounce all old theologies and dogmas, to abstain from the use of intoxicants, and from lying and theft; to lead a life

of morality and virtue, and above all things to refrain from killing in any form.

The *Essex Weekly News* has been having a discussion on "Why the Poor do not Love the Clergy." Various opinions have been elicited, but even those who put it all down to "paid agitators" do not venture to question the fact that the men of God are not liked by the poor. How can mice be expected to be fond of cats?

A few miles from Ramsgate is the sleepy little town—perhaps we should say village—of Minster. The inhabitants can hardly be more than three or four hundred, although the place may contain twice as many in the holiday season. The Church living, however, is worth £700 a year. Preaching kingdom-come is evidently the best trade in that locality.

Something very like a free fight took place at the Dublin Jewish synagogue. It appears that whiskey was provided at the prayers. The affair resulted in two of the chosen race receiving each one month's imprisonment.

Max O'Rell told a *Sun* interviewer that people sometimes called at his hotel, while he was in South Africa, and asked that they might kneel down and pray for his conversion. "I always consented," said the genial humorist, "because they went away happy." In the Transvaal he found many of the Boers "opposed to railways and telegraphs because they are not mentioned in the Bible."

Archdeacon Farrar, preaching the Harvest Sermon at St. Margaret's, declared in his grandiloquent way that, "No arch had ever been flung over the gulf—deeper than ever plummet sounded—which separated even the noblest animal from the lowest of the human race." Stuff like this may pass muster in a church, where the parson can say what he likes and no one can contradict him; but it would never do at a scientific meeting. There is no such gulf between the noblest animal and the lowest man. Dr. Farrar has only got to visit a lunatic asylum to find human beings who are lower in the intellectual and moral scale than the "noblest animal." The depth that no plummet can sound is the depth of clerical audacity.

The *Church Times* refers to Mr. Headlam's *Church Reformer* as a journal "which aspires to found a New Jerusalem upon earth, the citizens of which shall be entirely artisans with sacerdotal proclivities and a taste for dancing."

At Angerburg, Prussia, while making excavations beneath the church, workmen came across a small walled-in space, in which they found a human skeleton, a broken chair, and the remains of a helmet and a pair of boots. The walls bore marks as if of finger-nail scratches, and there was only too much evidence that some person had been walled in alive.

This punishment was a common one among the religious orders in the good old times. All the convents had an *in pace*, as it was called. The Church would not shed blood, but for any offender, who betrayed the secrets of the order, there was eternal peace in some cave or cell where, after a service for the dead, the offender was immured.

Bibliophile Jacob, in his preface to *Le Convent de Baiano*, a story of scandalous doings at Naples in 1577, says: "In several convents Christian charity and monastic humanity consisted in prolonging the life of these unfortunates by giving them a three-pound loaf, a pitcher of water, and a lighted candle." At the demolition of convents in France in 1789 a number of these *in pace* prisons were discovered with skeletons. In several the water and bread were untouched, either because the victim was killed for want of air, or refused to touch food intended to prolong misery.

Millbank Prison is happily pulled down, but the Rev. Mr. Merrick, who, as chaplain, has published a book detailing some of his experiences there. He gives some particulars of fourteen thousand women who went to prison from the streets. "Of the 14,000, 12,000 were members of the Church of England, 3445 of whom had been confirmed; 441 still regularly attended church; 1899 were Dissenters, of whom 275 regularly occupied pews in their favorite places of worship; 321 were fairly well versed in religious knowledge, and 130 were able to pass a searching examination

the subject generally; 695 of the 11,009 were blankly ignorant about everything in the Bible, 3237 could neither read nor write."

At a meeting of the Hull Auxiliary of the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, the Rev. F. Hewson said the Jewish nations were eagerly longing to return to the land of their fathers. This will be as much news to the chosen people, as that their Messiah has already come.

The next pious picnic, organised by the gentlemen who provide the ministers of Christ with a cheap outing under the pretence of promoting the union of the Churches, is a "pilgrimage" to Jerusalem. The cost of the tour is to be seventy-five guineas per head, and "already quite a number of places have been secured" by the poor apostles of the carpenter of Nazareth.

It would be more to the purpose if ministers would go on a pilgrimage to Hades. The physical geography and climate of that place is practically unknown, and all sorts of contradictory notions are taught by the clergy themselves. Other people can go to Jerusalem and tell us all about it; let them go to Hades and tell us all about it—when they come back.

Dr. Lauder Brunton did his best to cheer up the men of God at the Church Congress. With respect to the Creation Story, he said it was not written for a few scientific people—which is very evident. It was written for men, women, and children; especially, we should say, for children. So to speak, therefore, the picture had to be painted with a big brush and crude colors. The "explanations"—which, by the way, explain it into nothing—had to come afterwards. And they have come. Yes, when Science has knocked the Creation Story into smithereens.

We don't think there is much comfort, after all, in Dr. Lauder Brunton's little apology for Genesis. Still less comfort is there in what he says about immortality. "Science," he declares, "cannot help us in regard to the question of a life beyond the grave. We must be content with faith, and even faith has a hard struggle to hold her own." This is the most honest and sensible thing uttered during the whole Congress.

Rustem Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in London, told a *Christian Commonwealth* interviewer that the Christian missionaries do not convert Mohammedans. "Never," he exclaimed, "unless they be low and drunken people who think nothing of their religion." His Excellency felt quite sure that "a Mussulman is as good as a Christian," and many other people share his certitude.

Sir A. Blackwood, the late secretary of the General Post Office, may have been an estimable man, and we do not want to hurt the feelings of those who are mourning his decease. It is to be hoped, however, that his successor will keep his evangelicalism out of the Post Office. The humblest servant of the public has the same personal rights as the most eminent. He ought not to be worried about religion by his superiors, and his promotion ought not to depend on his agreement with their opinions. It is high time that this kind of tyranny were branded as an impertinence.

Ashore and Afloat has an argument for the goodness of God founded on "The Length of the Year." It says: "If the years were only seven months instead of twelve, fruits would never have time to mature." Again, "the birds take just a year for pairing, nesting, hatching, fledging, and fighting"; and it argues that these are therefore adjusted to each other. Of course they are, for were they not so adjusted the plants and animals would die out, as in the past so many species have. But that the adjustment is the work of an all-good person is another matter. If so, we may ask why so many fruits do not come to maturity, and why countless birds are killed in migration and by severity of climate. Jack Tar will hardly be convinced by such arguments as those in *Ashore and Afloat*.

Parson Diggle, of the London School Board, has been down to Stoke to help the cause of religious education in Church schools. He made one notable admission. "They were face to face with fact that out of every £13 spent upon elementary

education in Church schools £3 comes from the parents and managers and £10 from the State." Diggle is no fool. He sees that, in the long run, those who pay the piper will want to call the tune, and, like the rest of his cloth, is concerned in contriving some juggle by which the parsons shall control the schools while getting John Bull to pay for them.

Mr. H. M. Stanley has been distributing Bibles at a school, and singing the praises of that old-fashioned volume, which he appears to have studied pretty faithfully, if we may judge from the way in which he went through Africa with "the resources of civilisation." The next time he distributes Bibles he should also give a list of the corpses that marked his track through the Dark Continent.

Professor Max Müller doesn't please the *Christian Commonwealth*. It is to be hoped he will repent in time to be forgiven. The Professor declares that the Christian religion is the best one. That is good anyhow. But what does he mean by the Christian religion? Why, simply the best ideas of the New Testament. He dismisses altogether "the legendary traditions which from very early times gathered round the cradle of the Son of Joseph and Mary." Nay, he not only rejects all the supernatural part of the Gospels, but actually asserts that a man is a better Christian without them. This will never do. Our pious contemporary cries out against it. "The attempt," it says, "to sever Christ from the supernatural is a fraud on this religion by those who pay compliments to its humanitarianism." Agreed! Agreed! But it is so much the worse for "this religion."

Talmage wants the whole world to be represented at New York at a big celebration of the nineteen-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Christ. We invite him, first of all, to find out the right day. Nobody knows the day on which J. C. was born. The only way to be certain, is to let this New York convocation, in A. D. 1900, sit from the first of January to the thirty-first of December. It would be a long sitting, and we don't suppose they would hatch much, but they could all swear that they had celebrated the birthday of Christ. That is, if he ever was born at all—which is another very knotty point.

Mr. John Lord, LL.D., the American lecturer, in his younger days thought of entering the pulpit. In fact, he applied for ordination, but he did not prove to be orthodox enough. He was too loose on the subject of Reprobation. "Mr. Lord," asked the Council, "would you be willing to be damned for the glory of God?" It was a terrible question, and he took time to answer it. At last he replied, slowly and solemnly: "I am not sure that I can say Yes. But if I may make a little variation in the question, I can answer it satisfactorily. I am entirely willing that the members of this Council should be damned for the glory of God." He didn't pass. The Council thought it would see him damned first.

Dr. Parker let the cat out of the bag in addressing the Autumn Assembly of the Congregational Union. According to the *Christian World* report, he said that if a pastor questioned his congregation one by one as to their knowledge of the Bible, he would be simply amazed. Not a man in a million knows more of the Bible than a few texts." Precisely so. That is what we have always said. Christians don't read the Bible, and for that very reason they believe it. We are obliged to Dr. Parker for this professional corroboration of our own view, and the next time it is disputed we shall be able to refer to the oracle of the City Temple.

Dr. Parker has been preaching on "The Measurable and the Immeasurable." Other people and myself.

The *Daily Chronicle*, in reviewing Dr. Cunningham Geikie's *The Bible by Modern Light* says, "Every crucial question is clouded in ink after the manner of the retreating cuttle fish." This is admirably descriptive of the methods of the whole theological tribe.

We owe Mrs. Besant an apology, and we tender it unreservedly. By some accident we missed seeing the *Weekly Sun* for September 3, perhaps owing to our visit to Douglas. In that chapter of her Autobiography there is a sufficiently handsome reference to the prosecution of the *Freethinker* and Mr. Foot's defence. We very much regret our oversight and the paragraph it occasioned.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 22, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints', Manchester:—11, "The Doom of the Bible"; 3, "Christ and Democracy"; 6.30, "A Search for the Soul."

October 29, Bristol; 30, Bath.

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

December 3, Leicester; 10, Liverpool; 17 and 21, 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.

E. YEARLEK.—Many thanks for the copy of the *Weekly Sun*. We should be sorry to do Mrs. Besant, or anyone else, an injustice. See paragraph.

B. MUNTON.—Thanks for the reference. Glad to hear that the West London Branch has had such a successful open-air season. That the work has fallen upon a few is not surprising; it is the rule in most enterprises.

J. MELLING.—Dr. Isaac Watts wrote the lines, "Were I so tall," etc. He was a very little man.

J. W. WITTERING.—Mr. Foote will offer you a date.

W. BRONSON.—The Trade Union circular and Mr. Walter Besant's denunciations were the ground for whatever we said about the Bible Society. We cannot answer such inquiries by post.

A. ARNSDY.—The leaflet is sickening, but there are no special points in it for our readers.

ADRIAN.—Shall appear.

X. Y. Z.—See paragraph.

H. GOWDY.—The evangelist you mention is a vulgar mass of ignorance, conceit, and scurrility. It is to be regretted that the Leeds Freethinkers take the slightest notice of him.

STANLEY JONES, late secretary of the National Secular Society, has found great difficulty in obtaining suitable employment. Can any Secularist offer him a situation as clerk or time-keeper, or some position of trust? Mr. Jones has good testimonials, and we should like to see him occupied. Letters in reply to this appeal can be forwarded to us direct.

A. J. H.—We regard Unitarianism as a half-way house between Christianity and Freethought.

T. BIRTLEY.—Thanks; see "Acid Drops." The arrangements for Mr. Foote's lectures in the Newcastle district are in the hands of Mr. Joseph Brown. Drop him a line yourself.

W. DICKINSON.—Send us the details you refer to.

J. P. SILKSTONE.—Glad to have your approval.

W. MANN.—Many thanks. The matter shall be seen to.

A. GIBSON.—The passages marked are mostly taken from Mrs. Beecher Stowe's *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

MR. CHARLES A. WATTS offers, on behalf of the Rationalist Press Committee, to send 50 copies of the Prize Essays on "The Practical Value of Christianity" to the secretary of any Branch of the National Secular Society, on condition that he undertakes to distribute them, and remits 1s. 6d. to defray cost of carriage and packing. Applications should be sent to 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C.

W. GILBERT.—The South Essex Secular Society has no connection with the N.S.S. Where its lectures are given, and how they are attended, is no special business of ours.

H. BENNETT.—See "Acid Drops." As you say, it is a good advertisement.

G. J. WARREN.—Sorry you have had the trouble for nothing. Mr. Pentecost's account of Father Ignatius was reproduced in the *Freethinker* at the time.

MARKSMAN.—May be serviceable.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Westminster Branch, £1; Belfast Branch, 9s. 3d.; Camberwell Branch (collection at Mr. Foote's lecture), £1 10s.

F. A. BEARE.—We are obliged to you for lending this journal to your liberal-minded friends.

J. ROUTH.—It hardly comes under the same head as Missing Word Competitions.

P. H. WHIRLAN.—Not up to your best level.

O. E. SMITH.—Yes, we intend to add Charles Bradlaugh to our portrait gallery. Glad to hear you were "charmed" with the Camberwell lecture. Thanks for the items.

N. E. SECULAR FEDERATION.—Joseph Brown, sec., acknowledges:—Mr. Elcoat, 10s.; P. Weston, 5s.; Blyth Branch, 3s.

J. VERLIN.—You will find a good collection of Freethought books at the Hall of Science Library in Old-street, to which every member of the N.S.S. has access. Books can be borrowed and read at home. The catalogue is to be printed shortly. Meanwhile the librarian will be happy (this is for other friends) to receive any parcels of useful books from Freethinkers who have such to spare.

W. PANCOTT.—We cannot furnish you with arguments for the purpose, nor have we the statistics you ask for. The Conscience Clause is a perfect farce; it simply makes martyrs of little children when it is taken advantage of.

E. D. H. DALY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. R. HIGHAM.—(1) Glad to hear that the three Christian friends you took to hear Mr. Foote at the Gladstone Club were "delighted" and are going to "take every opportunity of attending similar lectures." (2) Pope's translation of Homer's *Iliad* is a spirited performance, but your young friend need not give five shillings for a copy. Second-hand copies can be bought for a few pence sometimes, and new copies for a shilling or eighteenpence.

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—Lincolnshire Chronicle—Commonweal—Freedom—Jewish Chronicle—Watts's Literary Gazette—Fur Unsere Jugend—Birmingham Daily Gazette.

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.

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

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Oct. 22), morning, afternoon, and evening in the Secular Hall, Manchester, where he will be glad to see as many as possible of his Cottonopolis and South Lancashire friends. He would have taken the St. James's Hall on this occasion, and thrown open a large part of the seating accommodation free, but £15 or £20 is more than he can afford to risk for a single day's meetings.

The Camberwell Secular Hall was crowded to the door on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "A Search for the Soul." Mr. Angus Thomas took the chair and Mr. A. B. Moss occupied a seat on the platform. The lecture was received with great enthusiasm. Two Christians offered opposition. One of them never touched the subject, but "stood up for the Father." The other was Dr. Bate, who is to hold a public discussion this evening (Oct. 22) with Mr. Moss. Dr. Bate was not particularly happy, but he explained that he had been suffering from influenza. At the close of the proceedings, after a touching appeal from the chairman, a collection was taken at the door for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

Mr. Foote attended the Hyde Park demonstration on behalf of the miners on Sunday afternoon, and spoke from No. 3 platform. Mr. Geo. Standing spoke from another platform.

The Bermondsey Gladstone Club, in Grange-road, has a nice little hall, capable of holding about four hundred persons. Several of the members are Freethinkers, and it occurred to them that the Club hall might be used for Freethought lectures occasionally. Bigotry was up in arms against them, but the question was decided in their favor. It was resolved that they should have the use of the hall once a fortnight for six months. Some of the bigots, especially those who were "nobs," immediately resigned. Among these was the local member of Parliament. But no doubt these gentlemen will come to their senses before (or at) the next elections.

A series of Freethought lectures being decided upon, Mr. Foote was asked to lead off, which he did, taking for his subject "Christ and Democracy." The hall was literally

crowded with an appreciative and enthusiastic audience. After the lecture several Christians offered opposition and were duly answered. The proceedings closed with a unanimous vote of thanks to Mr. Foote. One gratifying feature was the presence of several ladies, who seemed to be thoroughly interested.

The *London Star* for Oct. 12 gave an interesting article on Mr. Edward Truelove, the veteran reformer. It is pleasant to see that Mr. Truelove's long service in the cause of freedom is recognised outside the Secular party.

Mr. Edward Truelove, who on the 29th of this month completes his eighty-fourth year, is retiring from the book-selling, which he has conducted for so many years to the advantage of the Freethought cause. He has to leave his premises 256 High Holborn early in November. Many of his books have already been sent to the sale-room, but he retains a number of books and pamphlets of interest to Freethinkers, and those desirous of securing such should pay him a visit before it is too late.

A statue has been erected to Garibaldi on the rock at Genoa, whence the Garibaldians embarked for Sicily in 1860. Signor Crispi delivered an address upon the occasion.

The burial of the late Mr. Ford Madox Brown, the eminent artist, was without any kind of religious ceremony. Mr. Moncure D. Conway delivered an address at the graveside.

Anent the International Conference, and as an advertisement of Mr. Putnam's new work *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*, the *Truthseeker* of Sept. 30 is full of the portraits of Freethinkers, taken from the *Truthseeker Annuals*. We are pleased to see, in addition to these familiar faces, the portraits of Mr. L. K. Washburn, editor of the *Boston Investigator*, and Mr. John B. Charlesworth, secretary of the American Freethought Federation.

The International Freethinkers' Congress appears to have opened well. Judge Waite presided, and on the platform were the principal American Freethinkers, and Mr. Watts from England, and Captain Adams from Canada. Colonel Ingersoll sent a letter regretting that business engagements prevented him from attending the Congress. A letter was also read from Mr. Holyoake. It was characteristically humorous. Mr. Foote's letter had not arrived according to the *Truthseeker* report, though it was posted a fortnight before the Congress.

The *Truthseeker* does not reach us as regularly as it should, which is to be regretted, as we are always glad to receive it. The last number to hand contains a complimentary notice of Mr. Foote's lecture on Douglas Head. We are also pleased to see that Colonel Ingersoll is again on the war path. He is lecturing every night in October, and his tour covers a pretty wide area.

The Freethought Federation of America has commenced an action against President Bonney, chief of the Art Institute at the World's Fair, for damages. A Mr. Betts had a concession for a bookstall there, but on finding he sold Freethought literature, Betts was ordered to clear out. He refused, and his stall and contents were forcibly removed. The Federation has supplied funds to fight the case to the end.

The Parliament of Religions at Chicago was followed by a Congress of Evolutionists, an Ethical Congress, and a Congress of International Freethinkers. Those who look for signs may find something significant about this.

The Wolverhampton Branch has carried on an active propaganda during the last six months, and is arranging for a still more active propaganda during the winter. Some old and valued members of the Freethought party who have hitherto held aloof, are now working with the Branch. At the annual meeting, on Oct. 8, the following officers were elected: President, E. Mills; vice-presidents, H. Muir, J. H. Dannatt, H. Wootton, and S. Walker; secretary, L. N. Clifton. Mr. Clifton travels a good deal in the district, and will be glad to see any Freethinkers on his rounds, with a view to their joining the Branch.

The Islington Branch commenced on Thursday a special series of lectures at Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-

street. On Oct. 26 Mr. James Rowney discourses on "The Apostle Paul." Freethinkers in North London are asked to attend and bring their Christian friends.

Mr. H. Snell occupies the London Hall of Science platform this evening (Oct. 22), his subject being "The Conquest of Truth." We have not had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Saell lecture, but we have had excellent reports of him, and we hope he will have a hearty welcome on this occasion at the headquarters of our party.

In the morning the platform is occupied by Mr. Arthur Westcott, who will discourse on "Vivisection in Hospitals," and on Wednesday evening by Mr. Lewis Appleton who is to speak on "Europe under Arms." The admission is free.

The conflict of parties at the Birmingham Church Congress seems to redound to the advantage of heresy. Even the Conservative *Daily Gazette* gives currency to a letter on "What is the Real Truth?" by one who signs himself "Vastly Perplexed," who shrewdly questions the principal teachings both of the Bible and the Church.

Mr. Stapleton, the secretary of the Nottingham Branch, informs us that the hall engaged for Mr. Foote's lectures on Sunday, November 5, will not be available if there is a charge for admission. The proprietor does not mind the old Sunday law himself, but he has no wish to lose his license. Other hall proprietors tell the very same story, so it is evident that the police have given the hint all round. Such tactics are absolutely contemptible. It is bigotry without a single shred of courage. But the bigots will not stop Freethought lectures in this way in Nottingham. Mr. Foote will go there even if he has to speak in the streets.

We are asked to announce that Professor Johnson, whose articles on the Eusebian literature are appearing in the *Freethinker*, will meet his friends and critics at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, on Wednesday evening, Oct. 25, at 7.30 prompt. The object of the gathering is apparently to talk over the Professor's theory. Any of our readers who may desire to be present should communicate with Mr. C. A. Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E C.

The *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, is reprinting Mr. Johnson's articles on Eusebian Literature from our columns.

Mr. Symes publishes in the *Liberator* a facsimile of the end of Mark, as it appears in the Vatican Codex, and in doing so says: "I assert without fear of contradiction, that the whole round of the gospel is an unfounded superstition; that the gospels are frauds and forgeries; the New Testament a book of most uncertain date; and that, instead of having been written by eye-witnesses of the things it relates, no proof exists that the book is yet so much as 1,000 years old. I assert that the New Testament manuscripts now existing cannot be traced back to any known author or writer or copier; and that it is impossible to discover in what country any one of them was produced. Nor is it possible to fix within hundreds of years the date when any one of them was written."

The Debating Class in connexion with the Hall of Science Club is having some successful Monday evening meetings. Last Monday there was an animated debate on State Socialism, and on Monday next the subject comes up again under the question "Would State Socialism relieve Poverty?" Members of the N.S.S. and the Club are invited to attend and take part in the discussion.

Our friend and colleague, Mr. A. B. Moss, is a playwright. His latest production, "The Land and the People," was brought out on Monday evening and scored a great success, all the actors being called before the curtain.

In the name and by the authority of the ghosts, man was enslaved, crushed, and plundered. The many toiled wearily in the storm and sun that the few favorites of the ghosts might live in idleness. The many lived in huts, and caves, and dens, that the few might dwell in palaces. The many covered themselves with rags, that the few might robe themselves in purple and in gold. The many crept, and cringed, and crawled, that the few might tread upon their flesh with iron feet.—R. G. Ingersoll.

A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

XVI.—"THE FOOL HATH SAID"—.

I LATELY noticed an announcement to the effect that the Rev. Allan Rees would lecture or preach at the City-road Wesleyan Chapel on "The Death of the *National Reformer*," and incontinently determined (D.V.) to form one of the rev. gentleman's congregation upon that occasion. I therefore armed myself with a dilapidated hymn-book—long since, alas! divorced from its covers—which has been my faithful friend and protector upon many similar pious pilgrimages. It stands me in good stead as Bible, Prayer Book, and hymnal, and never "gives me away" when I (always) open it at the wrong place; and it protects me from the onslaughts of well-meaning people who would foist upon me devotional books with which I am not familiar.

City-road Chapel is as intimately connected with the life and work of John Wesley, as is our own Hall of Science with the career of Charles Bradlaugh. Amidst much extension to and improvement of the chapel buildings, the old house in which Wesley lived has been wisely suffered to remain in its original condition. To this holy of holies of Methodism I and my old hymn-book repaired last Sunday, to learn what a Wesleyan minister had to say about the journal which my dear dead friend and leader had made the record of his work and a part of his very life.

I found that Methodism had greatly changed the form of its public observances since *my* day—nearly thirty years ago. Then, the singing was entirely congregational, with no instrumental aid other than that of a tuning-fork. In those days a "kist of whistles" would have been regarded as a device of the Devil; but now there is a splendid organ at City-road Chapel, and a trained choir with the characteristic Dissenting tendency to sing out of tune. And, horror of horrors! there was a professional lady-soloist, who sang an air from "Elijah" with all the florid graces of the concert-hall. The natural effect of these "up-to-date" accessories was a large congregation; but of this the huge majority consisted of females and very young persons.

The Rev. Allan Rees chose as his text the very ungentlemanly remark attributed to David: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." He plunged at once into his subject, informing his hearers that the *National Reformer* was first published in 1860, and had existed for thirty-three years. Its policy had been very definite: Atheistic, Republican, Malthusian. A bishop had once wittily described this policy—here the preacher apologetically remarked that he was not sure whether it was right for him to repeat the *mot*, but as a bishop had said it he might venture to do so—as "No God, no king, and as few people as possible." Mr. Bradlaugh had very clear views, and he pressed forward to their realisation with great vigor and resolution. His consistency and courage excited general admiration, and his example might be fittingly commended to the weak and wavering amongst the faithful. It was given to few men to see so much of their policy carried into effect during their lifetime as had been the case with Mr. Bradlaugh. Some eighteen years ago [this is Mr. Rees' chronology], he had, in company with Mrs. Besant, publicly defended Malthusian teachings in the law-courts. He (the preacher) would say nothing about Malthusianism save this: that there seems to be very much more in it than prejudiced and dogmatic persons are inclined to admit.

Charles Bradlaugh was a stalwart Atheist. His paper and he were one—the *National Reformer* gave full and consistent expression to his principles and aims. Thirty years ago religious people were much more narrow-minded than now, for religion was then largely divorced from thought and reason. But Bradlaugh never wavered in face of bigoted opposition. The *National Reformer* had not been an unmixed evil, even from a religious point of view. It had done much to dispel many wrong ideas upon religious subjects. Much of this was due to the great ability and marvellous force of Charles Bradlaugh. Nevertheless, his paper had only survived him by two years. This showed the evanescence of Atheism. It was the energy of the man which had kept the journal in

existence for thirty years, and there was no cohesive force in the principle to continue the work after the man had passed away. Indeed, there was reason to believe that Charles Bradlaugh had himself materially modified his views before his death, that his Atheism became weaker as he grew older. Sir Isaac Holden had told him (Mr. Rees) that Mr. Bradlaugh had often spoken to him privately in the House of Commons upon religious matters, and had admitted that the conversion of his brother had profoundly impressed him. Mr. Bradlaugh had often said to Sir Isaac Holden that he often wished he were half as good a man as his brother.

Now at this point Mr. Rees had practically exhausted all that he had to say concerning Mr. Bradlaugh and the *National Reformer*; and here I pause to make a comment upon the astounding statement which has just been recorded. If the suggestion of modification in Mr. Bradlaugh's Atheism is to be believed, it must be substantiated by overwhelming evidence. The evidence on the other side is conclusive. Those who attended upon Mr. Bradlaugh in his last hours have testified that in him there was no shadow of turning. And as I write I have before me a letter, dated Jan. 5, 1891, signed by Mr. Bradlaugh himself, specifying the subjects upon which he intended to lecture at the Hall of Science during February 1891—the month following his death. His evening subject for Feb 15 was to have been, "Belief Not the Safe Side." On the 22nd he would have lectured on "The Alleged Decay of Freethought." Does this betoken any "modification" in his views? As against this Mr. Rees produces nothing but his bare suggestion of a conversation with Sir Isaac Holden, retailing some Lobby gossip.

The reference to the "conversion" of Mr. Bradlaugh's brother is so palpably ridiculous to those who know anything of the matter, that one is forced to the conclusion that Mr. Rees, in his child-like simplicity, has been deceived by a fiction as posteros as any that can be conceived.

To many of us the memory of Charles Bradlaugh is as dear as that of John Wesley can be to any Methodist; and I publicly challenge Mr. Rees to substantiate a statement which, if true, reflects discredit upon Mr. Bradlaugh; for, had he modified his views upon theological questions, his first duty would have been to communicate the fact to those whose thoughts and lives he had so powerfully influenced, and who were working with him in close sympathy and attachment until the end.

Proceeding with his discourse, Mr. Rees retailed with exaggerated emphasis and much straining after dramatic effect the stale and futile platitudes of the pulpits against the philosophy of Atheism. He did not examine fairly and thoroughly a single argument adduced by Atheists in support of their position, but sought by confident assertion to make up for lack of reasoning. For example, he said: "My friends, *man knows there is a God!*" There was no need to ask if God exists. How could finite man invent the idea of the infinite? If we did not believe in the evidence of God, it would be necessary to believe in the eternity of matter; and it was easier (!) to believe in the existence of God. How could matter, actuated by blind force, do this, and that, and the other? [I will not weary the reader with tedious recapitulation.] No; atheism was the death of reason.

As to evolution, well, evolution was full of God. The design argument appealed to him (the preacher) with a hundred times greater force in the light of evolution, which showed that God had a plan and that he is working through the ages to carry out that plan.

Then Mr. Rees brought forward once more the jejune assertion that the acceptance of the atheistic philosophy must necessarily dissolve every human tie and obligation. "There is no God!"—*therefore* the father can have no interest in providing for the happiness and welfare of his wife and children. "There is no God"—*therefore* the drunkard may drink in peace, the profligate may pursue his vicious career, the capitalist may grind the laborer without mercy; for there is none to punish, no judgment day to fear. "There is no God"—*therefore* let us eat and drink and make merry, for we have nothing to hope for, and nothing to fear, hereafter.

If this life is not agreeable to us, let us blow out our brains, for there is nothing to follow it and we need not stay here unless we like. [At this point my memory seemed to recall many recent cases of suicide, in which the departed had left letters overflowing with religion to explain their reasons for committing the "rash act." But this was probably hallucination on my part.]

To say that there is no God is a fool's utterance. The future is not a "dumb nothingness." [This is Mr. Rees' phrase.] O no! God exists, and we are all his children. Then Mr. Rees besought his congregation to testify their intelligent belief and conviction by repeating after him the opening sentences of the Apostles' Creed. And they did. There was a gentle murmur all over the chapel: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." Under a given set of circumstances, this would have been an impressive witness; but, as it was, surely even Mr. Rees himself could see through the utter hollowness and vanity of the thing. How many members of his congregation can he honestly suppose to have given a moment's really earnest and intelligent consideration to the question? Could one in a hundred of those men and women, girls, youths and children, adduce a solitary feeble reason for the "faith" they so highly professed with their lips?

I left City-road Chapel last Sunday evening with mingled feelings of pity and disgust. First, of pity for the mental condition of a public teacher who could stultify himself as completely as Mr. Rees had done. He had professed the highest admiration for the courage, consistency, and devotion to principle of a man who was the typical Atheist of his time; and then proceeded to argue (save the mark!) that Atheism was fatal to courage, conviction, and devotion to principle. He had traduced the memory of the man whom he professed to admire, by suggesting that he had modified his views and concealed the change from those to whom he should have first of all imparted the knowledge. And my final impression was one of disgust at the tricky expedient of presenting, as a solemn testimony, the lightly-uttered "profession of faith" by hundreds of young persons who would have as readily and as intelligently professed their faith in Mumbo-Jumbo had that been the current formula. My evening at City-road Chapel was, in fine, the most distressing and disquieting of my experiences amongst the Christian churches.

GEORGE STANDRING.

THE MAHATMA LETTERS.

In his paper entitled "Critical Historical Review of the Theosophical Society," read before the Psychical Congress at Chicago, and reprinted in the *Two Worlds*, October 6 and 13, Mr. W. Emmette Coleman seeks to throw some light on the Mahatma letters with which Mrs. Besant dumbfounded her Hall of Science audience the last time she lectured there. He makes the assertion that "Col. Olcott has distinctly charged Mr. Judge with their production." Further he says:

"Since the death of H. P. B., Annie Besant and others have received alleged letters from Mahatmas Koot Hoomi and Morya. Who wrote them? In a letter to Annie Besant from M. M. Shroff, Secretary of the Bombay Theosophical Lodge, April 2, 1892, Mr. Shroff says that Brother W. Q. Judge is 'strongly suspected of having forged all along letters in the name of the Masters after H. P. B.'s departure.' H. S. Olcott, B. Keightley, and Edge are absolutely convinced that Judge forged these letters, and has been duping and deceiving poor Annie."

I give no opinion upon this matter; but Mr. Judge was charged with concocting Mahatma letters in the *New York Sun*, July 10, 1890, while Mdme. Blavatsky was still living. Colonel Olcott certainly ought to be in a good position to judge.

J. M. W.

"Mamma," said a sweet little miss, "do they do just the same in Heaven every day as we do down here?" "I guess so, my dear." "Well, then, I don't want to go to Heaven." "Why, darling, what makes you talk like that?" "Well, I don't care, mamma. If I've got to have my hair done in curl papers every night when I'm an angel, I'd rather not be one. So, there, now!"

CHRIST A SECULARIST.

THE Rev. J. G. Greenough, who undertook a paper on "Secularism" before the Assembly of the Baptist Union at Reading, is reported as saying, "Christ was the greatest of Secularists." The saying is noteworthy as an instance of how any and every variety of opinion can be extracted from the gospels. But how astonished would all the pious of former ages be to learn that their teacher, who said his kingdom was not of this world, that his disciples must give up houses and land, wife and children, to follow him, and that "ye cannot serve God and Mammon," was really a Secularist. What would Thomas a Kempis, the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, have thought of it? His words at the beginning of his work—"It is the highest wisdom, by the contempt of the world, to press forward towards the kingdom of heaven"—have the very spirit of the gospel, but they are the antithesis of Secularism. John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." So Mr. Greenough's "greatest of Secularists" said, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth," "Take no thought for the morrow," and declared that his disciples "are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Christ taught that the end of the world was coming in the lifetime of the then existing generation. Believing it doomed to speedy destruction, he naturally disregarded its improvement. Man's one concern was to save his soul from the wrath to come and prepare for the kingdom. The true followers of Christ were the monks—or perhaps it would be more correct to say they were *his* originators and ascribed to him their doctrines.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

SERMONS: BY ONE WHO KNOWS THEM.

Addressing the Church Congress, the Bishop of Wakefield said there were various styles of preaching. First, there was the sesquipedalian style, in which very big words were used to conceal very little thought. (Laughter.) Then there was the wishy-washy style, which was, perhaps, the commonest. It was a mild religion-and-water kind of sermon, with a few texts floating here and there. (Laughter.) The pyrotechnic man kept them awake. (Laughter.) He was all sparkling with brilliant metaphors and illustrations, and when all was over it left them not unlike an extinguished catherine wheel. (Laughter.) With a faint smell of powder the sermon had gone off. (Laughter.) Next there was the anecdotal sort of preacher with little stories, some of which were good enough once—(laughter)—but they had gone bad by keeping, and in them there was not much point, if there was any point at all. (Laughter.) There was also the sentimental sermon: it was flowery, but the flowers were artificial; it was poetical, so far as interlarding discourses with rhymes without reason might be considered poetical. (Laughter.) Such sermons were usually admired by young ladies of limited intellects. (Laughter.) Then there was the mellifluous style which lulled the spirit to quiescence and moved the eyelids to deflection. Those sermons were like a draper's roll of ribbon—they could cut off as many yards as they liked—(laughter)—and it did not matter where it was cut. (Laughter.) The speaker had heard all those styles, and had felt unbounded sympathy for the laity who had to listen to them. (Cheers.)

OBITUARY.

HENRY CHADWICK COMPSTALL, born April 2, 1815; died Oct 6, 1893; interred Oct. 10. By his kindness of heart he had made hundreds of friends, a large number following his remains to their last resting place. He began his Atheistic career about 1845, when he joined the Owenite Community at Stockport, and he used to boast that since that time he had not wasted one minute in prayer. Yet his wife and children would not allow his dying wish for a Secular burial. He was quite conscious to within half an hour of his death, when he began mumbling to himself, and his Christian friends, with their usual "charity," hoped he was praying to God to forgive him. Only two days before his death he was pushing the sale of the *Freethinker*. He was told if he did not take it away they would put it on the fire. He replied: "Things have improved a little: formerly they used to put us on the fire." The farce is, he has been buried with a sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. What a time of it the angels will have when he lands.

ALF SHAW.

Religion has not civilised man—man has civilised religion, God improves as man advances.—*Ingersoll*.

BOOK CHAT.

The *Nature Lover and Literary Review* is the title of a new monthly edited by H. Durant. It opens with a fierce attack on Isaac Walton, the angler, entitled "Gentle Isaac, the Humbug." As a set-off to overmuch praise, it may pass; but after all, a man must be judged by the age he lived in, and the age of Walton was more distinguished for its piety than its humanity.

Swinburne has a poem in the *Nineteenth Century* on the depths of the forest in early autumn. He describes this in glowing language as the Palace of Pan. The last two verses run thus:

By a spell more serene than the dim necromantic
Dead charms of the past and the night,
Or the terror that lurked in the noon to make frantic
Where Etna takes shape from the limbs of gigantic
Dead gods disoriented of might.

The spirit made one, with the spirit whose breath
Makes noon in the woodland sublime,
Abides as entranced in a presence that saith
Things loftier than life and senerer than death,
Triumphant and silent as time.

The lover of good literature will welcome the publication, by Macmillan, of Prof. Huxley's *Collected Essays*. The earliest of them dates from 1866, and their author refers with pardonable pride to the fact that so far as their substance goes he has found nothing to alter.

Olive Schreiner's new volume is entitled *A Woman's Rose*. It is published by T. Fisher Unwin as from the pen of Ralph Iron.

Two volumes by a Jesuit priest, Father Grou, have just been published. They were written long ago for the benefit of a young lady, and have the delightful title of *The Interior of Jesus and Mary*, these venerated personages having submitted their interiors to the Jesuit's inspection.

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, Arthur Westcott, "Vivisection in Hospitals" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, H. Snell, "The Co-quest of Truth" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday at 8.15, Lewis Appleton, F.R.H.S., "Europe Under Arms." (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, G. H. Baker, "A Stolen Creed"; (recitals and ballads by the lecturer). Monday at 8, A. Johnson, "India's Place in History" (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment and dancing (tickets 3d. and 6d.), for benefit of member in distress.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, F. Verinder (E.L.R.L.), "The Problem of Unskilled Labor"; 9, members' quarterly meeting. Saturday at 8, social party.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, debate between A. B. Moss and Dr. Bate on "Secular Objections to Christianity."

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." Oct. 26, at 8, J. Rowney, "The Apostle Paul."

South Essex Secular Society, Enterprise Club, 33 Salway-road, Stratford: 7.15, G. H. Carter, "Malthusianism" (free).

Wimbledon—Hartfield-road Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The Fall of Man" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Johnson, "An Hour with Renan."

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Brain and the Soul."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Oct. 26, at 8, St. John will lecture.

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, a lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, St. John will lecture.

Kilburn—High-road (corner of Victoria-road): 6.30, a lecture.

Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

Victoria Park (near the band-stand): T. Thurlow, 11.30, "An Hour with St. Paul"; 3.30, "What shall we do to be Saved?"

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, E. Shepherd, "The Economic Basis of Anarchist Communism."

Belfast—Crown Chambers Hall, 64 Royal-avenue; 7, E. Martin, "A Reply to some Attacks."

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: Dr. T. R. Allinson, 11, "Temperance from a Doctor's Standpoint"; 7, "Health, Wealth, and Happiness."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, A. B. Wakefield, "Is Secularism a Success?"

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, J. B. Coppock, F.O.S., "Why the Sea is Salt"; 2.45, Sunda

school; 7, J. B. Coppock, "The Origin of the Universe" (illustrated by lantern and slides).

Failsworth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, P. Percival, "The Labor Movement."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, G. M. Wright, "The Politics of Aristotle"; 6.30, G. M. Wright, "Tolstoi and Christianity."

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7.30, a reading.

Ipswich—Co-operative Hall (small room), Cox-lane: 7, meeting of members.

Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7, business meeting. Oct. 23 and 25, in the large hall, C. Cohen will lecture.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: Touzeau Parris, 11, "Serpent Worship"; 3, "How the Messianic Prophecies are Manufactured"; 7, "Christianity: a Form of Devil Worship."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': G. W. Foote, 11, "The Doom of the Bible"; 3, "Christ and Democracy"; 6.30, "A Search for the Soul." Tuesday at 8, debating circle, J. W. Watts, "Pessimism and Atheism." Dancing on Monday from 8 to 10.30.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, J. Brown, "A Lesson in Political Economy."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Meaning of Materialism"; 3, "The Christ Hallucination"; 7, "The Whitewashing of Christianity."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, W. A. Lill, "God's Mistakes"; 8, meeting to establish a mutual improvement class.

South Shields—Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane: 11, C. Cohen, "Charles Darwin"; 3, ethical class for students; 7, C. Cohen, "Evidences of Theism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

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

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Oct. 22 to 31, on Tour. Nov. 4, South Shields; 5, Blythe.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Oct. 22, m., Pimlico Pier. Nov. 12, Lotus Club; 15, Hall of Science. Dec. 10, Portsmouth.

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

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Botherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 22, m. and e., Camberwell; 29, Westminster. Nov. 5, Chatham; 19, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Oct. 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, Depford Liberal Club.

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ADD TO THE PROGRAM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I think it would be greatly to the credit of the National Secular Society to add a clause to the Program of its Immediate Practical Objects given in your last issue. The wording of this clause I do not venture to suggest beyond saying that, in my opinion, every Secularist should be interested in promoting, by all means in his power, the considerate treatment of animals, in defending them from ill-usage, from the atrocities of sport, and, for my own part, I would add (but I fear all Secularists are not yet agreed upon the subject), from the still greater atrocities of vivisection.—Yours faithfully,
E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

A CURIOUS CUSTOM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—Could you throw any light upon the following peculiar custom? At the village of Islip, Northamptonshire, on every Good Friday, the baker of the village receives instructions from the Vicar to make a large cross of dough containing currants. This cross is deposited in the Church, and at noon on Good Friday it is cut up and distributed to the parishioners.—Yours, etc.,
HENRY R. CLIFTON.

[It is the survival of a Pagan custom. Mr. J. G. Frazer, in his *Golden Bough*, gives many instances of the corn spirit being eaten sacramentally. Sometimes "the corn spirit is conceived as an animal; this divine animal being slain and eaten." Again, as a substitute for the real flesh of the divine being, bread or dumplings are made in his image (vol. ii., p. 31). Mr. Frazer suggests that the loaves in human form, baked at Aricia, were sacramental bread, and that "in the old days, when the divine King of the Wood was annually slain, loaves were made in his image, like the paste figures of the gods in Mexico, and were eaten sacramentally by his worshippers." The interesting survival at Islip is one of many indications that the death and resurrection of Christ was like the death and resurrection of John Barleycorn, an emblem of the renewal of nature in the Spring.—J. M. W.]

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We sometimes try to think of what would hap
Resulting from some hypothetical change;
Now let us, in imagination, map
The happenings and conditions sad and strange,
The state of things chaotic that we'd see
If Christ, instead of sense, ruled you and me.

To take but one of Christ's absurd commands,
That bids us "for the morrow take no thought":
The well known "merest schoolboy" understands
This law would bring society to nought,
And quite destroy what all our best have praised,
The hospitals Humanity has raised.

Diseases, faith, and filth would all increase;
The surgeon's occupation would be gone;
Asylums and all kindred things would cease,
For, faithful pray'r would do the work alone,
Or, fail to do; but, whether fail or do,
All other means a Christian must eschew.

The prudent man must take most anxious thought
For many morrows—if he wish to live;
And, if he pity poor, to think he ought
For many morrows—if he wish to give.
Yes, careful thought for morrows we must take,
Or beg our bread, and duties all forsake.

Now, if, for barest food, think we must
Most anxiously of morrows far ahead,
Much more, if we would earn an extra crust
To give to those who cannot work for bread;
And, yet still more, for many anxious days,
If we would help a hospital to raise.

If Christ had but foreseen the progress made
In social life, since his barbaric times,
He would have nigh inverted all he said,
And thus prevented countless woes and crimes.

'Tis well for all that Christians merely praise—
But, never copy—Christ, in these our days!

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