

The Freethinker

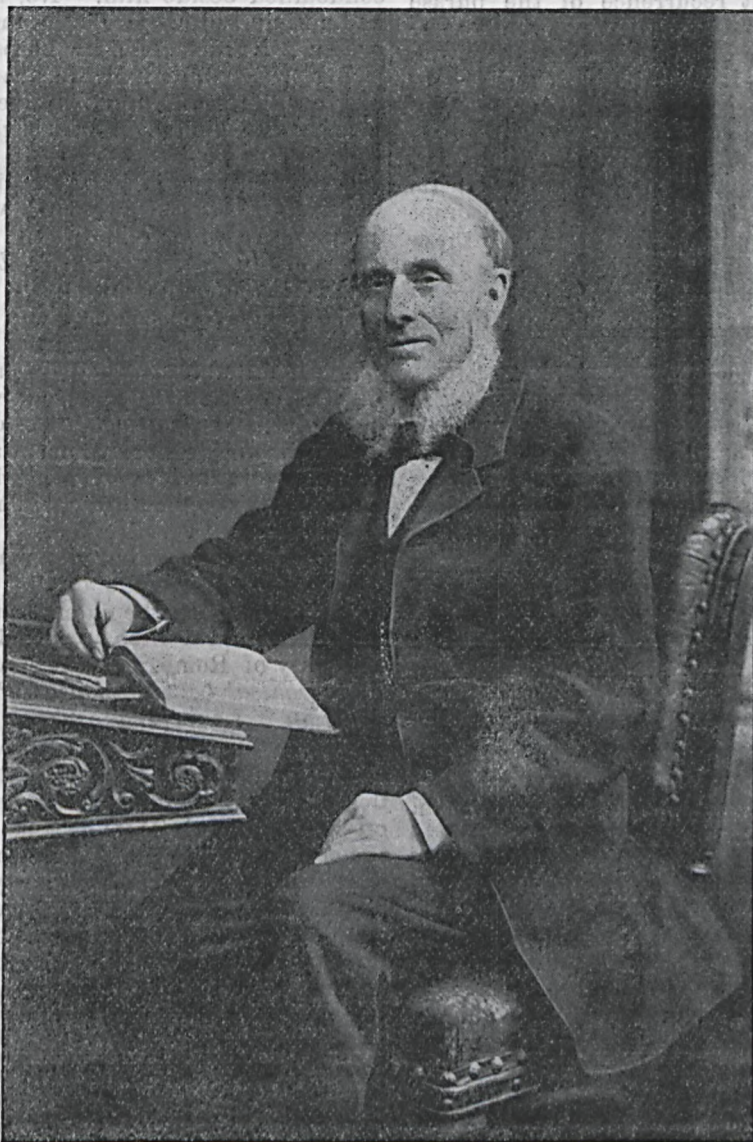
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE TWOPENCE.



PROFESSOR ALEXANDER BAIN, LL.D.

(See page 708.)

BYRON AND SHELLEY.

The Development of Theology as Illustrated in English Poetry from 1780 to 1830. By STOPFORD A. BROOKE. London: Green, Essex-street.

UNITARIANISM has had wealth and learning on its side for several generations, it has also enjoyed the services of some men of singular ability, yet it has signally failed to make an impression upon the general public. In all probability it ever *will* fail. Those who like theology at all, for the most part like it hot and strong. To purge it of its "grosser" features is to rob it of its chief attraction. The ignorant and thoughtless multitude want plenty of supernaturalism. Those who think for themselves, on the other hand, are apt to grow dissatisfied with theology altogether, and to advance beyond the somewhat arbitrary and fantastic limits of the Unitarian faith. For this reason

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Unitarianism was called by Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of the great Charles Darwin, a feather bed to catch a falling Christian. Others regard it as a half-way house between Christianity and Atheism, or even as a bathing machine for those who would wade, and fear to plunge, in the waters of Freethought.

Let us not, however, deny the distinction of such advocates of the Unitarian faith as Dr. Martineau and Dr. Stopford Brooke. The latter was once a clergyman of the Church of England, which he left because he no longer held her tenets, and in this he was more honest and courageous than some others who eat the Church's bread and undermine her faith. Mr. Brooke regards himself as a teacher of positive religion, but in our judgment his service to liberalism is really negative. His writings and sermons are a protest, however decorous, against the orthodox theology; and the protest may be all the more

effective, with a certain order of minds, because it does not show them the ultimate consequences of free-thinking. When they see the preacher aglow with the ardor of his "purified" faith in God and Immortality, they are encouraged to advance as far as he has gone, and thus to leave behind them the worst portions of the creed of their childhood.

Mr. Brooke is well known in the field of literature, and is held to shine as a critic of poetry. Hence it was that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association appointed him to deliver the first lecture of a course "dealing with some aspect of the history and development of Christianity as viewed from a liberal and progressive standpoint." The special subject selected was the development of theology as illustrated in English poetry, and the lecture is now published in a neat little volume for the general reader.

We notice the frequent recurrence of the phrase "liberal theology." Naturally we like everybody to be liberal, but we cannot see the appropriateness of the epithet in this instance. It would sound strange to talk of "liberal geology" or "liberal chemistry." Why then should we talk of "liberal theology"? If theology is anything but an effort of imagination—as we conceive it—it must be a system of ascertained truth. Its propositions are therefore true or false, but they cannot be good or bad, liberal or illiberal. Introduce these epithets, and you make it a matter of taste and preference, or of conformity or non-conformity to the spirit of advancing civilisation. This is indeed what Mr. Brooke appears to mean. He seems to regard theology as liberal or otherwise as it adapts itself to the growth of knowledge and morality. He goes to the length of admitting that secular progress precedes religious progress. "The Church," he says, "has always followed society." The change in theology, which has made it "liberal," or produced that variety of it, could not have appeared "in early Christian times, nor in the middle ages; not as long, that is, as the imperialistic or feudal theory of humanity and its rulers existed." Still more decisively, if possible, he repeats this statement:—"There was no chance then of theology changing until the existing views of human society changed. If theology was to be enlarged, they must first be enlarged." Now this is a truth which we have always insisted on, and the reason of it is destructive to "liberal" and all other kinds of theology. We are told that God made man, but the fact is that man made God, and what he made he is able to keep in repair. The growing idea of God's "love" is not forced upon theologians by a study of nature, nor by a study of Scripture. It is forced upon them by the advancing spirit of humanity. God was once a being who loved and hated, and all the "liberal" theologians have done is to minimise his hatred and maximise his love. God has not made any fresh disclosures of himself, as Mr. Brooke teaches; the theologians have simply brought him up to date, and they have done so under the compulsion of secular progress.

Mr. Brooke's conception of the Fatherhood of God is creditable to his feelings. The deity he worships is one who will "effectually call to himself and effectually keep, at last, all his children to whose free-will only one thing is impossible—final division from the sovereignty of his love." But how far is this creditable to Mr. Brooke's intelligence? It is certainly inconsistent with the teaching of Christ, and Mr. Brooke calls himself a Christian. It is no less inconsistent with all we know of Nature, who is supremely indifferent to the fate of individuals. To talk so consumedly of God's love in this age of Darwinism, with its law of natural selection based on a universal struggle for existence, is to fly in the face of common sense. But here, alas, as in so many other cases, the voice of reason is drowned in the chorus of sentimentalism.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded).

THE GIRONDINS.

JUST one hundred years ago, on the 31st of October, twenty-two of the flower of the French revolutionists were executed by guillotine. The judgment of history upon the Girondins is, that they were men of talent and virtue who inevitably fell in the welter of the revolution from lack of a firm grip upon affairs. The party of the Mountain, led by Robespierre, and in the absence of Danton, brought them to trial on October 24th, charged with fomenting the insurrections in the provinces, and other political offences. The assassination of Marat had sealed their doom. They were found guilty, and executed together within a week. Valazé, on hearing his sentence, fell as in a swoon. "Are you then afraid?" said Gensonné, who stood condemned beside him. No, he was not afraid, but had anticipated his fate by plunging a poinard in his breast. Nevertheless, his corpse was taken with the living twenty-one, and the head lopped off with the rest on the scaffold. Lasource, copying an ancient sage, said to his judges, "*Je meurs dans un moment où le peuple a perdu sa raison; vous, vous mourrez le jour où il la recouvrera* (I die at a moment when the people has lost its reason; while you will die the day when it is recovered.) Sillery, the eldest, exclaimed, "*Ce jour est le plus beau de ma vie*" (This day is the finest of my life.) "We are innocent," exclaimed several, while some threw their money to the people. They went from the tribunal shouting "Vive la République," and singing the "Marseillaise." Camille Desmoulins cried out with remorse that his pamphlet, *Brissot Devoilé*, had destroyed them. Most of the Girondins were young; all were Republicans. "The revolution," said Vergniaud, "like Saturn, is devouring its own children." The eminent among them were nearly all Freethinkers.

Brissot de Warville, who may be considered their founder, the first name of the Girondins being Brissotins, was among the elders of the party, being thirty-nine. He had written against slavery, against the legal authority of Rome, and had shown his Freethought in *Philosophical Letters upon St. Paul and the Christian Religion*. Louis Blanc says: "Amar dared accuse Brissot of meditating the ruin of our colonies because he had generously labored for the emancipation of the negroes; of having urged the assassination of patriots on the Champs de Mars because he was the first to raise the cry of 'Republican' that shook Paris; of having sought to crush new-born liberty under the weight of an allied universe because he had declared war against kings! It was an attempt to brand him with those deeds which in history will be his eternal praise."

Pierre Victurnien Vergniaud, by his eloquence, became the actual leader of the party. He was but thirty-four, an age, as Camille Desmoulins said, fatal to revolutionists. At the trial of King Louis, he voted for the appeal to the people, but that being rejected, voted death. He presided at the last banquet of the Girondins in prison, and was the last to be executed on the morrow. He had prepared poison for himself, but as there was not enough for his comrades, he resolved to suffer with them, and to remain to the last.

Jean Louis Carra was fifty years of age, and, after Sillery, the oldest of the party. His life had been that of a man of letters, having been employed in the king's library. His Freethought sentiments were manifest in his *System of Reason* and his *Spirit of Morality and Philosophy*. His last days were spent in political speculations.

Armand Gensonné, aged 35, who in the struggle with the Jacobins was one of the most active and eloquent champions of his party, was also one of the most pronounced Freethinkers, and probably shared the Atheism of his friend Guadet. M. Pierre Emile Aollas, in his *Droits de l'Homme*, says that "in the Revolution are two clearly defined views about God: that of the Girondins, who reject the idea of God, and that of the Montagnards, who accept this ancient pivot of the world." This, however, is scarcely correct. The Atheists were a small minority even among the Girondins. Lamartine has painted their last supper, when, like Socrates, they debated the question of the

A new edition of Sydney Grundy's novel *In the Days of His Vanity* has been called for in consequence of the success of his play, "Sowing the Wind," which is founded upon the novel.

immortality of the soul. "What shall we be doing at this time to-morrow?" asked the young Ducos, whose gaiety, with that of his friend Fonfrède, aged twenty-nine, neither prison nor the prospect of death could damp. According to the report of the priest, the eloquence of Vergniaud was in favor of immortality as demanded by the justice of God.

This was the Abbé Lambert, a friend of Brissot, who came to offer them "the consolations of religion." Brissot refused, gently but firmly saying, "Do you know anything more holy than the death of an honest man who dies for having refused the blood of his fellow men to scoundrels?" Most of the others equally refused. Two only are particularised by Lamartine as making their confession and receiving absolution.

Five cars carried them to the place of execution. They went singing the first verse of the "Marseillaise."

Allons enfans de la patrie
Le jour de gloire est arrivé ;

(laying significant emphasis on the succeeding lines)

Contre nous de la tyrannie,
Le *couteau* sanglant est levé.

One by one they mounted the ladder, chanting this death dirge. The swelling chorus grew fainter as head after head dropped beneath the knife, till but one clear note was left, that of Vergniaud, who had hushed many a crowd into silence, and whose eloquent voice, which had subverted the monarchy and disputed the mastery with Robespierre and Danton, expired, like that of his comrades, still chanting the hymn of the Revolution.

Whatever may be thought of the politics of the Girondins, there can be no doubt they were upheld by enthusiasm for their ideas, and, like so many other characters of the great French Revolution, died bravely. The spectacle on the Place de la Revolution a century ago is in itself a refutation of the Christian legend that it is religion alone that can make men face the terrors of death with equanimity.

J. M. WHEELER.

AMERICAN NOTES.

THE International Congress of Freethinkers, held in Chicago, is over. As an assembly of liberal minded men and women from all parts of the American continent, the Convention was a brilliant success; but it lacked the international feature so far as the personal attendance of foreign delegates were concerned, there being only two present, myself from England and Captain Robert Adams from Canada. Of course several pleasing and encouraging communications from many countries were sent and read to the Congress amidst great applause. The address of Mr. G. W. Foote, which recently appeared in these columns, was read by my friend, Mr. S. P. Putnam, and received with much enthusiasm. Many delegates expressed their regrets that the President of the National Secular Society was absent, and they all wished me to assure him of a hearty reception when he reaches the American shores. I explained to the Congress the position of affairs connected with the Secular cause in England and how necessary it was that Mr. Foote should remain at home for the present year. He must, however, remember that hundreds of friends on this side of the Atlantic are awaiting the opportunity to give him a warm American welcome, and they are hoping that the opportunity for them to do so will be at an early date.

The Congress was of a thoroughly representative character, and nearly all the American lecturers were present and made excellent speeches. The "Woman's Day" was remarkable, not only for graceful oratory, but also for sound, practical speaking. In fact, some of the gentlemen who spoke during the Congress could learn something, both in matter and manner, from their sisters in the lecturing field. The many speeches delivered within the eight days' sittings of the Convention embraced a variety of topics and opinions. All features connected with Freethought, and some that were not connected therewith, were dealt with. The mode of Secular advocacy adopted

in America differs from the English plan of propaganda. In the United States Secularism, called there Liberalism, includes within its advocacy social and political questions, as well as theological subjects, while in the old country we confine our Secular work to destroying theological fallacies and to the inculcation of the duties of daily life apart from, and independent of, all theology. Our labors in the fields of social and political reforms have no necessary association with our Secular philosophy as such. In England we have found this the wisest course to adopt; and, in my opinion, our American friends will in time learn the same lesson. In the Secular ranks much difference of opinion obtains as to what is politically and socially right, but there are no two opinions among us as to the evils of theology, the curse of priestcraft, and the retarding nature of orthodoxy. Neither do we differ as to the correctness and necessity of regulating human conduct by the highest principle of morality uncontaminated and unfettered by the teachings of the churches.

The work of American Freethought Congresses appears to me to be more suggestive than administrative. Excellent plans for progress are proposed, but from some cause the suggestions made have not, as a rule, been carried out. Is not this the result of a lack of united action among our brave and earnest Transatlantic friends? Union gives strength, and in proportion as the Secular movement possesses the power of combination, in the same ratio will its power of extension increase. I do not mean here by union more centralisation, the surrendering of power into the hands of one person; but I do mean that, as Secularists, we should fix our attention upon points of agreement, and then unite our efforts to achieve the objects we have in view. I can conceive of this being done only by confining ourselves as a Secular organisation to Secular work, leaving outside questions to be treated as we may individually think fit. In expressing my opinions thus upon Freethought propagandism in America, it must not be thought that I overlook, or fail to value, the individual efforts of the Liberals of the United States. To their honor be it recorded, there are scattered throughout all parts of the vast Republic isolated men and women who do not fear to avow their unbelief in theology, and who, by their noble action, give a powerful impetus to the cause of mental freedom. Still I feel their usefulness would be considerably increased if they were all organised for a definite purpose. The rank and file are numerous, generous, and enthusiastic, and, with better skilled generalship America would have the finest Freethought army in the world.

Among the many good addresses given at the Congress was the opening one by Judge C. B. Waite. Speaking of the Parliament of Religions, recently held in Chicago, he said:

"We regard it as auspicious of a new era; not because, as has been said in some quarters, that it indicates a broadening of faith, but because it indicates a renunciation of faith. Any examination of a faith by scientific methods, or any comparison of it with other faiths, is simply a preparatory step to giving it up altogether. We sometimes hear something said about a scientific religion, or the religion of science; but I cannot admit the right of a person to give new definitions to words. Definitions change, it is true; and much has been done at this religious congress, undoubtedly, towards giving the word 'religion' a new meaning. So the time may come when it may properly be used as including in its meaning, systems standing upon a scientific basis. But up to the present time, according to the established practice of the best speakers and writers, it cannot. The idea of religion involves two other ideas—the idea of worship and the idea of mystery. Science seeks to dispel mystery, or at least to limit and lessen its domain. But mystery is of the very essence of religion, which might be defined to be the incarnation of mystery. When therefore a person has fully adopted a system of religion, when he has surrendered reason to faith, he is not to be expected to be willing readily to broaden the platform on which he stands. According to the program there was to be in the parliament no attack upon any religion. Everything was to be harmonious and lovely; discussion was to be only on points wherein all agreed. Whoever heard of such a discussion as that before? We had supposed that discussion involved points of difference. Of course such a program could not be carried out. In such a congress antagonism is absolutely unavoidable. One of the Oriental speakers understood the situation. He said: 'Suppose Japan wants some religion; what will be this religion?'

Then comes the word "warfare"—the warfare between Christianity and the old religion of Japan. If Japan is a battlefield between religions, it is also a battlefield between the Christian religion and the non-Christian systems of religion.' This antagonism was developed in the congress after a few sessions. There was attack and defence and counter attack, until a number of delegates were engaged in showing up the evils of the different systems, always excepting that of the speaker.

"Our mission is quite different. It is for us to show the evil that is in them all. Take them altogether they constitute a huge religious trust. By this combined and ostentatious movement they hoped to avert the impending catastrophe, and postpone the coming of the day, not far distant, which is to witness the downfall of all religions."

The Rev. Dr. Frank Bristol has just given the churches a set back, and he suggests that instead of sending missionaries abroad, the heathens at home should be attended to. Says he:

"I could lead you in four minutes from where we stand to as dark a spot as ever defiled the face of the earth. It is useless for us to talk about saving the heathen abroad unless we can save the heathen at home. If you cannot save Chicago you cannot save Calcutta. Unless you can save San Francisco you cannot save Shanghai. Unless you can save Boston you cannot save Bombay. We plant our altars amongst the silks and satins and not amidst the rags of Chicago. We plant them among homes whose tables groan with every luxury, and we do not plant them in the midst of homes that are empty, where little children are pinched with want and hunger. Go over to Halsted-street or visit 'Little Hell' on the North Side. Look at the street arabs, the shoeblacks, and newsboys on our streets—the city waifs, who sleep in dry-goods boxes. These boys are growing up to be voters, and in a few years they will be settling political questions, not only for Chicago, but for the United States. God help us and open our eyes to see the field we have here right in our midst in Chicago."

And this is in Chicago where Moody, and other revivalists, have been working for years to "convert" the people. It is the same old story, plenty of gospel but very little of real moral health. The truth is, church teaching is no remedy for the evils in America, any more than it is in England. Well may the Chicago *Tribune* observe:

"Millions of dollars are squandered on the alleged conversion of some alleged Oriental 'pagans.' Tens of thousands of dollars before this have been wasted in reclaiming some Jews to Christianity, while in all this waste of time and money, thousands upon thousands of worse and more dangerous pagans are right here in our midst, with little or no effort made to save them except by the efforts of the Salvation Army, which itself is made the butt of ridicule or the victim of persecution. A few noble young women are making the effort to educate them, entertain them, and keep them clean, but what is the Church doing for them?"

I regret to report that I shall not be able to see Colonel Ingersoll during my present visit, in consequence of his being at the Pacific Coast. This is to me a great disappointment, as I had hoped to have induced him to visit England upon a lecturing tour. I have, however, written to him, saying how anxious his thousands of English friends and admirers are both to see and hear him. I expect shortly to be able to publish his reply.

I have just returned from Chicago to Toronto, where I lecture next Sunday. The old grievance of the exemption of church property from taxation, is again to the front. To their honor, be it said, the Baptists have just paid their due share, and now they are calling upon other denominations to do the same. Referring to this the Toronto *World* says: "The tenacity with which the church holds on to unjust privileges, are among the causes that fill the Academy to the doors when Charles Watts, the Secularist, holds forth on Sunday evenings."

CHARLES WATTS.

Tommy (who, like Freddy, has been trying to comprehend the mysteries of early chapters in Genesis)—"Well, pa, if Dod made ev'rysin' out of nussin', an' there was nussin' till he made nussin', what did he stand on when he made it?"

Smith—"I was sorry to hear, Brown, that you have failed in business." Brown (a pious grocer)—"Yes, I struggled hard, but I lost everything save my honor, thank God, and the property I was wise enough to settle on my wife when I found myself getting into trouble."

SCIENCE AND FAITH.

THIS subject of abiding interest was once more discussed by members of the recent Church Congress. The terms used in describing science showed a great improvement on past definitions. The old view that faith was divine and science diabolical appears to be completely abandoned. Science was described as "knowledge set in order"—not bad for a Bishop of Peterborough, only he omitted to define knowledge at the same time, although it varies in its nature. It is at once applied by him to subjects that transcend human experience, beyond reason and observation. But he answers himself effectively by saying that man's relationship to God, soul, spirit, and all similar matters were the subjects of faith, "began and ended in trust." The Atheist and Agnostic, "directly he accepted an hypothesis, he was acting upon the same faith which he professed to have nothing to say for."

The bishop mistakes the position. There is a difference between accepting and assuming an hypothesis; it is only accepted when verified. What is known as a working hypothesis is only assumed. The objection that science is only concerned with the *outward* world, and that questions about other matters it cannot answer, is easily disposed of, since it is only concerned with questions that *can* be answered.

"Of the *origin* of nature there was no key save an Intelligent First Cause." If science (as the bishop says it does) finds a continuous process, a perpetual transformation of energy, of which neither the beginning nor end can be conceived, why should it seek for his theological "key"?

To assume that there is a key of this character would vitiate all the conclusions arrived at by his own showing. Science, according to the bishop's own declaration, is that all is the result of a continuous process. If the bishop disputed the conclusions of science we could appreciate his demand for further information; but he does not. If we were to speak of a continuous rope as not having its first end accounted for, the bishop would no doubt see the incongruity. He describes the whole matter very fairly when he says "what the natural sciences taught them was how the outward world came to be as it was." The objection he takes in the next sentence is, "the answer they got was no answer to the question how they came to be here." Surely "they" form part of "the outward world," which has "become what it is," as already explained by "a continuous process." But even worse confusion remains behind, for in conclusion he says "the discoveries of science" "told of God working in the world of nature according to his own purpose."

How a personal intelligent God can work in nature by a process without beginning or end, and yet be the key to its origin, is not obvious to the lay mind. We cannot do better than accept the next speaker by way of explanation. Dr. Brunton defined faith as belief *untested*, and science as belief *tested* by experiment. He urged the desirability of accepting the actions of men as caused by influences not all of man's own choosing. He ascribed robbery, anger, violence, and even murder, to hereditary tendencies and external circumstances, as accounting for what are termed sins. Thus the bishop's difficulty about accounting for our moral nature is met by observation of natural causes, instanced by his lay brother without being opposed or called in question. Rev. Prof. Bonney also pointed out that science was not confined to the laboratory, as the bishop supposes. It worked in the field of philology, history, "and much else that concerned human action." He said it could not dogmatically affirm the miraculous impossible, but it was "bound to say improbable," and also to "regard with suspicion and scepticism" histories in which they formed an element. The part he wished science to play in the drama was that of "the critical friend of faith rather than its enemy." Has science anything at all to do with miracles or faith? He said, "Science makes very short work of the great mass of ecclesiastical miracles." The way it does this is to "dismiss them as explicable on natural grounds, or as misconceptions of phenomena, or not supported by adequate evidence." We should like to know why we may not suspect New Testament

"histories" containing this "element," and dismiss its miracles also as "not supported by adequate evidence," like ecclesiastical ones? Miracles are all alike and deserve one sort of treatment. They can only be taken "on trust," as the bishop puts it.

Does not Prof. Bonney dispose of a belief in the supernatural altogether when he says, "Faith was inseparable from belief, belief must be grounded on evidence, and evidence, as a rule, must be tested by methods in which the senses were employed"? No one contends that we have a sense perception of the supernatural. Sir George Stokes attempted to dispose of conflicts between Science and Faith in the declaration that "truth is one and cannot contradict itself."

Whoever said it did or could? The *assumption* he makes, not the proof he affords, is that *both* are equally true, Science and Faith. Could they imagine, he asked, God giving us faculties to "discover truth at variance with what he might think fit to communicate in a more direct manner?" If we do not so imagine, the fact remains that an *alleged* communication is so at variance, even if that can be accounted for as he suggests, by "a mistaken interpretation." It is a concession to place God's inspired revelation as resting on a fallible claim—"the claims of both were subject to human fallibility." If we grant this position, we are bound to claim credit for fallible science for pointing out the errors of the Bible and the interpreters. He argues that because there is some evidence that the earth is not as it once was, "things were called into being by a power *above* nature," in a manner that science cannot comprehend. He then proceeds, as though that was a proved fact, to follow it up by asserting that "the same power," exerted from time to time, "a creative or formative energy." Having started with this supernatural creative energy, he continues it now, as "the doctrine of the resurrection would be *more difficult* of acceptance if we refuse to admit the idea of successive creations."

Moreover, if we reject this, we shall have to trace all things from "lifeless matter." He does not consider the discovery of similarity of structure in all mammals amounts to more than the operation of *second causes* in some way or other of which we are ignorant. But if it is true that all things were, and continue to be, produced by a succession of creative energy, the talk of second causes is so much nonsense, not ignorance. The fact is, he is unable to offer any explanation whatever of the great scientific discovery so ably applied in the *Descent of Man*, and hence all these attempts at mistification founded on the condition of the globe unfitted for life, and the non-discovery of lifeless matter giving birth to living things.

Let it be assumed that to-day we cannot believe that things arose from *natural* causes—where is the evidence that they were produced from time to time by a *creative* energy or by "a power above nature"? That things have "been descending one from another from eternity" he puts as the only alternative. But at the same time he points out that science does not support that view! He says there is no evidence in history, "within the range of history no such thing as a human being having descended from some being not human."

If this mode of reasoning is valid, we have the right to reject the *creation* of man black, white, and red, by "a power above nature," because "within the range of history there is no such thing as a human being descending from some being" called "a creative or formative energy." I am not aware of a single fact in nature that indicates that such a thing ever happened, even if history had mentioned it. All the evidence, such as it is, points to a *natural* origin, whether conclusive or not. He admits the motion of the moon, and that the process of life on the globe depends on the supply of energy received from the sun's radiation, and that the law of gravitation brooked no exception, but he declines to accept Evolution as resting on a similarly sure basis. At the same time, he knows full well that the laws of motion and the sun's influence on the earth were not always conceived and accepted as he accepts them to-day.

He speaks of "the scriptural idea of a succession of

creative acts." But *where in them* can we find an account of the creation of successive races of plants and animals revealed by geology, which he does not dispute? If we accept the scripture, he tells us, we are not bound to expect scientific information; so that all its ideas vanish from the realms of science. It may be sufficient to mention that the Bible does not even support Sir G. Stokes's contention for the origin of man specially, by a creative power above nature, for it says he was made out of the dust of the ground—a manifest and demonstrative error, since it does not contain the elements of which he is made.

Sir George advises us to consult the works of biologists and use our common sense, and the Rev. C. L. Engstrom informs us that Dr. Sanderson is a biologist of the highest reputation, and also a believer in Christ. Fortunately we can quote his latest utterance on the question on the origin of life. In his address to the British Association, he said it was "a riddle outside our scope." But, "No seriously-minded person, however, doubts that organised nature as it presents itself to us, has become *what it is* by process of gradual perfecting or advancement." The whole process "is a necessary outcome of the fact that those organisms are most prosperous that look best after their own welfare." He further informs us that "Every organism must have sprung from a unicellular ancestor." As to whether that "ancestor" was Sir G. Stokes's "Power above nature," I do not think worth discussion. The "Power above nature" can hardly be "unicellular," and *where* it is he fails to explain, and it is a singularly unmeaning expression in the mouth of a man of science. So is the other expression, "calling into being." I thought all scientific thinkers accepted the totality of existence as limitless in both space and time. The indestructibility of matter is proof as to time. Sir George Stokes does not think science had anything to put against the special creation or origin of man "except a wholly unwarranted extension of the idea of evolution."

Perhaps the word of Darwin may be taken as sufficient answer to this; that man is descended from some less organised form is a conclusion that rests upon grounds that cannot be disputed and facts that have long been known. "It is incredible that all these facts should speak falsely. He who is not content to look, like a savage, at the phenomena of nature as disconnected, cannot any longer believe that man is the work of a separate act of creation" (*Descent of Man*, p. 607).

I regard this throwing doubts on the conclusions of science as useful work, but not when it is done to bolster up a baseless theology. I cannot appreciate the motive of the persons who do it only for that purpose.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

"PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE."

OPINIONS may clash about maxims and laws,
But all, we are perfectly sure,
Agree about this one—the sagest of saws—
"Prevention is better than cure."

We find throughout Nature, where conflict is rife,
And all seek, and shun, and endure,
That always through life—the adjustment of strife—
"Prevention is better than cure."

The unit, the family, township, and state
Declare, in their wisdom mature,
That always in striving to better our fate,
"Prevention is better than cure."

The Bible, however, unless we're deceived,
Says God, who will changeless endure,
Behaved in a manner that showed he believed
Prevention is *worse* than a cure.

He fashioned the couple that started our race,
Both perfectly healthy and pure,
Then caused them to fall into sin and disgrace,
In order to boast of a *cure*!

Take warning, O man! from Jehovah's mistake,
And follow the pathway secure;
Shun God, and remember, if progress you'd make,
"Prevention is better than cure"!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

LIVERPOOL PROGRESSING.

THE all-encompassing march of the spirit of progress has reached even belated Liverpool, and ere long will have traversed every nook and corner thereof. To those outside Liverpool, and knowing her only by reputation, this will sound surprising, inasmuch as she is notorious for her execrable history, politically, morally, and religiously.

Politically, Beecher once described his famous experience in the Philharmonic Hall, where he *attempted* to lecture on the abolition of slavery, as being that of a man among the wild beasts of Ephesus. Last summer we had bands in the Parks on Sunday afternoons, in the winter the Art Gallery is open for a few hours, and the world-famed organist, Mr. Best, presides at the splendid organ in our magnificent George's Hall next Sunday.

Morally, she has been epigrammatically described as the black spot on the Mersey, and even unto this day I hope—notwithstanding a marked improvement—no city in the world surpasses her in various and manifold transgressions.

Religiously, I am perplexed to know how to give a concise and yet adequate description of what she has been. For, with a few and rare exceptions, nothing was done to give her blind votaries a lofty conception of life. In brief, religion here has been a veritable stagnant pool, the waters of which was periodically disturbed in the months of March and July, followed by epidemics of cowardly brutalities, and excessively so in the latter month; the virulence of the July epidemics being due probably in part to climatic conditions, but in greater part attributable to the numerical preponderance of a yellow-colored germ, which now happily, if not totally extinct, is completely innocuous. It is not adapted to the new environment. Oh, if but certain walls in Liverpool could re-echo a specimen or two of the disgraceful diatribes that have been fulminated within them to ignorant rowdies! What a stopping of the ears there would be!

As at the outset indicated, Liverpool is fast succumbing to the all-pervading spirit of progress, and of the ministers that are doing yeoman service to bring about such a consummation, Mr. Armstrong, a Unitarian, and Mr. Aked, a Baptist, stand out prominently; the former a man of sterling qualities and of progressive ideas, notwithstanding the fact that he is, as Novalis asserted of Spinoza, a "God-intoxicated" man. The latter is a young man apparently of thirty-two or thereabout, able, fluent, plucky, and full of "go"—aye, and full of heresy too. He came to Liverpool a few years ago to minister in a large chapel, that hardly a hundred attended, which now is filled to overflowing. As a sample of his pluck, the other Sunday he invited the Rev. Mr. Armstrong to lecture in his chapel on the "New Bible," and had the same murally advertised by huge posters that were truly eye-arresting. So obtrusive were they that, Secularist as I am, I could not refrain from exclaiming, Go, thou Secularist, and learn of the Baptist the art of advertising thy orators.

Mr. Armstrong did lecture to a large audience, and what an eye-opening address it must have been to many present! He amended the title of his lecture to that of the "Larger Bible." The old book, I need hardly say, was highly rated, for he said that this "larger Bible" "included as one of its brightest jewels—indeed its very brightest jewel—those wondrous works of scripture which come down to us from the hoary antiquity of Palestine," etc. But, he continued, "we lay aside, for example, the unreasoned and preposterous notion of the inerrancy of any ancient or modern scripture. That notion seems to us wholly without basis in reason or in fact." The larger Bible included all that had been written to purify the emotions and quicken the consciences of men. Of the number that had so written were the brothers Newman, Tennyson, Lowell, Carlyle, Emerson, "George Eliot," Whittier, Hugo, and a host of others—all these were as truly inspired as any of the ancient prophets.

He expanded the word "Bible" so as to include scientists among the inspired, and while doing so dealt a palpable hit at the miracles. They, said he (the scientists), strive to dive to the centre of the mystery of the world in which we live, to ascertain its physical constitution; and miracle after miracle—*far transcending the petty miracles which men of old imagined*—is revealed to them day by day, the permanence of unseen force. Oh! what fools are they—what fools are they who look upon natural science as the foe of faith and the deadly enemy of

the living God! Fools and blind who know not the signs of the times. Let them read of these things; let them, too, sweep the heavens with their telescopes; let them, too, discern the marvels of the microscope, that they also may be won to our faith, and believe in our larger Bible.

In addition to the foregoing there was a large admixture of poetry, but the crux of the address, as will have been seen, consisted of putting the Bible on the same basis as any other book, and that done too in a Baptist chapel in the heart of Liverpool before a popular audience. The victory is as good as won, for the halo once removed, it will quickly be relegated to its proper place, and cease to trammel any more the intellect of the masses of the people. Truly we are progressing.

J. ROBERTS.

ACID DROPS.

The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, returning from his holidays like a Congregational sky-pilot refreshed, preached a sermon on "The Old Lamp *versus* Nineteenth Century Improvements." The Old Lamp was the Bible, and Mr. Rogers objects to its "improvements." He prefers the good old thick oil and the coarse spluttering wick. As for the critics—base wretches!—he thinks they have "no right to parade their insolent pedantry in the face of Christian susceptibility." What he forgets is, that the insolence of pedantry is not nearly as bad as the insolence of ignorance.

Dr. Parker is willing to do "mission" work outside London. For three sermons and a conference he wants £100 for the enlargement of his own work in London. "But what," the *Christian World* asks, "is Dr. Parker's work in London which so needs support? If his work is not confined to the Sunday and Thursday services we have been living in ignorance." One of Dr. Parker's objects is to "bring useful books within easy reach of ministers, students, and teachers of limited income," and the *Christian World* maliciously inquires whether those useful books "are mostly Dr. Parker's own publications."

Dr. Dawson Burns has to pay the penalty of his pious connection with "the Liberator." The United Kingdom Alliance has given him notice that his engagement will terminate at the end of the year. Of course he thinks it is unfair, but he may thank his stars (or his God) it is no worse.

"Craven" is a hard word to apply to John Henry Newman, yet it is applied by the *Christian World*, which says it has not "the slightest sympathy with the craven theory of Newman that the free exercise of the intellect is destructive of faith." Now "craven" is only an adjective, and adjectives are generally matters of opinion. What is the *fact*? Has not the free exercise of the intellect been destructive of faith ever since the right of private judgment was first appealed to? It is curious that in the very same number of the *Christian World* there is a report of Dr. Cave's address to the Congregationalists, in which "He urged them to be content to walk by faith, and let no ambitious attempt to walk by sight rob them of the cardinal truth of the Incarnation." This appears to us remarkably like the "craven" theory of Dr. Newman.

One of the ministers who prayed at the devotional service of the Thursday meeting of the London Congregational Union begged God to remember the poor ministers who are suffering from the coal lock-out, and would make their worn garments last even a year longer. It is refreshing to find a minister who really believe in miracles.

Sky-Pilot Nicholson, of the Free Manse, Garth, is down upon a schoolmistress who held an annual prize distribution, followed by a dance. This was wicked enough in itself, but it was worse for being held on the same evening as the man of God's weekly prayer meeting. "The Great God and Judge of all," he declares, "will bring all such godless ones, rich and poor, to an account, and assign them their portion in hell for ever."

Another much disturbed man of God is the Rev. T. Millar, of St. Paul's, Lorne St. Leith. The members of his choir resolved to have a dance. Mr. Millar strongly denounced the project. One audacious choirman asked him to give his

reason. He discreetly declined, saying he would "state his reasons to no man." Like Falstaff, he might have added, not if they were plentiful as blackberries. It is satisfactory to learn that the choir determined not to abandon their dance.

Charles Woodhouse Shepherd, a clergyman, has been sentenced at Monmouth to three years' penal servitude for theft and false pretences.

The Rev. W. Sandford, formerly rector of Bicton, near Shrewsbury, committed suicide with a razor. Another fact for Talmage!

Mr. Allen, of Bravington-street, Paddington, took a dose of opium, and, while the poison was operating, wrote a letter to his wife, in which he exclaimed "Have mercy on me, a sinner, O God!" Not an Atheist this, Mr. Talmage, and not a brave man. His accounts were "involved," and he left his wife to shift for herself.

Another man worried over financial matters was Henry Langdon, of 10 Milman-street, St. Pancras, who cut his throat at King's-cross Station, leaving a letter for his wife, saying "I am going home to God." We can't make this poor fellow out to be an Atheist either.

Another attempted suicide at Blythe Bridge, in the Pottery district, left a letter to his wife, in which he said, "God bless my family. My Lord has forgiven my sins. As it was in the beginning, world without end. Amen." Drink and religion had been too much for him, and it would be hard to say which of the intoxicants is worse.

The Church, personified by the Bishop of Winchester, has been fraternising with the Army, personified by the Duke of Connaught at the opening of a Church Institute at Aldershot. The Church has a new recommendation for itself. It is going to supersede the recruiting sergeant. Said the Bishop, "he could not help wondering if ever the time would come when the service of Her Majesty would be able to attract to itself suitable men to protect her honor and empire without the assistance of the recruiting sergeant. He thought that by the aid of such institutions as this that happy time was in store for us." Who could desire to disestablish the Church after this?

A certain grim old theologian said that there were babies not a span long crawling on the floor of hell. By many persons it was believed that the late Mr. Spurgeon held the same detestable doctrine, but it appears that they were mistaken. Mr. Spurgeon wrote thus to a correspondent in 1869: "I have never at any time in my life said, believed, or imagined that any infant, under any circumstances, would be cast into hell. I have always believed in the salvation of all infants, and I intensely detest the opinions which your opponent dared to attribute to me."

This is satisfactory—as far as it goes. Mr. Spurgeon shrank from the idea of babies going to hell, and more sensitive persons shrink from the idea of men and women being roasted for ever and ever by their Creator. Besides, if babies cannot go to hell, and most grown-up people do, it is clearly a blessing to die in infancy.

Crews is a town built and controlled by the London and North Western Railway Company, which actually provides for the "spiritual" wants of the inhabitants, who are mostly in its service. All the Bethels built by the Company belong to the Church of England. "Dissent," says a writer in the *Christian World*, "exists on sufferance." Very likely; but Freethought is not even suffered. There are several Freethinkers employed in the Company's service at Crews, but a Branch of the N.S.S. is an impossibility there. Every man who joined it would be soon discharged. The Freethinkers at Crews who want to hear a Freethought lecture must travel to Chester or Manchester for the purpose. After all, Dissent is not so badly treated in comparison, for it is allowed to live if it can.

The *Irish Emerald* must have a green set of readers. An appeal is made in its advertisement columns for a Catholic school, subscribers to which have their names kept in a book which "lies under the altar." Who is it that lies over the altar?

St. Patrick's League is formed to "save the poor children of London." Its president is Cardinal Vaughan. His Eminence offers Mass once a month—on the wholesale plan, you know—for all who subscribe a shilling per year. The children in the Refuges also pray for the subscribers. On the whole, the subscription seems a very good investment for those who are fond of the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

The *Bristol Christian Leader* displays the usual arrogance of the creed which has had everything its own way for so many ages. It actually supports the Rev. J. M. Logan, who will not enter into that written debate with Mr. Foote until the latter gives a signed undertaking to keep to the subject. Such a demand is childish in itself, and insulting to a man in Mr. Foote's position. Mr. Logan's motive in making it may be left to the judgment of all men of sense and candor.

We are pleased to see that Mr. Logan intends to give himself away shortly. According to the *Christian Leader* he intends to give a lecture on the question "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" The lecture is to be printed, and Mr. Foote will certainly give it a printed reply. It is curious to note, however, that although Mr. Logan will *lecture* on this plain question, he steadily refused to *debate* it, and even went to the length of saying that if he did so he would be a fool. We quite agree with him, but we hardly expected that he would let the world see his reasons so plainly.

The Austrian government has a touching belief in the value of an oath. The army recruits, who have already been sworn in, are to be sworn in afresh, in a particularly solemn manner, on All Souls Day (Nov. 1). It is thought that in this way it will have a great effect upon them. In nine cases out of ten, however, it will be a sheer waste of time and energy. Oaths always go down before the weight of solid interests and altered convictions.

The children of the two brutal wretches, Mr. and Mrs. Phelan, have been handed over for a month to the custody of Mr. Waugh, secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. A question arose in court as to the religious views of these child-beaters. According to the law the children must be brought up in their parents' religion. Mr. Phelan is a Roman Catholic and Mrs. Phelan a Protestant. How curious! We thought it was Secularists who were the chief culprits in this direction. At any rate Mr. Waugh said so, though the facts are all against him.

Catherine Coleman, Mary Hudson, and Ellen Hughes appeared in the dock at Bow-street Police Station, each nursing a baby. They had been to a christening; that is, they had their little squallers initiated into the Church of Christ. After the pious ceremony they went "on the booze," and the end of the spree was their arrest for being drunk and riotous. Such is the elevating influence of religion!

Perhaps these three ladies were not so bad as the married couple who got very drunk before the ceremony. When it was their turn to hand the child to the parson, the husband whispered to his spouse, "I say old gal, I'm blowed if we haven't been and left the kid at home."

"Carrying Politics Beyond the Grave" is the caption of a report, in the *Irish Daily Independent*, concerning the funeral at Tuam of a Parnellite of some note in the district, named Thomas Mooney. Col. Nolan, M.P., was present at the graveside and remained till nightfall, but the deceased had incurred the displeasure of the priests, and none would put in an appearance, though solicited by his sorrowing friends. It happened that the town was filled with clergymen attending the bazaar, but all were devoted to the boycott, much to the disgust of the Parnellites. Mooney will be none the worse for wanting the priestly prayers, but the incident will be remembered by Irish lovers of liberty.

The villagers of Castle Ashby are indignant over the action of the rector, the Rev. R. M. Carrick, who refused Christian burial to the dead child of a Nonconformist because it had never been baptised, and of such are not the kingdom of heaven.

John Jenkins, who was a sailor on the "Etna" steamer, on which seven Swansea seamen and many passengers died from cholera in the Red Sea, gave a terrible account of the

sufferings aboard. The Arab pilgrims died by hundreds and so rapidly that the crew had to hang the corpses over the side with bow-lines round their waists. There they hung rotting and emitting a fearful stench. This is the district where God worked his miracles in the good old days before he retired from business.

Cardinal Vaughan having started the ball, all the Catholic writers are having their fling at Anglican orders. Whether the Holy Ghost descended in a straight or a zigzag line to the Elizabethan bishops is a mighty question, and has involved tons of controversy, but we doubt if the majority of the English people care twopence either way.

According to a correspondent of the *Daily News* at a village in which a parish charity has fallen into the hands of the clergyman and churchwarden, it is used as an incentive to attendance at the Church Sunday-school, each child getting a penny for every attendance. A Dissenter's rival establishment stands small chance against the bribery of the juveniles.

Another instance of the anxiety to get the children into the Church schools is given by a correspondent of the *Bromsgrove Weekly Messenger*, who states that at the Sidmoor Church Sunday-school baskets laden with apples and cake are offered to the children as inducements to leave the Nonconformist schools. This sort of thing must make the Dissenters anxious for Disestablishment.

The terrific battle between two tigers in the Zoological Gardens, Rhode Island, in which they tore and mangled each other fearfully, reminds us of the constant carnage in nature. As pious Dr. Watts says, "God has made them so." But what a queer animal he must be.

A. Hornstein, an apostate Jew, who has been a student under Principal Wace, and a director of Jewish Missions in Bishopsgate, has sent his renunciation of Christianity to Chief Rabbi Adler. He says the Hebrew Christians are rogues. "A Wesleyan clergyman, of Eastbourne, had the fortune of baptising one of these impostors his seventh or eighth time, and who was eventually arrested and sentenced to six months' hard labor. There are quite a legion of them. Such, then, is the present lamentable state of the so-called Jewish Missions, from which I am now happy to sever my connection."

The publication of Hornstein's letter in the *Jewish Chronicle* has been followed by that of "Another Penitent," who says, "I am sorry to say that for nearly ten years I have also, I sincerely regret, belonged to that miserable band of apostates." He warns the Christian public that they are only made dupes of by the worshippers of the golden calf.

According to the *Beverly Independent*, there will soon be lucrative posts open at St. John's. The verger, who had the lordly salary of £8 per annum for cleaning and heating the church, and showing the folks in on Sunday, in consequence of the paucity of tithes, has had his salary reduced to £4 by the vicar. A widow lady who acted as bell-ringer and organ-blower, has had her salary reduced from £3 4s. to £1 per year. Both will resign. Perhaps the vicar will threaten resignation too.

The Dartford magistrates sent a boy named Mace to a truant school for two years, whereupon this colloquy ensued:

Clerk: You are bound to ask the father what is his religious persuasion.

Chairman: Do you go to church?

Defendant: No, sir.

Chairman: Do you go anywhere?

Defendant: No, sir.

Chairman: Does the boy go anywhere?

Defendant: No, sir.

Clerk: Then we shall put him down as belonging to the Church of England. (Laughter.)

The clerk followed precedent, eminent lawyers having laid it down that every member of the commonwealth is *ipse facto* a member of the Church of England.

A Kensal Green cemetery man says the sentiment of women is against cremation. This may be with the little educated, but when training in sanitary science becomes more common, there may be an alteration. Moreover, most women

have a sentiment against being buried alive, and there is no fear of this in cremation.

The Rev. Father Morris died suddenly in his pulpit at Wimbledon Roman Catholic Church on Sunday. Luckily the Lord did not play a similar trick with the Secular lecturer, who was discoursing on "The Fall of Man" at Wimbledon on the same day. It was a narrow escape.

This is Self-denial Week, and Salvation soldiers are at all railway stations and street corners with collection boxes. It is not true that General Booth will give the proceeds to the miners' starving wives and children. In his opinion he has something better to do with the money.

In Japan a physician never thinks of asking a fee from a poor patient. A proverb among the medical fraternity of that land runs thus: "When the twin enemies, poverty and disease, invade a home, he who takes aught from that home, even though it be given to him, is a robber." These people are heathen, and good Christians assure us there would be no sentiments of honor or even common morality without Christianity.

It is a very difficult business to get a priest out of a living into which he has been inducted, otherwise we expect the Rev. R. C. Fillingham, vicar of Hexton, Bedfordshire, would soon have to quit. This Radical parson says he should like to see the Church disendowed and the money "used for national purposes, education, pensions for the aged, and such-like." We wonder what chance Mr. Fillingham would have of being heard at a Church Congress.

Some time ago the Protestants and Catholics in Uganda were firing at each other, and there was a good deal of lying as to who was in the wrong. It appears, however, that on Sunday, the 18th of June, the Protestants and Catholics joined forces and attacked the Mohammedans, who were driven off with the loss of several hundreds killed. After this victory, the rival Christian sects will probably fall to loggerheads again. Uganda is but displaying an epitome of Christian history.

The Church is going down morally everywhere. At Sutton St. James, Lincolnshire, it is going down physically. A few years ago the parish church there was restored at a cost of £1,600, but the Lord forgot to look after the place, and it is now in a state of collapse. Prayer is no good. They have called a council of architects.

They are getting up a Grand Bazaar in aid of the St. James's Church, East Dulwich, and "G. W. Foote, Esq.," has been favored with a request for some of his publications for the Literary Society stall. Mr. J. Grant (stall-holder), who forwards this request, must be of a facetious turn of mind, unless, as is more likely, he is ignorant of Mr. Foote's opinions. A parcel of "G. W. Foote, Esq.'s," publications would play the very devil with the Grand Bazaar and ruin the Building Fund.

Vivekananda, a popular Hindu monk, who is said to bear a striking resemblance to the classic face of Buddha, uttered some stirring words at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. "You come," he said to the Christians, "with the Bible in one hand and the conqueror's sword in the other—you, with your religion of yesterday to us, who were taught thousands of years ago by our Rishis precepts as noble and lives as holy as your Christ's. You trample on us and treat us like the dust beneath your feet. You degrade our people with drink, you insult our women, you scorn our religion—in many points like your own, only better, because more humane."

Jesus Christ, if he were living now, would fare badly at the hands of Christian magistrates. Men are sent to prison every week in England for the atrocious crime of having no place to sleep in. Well, is it not a fact that the Son of Man had not where to lay his head?

Christ came to save the world nineteen hundred years ago. Last week a woman named Diana Green was found dead with a baby at her breast in a farm outhouse at Polstead. Her malady was starvation. Christ's churches are having many millions a year spent on them. What a wonderful world we live in!

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 29, St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street, Bristol: 11, "The Doom of the Bible"; 3, "Christ and Democracy"; 7, "A Search for the Soul."

Monday, October 30, Corridor Rooms, Bath: at 8, "Who Wrote the Bible?"

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

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Nov. 12, Town Hall, Birmingham; 19, Manchester; 26, Birmingham. Dec. 3 and 10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

T. BERTLEY.—Many thanks. No doubt the *Freethinker* will have a larger sale than ever at Pelton Fell and the surrounding district. Will you tender our thanks to Mr. MacDonald for his brave defence of toleration and fair-play in relation to the claim of the *Freethinker* to be read by those who choose to read it at Pelton Fell?

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Always pleased to hear from you.

G. ADAMS.—Thanks for cutting. What verses do you refer to?

J. G. S.—See letter in another column. Thanks.

E. C. RAMSEY.—Yes, we have heard that foolish story before. You will find it told, with slight variations, in several parts of the country. It is about as true as the wonders of the Bible.

R. KILLICK.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with Mr. Foote's new pamphlet, *Will Christ Save Us?* Whatever its value, it is at least very carefully written.

F. G. LEACH.—(1) Glad to hear you have nine members, besides sympathisers, on board "The Nelson." Thanks for the intimation that some of you may take up shares in the Hall of Science scheme. (2) The Disestablishment of the Church of England should involve the abolition of chaplaincies in the Army and Navy. (3) We should advise you to respectfully request the captain to excuse you from attendance at "divine service." If he is a fair-minded man he will accede to your desire. At the same time, he can force you to go if he chooses; and, knowing what chance a sailor has against his officers, we should advise you to give them no opportunity of making your life a hell.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, hon. treasurer, acknowledges: E. M. Vance, 10s.

H. GOWDY.—You have a right to your own opinion, but we see no reason to alter ours. The man is a vulgar, illiterate, and scurrilous adventurer; and any person who could be prejudiced against Secularism by his brutal and filthy language must be too low in the scale of taste and intelligence to be a possible recruit to the ranks of Freethought.

O. KENN.—Howitt's *History of Priestcraft*, Foote and Wheeler's *Crimes of Christianity*, and Bradlaugh's *Laws Against Heresy*.

J. MARTIN.—Contents-sheet shall be sent. Thanks.

SEAFARER.—Glad to hear that a copy of the *Freethinker* is left at the ports you visit. See "Acid Drops." Certainly there are Freemasons who are also Atheists. Mr. Bradlaugh was one. The English Freemasons, however, would have nothing to do with him. All of them make a profession of Theism.

W. B. THOMPSON.—We wish you success in the struggle. See "Sugar Plums."

T. G. (Liverpool).—Under consideration.

J. READ.—See paragraph.

W. DICKINSON.—No doubt it might be made amusing, but, from the historical point of view, it would appear very far-fetched.

W. BRADBURN.—Cuttings are always welcome.

S. HARTMANN.—We cannot give space to a criticism of the gentleman in question. Better let the matter drop. He has no power to injure your reputation, or that of the N.S.S., in the eyes of honest and sensible persons.

W. ELDER.—Huxley's collected writings are to be issued by Macmillan in six volumes at five shillings each. One volume is already published.

MARIE O. FISHER.—We decline to advertise a man whom you describe yourself as "an ignorant, foul-mouthed blackguard." Others may do so if they choose.

W. M. KNOX.—Next week.

R. CHAPMAN.—Obliged to abbreviate.

T. J. BARTLETT.—See "Sugar Plums."

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: F. Smallman, £100; Hanley Branch, 4s. 6d.

J. JOHNSON.—There is nothing in the Bible about Lilith. According to Rabinnical traditions, she was the first wife of Adam. When he left her for Eve, she made love to the Devil, and got Old Nick to spoil her old hubby's felicity by seducing his new spouse.

W. WARRY.—Mr. R. O. Smith, as chairman, acted with his usual discretion. The proverb says it is never too late to mend, and we hope you will learn a lesson from the courtesy extended to you at the Hall of Science.

F. S. DENNY.—(1) It would be inadvisable to extend the Immediate Practical Objects of the N.S.S. at present. The program is a pretty long one as it stands. It could be added to, if necessary, after the next Conference. (2) Old Age Pensions would certainly be better than our present wasteful and pauperising system of Poor Relief.

T. THURLOW.—You have a right to ask for the paragraph and we give it gladly.

W. RIX.—*La Vérité Philosophique* is published at 17 Rue Croix des Petits Champs, Paris.

G. O. WARREN.—We have no space for a discussion of his views on the Land Question. They are not of any great importance.

J. G. RITSON.—We have no time to answer such inquiries by post. Mr. Wise's statement that the N.S.S. has no member who is a "scientist" is an absurdity. We have many doctors and many holders of scientific degrees on our books, but we are not going to copy them out for Mr. Wise's benefit, especially as a large proportion of our members cannot afford to have their names published.

A. J. H.—We will mention the matter to Mr. Standing.

R. DAVISON.—Your notice arrived on Wednesday last week—too late of course for insertion.

A. H. J.—Items received with thanks.

W. HAZLEHURST.—The Sunday question shall be treated, as you desire, as soon as possible.

H. M. RIDGWAY.—The Brown Memorial case of books is safely deposited at the Hall of Science. It is kept separate. The Hall of Science Library has also just received the books of the Finsbury Park Branch, which is now without a room to place them in.

W. BAILEY, in applying for ten shares in the National Secular Hall Society (Ltd.), wishes success to our "gallant efforts to obtain a permanent London home in commemoration of our late and much loved leader." With respect to Mr. Foote's intention to take a larger hall when he next visits Manchester, this correspondent writes—"I shall be glad to subscribe one pound any time you feel disposed to risk St. James's Hall, but at the same time I think the Manchester friends should relieve the President of such a responsibility. There are surely a dozen who would subscribe 20s. each, which, while not doing all, would secure you against loss. I am quite with you when you say that some alteration should be made in the lecturing arrangements."

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—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Southwark Recorder—Redditch Weekly Messenger—Bacup Times—Staffordshire Sentinel—Bristol Christian Leader—Star—Weekly Dispatch—Post—Twentieth Century.

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.

We calculated that the coal lock-out would tell against the circulation of the *Freethinker*, as a good many of our subscribers are scattered over the affected districts. We are happy to say, however, that our circulation has slightly improved, instead of diminishing, during the last few weeks, which speaks volumes for its hold upon its readers. Perhaps we should take this opportunity of once more pressing the *Freethinker* as a advertising medium upon the attention of men of business in the Freethought party who have goods that can be sent all over the country.

Mr. Foote had good meetings in the morning and afternoon at Manchester, and in the evening the hall was crowded in every corner. His announcement that he intended to take a larger hall in the centre of the city, on the occasion of his next visit, was received with general applause. During the day a collection was taken for the N.S.S. General Fund. A special feature of the evening meeting was the introduction of music, which was admirably rendered by some professional players. We are glad to hear that this feature will be continued on Sunday evenings.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (Oct. 29) at Bristol. The hall in which he previously lectured there is now occupied by another Society; it has been necessary, therefore, to engage the St. James's Hall, where it is Mr. Foote's intention to try the plan which was so successful at the London Hall of Science. A considerable part of St. James's Hall will be thrown open free at all three meetings. On Monday evening Mr. Foote lectures at Bath.

Mr. H. Snell had a very good audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, and was warmly applauded at the conclusion of his lecture. Some opposition was offered, to which he replied effectively. A lady friend sang two ballads before the lecture.

Mr. W. Heaford occupies the same platform this evening (Oct. 29), his subject being "The Errors and Terrors of Theology." Mr. Heaford is a man of many accomplishments, he has worked hard for Freethought, and we hope he will meet with a very hearty welcome on this occasion. In the morning the platform is to be occupied by Mr. Tom Shore, who will lecture on "Freethinkers and the School Board." Mr. Shore can speak on this matter with knowledge and authority.

Mr. F. Smallman has generously contributed £100 to the National Secular Society's Benevolent Fund. He allows his name to be published to "encourage the others," as the French say. Some other wealthy Freethinker should now send a cheque for £100 for the General Fund.

The officials at Victoria Park are not to be played with by persons who think they can indulge in any sort of rowdiness on the pretence of "standing up for Jesus." On Sunday afternoon the Christian Evidence people brought their platform within a few feet of the Secular platform, but the Park officials made them move back to their old position with greater rapidity than they left it. This afternoon (Oct. 29) the Freethought open-air campaign closes in Victoria Park, and a collection will be made for the Benevolent Fund. Freethinkers in the district should attend and contribute.

The Freethought lectures are being continued at the Bermondsey Gladstone Club. Mr. G. Standring occupies the platform on Thursday, Nov. 9, and will speak on "The Absurdities of the Church Prayer Book." A few more resignations have been sent in on account of these lectures, but the Club is determined to have fair play and free discussion.

The West London Branch, having concluded a most successful outdoor lecture season in Hammersmith, has determined to continue the propaganda during the winter months, in the hall adjoining the Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway. On Thursday next, Nov. 2, an inaugural public meeting will be held, which will be addressed by several well-known speakers. Among the lecturers who have given their services are Messrs. Touzau Parris, John M. Robertson, and Mr. G. Standring. Members and friends in the district are requested to help in making these lectures known.

Mr. Sam Standring has been lecturing and debating with success in South Lancashire, winding up on Sunday at Rochdale, where the Branch should be reformed. We should be glad to hear that the local "saints" were showing their appreciation of Mr. Sam Standring's services by moving in this direction.

Mr. O. Cohen has been conducting a successful Freethought mission in the South Shields district. Arrangements are being made for a six months' mission by Mr. Cohen in the winter of 1894-5. A good deal of financial support has

already been promised. Those who would like to help the project should communicate with Mr. S. Peacock, 35 Baring-street, South Shields.

The National Secular Society's Almanack for 1894 is in course of preparation, and will be published about the middle of November. Branch secretaries who have not yet sent in details of their organisation should forward the same to Miss Vance *immediately*. Intending advertisers are also reminded that there is no time to be lost.

Friends intending to be present at the Tea and Soirée on Wednesday next at the Hall of Science, should at once secure their tickets. An excellent tea will be served at 7.30; a concert will be given from 8.30 till 10; and the rest of the evening, till 12, will be spent in dancing. The tickets are 1s. each, obtainable of all Branch secretaries; and as any profit will be aiding the work of the London Secular Federation, it is hoped a large number will be present. Mr. Foote will attend and give a reading.

The Lecturers' Class at the Hall of Science does not appear to be meeting with the support such an effort deserves. A larger attendance of those interested in the training of young speakers for the Secular platform, would do much to enhance the value of the weekly meetings, which are held at 8 p.m. on Tuesdays.

The *Southwark Recorder* gives a good notice of Mr. Moss's new play, and hopes he will reap "the rich reward of success his labors deserve."

We referred last week to the attempt to exclude the *Freethinker* from the Reading Room of the Miners' Institute, Felton Fell, near Chester-le-Street. The bigots, as we observed, had succeeded at a scratch meeting in getting this journal excluded for three months, but we hinted that the tables would be turned upon them, in spite of the solemn and lying appeal of Parson Birley. Well, the tables have been turned upon them. There was a heated discussion at the recent quarterly meeting, in which some strong references were made to the "morality" of the Bible. One miner brought a dozen copies of the *Freethinker* and challenged curate Stack to point out any immoral teaching in them. Curate Stack replied that he would not soil his fingers by touching such publications. When the show of hands was taken, 63 went up against the *Freethinker*, and 200 for its retention. It remains on the table, therefore, by a triumphant and splendid majority; and all that the bigots have done is to give it a first-class advertisement, for which, although they did not intend it, we return them our most hearty thanks.

Mr. W. B. Thompson, the zealous secretary of the Chatham Branch, is standing for the new Gillingham School Board. He has a good working Committee, and we hope he will be at the top of the poll. His chief trouble, we believe, is the want of peace that vexes public men, especially on the advanced side. Anyone who can send a subscription, and does so, will be helping him to fight this important battle. His address is Grosvenor-villa, Nelson-road, New Brompton, Kent. Mr. Thompson is thorough, of course, on the "secular" ticket.

The *London Daily Chronicle* severely reviewed Sir J. W. Dawson's new book on Geology. It declares that there are not half-a-dozen geologists of any standing who would agree with him as to the scientific character of Genesis. The *Chronicle* also girds at Sir George Stokes, another pet of the Christian Evidencers.

Mr. A. B. Moss and Dr. Bate held a debate at the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening before a large audience. Those who know anything of the two disputants will hardly need to be told that Mr. Moss had by far the best of the discussion. Dr. Bate is courteous, but he is no debater. He is, by the way, a sincere Christian. He declines to shake hands with Freethinkers because it is against the express commands of the New Testament.

At a recent meeting, held at the Eleusis Club, Chelsea, of delegates from Radical and other advanced bodies in London, it was decided to appoint a Committee of thirteen to prepare a plan of agitation against the House of Lords. Mr. G. W. Foote was the first member nominated. Mr. A. B. Moss was

also nominated, but an objection was raised against two members representing the same organisation. It was decided, however, that the National Secular Society should be specially favored in this respect on account of its size and formidability:

CHANGEABLE CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is alleged to be the revelation of an unchangeable God. Yet if there be one thing certain amidst the many uncertainties of Christian history, it is that Christianity has changed in the past as it is changing to-day. The Christianity of to-day is not the Christianity of the Middle Ages. This change—or growth, as some call it—is so palpable and so undeniable, that the more advanced people on the Christian side are conscious that it requires explanation, and are, therefore, trying to formulate a new Christian philosophy which shall embrace and explain it.

Now the favorite idea is to put forward a "religious consciousness" which grows and develops with the growth and development of the race, and perceives more clearly the religious "facts" as the organs of religious perception become more sensitive. An attempt is made in fact to weave a little of the doctrine of evolution into religious theory, and so produce a plausible and fair explanation of existing facts, while striving to preserve the general idea of the supernatural character of religion.

The latest exponent of this idea is Miss E. M. Caillard, who writes in the *Contemporary Review* for September on "Evolution, a note of Christianity." And her article—which, by the way, seems to have been lying in the editor's drawer a good while—supplies some delightful samples of the manner in which your *fin-de-siècle* religionist spins verbiage to cover awkward positions. Thus, for instance, Miss Caillard is compelled to face the difficulty we have mentioned, of Christianity being, at once, unchangeable and evolutionary. And this is how the thing is done:

"There is undoubtedly a point of view from which Christianity is unchangeable; but that is not the human, it is the Divine; and from the Divine point of view, all must be unchangeable, for there can be no sequence in it, else we limit the Supreme Being by the conditions of Time which limit ourselves, and bring Him down to our own level. Evolution (which must imply sequence) is altogether a human way of understanding what some would call a mode of the Unknowable, and others, 'the workings of the Eternal God'; and since, from the Christian standpoint, all things are of Divine origin, though humanly and consequently incompletely perceived, there is no difficulty in allowing that Christianity though unchangeable as God sees it, is yet subject to change as man sees it."

Now, frankly, does anyone—does Miss Caillard herself—understand what all this rhodomontade means? We candidly give up the task. Writing of this kind is a "mode of the unknowable" with a vengeance. But then this—as we pointed out a few weeks ago in these columns—is the normal style of the modern religious essayist. You throw in a lot of phrases about "divine and human standpoints," "working of the eternal God," and so forth, and lo! the thing is done. Nobody of course will know what you intended; you will not know yourself. But then you will be boomed in the "advanced" religious journals; you will have written a powerfully religious book; you will have caught the "upward yearning" and the desire for the "higher life"—and all the rest of it.

From a subsequent passage we gather that what the writer wished to convey was that there is an unchangeable, perfect Christianity—somewhere, presumably. And to this end the proposition is concocted that "all evolution presupposes an ultimate, perfect type," which will be new to most people. As a matter of fact—though we regret to have to so flatly contradict a lady—evolution presupposes nothing of the kind. Evolution, like everything else, is only relative; it is a change from a simple to a *relatively* complex. But where will you get an absolute, perfect type? Who shall set a limit to evolution and tell us there is no higher? Unfortunately, Miss Caillard belongs to that class of persons who are perpetually going about looking for the final and the absolute, regardless of the fact that human thought can only take cognisance of the relative and the conditioned.

Miss Caillard sounds, of course, the praises of Christianity. She thinks that "a religion which could wake an answering response in Jew, Greek, and Roman, despite their widely different mental and moral constitutions . . . showed from the first a vital power comparable to nothing that had gone before it." Yes, but what are the facts? Christianity won, not by conquering the creeds around it, but by assimilating them. Christianity supplanted Paganism by simply incorporating Paganism into its own system. A new name was tacked on to the old faiths—that, to a large extent, was all the change. Christianity, in fact, was all things to all men. And strangely enough, Miss Caillard unconsciously says as much. She says Christianity permeated slowly through society, "adapting itself with truly marvellous versatility to extremes of thought and culture, which seemed as if they had absolutely nothing in common." Creeds or opinions that really conquer do not adapt themselves to different people; the people adapt themselves to the creeds.

Taking Miss Caillard's thesis as it is expounded, the first point to be noted is that if we have been growing towards the truth all these ages, then, the farther back we go, the farther we must have been from it. Hence the Christianity of the Middle Ages, say, was only very partially true, the Christianity of the time of Jesus must have been still less true, while the faith of the early Jews must have been very largely false; all of which propositions may be thoroughly sound, but then they come curiously from a seemingly good Christian. And a good orthodox Trinitarian Miss Caillard appears to be. For she tells us that "if the New Testament had never been written it is not too much to say that the doctrine of the Trinity could never have been formulated," a statement which will be interesting to Unitarians, who, from this, may be taken to represent the anthropoid stage of religious growth, while Miss Caillard represents the human. Naturally Miss Caillard herself stands on the highest rung of the ladder; those who have the misfortune to own other creeds are in a less "evolved" condition, and can only glance up in admiration at the giddy height to which Miss Caillard has climbed.

Many of the religious reformers then were nearer the truth—according to Miss Caillard—than those who denounced them, and often put them to death. But these persecutions, we suppose, must be taken as part of the evolutionary process. They were due to the mistaken perceptions of religion held by religionists. And thus is Christian philosophy saved by a surrender of Christian conduct; which, we may remark, is the usual method nowadays. The Christianity of to-day is generally defended by abandoning the defence of the Christianity of yesterday.

The second point we have to put is this: If the Christianity of the past was very far short of the truth, is there not a strong presumption that the Christianity of to-day—including the evolutionary-Christianity of Miss Caillard—is a long way from fact too? We are in a state of growth. And if, notwithstanding the persistence with which bygone Christianity was preached, it is now declared to have been very incomplete, then the vehemence of Christian preachers to-day is no guarantee of the truth of their preaching either. When the "religious consciousness" has further developed, the religion of to-day will be left behind, with its ingenious theories and all.

And this brings us to the fallacy underlying all Miss Caillard's exposition. We are very far from denying there is evolution in religion as in everything else. It is one of the facts, we contend, which shows the natural and human character of religion. Religion, amongst people in a certain stage of intellectual development, is subject to the same fluctuations as, say, language; it is modified by climatic and often commercial conditions, and is in fact as susceptible to external influences as any natural human environment. There is, we contend, evolution and development in religious thought. But then, who is going to set a limit to this evolution; who shall say that it will not, that it has not, transcended and outgrown Christianity already?

If one phase of religious development is given the title "Christianity," then it is confusing to give the

same title to another and totally distinct phase. And that is what Miss Caillard really does. We have, say, the gross superstition of the Middle Ages, or of Russia to-day—that is “Christianity.” We have also the high, hazy, half-Theism, half-Pantheism of, say, Dr. Martineau—that is “Christianity,” too. And Miss Caillard, looking at the difference between the two, cries, in effect, “See what progress, what evolution!” Yes, but evidently, if the Russian peasant’s religion is called “Christianity,” it is simply playing with words to call Dr. Martineau’s religion “Christianity.” But, as we have said, Miss Caillard gives the same title to every stage of religious thought, and then works out her formula of “evolutionary Christianity.”

The last point we have to note is that Miss Caillard’s philosophy does not account for the Atheist or the Agnostic. And the day has gone by for pretending that they represent a backward or less “evolved” stage of thought. The average Freethinker could give points in an intellectual combat to the average religionist; and Miss Caillard herself, indeed, would come off badly, we fear, if she were to measure swords with any representative thinker on the Atheist side. Miss Caillard then has to explain the Atheist. And that, on her present formula of religious development is an impossible task. For our part, therefore, we would offer to Miss Caillard an explanation which, it seems to us, covers all her facts as well as those which her’s does not cover. And that explanation is, that the religious stage of culture represents the survival in civilised times of savage modes of thought; that with the extension of science and the growth of education, it will pass away; that in its place we will have the positive stage, to the scope and development of which no limit can be set; that as man grows, so will his knowledge grow too; and as his knowledge grows, so will his philosophy become the truer and better, and the action based on that philosophy more conducive to human well-being and human growth.

FREDERICK RYAN.

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER BAIN, LL.D.

PROF. BAIN, who has for so many years been a leading light of the University of Aberdeen, stands also as a shining example of what a youth of parts and diligence may accomplish, at least in Scotland, where evening classes and low fees have long rendered the best education accessible to the many. A native of Aberdeen, where he was born in 1818, he began life as a weaver, and continued that calling while taking his classes at Marischal College. He graduated Master of Arts in 1840, and in the same year began to contribute to the *Westminster Review*, becoming acquainted with Grote and J. S. Mill, whose *System of Logic* he read in manuscript, discussing the work in detail with the author, and providing many illustrative examples, mostly drawn from the experimental sciences. Soon after taking his degree he acted as deputy for the Professor of Moral Philosophy, and afterwards for the Professor of Natural Philosophy, in his *Alma Mater*. In 1855 he published *The Senses and the Intellect*, and in 1859 *The Emotions and the Will*, which together constitute a systematic exposition of the human mind. After serving for some time as secretary to the General Board of Health, he was appointed Examiner in Mental Philosophy in the University of London, where his friend and pupil, Mr. Croom Robertson, secured the Chair of Logic in 1867. From 1860 to 1880 he occupied the Chair of Logic (to which is attached the Chair of English) in the University of Aberdeen. His accession was most obnoxious to the orthodox. Sermons were preached against the heretic, who was suspected of Materialism and Atheism, and disorder provoked among the students. Nevertheless in 1881 he was elected Lord Rector of the University by a majority of the students in each of the four “nations,” and in 1884 he was re-elected.

In connection with his chair of English, he issued books on grammar and composition, very useful to students; as indeed are all his works. In 1868 he published *A Compendium of Mental and Moral Science*; in 1870, *Logic, Deductive and Inductive*; and in 1873, *Mind and Body: the Theories of their Relation*. Taking the greatest interest in education, Dr. Bain served on the first Aberdeen School Board as Huxley did in London; and in 1879 he wrote for the “International Science Series” *Education as a Science*. Always mindful of the intellectual friends who helped him forward in early life, Dr. Bain has edited James Mill’s *Analysis of the Human Mind*, and the *Minor Works of George Grote, with Critical Remarks on his Intellectual Character, Writings, and Speeches*. In 1882 he published *James Mill: a Biography*, and *John Stuart Mill: a Criticism*,

with *Personal Recollections*. In this work he says: “Both his Theism and his estimate of Christianity as founded on the character of Christ, are concessions to the existing Theology; and, as is usual in such cases, the inch has been stretched to an ell.” His criticism on the latter item is also worth quoting: “A Deity dethroned should retire altogether from playing a part in human affairs, and remain simply as an historic name.” As a teacher and philosophic thinker the influence of Professor Bain has been widely felt. All his works are of interest and value to the student of the best thought of our century. A volume of *Practical Essays* completes the labors of one who has ever been a strenuous worker and a typical hard-headed Scotsman. Of slight stature, but of active, nervous temperament, he is a ready talker, full of humor and anecdote, never afraid of showing his advanced opinions, and with a keen anxiety for the world’s progress on practical lines.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF “THE FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—I am emboldened by a reference to above subject in your issue of Oct. 15, to send you a few lines by way of giving the only rational and reasonable definition which I believe is possible, to what appears to be, from the theological point of view, an interminable mystery. The subject ought to be fairly tackled and definitely settled once for all, and I believe further that Secularism is going to do it.

I briefly say that numbers of people have made themselves miserable—some even committed suicide, or come to violent ends—because under the hallucination that they had been guilty of this mysterious and awesome crime.

First let me walk straight up to this theological bogey and see what it really is; and, to do this, we must face the text openly and squarely. In Luke xii. 10, Mark iii. 29, and Matt. xii. 31, therefore, we find these words: “That whosoever speaketh against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever shall speak against, or blaspheme the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven either in this world or the next.” This is plain enough, and if priestcraft will stand out of the light and let common sense explain these texts we shall come at the truth.

Briefly, then (readers who doubt my word may study Max Müller on Science and Religion and Natural Religion in confirmation thereof), the Holy Ghost is two words: the first, a title of dignity, and the second derived from the old German word *geist* or *geist*, meaning gas or air, and sometimes translated Holy Spirit, from *Spiro*, to breathe—hence the unpardonable sin, or error, is clearly to deprive oneself of the power of breathing, and to blaspheme the Spirit is to pollute or render foul, obnoxious, or poisonous the air (*geist*), which is absolutely indispensable to the sustenance of healthful and vigorous life of every living thing; and it is clear that when once the breath has left the body forgiveness is out of the question either in this world or any other world.

Here is, then, the only reasonable and natural sense possible of a text which has puzzled myriads, but which, to quote the language of a learned judge recently, is “as plain as a pike-staff” to—Yours faithfully,

THOMAS MAY.

FRUIT OF THE SAME TREE.

TO THE EDITOR OF “THE FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—I quite agree with Mr. Thomas May’s note that, at bottom, the Protestant sects are as intolerant and tyrannical as the Church of Rome. In my article, dealing principally with the particular matter of the attempted suppression of Mr. Mivart’s essays, I did, I think, indicate that religion generally appealed to force and power as the arbiters of disputes; that, when beaten with mental weapons, it usually flew to physical ones; and, as a rule, sought to gag by brute force the truth it could not combat by argument.

But then, as indeed is pointed out, the Protestant sects, from their want of cohesion, are far less formidable than the organised, drilled Roman Church. Squabbling amongst themselves, divided into half a thousand factions, with their Knox-Littles and Canon Farrars, their Ignatius’ and Gores, the Protestant Churches have far less scope for mischief than a Church which is almost a prodigy of organisation, which manages to conceal its differences when they do crop up, whose policy is completely controlled and dominated by a small band of diplomatists; a Church in which each member surrenders his own individuality, and becomes a mere puppet in the hands of others; a Church which through all vicissitudes manages to present an unbroken front to the world.

This does not lessen, however, the necessity of exposing the tyranny of the lesser as we have denounced the tyranny of the greater churches. In all probability the thunders of Little Bethel, laughable though they sometimes be, are in their way quite as inimical to true freedom of thought as those of the Vatican. In fact it may well be that there is more chance of a semi-freedom under a Church strong enough, as it thinks, to withstand light attacks, than under a little Church fighting for

its life. Certain it is that, at some periods, the persecutions of "heretics" by the "reformed" churches were if anything more fierce and terrible than those of Rome. A great organisation perhaps to some extent can afford to pass over what a lesser one would stick at. But both tyrannies—all tyrannies in fact—must be fought, whether they be those of a Pecci wrought in a Vatican or the petty attempts at mock-tyranny of amateurish Christian journals.—Yours, etc.,

FREDERICK RYAN.

SNEAKING THE "FREETHINKER."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Having been a regular frequenter of one of the Metropolitan Public Libraries for the last two years, I was agreeably surprised this evening to find a copy of the *Freethinker* on one of the tables. Theological papers are there in plenty, but to my knowledge it was the first time your paper had put in its appearance; therefore I kept one eye on that *Freethinker*. Pretty soon a gentleman (?), also a frequenter of the place, picked it up and examined it, evidently with curiosity. Then, slowly folding it, he arose from his seat and walked to a newspaper stand, taking that *Freethinker* with him. A minute afterwards his hand (and the paper) went into his pocket. It might have been a case of abstraction of mind, but the sweeping glance he cast around the room seemed to preclude that charitable interpretation. Clearly it was a case of abstraction of the *Freethinker*. Although playing the part of detective for the time being, yet the part of informer seemed objectionable, so I am adopting the milder course of sending this for publication, premising that I will take care he also sees a copy of the issue containing it.

J. J. L.

Scene—A street in Ealing. Time—Sunday morning, 8.50 a.m. Boy (whistles piously under Sabbath influence)—"For he is our childhood's pattern, Day by day like us he grew." A cat crossing the road interrupts the whistling at this point, and boy very nearly hits it with a stone. In great good humor he resumes his walk, winding up his previous lines by singing as ending "The man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo."

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.O.: 11.15, Thomas Shore, "Freethinkers and the School Board" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, W. Heaford, "The Errors and Terrors of Theology" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday at 8.30, debating class, "State Socialism Antagonistic to Personal Liberty, Moral and Material Improvement." Wednesday at 7, London Secular Federation tea and soirée (tickets 1s.)
Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, musical and dramatic entertainment (free). Monday at 8, A. Johnson, "Buddhism and its Work" (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free).
Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Boman-road: 7.30, U. James, "Bruno: his Life and Philosophy" (free).
Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 8.30, preliminary meeting of debating class; 7.30, H. Snell, "The Conquest of Truth." Friday at 7.45, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.
Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, Nov. 2, at 8.30, inaugural public meeting.
Islington—Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-street: Thursday, Oct. 26, at 8, J. Rowney, "The Apostle Paul." Thursday, Nov. 2, at 8, Touzeau Parris, "The Christian Religion a Form of Devil Worship" (free; front seats 6d.)
Wimbledon—Hartfield-road Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, A. Johnson, "God in History" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Guest, "Recipes for Happiness."
Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, C. James, "By their fruits shall ye know them."
Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, F. Haslam, "The Miracles of the Bible: are they true?"
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.
Kilburn—High-road (corner of Victoria-road): 6.30, St. John will lecture.
Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford, "A Vindication of Freethought."
Mile End Waste: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Why I Remain a Secularist."
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Bruno and Spinoza."
Victoria Park (near the band-stand): T. Thurlow, 11.30, "Traces of Egyptian Morality and Religion in Christianity"; 3.30, "A Famous Conversation."

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, W. S. Rennie, "Is Christianity Played Out?"
Bath—Corridor Rooms: Monday at 8, G. W. Foote, "Who Wrote the Bible?"
Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, J. W. Stanley, "Why I Became an Agnostic."
Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, G. Stirk, "How Secularism can be most Efficiently Advanced."

Bristol—St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street: G. W. Foote, 11, "The Doom of the Bible"; 3, "Christ and Democracy"; 7, "A Search for the Soul."

Failsforth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, P. Percival, "The Republic of the West."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: J. M. Robertson, 11.30, "The Ethics of Marriage"; 2.30, "Toryism in Religion"; 6.30, "The God Hallucination."

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7.30, public discussion, "The Creation Story."

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: 6.30, Frederika Macdonald, "Theosophy; or the Renaissance of Superstition."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 3, logic class, L. Small, B.Sc., "Propositions and the Syllogism"; 7, Mr. Jackson, "Jesus Christ."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: 6.30, W. R. Hall (Socialist candidate for South Salford), "The Solution of the Labor Problem." Tuesday at 8, debating circle, L. D. Prince, "Socialism and Individuality." Dancing on Monday from 8 to 10.30.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, monthly business meeting; 7, R. Mitchell, "The Sermon on the Mount."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, chess club; 7, Mr. Feinetan will lecture.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, W. Dyson, "The Recent Lectures by W. T. Lee (C.E.S.)—a Review."

South Shields—Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane: 11, C. Cohen, "Free Will and Determinism"; 3, ethical class for students; 7, C. Cohen, "The Meaning of Secularism." Mr. Cohen delivers a course of lectures in the Free Library Hall, Ocean-road, as follows: Tuesday, "Christianity and Secularism." Wednesday, "Christianity and Slavery." Thursday, "Christianity and Science." Friday, "Christianity and Women." Saturday, "The Rise and Development of Freethought." Each evening at 7.30.

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

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C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Oct. 29 to 31, on Tour. Nov. 4, South Shields; 5, Blythe.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, Loudon, W.—Nov. 12, Lotus Club; 15, Hall of Science. Dec. 10, Portsmouth.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 29, Westminster. Nov. 5, Chatham; 19, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith London, W.—Nov. 2, Wellington Hall, Islington; 26, Camberwell.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk street, Woolwich.—Oct. 29, Camberwell. Nov. 12, Camberwell; 14, West Norwood Reform Club. Dec. 10, Camberwell; 17, Deptford Liberal Club.

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BOOK CHAT.

The *Agnostic Annual*, which has reached its eleventh year, has a varied list of contents. Prof. Edwin Johnson leads off with "The True Story of the Bible," which implies that story has not hitherto been written. It is part of his case that the immense circulation of the Bible is a thing of modern growth, largely the product of the Bible Societies, and that we soon get back to a time when readers were few and editors and writers a restricted class who could do pretty much what they pleased. Mrs. Lynn Linton writes briefly on "The Decadence of the Old Theology," and Mr. Samuel Laing on "Inspiration *In Extremis*," shows the straits to which defenders of orthodoxy are driven. Mr. Edward Clodd replies to the Gifford Lectures of Sir G. Stokes; F. Millar writes on "The Dream of Immortality." The succeeding article, "Is Immortality a Dream?," seems to have been intended for *Lucifer*. It appears that though "few among us claim to have any recollection of a previous existence," we must credit those who do. "If clairvoyance and clairaudience be facts, why not clairaudience?" It is a relief to turn to Mr. Gould's sober paper on "The Practical Consequences of Agnosticism," and Mr. F. Jordan's "Analysis of the Religious Propensity."

Helen Gardener, in an article on Matilda J. Gage's "Woman, Church, and State," in the October *Arena*, says: "All religions of which we have record have been made by men, and believed by women to their own degradation and disadvantage. The less 'orthodox' the religion, the better and more honorable has it become for woman. This is plain to any reasonably thorough student of Lecky, Buckle, Mosheim, and other able writers on these and kindred topics."

Miss Gardener continues: "Her religious emotions have ever been played upon to keep her submissive in the state, and her subject status in the state has rendered her the ready and self-abnegating religious dupe that he has always been. I have never seen a thoroughly ignorant man nor an especially brutal one who did not believe, with all his soul, that this order of things was right and of 'divine' origin. Such a one unhesitatingly believes that he does and should stand for more in the economy of the world than should the most gifted woman that ever lived. A good many of the ablest men of

the world have doubts and do doubt this, seriously, for themselves in particular and for all men in general. They have so stated and so written. But it is one of the pitiful facts of life that even these great men have seldom been great enough to make a bold, steady, fair, and persistent fight against political, social, legal, and religious injustice toward woman, though they may and do fight any one or all of these, with passion and with power, where such points of injustice have touched classes or castes of their fellow men."

IN MEMORIAM

OF
LITTLE HAROLD M——LL,
Who was burnt to death at Christmas, 1892.
BY ONE WHO CANNOT FORGET HIM.

"Suffer little children to come unto me."
Dearly beloved boy! Thy cruel fate
Inspired me with undying, bitter hate
Of him who watches o'er the sparrow's fall.
Could I appear before the Lord above,
That fiend by Christians called a God of Love,
I'd roar out "Damn him!" in the teeth of all.

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

OBITUARY.

I very much regret to record the death of Mr. W. Pine, a member of the Bristol Branch N.S.S., who died on the 18th inst, aged 60. Mr. Pine was a sound Freethinker for many years, he was an ardent supporter of the late Mr. C. Bradlaugh, and has done good work for the good old cause of Freethought. He had ample time to return to the old faith of his youth, Christianity, if he so desired, but when questioned on his religious views, in the face of death, he answered, "My mind was settled on that question many years ago." A minister called to see him and asked if he should pray with him; he answered, "No, thank you." His faithful daughter, who was with him until his last, assured me that there was no change; he died as he had lived, a sound Freethinker.—J. KEAST.

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