

The Free Thinker

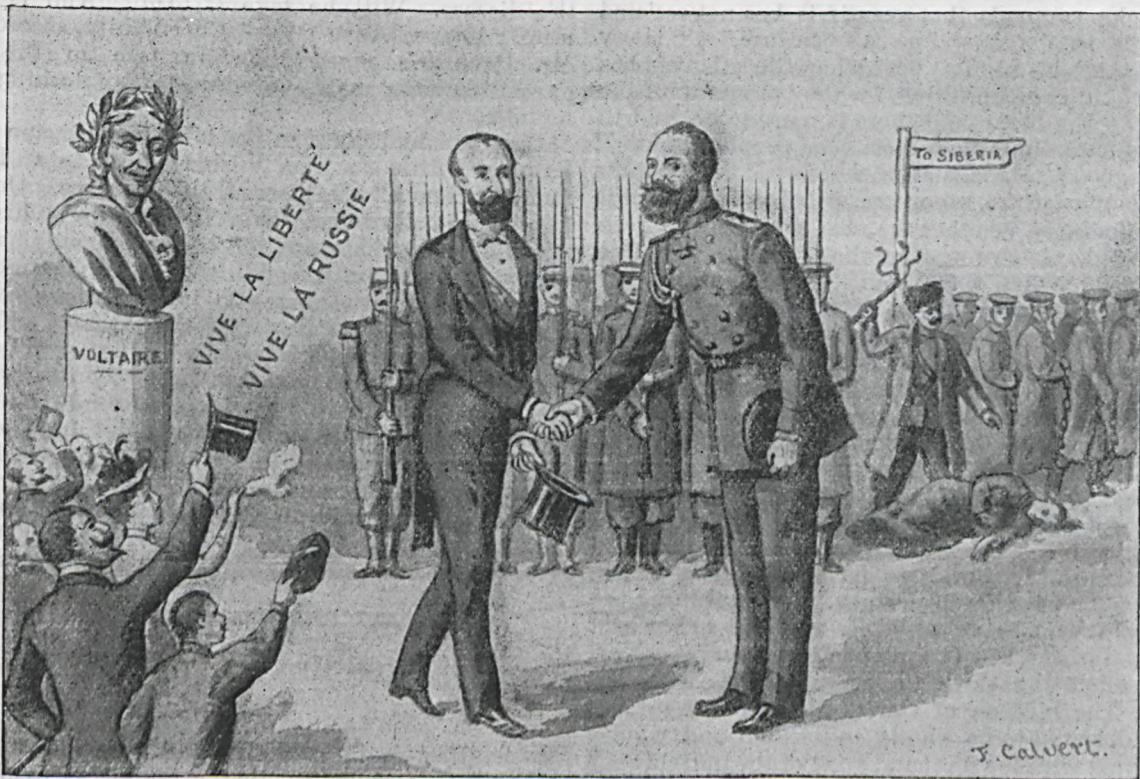
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE TWOPENCE.



THE NEW HOLY ALLIANCE.

CARNOT AND ALEXANDER.—LIBERTY AND SIBERIA.

A POET'S RELIGION.

AMONG the secondary poets of our age is Mr. Coventry Patmore. According to Mr. Ruskin he is always pure and elevating, and Mr. Garnett has edited a selection from his poems, with a highly laudatory introduction. His *Angel in the House* and *Victories of Love* are included in Cassell's National Library, and as the price is but sixpence it is to be presumed that they are extensively circulated. The first of these poems is said by Professor Henry Morley to have "obtained a permanent place among the Home Books of the English People"—with what amount of truth we are unable to judge. Some of Mr. Patmore's strongest work is to be found in the *Unknown Eros*, in which he handles irregular metres with great power and precision. The language is terse, the metaphors are often vivid and illuminating, but the thought is occasionally subtle or recondite. We must go back to Southwell and Crashaw for parallels to some of the writing in this volume, for, like them, Mr. Patmore is a Roman Catholic, though in the earlier days of the *Angel in the House* he was evidently a member of the Church of England. In a poem entitled "The Standards," written in 1874, as he tells us "soon after the publication of an incendiary pamphlet by Mr. Gladstone against the English Catholics, occasioned by the Vatican Council," he pens this exclamation:—

No. 642.]

Lo, yonder, where our little English band,
With peace in heart and wrath in hand
Have dimly ta'en their stand,
Sweetly the light
Shines from the solitary peak at Edgbaston,
Whence o'er the dawning Land,
Gleam the gold blazonries of Love irate
'Gainst the black flag of Hate.

This is, of course, an allusion to Cardinal Newman, whose reply to Gladstone is a fine and dignified polemic, so different from both the Liberal leader's pamphlet and the coarse, heavy-handed answer of Cardinal Manning.

Mr. Patmore sings much of Love, and in the Catholic stage he is sometimes wrought into an ecstasy. But a change of religious faith has not altered his point of view. Woman is adorable, but still "the weaker vessel." Nevertheless there is an abatement of the Turk-like strut of the earlier love-poems, in which the hero, though pious and monogamous, always flourished the handkerchief with an air of patronage.

Like many another poet, Mr. Patmore has condescended to prose. There are some who say that poets cannot write good prose, but this is an absurdity. Look at Spenser, look at the magnificent prose passages in *Hamlet*, look at Milton's glorious *Areopagitica*, look at the beautiful prose of Wordsworth and Southey and the splendid prose of Coleridge, look at Byron's letters and Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*, look at Landor and

Mr. Swinburne. There never was a ranker piece of literary heresy than this, that poets cannot write good prose. They have written the best prose in our language.

Mr. Patmore's prose is excellent. It is vigorous and pointed, without losing grace and color. Those who differ from him the most utterly, in religion, politics, and sociology, may read with pleasure his latest prose volume, which takes its title from the first essay headed "Religio Poetæ." We derive more advantage from ardent intelligences who differ from us than from dullards with whom we happen to be in agreement.

Before dealing with the first essay in this volume we prefer to take the eighth on "Christianity and 'Progress.'" From its being put within quotation marks the reader may infer that Mr. Patmore is not in love with Progress. He *is* in love with Christianity, however, and he contends that even if it has not assisted Progress it is not therefore a "failure." "Many people doubt," he admits, "whether Christianity has done much, or even anything, for the 'progress' of the human race as a race; and there is more to be said in defence of such doubt than most good people suppose." There are good Christians even, who think Christianity anything but a failure, who "nevertheless hold that it is open to question whether the race, as a race, has been much affected by it, and whether the external and visible evil and good which have come of it do not pretty nearly balance one another." Mr. Patmore denies—and he seems to us honest and consistent in doing so—that it was the main purpose of Christ, or any part of his purpose, to bring about a state of things in which "everybody should have plenty to eat and drink, comfortable houses, and not too much to do." Nor did Christ prophesy "any great and general amelioration of the world, material or even moral, from his coming." On the contrary, he prophesied, as his Apostles did after him, that the world, so far from getting better, would become "intolerably worse." He said that the poor would be always with us, and did not "hint disapproval of the institution even of slavery." Nay, he counselled the slave to be "content with his status." The mission of Christ, Mr. Patmore says, is "clearly declared to be wholly individual and wholly unconcerned with the temporal good of the individual." Christ came to save the elect, and "it was practically for those few only that he lived and died."

"That may be very shocking; but they are *his* words, and not mine, and those who do not like them should have a special edition of the New Testament revised for their own use, from which all disagreeable references to the many called and few chosen, the narrow way which few find, the broad road generally taken, and the end it leads to, etc., etc., should be excised. It is not to be denied that our Lord's doctrine must be in the highest degree unpleasant to all who will consider what it really is, and who have not the courage either to reject or adopt it in a whole-hearted manner."

This is clear, pungent, and refreshing. Mr. Patmore is an honest Christian, who will have nothing to do with the attempt to reconcile Christianity with "the world." Christian Socialists of the type of the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* try to throw the supernatural mission of Christ into the background, in defiance alike of the New Testament and the unbroken stream of Christian doctrine and tradition. Mr. Patmore recalls them to the real standard of Christ, and if they do not fall in under it he will honestly treat them as deserters, however much they may vapor and sentimentalise about the Sermon on the Mount.

It is easy enough to see that Christian Socialism, and all similar movements, are but signs of the break-up of Protestantism. Ever since the Reformation, when it denied the authority of the Church and appealed in its partial way to the right of private judgment, it has been slowly but steadily going to the dogs. It was at best a temporising sectarianism. All its positive teaching belonged to the Catholic Church, and in that Church it will have to be found in future by all who cannot tolerate the brave freedom of "infidelity."

Mr. Patmore is not the man to trouble himself about "Christian Evidences." He leaves all that to the Pro-

testants who argue with their own heretics. "Christianity," he declares, "is an experimental science, and the best answer to one who questions, If it be true, is Try it." This may be scouted as "mysticism," but the saints "know each what the other is saying, though, to a Huxley or a Morley, it is but a hooting of owls." Passing the rather coarse vehemence of this simile, we may observe that Mr. Patmore overlooks an important fact. The majority of unbelievers have been Christians; they have tried Christianity. To ask them to try it again is to request an impossibility. They could not do so without sinking the past and stultifying their reason. You may advise a man, for instance, who is suffering from a particular disease to try a specific remedy, and though he has already tried it without success, he may still take your recommendation. But suppose he has taken the trouble to study your specific remedy, and found it to be worse than the disease. Will he take it *then*? And is it not utterly impossible to "try" Christianity, according to Mr. Patmore's prescription, in face of the plain opposition of a man's intellect, to say nothing of his moral sense?

Beautiful and eloquent as is the conclusion of Mr. Patmore's fifth essay on "Christianity as an Experimental Science," it is after all inconclusive. One who has been a Christian for a lifetime finds his faith adequate and sustaining; but so does one who has been a Jew, a Brahmin, a Buddhist, or a Mohammedan.—Adequate and sustaining, also, is the philosophy of the Freethinker, the Agnostic, or the Atheist. Mr. Patmore's argument is an appeal to feeling. "I *feel* it is true" will be the exclamation of every one who has worked a principle into the texture of his life. True or false in itself, it is true to him; but his judgment is personal and partial, like that of a man who sees beauty in a plain woman whom he loves; and how can it stand as valid in the open court of universal reason?

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded).

MONUMENTAL HISTORY.

So manifest is human bias, and so dubious ancient documentary evidence, that a sceptic is disposed to consider that the only trustworthy history is the monumental, or those records which are corroborated by monuments. This would make havoc of much that passes as history, whether "sacred" or "profane." Monumental evidence is of great value, but it entirely fails us in regard to some of the most important records, and even when we have it, it is often difficult to interpret. Here, too, caution and scepticism are required. Not to dwell on the host of manufactured coins and antiquities of all kinds supplied wholesale in every country where there is a demand for the articles, inscriptions may be as false as written records, or may be taken for more than they are worth. Our Monument *par excellence* in London, Pope said, "Like a tall bully rears its head and lies." It did so till 1810, when the assertion that the great fire of 1666 was due to a Papist plot was effaced. An instance of easy misconstruction stands in the King's Library at the British Museum. On a marble slab in that fine hall it is recorded that "This library was given to the British nation by his most gracious Majesty George IV., 1823." One might infer that George IV. was a most enlightened and munificent patron of letters. The truth is, he was a gambler who several times got the country to pay his debts. When he wanted an extra heavy amount, Lord Liverpool suggested he might hand over the royal library, and, as otherwise the books might have been sold for the benefit of his creditors, he assented. It was a bargain or sale. But as the facts were hardly creditable to the monarch the transaction was made presentable as a presentation.

Coins and medals, too, may deceive. There are, for instance, coins of George III., in which that ruler is described as King of France as well as of Great Britain. When Napoleon contemplated the invasion of England

he had a medal struck, representing a sea-monster overthrown and with the lying inscription "*Frappé à Londres.*" The medal is excessively rare, but suppose it to turn up when other records were destroyed; it might be used as evidence that Napoleon conquered England, striking a medal at London to commemorate the event.

Take the famous case of the sinking of "*Le Vengeur.*" Theirs and a host of French historians tell how the ship refused to strike her flag in the action of June 1, 1794, and sunk while her crew shouted "*Vive la Republique!*" The story was in circulation at the time, the Convention reported it officially, and a medal was struck recording the event. It was repeated by many historians, even by Mrs. Besant in her lectures on the French Revolution, although she had before her Carlyle's history asserting its falsity. Yet it is false, for there remains the direct testimony of the English admiral who saw "*Le Vengeur*" taken possession of by the boats of the "*Culloden*," saw the Frenchmen trying to save themselves, and heard their outcries, which were those of horror and despair.

The bombastic phrase "*La Garde meurt et ne se rend pas,*" attributed to Cambronne, who was made prisoner at Waterloo, was denied by him, and when, notwithstanding his denial, the town of Nantes was authorised to inscribe it on his statue, the sons of General Michel laid formal claim to it for their father. Really it was invented by a writer in *L'Independant*.

Leslie in his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists* [it should have been *Free and Easy*], lays down certain marks of credibility: as that the matter must be a sensible one, done openly, and that a monument be instituted from the time; and he argues it is utterly unreasonable to deny the Ten Plagues, since the Passover was an institution monumental of the fact. But nothing was more common among the ancients than to forget the real facts, if any, which their institutions commemorated, and to make up stories to account for them. That this was the case with the Passover is most likely, for, as Bishop Colenso has shown, the Bible story is full of incredibilities. At one day's notice the head of the families of two millions of people about to start on a hurried flight, have to sacrifice male lambs of one year old and without blemish, and smear the doorposts with blood in order that the angel of the Lord, when massacring the first-born of Egypt shall not make a mistake and include the children of Israel! So with the analogous institution of the Lord's Supper. It is incredible that any sane person, seated at table, broke bread saying "Take eat, this is my body," and declared that the wine was also his blood. When we know, as the early Christian father, Justin Martyr, himself tells us, that they had the same eucharist in the worship of Mithras, we may plausibly interpret the rite as a partaking of the flesh and blood of the sun-god.

So the Sunday has been cited as a monument of the resurrection, oblivious of the facts that the first Christians kept the Jewish Sabbath, that Paul held days as immaterial, and that the very term Sunday refers us back to Paganism. The only monumental evidences of Christianity are those which take us back to institutions antecedent to Christianity itself. Ritual is one of the most enduring things in religion, and its study throws much light on the social and mental condition of those among whom it took its rise; but rites are poor witnesses to historic facts. It may be doubted if even the commemoration of Guy Faux Day would have taken the hold it has on English custom had it not linked itself to an earlier custom of lighting bonfires when the dull season set in.

The cross and most of the other so-called Christian symbols, such as the dove, anchor, etc., give very uncertain testimony, since they were demonstrably used anterior to Christianity. On the strength of the letters B.M. hundreds of "blessed martyrs" have been added to the Christian catalogue, when probably *vene merite* or "well deserving" is all that was intended. Legends have been manufactured to fit misinterpreted symbols and inscriptions.

Monumental evidence must not be taken for more than its worth. The annual pilgrimage of Catholics to the tomb of Marie Alacoque does not prove that

Christ really visited that insane young lady, but that the pilgrims believe so. The service of the Church of England does not prove that Charles I. was a "martyr" barbarously murdered after "meekly suffering all barbarous indignities," or that Charles II. was miraculously preserved from his bloody enemies, but it proves that those who drew up the service wished others so to believe.

In our own time the pious have made monumental evidence out of a legend. The *British Workman* has had fine woodcuts illustrating infidel death-scenes that never happened. One of its pictures, known as "*The Secret of England's Greatness*," has also been produced in an elaborate steel engraving. Queen Victoria is represented as presenting a copy of the Bible to an Oriental Chief, supposed to be the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh (who turned from Christianity to the Sikh faith when it suited him), with the words, "*Here is the secret of England's greatness.*" In times to come the picture may be cited as contemporary evidence. Yet Sir Henry Ponsoby, her Majesty's secretary, has officially contradicted the story that the Queen ever used such words. Such facts warn us how cautiously it is necessary to approach the problems of religious history.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE DELUSION OF PRAYER.

[CONCLUDED.]

SCIENCE proclaims the "stability of natural law," and upon this fact human actions are based. Take for examples, the weather predictions, the calculations of insurance companies, the science of medicine, and even the rules of church government. In all these matters prayer is not recognised as a factor, and it is fortunate for human progress that such is the case; for if it were not there would be no reliance on the regularity of the affairs of life. Volney says, "It is a law of nature that water flows from an upper to a lower situation that it seeks its level, that it is heavier than air; that all bodies tend towards the earth; that flame rises towards the sky; that it destroys the organisation of vegetables and animals; that air is essential to the life of certain animals; that in certain cases water suffocates and kills them; and the same of a variety of facts." Now these facts are consistent, regular, and immutable. Dr. Page, in his *Man: Whence and How?* observes: "There would be an end to all reasoning regarding either past or future if we did not believe in the general harmony, the even uniformity of the methods of creation." It is no answer to this to say, as the orthodox believers once said, that with God all things are possible. Such an absurd notion has long been exploded among intelligent people, and it only merits the humorous retort, that God could not make a clock strike less than one. This reminds us of the boy who asked his father if God could make a two-year-old colt in two minutes. The father replied, "Yes, if he (God) wished to do so." "Then," rejoined the shrewd lad, "the colt would not be two years old, would it?"

The theological idea of prayer is based upon the humiliating habit of abject submission and obedience to those who are thought to be superior to ordinary mortals. The orthodox idea of prayer would probably never have existed if an earthly king had never reigned. Because kings, emperors and potentates of every kind have exacted submission and obedience and demanded the bended knee and prostrated body, the same it has been thought, must be rendered to the "King of Kings." He is supposed to be actuated by the same motives as an earthly monarch; he has the same desires and passions to gratify; he loves flattery, adulation, and praise, and takes pleasure in seeing his dependent creatures at his footstool, cringing and fawning, and in all ways humbling and debasing themselves. When a subject has a petition to present to his sovereign he approaches with due solemnity, obedience and humility, and begins with "May it please your most gracious Majesty to grant to your humble servant," etc., and in every way overwhelms the monarch with the most fulsome flattery and praise

so that he may stand a better chance of having his petition granted. In the same manner the Christian appeals to the Almighty as if he were, in every point of view, an earthly king. Thus prayers and supplications are the outcome of the sacrifice of manly dignity and of self-reliance—the noblest characteristics of human nature.

The ordinary orthodox prayer of the Salvationist and of the Methodist is a curious conglomeration of folly, delusion, and devotion. Here is a specimen. "The devout believer" approaches what he calls the "throne of grace," and begins to tell Jehovah how great, how wise, how powerful, how good he is; he tells him that he is matchless in goodness, glorious in holiness, infinite in wisdom, etc.; he also informs him that all the universe is his own; the flocks, the herds, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; that he created all things for his glory, yea, the wicked for the day of evil; and that he has millions of cherubim and seraphim continually praising him, casting their crowns before him, crying holy, holy, art thou, O God! When he has told God all this, he confesses that he himself is a poor, weak, ignorant, and sinful creature; that his nature is shockingly bad, inherently depraved, vicious and corrupt; that he has been a sinner ever since he was born; sinned against his God in thought, word and deed; that God might justly have doomed him to eternal perdition, where the fire is not quenched, and where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then he thanks Jehovah for being so merciful and kind to him, and humbly desires him to accept his grateful acknowledgments for past favors, and hopes he will still continue them; on these conditions he will thus humble himself in the dust before him to worship and adore him; he will read his holy word more often, attend his house and endeavor to please him in all his thoughts and actions. But, before he concludes, he informs him that he cannot do anything of himself, he is so weak and sinful, and has so many enemies; therefore, he hopes and expects his divine assistance, as much grace as he has need of, and a double portion of his holy spirit. If God will give him these, he promises to praise him as much as he can in this world, and when he gets to heaven he will have nothing else to do but to praise and glorify him for ever and ever—Amen!"

We can quite understand the helpless condition that those persons are in who rely upon the efficacy of prayer for aid in their forlorn state, and the best advice we can give them is not to depend any longer on a source which experience has shown to be incapable of affording them any practical relief. We wish to warn them against delusion and the machinations of blind leaders. If we do not know the exact road to the City of Refuge, we may at least spare the weary traveller the inutility of journeying the road that is known not to lead to it. Our object, however, is more than this. By inducing people to refrain from trusting to broken reeds, we do them a service in giving them time and opportunity to look for sound supports. It is a well-known historical fact that for many ages the power of the clergy was unchecked; prayers were offered up on every occasion; but until the discovery and application of science, famine, sickness and pestilence swept over the earth. The flower of youth was nipped in its bud, and the fruit of maturer age was withered ere it ripened. Prayers were addressed to heaven, but no answers were received. Misery, suffering, and death desolated the earth.

The advocates of the prayer of supplication are placed on the horns of a dilemma. They either ask God to alter what they believe to be his fixed order of nature, or they offer up prayers knowing them to be useless. In the first case they apply for an impossible answer, and in the second for what they do not expect to receive. The most that can be said for such persons is that they please themselves and do not affect God. If a prayer seeks an alteration of the order of nature it is useless, and if the request is in harmony with nature the appeal is superfluous. No prayer can undo what is done, or reverse events that have happened; and it is equally impotent in determining what shall happen. The Russians and the French supplicated

heaven, and so did the English and Germans. Although each prayed to the same God and were equally sincere, one side in each case was victorious and the other defeated.

It may be urged that if prayers are not answered they can do no harm. This, however, does not meet the point to which we attach considerable importance, namely, that the beliefs and practices that are false or superstitious, must be and are for that very reason harmful to all who rely upon them. We believe with Coleridge:

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small.

By some prayer is defended on the ground that it permits the outpouring of and gives relief to the troubled spirit. This is not the prayer of supplication, and to such persons we would suggest the reading of Shakespeare and the products of other master minds; and also the communing with the beauties and treasures of nature. This would bring consolation to a well-balanced mind of a much more enduring and more dignified nature than any relief sought by mental prostration to an imaginary power. The prayer against which we protest is that which asks for physical benefits as taught in the New Testament. Instead of prayer we counsel earnest work, noble conduct, and loving actions. Our hope is in the dawn of that period when human effort and obedience to natural laws shall be regarded as the means of deliverance from the errors and fancies of the past. When we can truly exclaim:

O what a night was that which wrapt
The human mind in gloom!
O what a sun which breaks this day
From Superstition's doom!

Reason, the friend of human kind,
Long banished from her throne,
Has burst the veil of gloomy night
And claims us as her own.

CHARLES WATTS.

RAMON CHIÉS.

To those unacquainted with the *cosas de Espana*, the name of Ramon Chiés may perhaps appear strange. Yet Chiés was one of the foremost leaders of the Spanish Freethinkers and a staunch advocate of Republicanism. I therefore think that a notice of this remarkable Spaniard would undoubtedly prove of interest to the readers of the *Freethinker*.

Time works wonders. Spain of to-day is not the Spain of fifty years ago. Quite unaware and serpent-like, she cast off her old skin of superstition, and, paradoxical as it may sound, there is no nation advancing so rapidly towards Freethought and Republicanism as the sunny country of Cervantes and Murillo.

In Spain it does not do, at least for the present, to be too enthusiastic upon any theme which tends towards checking the power of the Church or State. The bold ones, who at times have dared to attack those two institutions, have, as a rule, paid dearly for their audacity. A spirit, akin to that which prevailed in the days of the Inquisition, still seems to hover in the air, and tabooed subjects like Freethought and Democracy must only be approached, like the G. O. M. said of Jehovah and Co., with a sort of "reverential calm." The death of Chiés was, therefore, made the occasion for a general and enthusiastic demonstration, the like of which Madrid has not seen for many a day. Freethinkers and Republicans gathered from all parts. Here and there could be seen small groups quietly discussing the state of affairs, exchanging vows of fraternity, and laying many a glorious project for the future. Great animation reigned in the streets, and a fiery imagination would have discerned in the picturesque masses of men and women a revolutionary mob, marching to the storming of a second Bastille! The authorities did not deem it safe to interfere, consequently no attempt was made to put an end to the demonstration. The local sky-pilots, on seeing this, buried their scraped heads deeply into their

tile-shaped sombreros and betook themselves to their dens, where they fervently prayed to the Old Gentleman above to destroy the cursed heretics.

Ramon Chiés y Gomez was born on October 13, 1845. He imbibed his Freethought ideas from his father, who was himself a distinguished Republican, and who gave his son a secular education. After visiting the schools of his native town, in 1865, Chiés went to Madrid to study law. Here he became acquainted with most of the Republican leaders, and began his literary career by contributing to the newspapers, especially to the *Discusion*. When the revolution of 1865 broke out, Chiés at once joined the movement and became one of its prominent members. The Republic appointed him Governor of Valencia. In 1881, with a few friends, he founded a liberal paper, called *El Voto Nacional*, and if I am not mistaken, this journal was converted later on into *Las Dominicales*. This gallant little paper is to-day the foremost Freethought journal in the Peninsula, and counts among its contributors many eminent literary men. Chiés, with the exception of a few pamphlets, has left no work behind him. He preferred devoting his leisure hours to lecturing. Three years ago, as editor of the *Dominicales*, he was condemned, on account of a poignant criticism on the priests, to four years' imprisonment and a fine of 8,000 pesetas. On the case being brought before the court of Cassation, this indictment was, however, to the great discomfort of the Clerical party, quashed.

Chiés had been suffering since some time from nervous debility, brought on by over-work. His illness developed itself into an inflammation of the lungs, from which he never recovered. On October 15 he sank peacefully into that sleep which knows no awakening. During his last moments he was surrounded by beloved relatives and friends, and whatever the ghouls of clericalism may afterwards cry, Chiés died like he had lived, a firm unbeliever unto the last.

Already in the morning of the day fixed for the funeral the streets were thronged with people, and later in the day it was almost impossible to stir an inch. At two o'clock the procession started, the cortege being composed of men of all ranks and conditions. Among the number of well-known faces were those of Salmeron and Pi y Margall. The editors of all the chief papers attended personally, or sent a representative. Behind the hearse, which was literally inundated with magnificent crown and wreaths, followed 300 carriages, and after these came a concourse of no less than 8,000 persons, these being the members of the different societies and associations to which the deceased belonged. It was an imposing sight indeed, and a sight that would have given then and there a flat denial to the pious assertion that Freethought is played out. In Chiés, the cause has lost a great champion, and his loss is as keenly felt by the Spanish Freethinkers, as that of Charles Bradlaugh was by the English. After the Spaniards have bemoaned the death of their late leader, they will assemble to choose a new one to take his place, for it is the great pride of the gallant warriors of Freethought, that they are never baffled or disheartened by the blows of adversity, and that although they may suffer defeat for a while, they are like the sun, which disappears at times behind the clouds, only to shine forth again with greater brilliancy and splendor

F. MALIBRAN.

HOW TO HELP US.

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

"MODUS OPERANDI."

To the heathen in a foreign land
Is sent a missionary band
To try to make them understand
How they were created.
When told of Adam's first great sin,
The "gentle savage" does a grin;
He can't take all that "great truth" in—
He's not been educated.

He is told how gentle Jesus came
To "save" the world from sin and shame;
The result is very much the same—
He don't seem agitated.
So the missionary changes his attack;
He slaps the savage on the back,
And says, "Dear friend, although you're black,
You know we are related."

This does the trick. His simple mind
Is caught by words that sound so kind,
And to his cost—as soon he'll find—
His heart is captivated.
The mission man now comes to trade,
With rum and tracts his debts are paid,
With Christian booze the black is made
Quite intoxicated.

He runs amuck from shore to shore,
And kills his subjects by the score;
The mission man says, "Well, I'm sure!
This can't be tolerated."

So Christian soldiers are called out
To put the savage man to rout;
They turn his kingdom inside out.
The place is devastated.

At home, in Paternoster-row,
The good folks say, "I told you so.
For not trusting in God below."
His land is confiscated.

A case in point:—In New Zealand
A noble race of men did stand.
Where are they? Ask the mission band.
Saved?—or exterminated?

P. T. WHELAN.

MUSEUM RELICS OF SUPERSTITION.

If no other evidence was required, a visit to the South Kensington Museum would be amply sufficient to demonstrate the remarkable ascendancy religion held over its slaves from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Whichever way you turn, you will find coins, carvings, and pictures dedicated to determined and forbidding-looking popes and priests; the birth, crucifixion, entombment, and ascension of Jesus Christ; episodes in the lives of the saints; and other relics representing the marvellous feats of Hercules, Mars, and the rest of the mythical gods.

Man's genius was not considered thrown away by perpetuating the portraits of grandees of Spain, Italy and France, in which countries religion seems to have been most rampant. What complete slaves the poor wretches must have been? No originality in choice of subject (I suppose, after all, the scope was limited); not a particle of naturalism; nothing but weeping virgins and melancholy Christs. And this is not all. In the treatment of these subjects the most astounding ignorance is displayed. In one gallery there is an enamelled plaque, a study of the Crucifixion in broad day, with the sun and moon both brightly gleaming, with faces looking out of each. In others you will find uncleanly suggestions, such as saints being conveyed to heaven supported by nude women in wanton attitudes. Another enamelled disc (for which the sum of £200 was paid) represents the creation of Adam, by some means not particularised by the painter; but in the case of Eve we have her plucked bodily from Adam's side by a male angel, with a head covering resembling a turban. Many more equally incongruous things can be seen by patient investigation. "ADRIAN."

The organist of a country church, having fallen ill just before a festival at the church, asked a friend—a thoroughly good player—to play in his stead. He consented, and on the festival day played the "Hallelujah Chorus," playing full chords where the regular organist played only notes. This, of course, required far more wind. Presently, in the middle of the piece, the wind gave out, and as it did not come on again the organist went round to the blower and found him just going home. "What's the matter?" said the organist. "Go on blowing directly." "Blowing!" said the other; "why, you've finished. Young man (solemnly), do you think I've been blowing all these years and don't know how many puffs the 'Hallelujah Chorus' takes?"

CHAPTERS FROM THE NEW APOCRYPHA.
THE LITTLE BOX.

PAUL, being at Athens, when he had come down from Mars' Hill, certain of the philosophers who had heard him came unto him, saying, Show us a miracle!

Then Paul, minded to show forth the power committed unto him answered and said, What sign will ye that I show?

They say unto him, Make the dumb to speak.

And Paul answered them straightway, saying, Go to now, fetch hither a man born dumb.

And while they yet sought among the throng gathered about him if peradventure any such might be found, Paul lifted up his voice, saying, Which of the twain is the greater miracle, to make a dumb man speak, or this little box?

With one accord they answered him, The little box.

Then Paul, having taken from beneath his cloak the little box, set it on the ground in the midst of the multitude. And again he lifted up his voice, saying, What will ye that the little box shall speak unto you?

They answer him, Let it testify of those things whereof thou hast spoken even this day upon yonder hill.

And Paul (having laid in previously with the little box) touched it gently in the right place, and the box spake, saying, Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship him declare I unto you.

Then were the multitudes amazed and confounded. Some said, This indeed testifieth of the truth; but others said that the Devil was in the little box. And one of the philosophers questioned Paul concerning what had happened, demanding of him whence came the voice and whose was the voice thereof.

And Paul answered and said, Truly, the voice is the voice of God; and hath to-day spoken unto you by the mouth of his holy prophet which hath been since the world began.

And when he was questioned further concerning the name of this prophet, he answered them, saying, There is but one name given unto men worthy of the kingdom of heaven, and that name is Truth. But the name of the little box is Arche-type of the phonograph.

Then were the multitude still more amazed. And they said one to another, This is a big name, sure enough. Verily, verily, the name is bigger than the box.

But they wist not—neither they nor the philosophers—how much bigger was the idea than the name. And as it was with the little box so with little facts, it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

HUDOR GENONE.

ACID DROPS.

Jesus Christ taught his disciples that if a thief took their coats they were to give him their cloaks. His disciples, however, are not very fond of obeying him; most of them, in fact, would see him in Hades again before they carried out some of his stupid and highly inconvenient injunctions. Canon Mason, for instance, had his coat stolen by James Turner. Did he give Jimmy his cloak too? Not he. Jimmy was dragged before the Lord Mayor, at the Mansion House Police Court, and sentenced to twenty-one days' hard labor.

Pity the poor clergy! Their incomes are sadly affected by agricultural depression. The Dean of Canterbury, for instance, who should be having £2 000 a year, is at present only receiving £1,000. The Canons should be having £1,000 each, and they are only receiving £500. It is really awful! Fancy a servant of the meek and lowly Jesus being reduced to living on twenty pounds or even ten pounds per week! The very locked-out miners ought to feel for these unfortunate men of God.

Tom Mann is still talking rubbish about religion. Addressing four thousand people, at a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon meeting in Bradford, he said that "he took it" that "the great object of religion was to make a right earth." Well, he has "took it" wrongly. The great object of religion has always been to prepare men for heaven and keep them out of hell. This earth was almost an accident in the problem, a mere next to nothing. Christians are told to "love not the world." This life has been styled a "pilgrimage." And does not the hymn say—

Nothing is worth a thought beneath
But how we may escape the death
That never, never dies.

"Heaven was then sure to be all right," said Tom Mann—that is, if earth was made all right. But what does he know about this "heaven," whether all right or all wrong? The only heaven he really knows anything about exists on earth. We advise him to stick to that, and leave the other heaven

to the angels and the sparrows—creatures with wings, which, by the way, Tom Mann has not spouted yet, though he is beginning to talk like a five-o'clock-tea curate.

The *Bradford Daily Telegraph* gives insertion to a capital letter by Mr. J Grange on the utterance of Mr. Tom Mann in Bradford. He shows that every good principle uttered by Mr. Mann are really secularistic and have long been avowed objects of the Secular party. Yet when these principles are put forward by a man claiming to be religious, a section of the Christian public regard them as something like a new revelation.

There are evidently a number of men of God who would not welcome Tom Mann into the Church. One writes to a church paper asking if he has ever been baptised and confirmed. Another, the Vicar of Woolwich, calls attention to a public declaration that he has severed himself from the Church.

Muller's Orphanage has always been supported by "prayer." That is, Muller prayed to the Lord, and a lot of people got aware that he was doing it. By this means the funds were brought in. But somehow, when the fever crept into the Orphanage, prayer was no use. Science had to be applied to on that occasion.

Prayer doesn't seem quite as efficacious as it used to be even in regard to subscriptions. In order to raise funds a part of the Orphanage grounds has been sold to the speculative builder. This leads a Mr. G. F. Cole to appeal for aid through the Bristol press. He suggests that ladies should go out into the streets with collecting boxes, and that the money thus obtained should be "given as the city's donation to the Orphanage." Only the ladies must not solicit, otherwise it would not be trusting to "the sure mercies of God." Oh Mr. Cole, what a funny man you are! A lady standing in the street with a collecting box, labelled "Muller's Orphanage" is not soliciting! Writing letters to the newspapers is not soliciting either! Logic, thy name is—well, not Christianity.

How these Christians love one another! Over at Jersey there is a Rev. C. M. Godfray, vicar of St. Simon's (it ought to be Simple Simon's, judging by the vicar), who is noted for his High Church practices. To this man of God "A True Protestant" sends an anonymous letter, asking why he doesn't go over to the Church of Rome, and saying that he ought to be pelted with rotten eggs. The man of God is less impolite in his answer, printed in the local *Post*, but he sneers at "Protestantism" like any Jesuit. Altogether, it is a happy family, even in Jersey.

The Rev. R. Dolling, the Radical High Churchman, of Portsmouth, made a scene at the Winchester Diocesan Conference, by demanding to know what the clergy had done to relieve the monotony, the lack of public amusement, and the unsanitary condition of the poor in the country. They had in their own hands the schools, clubs, and influence of every kind, and if they had done their duty, the Parish Councils Bill would not have been necessary to accomplish what they had left undone. Loud cries of dissent accompanied Mr. Dolling's speech, and at this point the Bishop interposed.

An article on "Our Disastrous Cathedral System" in the November number the *Nineteenth Century*, alludes to the familiar fact that those who do the least work get the most pay. This is but a Church improvement on the economical teaching of Jesus, who apparently approved of the person who worked only one hour getting as much as those who bore the burden and heat of the day.

The Rev. Dr. Pius Elgar Mortara is to be appointed to a chair of Theology at the University of Innsbruck. This is recorded as an instance of the force of education, and the triumph of injustice. For who is the Rev. Dr. Pius Mortara? He is the circumcised son of Jewish parents, who resided at Bologna, in 1858. On June 23 of that year, officers of the Inquisition entered their house, and forcibly removed the child. The ground alleged was that the boy, then seven years of age, had been secretly baptised by a Christian maid-servant during a serious illness, which he had suffered two years before. Pope Pius IX. was appealed to, and supported the action of the Inquisition, though the whole

Liberal press of Europe rung with denunciations of this injustice. The parents never saw their child again, and he has turned out a good Catholic, much in the favor of the Pope. We wonder what old Jahveh thinks of it.

They could not get on with their swearing at the Cranbrook Petty Sessions last week, one of the witnesses having unwittingly pocketed the New Testament, and proceedings were delayed until a constable was dispatched after the missing book.

Norwich Cathedral is threatened with disaster, and a sum of £12 000 is wanted to restore the fabric which has been much affected lately by the weather. The roof and walls of the symbolical "Jesus Chapel" are decaying. After a recent thunderstorm, portions of some of the windows were found in the garden alongside. The dean and chapter ask for £5,200 down to commence restoration.

The Rev. George Whitehead, vicar of St. Andrew's, Northampton, has had to pay £50 for slandering the master of the St. Andrew's National Schools.

The Rev. Horace Graham deserted his wife, leaving her with the sum of half-a-crown to live on, and went to live in style at Clacton. On being summoned at the Lambeth Police-court, he said he did not wish to shirk his responsibilities. He made her the munificent offer of five shillings a week. The magistrate made an order for twenty shillings per week and costs.

Booth has gained his case on appeal from a decision awarding damages against him for injury done to a horse belonging to the London General Omnibus Co. through restiveness, excited by a S. A. band in Edgware-road. He can now order his instruments to strike up in whatever crowded thoroughfare they please.

From a religious census taken at Leeds, it appears that the Church of England is very backward in that city of 372 000 inhabitants. It has but 62 churches with accommodation for 46,000, while the Nonconformists have 126 buildings providing for 74,000.

A well-known eminent divine of Boston was also president of a railroad. He had occasion to go out into the railroad yard one day and witnessed the unloading of a car-load of rails. The men were pitching them over in a careless manner, and, as they were expensive, he remonstrated with the workmen. One of the men gently told him to go to Hades—the polite expression used to describe the torrid zone of the hereafter for the wicked. "Oh, shame!" said the ex-clergyman; "that's the last place you ought to send me to." "Faix, I think you are right," replied the workman; "there's no doubt but it will be the last place you'll go to."

They have a counterpart to our prophet Baxter in the United States. His name is Lieut. Totten, and he predicts that within six years J. C. will return and rebuild Jerusalem. Time has given the lie to a number of these cranks, and probably the best way is to let them wait for his merciless scythe. But as long as the belief in Bible inspiration lasts we may expect to see a fresh crop of these frauds and cranks springing up directly others are mown down.

The attitude of the clergy towards the Parish Councils Bill is very amusing. They are, before all things, anxious that the rights of villagers shall be preserved, but they have a painful consciousness that their own privileges may be touched. The closer their wings are clipped the better. The parson has too long been "the person" of the parish, doing his own will as though it were the revealed behest of the Almighty.

The *Natal Advertiser* says that as far as making good men of their converts, the missions are "notorious and scandalous failures. The resident missionaries themselves are very far from above reproach, and the most charitable thing that can be said of them is that they have failed—utterly and irretrievably failed—to achieve a hundredth part of the work they are supposed to perform." It continues: "As in warlike Mashonaland, in Pondoland the missionary is working on the side of war and bloodshed; he seems determined to secure his ends even at the risk of unrighteous war, and in the case

of Pondoland there are many who would rejoice to see his Jesuitical designs frustrated."

The Rev. T. Harrison, of Staplehurst, Kent, has been finding a confirmation of the invasion of Palestine in the Tel-el-Armana tablets. He says: "Among the enemies against whom help is invoked are the Abiri, easily recognised as the Hebrews." These names are easily recognised if you are determined to recognise them. But can Mr. Harrison bring contemporary evidence of a people known as the Hebrews at that date?

At the Sheffield Police-Court (in the days of Albert Smith, magistrate's clerk), an Irishman was fined a small sum and costs for being drunk. When he had paid the amount he demanded a "recate," and of course as no receipt is given for fines, etc., the Irishman became so excited, that he was taken before the magistrate again, and to pacify him a receipt was given him. One of the Bench, whose curiosity was excited, asked the Irishman whatever was his reason for being so particular about a receipt. The man said that when he died and went to heaven they would ask him if he had paid all his debts, he would answer, yes. And then if the angel wanted to see his recates, he did not want to be obliged to hunt over the plains of hell to find Albert Smith to give him a recate.

Thomas Matthews, the keeper of the Gospel Mission Hall at Thornton Heath, stands committed for trial on a charge of assaulting four little girls, of ages between eleven and thirteen, who were in the habit of attending the Band of Hope there.

There was a regular Irish scene at the annual Synod of the diocese of Down and Connor and Dromore, arising out of a motion by the Dean of Down to place on record a resolution of thankfulness to God for the rejection of the Home Rule Bill by the House of Lords.

James Fitzgerald got into a theological argument outside the Y.M.C.A.'s building, Mare-street, Hackney, last Sunday, and became so vehement that he got run in, and was bound over to keep the peace.

A knowing clergyman spoke at the Leeds Diocesan Conference. He advised his clerical brethren not to advertise forbidden fruit, as it was sure to be plucked. One clergyman he knew had condemned a certain book as not fit to read, and the following week the bookseller sold fourteen copies, though he had not sold one before.

The Bishop of Worcester has passed over all the eligible curates in his own diocese and presented the living of St. Thomas's, Coventry, which is worth £300 a year, to Eric Farrar, the son of his friend Canon Farrar, the well-known pluralist of St. Margaret's, Westminster, where Farrar the younger has been officiating as curate.

After all, preaching the gospel is one of the best trades going. In most other occupations a man has to do some work for his living, but in the gospel business there is little need for exertion. It is this possibility of living in idleness on the fat of the land that every year attracts such numbers of the youth of Oxford and Cambridge to the Church. Your average graduate of Oxford or Cambridge has as little religion as any decent Pagan, but he takes to the pulpit all the same. Why to-day more than one-half of the clergy of the Church of England are Freethinkers, but they manage, by an effort of consummate hypocrisy, to disguise their freethinking. The fat sinecures place an enormous premium upon hypocrisy, and there is little to be wondered at if the cultured youth of the Universities flock into a profession which, requiring little brain-power and less exertion, rewards its devotees so handsomely.—*Reynolds*'.

Take this case. The Rev. Richard Whittington is Rector of St. Peter's Church, Cornhill, and is held in high esteem by his parishioners and the City authorities. His income is £2 300 a year, and for that yearly sum he feeds 196 persons with the Bread of Life. A nice little job this, you will say. Most of us would be quite content with it as it stands. But this disciple of the Galilean Carpenter doesn't consider it enough. At the last meeting of the Common Council, the reverend Richard appeared to support a petition that a

new lease of premises should be granted the Midland Bank, stating that if the lease were granted, his income would be increased by £150 a year. £2,450 a year for looking after 196 persons. Why are we not all parsons, and save one another's soul's after the manner of the American town in which the people all lived by taking in each other's washing? How well one can understand the fits of pious rage into which these men of God are thrown by the mere word "disendowment."—*Reynolds*'.

Mr. J. Ellis MacTaggart has been lecturing on "Pantheism and Worship." He argued that if the world was taken as it stood, and called God, "there was no meaning in worshipping a God of that description." "The world as revealed to us by science was totally indifferent to morality, and was hastening to the freezing out of conscious life, which was a negation of morality, since without consciousness morality could not exist." Well, according to Mr. MacTaggart, God is the personal author of and responsible for the world, and we see no good in worshipping a God of that description.

A sad disaster has befallen St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh. During the temporary absence of the rector it has been desecrated by a wicked Cornishman, who in the far north contrived to get married to his deceased wife's sister without being detected. There will have to be an Act of Reparation like that which was used by direction of the Bishop of London when St. Paul's was supposed to be desecrated by a suicide.

According to the *Allahabad Pioneer*, the Secretary of State has ordered the dismissal from the service of Archdeacon Noyes, whose name was connected with an unpleasant scandal at Mandalay last summer. The archdeacon was implicated in offences which, according to St. Paul, were not so much as mentioned among the Gentiles.

A strange story comes from Adrian, Michigan. Two women, named Church, mother and daughter, were lodged in gaol there last week charged with burglary. On the previous Friday the two women donned male attire and burglarised the house of Editor Stacey. After securing one load, they left, but returned for more. In the meantime the robbery was discovered and a watch was set, and after a desperate resistance by the mother, who used as her weapon an insect powder sprayer loaded with cayenne pepper, the pair were arrested. They both bore good reputations in Tecumseh, where they lived, and moved in the "exclusive circles" of village society. Mrs. Church was an active worker in the church, and was at the head of two missionary societies; the daughter was employed in the office of a newspaper. It is supposed the two pious women have been the perpetrators of numerous recent robberies.

The suicide epidemic is so prevalent in Denmark that it has been proposed to check them, if possible, by a law turning over the bodies of all suicides to medical colleges for dissection. After-death punishment, even in hell fire and to all eternity, has hitherto failed to have any appreciable effect. Improvement of the conditions of the living is the one thing needful.

Christian rowdiness at Freethought meetings seems to be extending. Last Sunday week, at the afternoon meeting of the Brighton Freethinkers on The Level, the bigots, apparently disheartened at the failure of their (more or less) orderly opposition to extinguish the gleam of reason falling on this benighted town, descended to the use of force, and the platform was broken in a malicious rush. Last Sunday again a disturbance took place. Mr. Guest was lecturing, and was listened to quietly to the end. Then the baser feelings of the crowd were fired by a local Christian Evidence man, who appeared to endeavor to out-do his London confrères in the violence and malignity of his abusive language, so much so, indeed, that a young S.A. officer, with whom he consorted, was so disgusted that he quitted his society. After the chairman had declared the meeting closed, however, this Salvationist, who had given two speeches in opposition to the lecturer, endeavored by force to storm the platform, for the purpose of further addressing the audience. This the chairman properly resisted, whereupon a general scuffle took place, the stand was smashed, some severe blows were exchanged, hats were bashed, the lecturer received some Christian spittle on the face, and the secretary and lecturer had ultimately to be

escorted by the police, followed by a howling mob, to the shelter of the police-station.

On the way, one gaunt Salvation lassie shook her finger in Mr. Guest's face, and, with hate gleaming from her eyes, told him he would go to hell for ever. "Will you be there?" asked the latter. "No," she replied. "Then there's a crumb of comfort in that," was the rejoinder. "I shall be in heaven," said the girl, "and shall see you writhing in hell"; and her face lighted up with the beatific prospect.

The *St. Pancras Guardian* reports the inaugural meeting of the N.W. London Branch of the Christian Evidence Society, which was blessed by the Rev. Mr. Waterman, a gentleman who professes great *charity* towards "infidels." It was also stated that the Rev. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead, had consented to become a vice-president. Mr. Horton has the reputation of a gentleman, and we beg to draw his attention to the sweet reasonableness of some of the persons he is patronising. One of the speakers referred to the "horrible and debasing teaching of Atheism." We notice that another "very aptly compared infidels to rats." Mr. Horton is hardly the man, we believe, to countenance such language. He is probably quite ignorant of the kind of Christian advocates who have secured his patronage. When he learns what are their temper and methods, we should imagine he will deny them the use of his name. If he does not, he will suffer in reputation from the company he keeps.

St. Philip's, Church, Paddington, is to be demolished, it having been very poorly attended for many years past. The Bishop of London is also having a commission of inquiry as to the propriety of uniting certain London city parishes where the churches are but badly attended.

The Rev. J. D. Mullins, secretary of the Church Missionary Society, boasts that "a servant girl sent up an envelope containing four five pound notes as an offering to the work." This seems to us very much like glorying in one's shame.

There is a pretty squabble at Erith as to whether the new cemetery shall be "consecrated" or "dedicated." The parish is to be polled on the question. If it cannot be settled that way, we suggest that a poll be taken of the corpses. It really seems *their* question after all.

The *Christian World* does not take kindly to the Variorum Teachers' Bible. The learning of it is all right, there is "solid and valuable information of a kind," but the editors are accused of "regarding the average English Bible reader as a great baby, who must, in these matters, be fed with milk and not with meat." Yes, but if they fed him with meat, he would soon leave school, and the teachers can't afford to lose him.

"There are not wanting signs," says the Rev. Dr. Fairbairn, "that the Church is seeking reconciliation with the working classes. But as yet there are no signs that the working classes are inclined to meet the Church." Of course not. The sheep are not likely to attend a convention called by the wolves.

Christian Socialism is to have a penny monthly magazine, edited by Canon Scott Holland, who should write an opening article on "Blessed be ye poor," and one to follow on "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor." This is Christian Socialism, as taught by Jesus Christ.

When a lady novelist gets hold of Jesus Christ we may expect some rare developments. Marie Corelli, in her new novel *Barabbas*, introduces J. C. with a "fair body." She talks of his "bare, rounded arms," and gloats over his "extraordinary physical beauty." "What height and muscle!" she exclaims, "what plenitude of vigor." His "muscular force" is "mighty," and then his "rich, agonised voice!" Of course this is all due to the lady's fancy. A sentimental female's ideal of a male is something big, muscular, Herculean—Samson with a dash of Adonis. But the Prophet of Nazareth, according to tradition, was nothing to look at, being plain and almost ill-featured.

The gospel writers padded out their romance with miracles. Miss Corelli could have taught them a better trick. She introduces Judith Iscariot and love passages with Caiaphas.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 12, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. : 11.15, "Can Wages be Raised?"; 7, "The Pillars of Priestcraft." (Free; reserved seats, 6d. and 3d.)

November 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.

J. RICHARD.—Pleased to hear that you are going to form a Branch at Ryhope. Miss Vance has forwarded you all the necessary information and printed material.

J. TRUELOVE.—Sorry we cannot find room. It is only a repetition of what has been said a hundred times in our columns.

DELTA.—We quite agree with you that Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* should be read by Freethinkers and circulated by them as widely as possible. The popular edition, being published at 2s. 6d., and purchasable for 1s. 11d., is within the reach of most book-buyers. By the way, the famous passage on the Trinity, likening it to three Lord Shaftesbury's, was omitted from all editions of the book after Mr. Foote's trial before Lord Coleridge. Mr. Foote read the passage in his defence.

F. ROE.—Please direct your Lecture Notices to us, and not to Mr. Forder. Our address is 14 Clerkenwell-green, E.C.

E. T. N.—Thanks. See paragraph. If Mr. Foote ever has time to visit Jersey, whose beauties he has often heard of, he will be glad to have that "heartiest of welcomes from a small, though sturdy, band of Secularists."

A. J. N.—We do not publish an Index to the *Freethinker*. The Christian Evidence Society does not believe in debate. It has always refused to arrange for a set discussion between one of its representatives and a representative of the National Secular Society. Debates have taken place, but not with the C.E.S.'s assistance or sanction.

F. WESTERN.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. J. BARTLETT, sec. Camberwell Branch N.S.S., desires to know the present address of Mr. Crisfield.

G. HERBERT.—Yes, the press is getting alive to the fact that Freethought is extending.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: G. G. Ross, 10s.

NEMO.—Glad to hear that you are now able to obtain the *Freethinker* through a newsagent. We hope he won't be frightened by the parson. The number of members of the N.S.S. cannot be given without the sanction of the Conference or the Executive. Nor is it easy to determine the number of members in such a voluntary Society. Arrears are sometimes paid up after a lapse of two or three years.

JOSEPH BROWN, sec. N.E. Secular Federation, has removed to 55 Northbourne-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Branch secretaries will please note.

J. G. DOBSON.—The "infidel-slayer" in question enjoins upon Christians to refrain from opposing Freethought lectures, or even attending them. His friends cannot grumble, therefore, if you return the compliment. Let them arrange for a set debate if they want something in that line. Mr. Foote will try and offer you a date for Huddersfield.

M. BROWN suggests that Freethinkers should go to St. Paul's Cathedral on a fixed Sunday. He thinks it would help to liberalise the preachers and hasten disestablishment.

E. E. P.—Freethought journals are not maintained to enable Christians to publish articles; though, for our part, we have never denied room to a well-written and courteous reply to one of our contributors. Freethought does not mean helping to propagate what you disbelieve, otherwise Freethinkers should subscribe to churches and chapels. It means allowing every man to advocate his own ideas—at his own trouble and expense. There are plenty of Christian papers for Christians to write in, and while that is so they need not come to us for publicity.

X. Y. Z.—Cuttings are always welcome.

STONK WALL JACKSON'S.—Received with thanks. Much appreciated.

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—Church Reformer—Hampshire Observer—Chat—Isle of Man Times—West Sussex Gazette—Allahabad Pioneer—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Kensington News—Bradford Daily Telegraph—Islington Gazette—Lucifer—Natal Advertiser—Essex Weekly News—Bromsgrove Messenger—Bournemouth Chronicle—Secular Thought.

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote is now lecturing at the London Hall of Science for two Sundays. To-day (Nov. 12) his morning subject is an economical one—"Can Wages be Raised?" In the evening he delivers a new lecture on "The Pillars of Priestcraft." It will be remembered that the admission is free. Seats in the body of the hall have to be paid for, but the gallery, which runs round three sides of the hall, is open without charge of any kind, though the persons who sit there have an opportunity of dropping something into the box as they pass out. Freethinkers should try to induce as many as possible of their Christian friends to attend.

Mr. Foote's lectures at Nottingham on Sunday were a decided success. Owing to the terrorising of the proprietors and lessees of halls in the town, no charge could be made for admission, and the Branch had to depend entirely upon collections. Unfortunately the seating accommodation was not enough to cover the whole area of the Co-operative Hall, and a great many people (including, we are sorry to say, some ladies) had to stand. The audiences were very large for Nottingham; they were also very friendly, not to say enthusiastic; and the Branch committee was highly pleased with the day's proceedings. A notable feature of the evening meeting was the presence of a considerable number of ladies. Many persons in the audience heard Mr. Foote for the first time, several of them being Christians tempted by the "free admission." One of these, a young fellow, was overheard to say to his companion, "Well, I wouldn't have missed this for a treat. I thought it was something quite different." Exactly so. Christians are prejudiced against Freethought by the Black Army, and the prejudice too often keeps them from coming into any sort of contact with it; but when they do come in contact with it, they find it is not so bad a thing after all, and some of them get to like it wonderfully.

Mr. Atkey took the chair in the morning, Mr. Hooper in the afternoon, and Mr. Anderson in the evening. Mr. Stapleton, the able and zealous secretary, was busy in other directions. Such men as these, to say nothing of other good workers, ought to win a brilliant success for the Nottingham Branch. It has labored under many difficulties for some time, but the prospect is now brightening, and it is intended to carry on an active propaganda this winter.

Special lecturers from London or elsewhere will evidently for some time have to address free meetings at Nottingham. Still, the Branch is far from being discouraged. The collections on Sunday were extremely satisfactory, and if subsequent ones turn out as good the Branch will be able to hold its own nearly as well as under the old arrangement. Sometimes, indeed, it may do better; for instance, when the lecturer is comparatively unknown, and people would hesitate to pay to hear him.

Mr. Foote's morning lecture at Nottingham was on "The Coal War," and two-thirds of the collection was promised for the miners' relief. It has been forwarded to the *Daily Chronicle*.

After his release from prison, early in 1884, Mr. Foote wanted to visit Derby, which was then as now represented in

Parliament by Sir William Harcourt, who stood up in his privileged place as Home Secretary and grossly slandered the editor of the *Freethinker*. "Liberal" as Darby was, not a single hall could be obtained for a lecture by Mr. Foote. Several attempts to obtain one have been made since, but all were unsuccessful until quite recently, when by what we are afraid was a fluke the Athenæum Hall, in connexion with the Royal Hotel, was secured for Monday evening, Nov. 6. Mr. Foote's lecture on "Why I cannot be a Christian" drew an excellent and—what was hardly expected—an extremely orderly audience. Mr. Hooper came over from Nottingham to take the chair, and made a neat introductory speech. The lecture was listened to with deep attention, and very warmly applauded. Two orthodox Christians offered opposition, and were followed by Mr. Hyde, a Swedenborgian minister, who created a very favorable impression by his evident courtesy and sincerity. The lecturer's reply appeared to give great satisfaction. There was a good sale of literature at the bookstall, which should lead to an increase in the local circulation of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Foote was thoroughly pleased with his first visit to Derby. He was happy to find that the Branch means business during the winter. Many of its members are earnest and intelligent young men, full of "go." A room has been engaged for regular meetings. It will hold nearly two hundred persons, and Mr. Hooper is going over again next week to deliver the first of a course of lectures there. We wish the Derby Branch all the success it deserves, and that is a good deal. The town is very bigoted, but an impression will be made upon it by "pegging away."

Mr. G. J. Holyoake met with a cordial reception at Liverpool on Sunday last. His last previous appearance on the Freethought platform in Liverpool was in 1878. To the greater number of local Freethinkers Mr. Holyoake was known only through his writings, but he has many admirers outside the Freethought party; and at the close of the evening lecture several gentlemen took the opportunity of testifying to their appreciation of Mr. Holyoake's long and useful career. This was Mr. Holyoake's first outing since his recent accident, and he was so anxious to meet his Liverpool friends once more that he made the journey against the advice of his doctors; but every provision for his comfort was made by the president of the Branch, and we may confidently hope no evil consequences will result from the venture.

Our readers will no doubt be pleased to know that Mr. Charles Watts has returned from his American trip in excellent health, ready for a good winter's work in Secular propaganda. He arrived on Friday evening, Nov. 3, in the "Campania," after a pleasant and rapid voyage of five days, twelve hours, and seven minutes. This is the quickest passage that has ever been done between New York and Queenstown.

Mr. Watts speaks very highly of our Freethought friends in the United States and Canada, and he has but one regret in connection with his American visit, and that is his inability to see Col. Ingersoll, who was thousands of miles from New York on a lecturing tour. Mr. Watts, however, wrote the Colonel, stating how anxious we all are on this side of the Atlantic to see and hear him in England. We hope to be able shortly to publish his reply.

The last few days Mr. Watts was in New York he spent with the able editor of the *Truthseeker*, Mr. E. M. Macdonald, and Mr. S. P. Putnam. Both these gentlemen sent hearty greetings to their English co-workers. The *Truthseeker* is the leading Freethought journal of the United States, and we are happy to hear that its circulation is constantly increasing. Its editor sends an urgent invitation by Mr. Watts to Mr. Foote to visit America at as early a date as possible.

We wish to remind our readers in the Midland districts that Mr. Charles Watts will lecture this (Sunday) evening, Nov. 12, in the Town Hall, Birmingham, taking for his subject, "Does Death End All?" As the hall is capable of holding several thousands, we hope our friends will rally in good force on the occasion.

Miss Vance desires lecturers to give her immediate notice of any change of address for insertion in the Almanack.

Mr. C. J. Hunt lectures at the London Hall of Science next Wednesday evening (Nov. 15) on "Man's Duty and Responsibility." The subject is an important one, and the admission is free to all parts of the hall, and there should be a large attendance.

A new departure in the proceedings of the Lecturers' Training Class at the Hall of Science will be inaugurated. Previous to the commencement of the reading of papers and debates thereon, Mr. Sam Standing will give instruction in the composition of lectures, and young speakers are requested to bring reporters' note-books with them. Mr. Standing will occupy half an hour (from 8 till 8.30) when the class will proceed as usual, under the chairmanship of Mr. Geo. Ward. These meetings take place on Tuesday evenings, and all members of the N.S.S. are invited.

We see from the *Kensington News* that the West London Secular Society has made a good start at the hall of the Hammersmith Club. This Thursday Mr. T. Parris discourses on "Christianity and Devil Worship."

We regret to see from *Fritankaren* that Mr. Viktor Lennstrand is seriously ill. Mr. Knut Wicksell is conducting the paper, and gives a translation of Mr. Foote's article on "Harvest Thanksgivings."

Mr. W. E. Addis, who after editing a Catholic Dictionary on behalf of the Mother Church, turned Unitarian and went to a church connected with that body at Melbourne, has put forward a volume on the *Documents of the Hexateuch*, in which he adopts the views of Kuenen and Wellhausen as to the late and post-exilic origin of the priestly portion of the writings ascribed to Moses.

Mr. Robert Wallace, M.P., has a notable article in the November *Fortnightly Review* on "The Psychology of Labor and Capital." It is very brightly written, and full of shrewd common sense. Mr. Wallace regards the Capitalist as a not very loveable, but an indispensable, member of society. How to convert his cupidity into altruism is a difficult problem. "The Church has been trying it," Mr. Wallace says, "for a period of about two thousand years. What speed has it made? The capitalist goes to church, perhaps subscribes—largely—for the Sunday show, and then he is himself again for the next six days. Indeed, the Church itself is to a great extent a paying concern. The reproduction of Christ, the preaching and professed practice of self-sacrifice is a genteel business, at which gentlemen of enterprise will sometimes clear their £10,000 or £15,000 a year."

The close of Mr. Wallace's article does not betray much belief in Kingdom-Come. He deprecates the mad enthusiasm as to setting up new heavens and a new earth. "The existing heavens and earth," he says, "are the only thing of the kind we are ever likely to have, and all that we can do is to keep it in repair, and treat it to the usual spring cleaning and periodic painting. Life, in its very highest form, is not going to be for any of us a rest in any realised ideal, but a perpetual pegging away and patching away at a very imperfect and continually wasting actuality, until that final and only rest comes, on which the tragic drawback is that we shall not be aware of it when it has arrived."

De Dageraad opens with an important study of the "Romish Mysteries of Mithras," by A. J. Rotteville. These mysteries had an undoubted influence on the development of Christianity. Herr Rotteville has evidently examined the subject thoroughly. We notice that he refers to all the best authorities, Mr. C. S. Wake's *Evolution of Morality* being the only work dealing with the subject which we find unmentioned. Some poetry on the great Dutch Freethinker, "Multatuli," follows. The "Universal Review," as usual, gives a number of interesting items from all parts of the world.

Colonel Ingersoll has been discoursing to crowded audiences in the Theatre Indianapolis. Interviewed by the *Indianapolis Sun*, he is reported as saying: "It fills my heart with joy to see that the people of the world are beginning to think and to inquire what good it does to appeal to gods, from whom no response has ever come. Of what benefit is it to erect churches and cathedrals and install over them priests and ecclesiastics who know nothing more of the future than

the lowliest street urchin? It's all a mistake, and I long to see the day when the Churches of this country will be compelled to turn over into the coffers of the government taxes on the 40,000,000 dollars' worth of property which they control. I believe in doing away with simulacrums and worshiping humanity."

It is the custom of the students of the Missouri State University at Columbia to choose by ballot the person who shall address them at the commencement. One year the faculty was greatly disgusted to find that after the most faithful religious teaching for the past session a majority of the ballots had the name of "Bob Ingersoll" on them. But the faculty as a returning board threw out the votes.

The Blackburn Branch has had some difficulty in obtaining a suitable room, but has at length fixed upon one at the Haymarket, near Market-place, where discussions will be carried on during the winter on Sunday evenings.

A meeting of the Huddersfield Branch will take place in No. 9 Room of the Friendly Societies' Club, Northumberland-street, on Tuesday, Nov. 14, at 8, for important business. All friends are cordially invited.

The Edmonton Freethinkers have taken a good hall at the Assembly Rooms, Silver-street, for the ensuing winter, commencing Nov. 19. Any local Freethinkers willing to assist, musically or otherwise, will please communicate with F. Margetson.

The Tea and Soirée at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, Nov. 1, was in every way a success. A large number of friends from all London Branches spent a very enjoyable evening, and it is satisfactory to learn that the funds of the London Secular Federation were benefited to an appreciable extent. Arrangements are already in hand for the annual dinner to take place early in January.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Ball and Social, under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive, takes place at the Hall of Science on Wednesday evening, December 6. The tickets (1s) are now on sale. Those who intend to join this party may look forward to a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Those who do not dance, or those who do but wish to diversify their pleasure, will find a good entertainment provided in the Minor Hall.

A good many applications for shares in the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) have been received at the office since the first week in October. Still, there are hundreds of Freethinkers who could take a share or two, or even more, who have not yet done so. We appeal to them to translate their good wishes into actions. All that is really wanted is a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, and our good craft will soon be safe in port. By the end of January we should like to see a clear prospect of rebuilding the Hall of Science premises during the summer of 1894. We beg every Freethinker to see at once how far he can help to bring about this happy consummation. The smallest help is valuable. It is a myriad little streams that make up the mighty river.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE COAL WAR.

Be comforted, oh ye householders, who have had to buy your coal by the hundredweight at famine prices; be comforted, oh ye manufacturers, who have had to close your works for want of fuel, and thus to throw your unfortunate workmen out of employment; be comforted, oh ye sons of toil, who have had to eke out a precarious existence, supported by union funds, or the generosity of your more fortunate fellow-men; be comforted, I say, for have not a number of "Christians of all denominations" held a solemn Conference, and joined together to pray to Almighty God "that a Christian spirit and Christian methods of securing mutual agreement may be brought to bear on this, and all future misunderstandings between employer and employed?" This remarkable demonstration, as the *Manchester Guardian* calls it, to which "all Christian coalowners and colliers in the neighborhood (of Manchester), as well as all other followers of the Master," were invited, was extensively advertised, and was held in the Star Hall, Ancoats, Manchester, on October 17. It was reported at some length in the *Manchester* newspapers, and occasioned a considerable amount of correspondence therein; for I have by me, as I

write, seven letters which have appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, and I have no doubt there have been letters on the subject in the other *Manchester* newspapers.

Some fifty of the leading coalowners, and about as many leading miners and miners' agents of the Manchester district, were asked to sign the circular convening the Conference, but of the twenty-six signatures to the circular, I cannot find that any are signatures of either coalowners, miners, or miners' agents, although nearly every trade and business is represented, from bakers to ironmasters and cotton-spinners.

I was reading, to-day, that at some meetings recently no chairman was appointed, but that the Holy Ghost was announced as occupying that position; this procedure was not followed at the Star Hall Conference, possibly on account of the difficulty of finding the Holy Ghost and tendering him the invitation to be present in the chair, or it may be that the conveners were afraid that an invisible and intangible chairman would not be able to keep order in a meeting of "Christians of all denominations." Be that as it may, the Conference was presided over by Mr. F. W. Crossley, who is a gas-engine manufacturer, and is principally distinguished, I believe, by his fondness for and liberality to "General" Booth and his motley army; if I am wrong, perhaps some Manchester reader will correct me. The Conference commenced with the singing of a hymn, after which the chairman read one passage of Scripture, and then addressed the meeting. He asked: "Why had the strike taken place at all?" "What was God's object in putting men into the world?" To me it is not obvious what connection the second question has to the first; nobody, so far as I know, has affirmed that God put men into the world to strike, in fact the number of people who affirm that God put men into the world at all is becoming less and less, owing very largely to the circulation of the *Freethinker* and similar papers. Mr. Crossley, so far as I can see, left it to a later speaker to answer his first question, but Freethinkers will be interested to learn that Mr. Crossley attempted to answer the second question. He informs us that he thinks (he is wise not to dogmatise) "that God put men into this world to give them an opportunity for spiritual heroism, and to enable them to seize an opportunity, such as that presented to them by the strike, to show that spiritual quality which Jesus Christ came into the world to show." As no strikes seem to have occurred during Jesus Christ's life on earth, or if any occurred they have escaped mention, it is not easy to say what Christ's attitude to strikers would be; but it seems to me that one who said "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," would hardly give any active support to the colliers in their efforts to resist a reduction in wages.

After the speech of the chairman, a number of persons offered prayer. I am unable to give their names, which is unfortunate; for assuredly they should not be buried in oblivion, but should be handed down, that future generations might read of the names of those who in 1893 attempted to persuade the Deity to terminate the coal war, for the existence of which he should be held responsible. After the praying came the event of the evening, the reading of a paper by Mr. Frank Spence, a chemical manufacturer of Manchester, who is well known by his hatred of and war against alcohol and tobacco. He commenced by expressing a hope that he should not be called a busynody if he ventured to ask, "What is it all about?" He had three reasons for his hope. (1) He had made himself intimately acquainted with the suffering caused to the miners and other workmen and their families by the coal stoppage. (2) He was a partner in a firm whose manufacturing profits had been completely wiped out in two large works by the coal famine. (3) He was a Christian, and was convinced that the stoppage had set back the clock of human progress more than had any event in modern time; it had renewed bitter class hatred, and had converted working men to socialistic, if not anarchic, views. The real question to every Christian, said Mr. Spence, was, who is responsible to God for the hunger, disease, and untimely deaths, the class hatred, and the money loss? He could not believe that private colliery owners would have conceived and carried out the policy which was being pursued, and which, if persisted in much longer, would certainly bring the country to ruin. They all knew that men did not hesitate to do things as members of boards or corporations which they would scorn to do in their individual capacity. He believed that there would be a day of reckoning at the bar of God for this cruel, arbitrary and unnatural attempt to ignore and trample on his beneficent and irrevocable laws. He concluded by moving a lengthy resolution expressing the views of his paper, and also recording the conviction of the Conference that the enormous rational expenditure of £140,000,000 annually on drink was a fruitful and permanent cause of bad trade.

I may remark *en passant* that in a letter arising out of the Conference, Mr. S. once has a tilt against tobacco, especially in the form of cigarettes. The chairman, in closing the Conference, said that, while he sympathised with Mr. Spence, he did not want exactly to be a party to the line that he, in his judgment, had seen fit to put before them. He (the chairman) felt that their line at that meeting was an appeal to God to direct them to a settlement of the dispute.

Although my account of this interesting Conference has already run to some length, I cannot conclude without making two or three comments which have occurred to me. I should have thought that in reading a paper at a Conference such as this, it would have been better to leave out personal pecuniary considerations, but Mr. Spence evidently thinks differently. He seems as much affected by his manufacturing profits being wiped out as by the distress and privation around him. I hope I do not wrong him; that is the impression I get from his paper. Mr. Spence also says he believed there would be a day of reckoning for this attempt to ignore the benevolent and irrevocable laws of God. But which laws did he mean? Did not God sanction slavery? Were I a collier I think I would rather leave the matter to the judgment of men than of God.

I suppose that most of those who attended the Conference did so in hope—nay more, in the expectation—that their prayers would be answered. Certainly some may have gone with a feeling that prayer could do no harm, and might do some good. The Conference, however, took place on Oct. 17, and weeks have elapsed without a settlement taking place; so that I fear the 250 who attended the Conference must be somewhat disappointed, although I cannot expect that it will weaken their belief in the efficacy of prayer. I am puzzled to know, if Messrs. Crossley, Spence and Co. were so convinced that the intervention of "Almighty God" was necessary for the ending of this disastrous struggle, why did they not call this Conference earlier, instead of waiting till the struggle had lasted nearly three months? Assuming for a moment that God exists, and that he possesses the attributes usually assigned to him, he must have known all about the Coal War before it began; he must have known what suffering it would cause. He did not exert his omnipotent right arm, and yet he is a God of Love! Again, if he knew all about the crisis, what need is there to tell him of it? Is it likely that the God who is the same to-day as yesterday, and is without variableness or shadow of turning, is to be turned from his purpose by a Conference of "Christians of all denominations," or by a thousand such conferences?

Rather, I say, let us quit prayer to God, and devote ourselves to serving our fellow-men more than we have done in the past; let us do without conferences to ask God's intervention, and employ the time thus saved in doing something to relieve the distress around us. We shall thus have the consciousness of having done well, which will surely be more precious to us than the remembrance that we have besought God to intervene, that we have cast the burden upon him, and may now fold our arms and wait for him to act.

ALPHA.

I'VE TWO STRINGS TO MY BOW.

FREETHINKERS are sometimes made to defend themselves against the impudent attacks of officers of the Salvation Army. Some experience of this kind fell to my lot the other day. Going on a journey of about a hundred miles, I found myself in a compartment with a solitary gentleman—the others had left at the last call. When the train was again in motion, the solitary gentleman leaned towards me and said: "Are you on the Lord's side?"

This question was so far from railway language that I didn't catch its meaning at once; then he repeated the question. It is difficult for me to talk aloud in the noise of a railway carriage. But this unexpected and abrupt manner of my fellow traveller rather put me on my metal, and I replied: "Which lord—a lord of the earth, or a lord not of the earth?" I might truthfully have answered in the negative, for there is no lord that I know who needs the help of a humble reader of the *Freethinker* like myself.

"The Lord of both," he replied; "Lord of heaven and earth, both."

"There is nothing that I know that answers to your description," I said.

"But I know there is. Knowledge of the Lord is in my heart," he replied, pointing to his breast.

"I don't seem to understand you. I fear that you are under a delusion."

"If it is a delusion, it is a pleasant delusion of thirteen years' standing."

"Then it is full time that you woke up into reality."

"It is a reality."

"Oh, that's nonsense."

"When I was converted, God told me it is a reality; and you will see it is a reality when you are on your death-bed."

"Oh, that's a prophecy. It is no use prophesying to me, because I don't believe in prophecy. I suggest to my friends that they should only prophesy that which they know."

Holding up his two fingers, he said: "I have two strings to my bow."

"Then you have one too many; they can't both be true."

"The death-bed repentances you mention are mainly a pack of falsehoods."

In this way we talked till the train came to a stand and more passengers came into our compartment, and our discussion ceased, and was not renewed or continued during the journey.

It is evident that the question, "Are you on the Lord's side?" is a subtle question which the superior officers of the

S.A. have adopted. I heard it put at an open-air meeting, and it was added, Because if you are not on the Lord's side you must be on the other side, which he was careful not to describe, but left us to ask ourselves which side is that?

The Salvation officer expressed his sorrow for me in not knowing the Lord. I, in my turn, replied that I was sorry for him, who appeared to be a lost victim of superstition. "I know what it is; I was once like you, and lived in your street." Thinking from this that he had met me before somewhere, I asked, "Which street was that?" "The street of sin and wickedness." This reply tickled me so that I had a hearty laugh, for which I ought to feel grateful to him, for I always fancy that a laugh does me good. Among the fresh arrival of passengers into our compartment there seemed to be raw material for him to work up. He did not, however, try it on during the presence of

JOHN SKINNER.

THE GADARENE SWINE.

SURE, of all the silly twaddle
That is likely most to addle
All the addle-able noddles of our line,
There's nothing half so farcial,
To a mind that is impartial,
As the story of the devils and the swine.

In the pamphlets called the Bible—
Ancient, artless, artful libel
On the Cosmos and its majesty sublime—
It appears that Christ the savior
Did exhibit such behavior
As is only seen in madness or in mime.

We are told that, after sailing
In a boat that needed bailing,
He, in Gadara, in safety did debark,
Where he met a horrid creature
Who disdained to hide a feature,
Being naked with a nudeness that was stark.

Now, this godly-imagined "varmint,"
Though possessing not a garment,
Was of devils the possessor, and possessed
But, while he was lodging legions
From the loco-foco regions,
He himself, poor man, was neither lodged nor dressed.

When this locomotive lodging,
From the tombs, where he was dodging,
Saw his fellow madman, Jesus, he did run,
Shrieking forward in his madness,
And addressed the Man-of-sadness
As the high and mighty Devil-Maker's Son.

Then the milder-toned fanatic,
In a manner quite dramatic,
Ordered all the man's inhabitants to quit;
Whereupon, the noisy lodgers,
Being very artful dodgers,
Asked for *other* lodgings whither they might flit.

Now, it happened, says our reading,
That a herd of swine was feeding,
Not a great way from this memorable spot,
So the devils all petitioned
That the pigs be requisitioned,
Not as food, but merely lodging for the lot.

Well, though Christ was not the owner,
He assumed the rôle of donor,
And quite coolly gave the imps the porcine lease;
So the human was forsaken
For the quick, potential bacon,
Into which the devils went, a pig apiece.

But, no sooner had these tourists
From the "Sheol" of the purists
Settled comfortably down within the swine,
Than the pigs began a-squealing,
Like Salvationists a-kneeling,
And skodaddled down a very steep incline.

This incline had such a gradient
As made all the pigs "obedient,"
Then, with earnestness that nothing could excel,
They unanimously bounded
To the sea, where all were "drowned"—
Of their lodgers' fate, the story doesn't tell.

Now this story clearly teaches.
What our worldly-wisdom preaches—
Don't destroy the goods of others, but attend
To the "Rule" that's nearly "golden,"
Nor believe in Nick, the "Old 'Un,"
Lest, like Christ, you reach a bad and awful end

G. L. MACKENZIE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MANCHESTER "LAW AND ORDER."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your paragraph in the *Freethinker*, respecting the recent conviction of myself and Mr. Taylor for "obstruction" at Ardwick, does not tell the worst part of the business. As regards myself, it is true that I went into the police-station to bail out a prisoner, but he was not an Anarchist, as your paragraph would lead one to suppose, and his only offence was that he had hooted at the police. I knew him somewhat intimately as a Secularist, or I should not have concerned myself in the matter. Both myself and Mr. Taylor were hustled about until we protested, and then we were promptly "run in." The next morning, to our surprise, we were charged, not only with having refused to leave the police-station, but with having "obstructed" repeatedly at Ardwick Green, which is half a mile away. At least five policemen deliberately perjured themselves to secure our conviction. Each man as he came up carefully opened the book and kissed the inside, the biggest liar of all piously turning up his eyes the while. So much for the value of the oath in ensuring truthfulness.

We have since placed our case fully before the Watch Committee. They have not given us much satisfaction up to now, but if the worthy gentlemen think the incident has ended, they are very much mistaken.—Yours, etc., W. PAYNE.

EVER THANKFUL.

A pious old lady of Watford was the owner of a fine talking parrot, which she had taught to repeat hymns, prayers, etc.

Another lady of her acquaintance, admiring the bird, procured a parrot, which she endeavored to educate in the same way, but, alas! in its early and youthful career it had contracted the vulgar habit of using profane language, and was, beyond doubt, "past praying for."

The ladies conferred together on the matter, and ultimately decided that the birds should be brought together, as in time the good would surely triumph over the evil.

The experiment was tried, and on their being placed together, the parrot of profane proclivities immediately flew towards the other and exclaimed, "You blank old something, I'll knock your blank, blank head off." Whereupon the other, in a very orthodox and beautiful manner, replied, "For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful."

Why should we sacrifice a real world that we have for one we know not of? Why should we enslave ourselves? Why should we forge fetters for our own hands? Why should we be the slaves of phantoms? The darkness of barbarism was the womb of the shadows. In the light of science they cannot cloud the sky for ever. They have reddened the hands of man with innocent blood. They made the cradle a curse, and the grave a place of torment.—*Ingersoll*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "Can Wages be Raised?" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "The Pillars of Priestcraft" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday at 8.30, debating class, Mr. Balderson, "The Benefits of Socialism." Wednesday at 8, C. J. Hunt, "Man's Duty and Responsibility" (free). Saturday, in the Minor Hall, social evening (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, W. J. Ramsey, "God and his Unholy Book" (free). Monday at 8, A. Johnson, "Social Problems" (free). Tuesday at 8, dancing (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Bermondsey — Gladstone Club, 43 Grange-road: Thursday, Nov. 9, at 8.30, George Standing, "Absurdities of the Church Prayer Book" (free).

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, Charles Freak, L.C.C., "The Dignity of Manhood" (free).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30 (in small hall), debating society, H. Snell, "The Private Ownership of Land and Minerals is Robbery"; 7.30 (in large hall), H. Snell, "The Gospel of Freethought." Friday at 7.30, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road 8, W. Meaford, "The Teachings of Confucius."

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, Nov. 16, at 8, musical selections; 8.30, J. M. Robertson, "The Whitewashing of Christianity."

Islington — Wellington Hall, Almeida-street, Upper-street: Thursday, Nov. 9, at 7.45, music; 8, H. Snell, "The Gospel of Freethought" (free; front seats 6d.); adjourned members' meeting after the lecture.

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

South Essex Secular Society, 33 and 35 Salway-road, Stratford, E.: 7.15, W. J. Woodward, "Electricity," with experiments (free).

Wimbledon—Hartfield-road Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, F. Haslam, "The Bible and Science" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?" Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, J. Maitland will lecture.

Birmingham—Town Hall: 7, Charles Watts, "Does Death End All?"

Blackburn—"Haymarket," Cort-street: 6.30, discussion.

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, J. Hacking, "An Hour with the Leading Writers on the Land Question."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 3, sharp practice.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, members' meeting; 2.30, Sunday-school; 7, public meeting on School Board election; Messrs. Rowcroft, Andrews, W. B. Thompson (the Secular candidate), and other gentlemen will speak.

Fairsworth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, P. Percival, "Great Types of Humanity: Descartes—Modern Philosophy." Saturday, Nov. 11, at 7, the drama "The Founding of the Forest" will be repeated (1s. and 6d.)

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, G. Faulkner, "The Clergy and Politics in Ireland"; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Science of Man—II."; illustrated with special lantern slides.

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 5, annual knife and fork tea (tickets 1s.); 7, free dramatic entertainment.

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall (No. 9 Room), Northumberland-street: Tuesday at 8, business meeting.

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, music, etc.

Hull Sunday Association, St. George's Hall, Storey-street: 2.30, G. E. Conrad Naewiger, "Is Overpopulation the Cause of Industrial Depression?"

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: 8.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "A Glimpse through the Corridors of Space," with lantern illustrations (free).

Liverpool — Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Utility."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': J. M. Robertson, 11, "Were the First Christians Communists?"; 3, "Socialism and Individualism"; 6.30, "The Church and Social Reform"; instrumental music morning and evening (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday from 8 to 10.30, dancing (6d.) Tuesday at 8, debating circle.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, G. Selkirk, "The Christian God an Impossibility—what then?" (free).

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea 3 and 7, Mr. MacQuinn (of London), "Anarchy" (free).

Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7.30, Mr. Jones will give a reading.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, W. Dyson, "The Recent Lectures of W. T. Lee (C.E.S.)—a Review" (continued). Wednesday at 8, literary and debating society.

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: C. Cohen, 11, "Christianity and Science"; 3, "Theology and Morals"; 7, "Religion and Freethought."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Nov. 11, Ryhope; 12, South Shields; 14 and 15, Haines; 19, Camberwell; 26 to 30, Portsmouth. Dec. 1 and 2, Portsmouth; 3, Luton; 10 to 17, Manchester; 24, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell; 31, Leicester.

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

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 19, Leicester. Dec. 3, Birmingham.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith London, W.—Nov. 26, Camberwell.

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

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BOOK CHAT.

The *Quarterly Review*, under the title of "A Sceptic of the Renaissance," devotes an article to Pietro Pomponazzi, who from his professor's chair at Padua, taught that while immortality might be received by the Christian on the ground of faith, it must be rejected by the philosophers on the ground of reason.

The second volume of Huxley's collected Essays is now issued and entitled *Darwiniana*.

In the *Letters, Remains, and Memoirs of E. A. Seymour* (12th Duke of Somerset), who wrote rather a poor book advocating scepticism, there are some good stories. One was told by Robert Lowe of Wilkes, who dreamt that he and Lord Sandwich died, and were rode by Charon across the Styx. On the other side they saw an inn, and the innkeeper at the door, whom Lord Sandwich recognised as his old butler—deservedly there, for he had been a great rogue. They decided to enter the inn for refreshment, and Lord Sandwich ordered some wine. "Let it be champagne," said Wilkes, "and well iced." "Alas!" said the butler, "ice is a luxury we never get down here." The shock was too much for Wilkes, and he awoke at once.

A better one is thus given in one of the Duke's Letters:—"— told me rather a good story about Lady — at Geneva. He bought a little bust of Voltaire and took it in her, telling her it was Calvin and that she might be glad to have a bust of that religious and zealous Protestant. She was delighted, and kept it on her table to inspire her devotional meditations; and it would have been there still if someone had not undeceived her by telling her that she was praying under the sneering bust of the infidel Voltaire."

Mr. Symes, in the *Liberator*, notices Mr. Moss' books on *Christianity and Evolution* and the *Bible and Evolution*, which he praises as well written, though he differs from some of the opinions advanced.

The Bible: its Sufficiency and Supremacy; and Christianity, what is it? is the title of a thirty-two page tract by C. H. M., sent to us from the publisher, A. Holness, 14 Pater-

noster-row. The writer is aware that there are such creatures as rationalists, but he has no sympathy with them. He declares "We believe that the Bible as written in the original Hebrew and Greek languages is the very word of the only wise and the only true God," and he argues that it must be perfect. For what Christianity is, we are referred to Phil. iii., which is giving Paul, instead of Jesus, as an example.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

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He was asked why he killed his fellow man.

He replied: "For money."

"Did you get any?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Fifteen cents."

"What did you do with this money?"

"Spent it."

"What for?"

"Liquor."

"What else did you find upon the dead man?"

"He had his dinner in a bucket—some meat and bread."

"What did you do with that?"

"I ate the bread."

"What did you do with the meat?"

"I threw it away."

"Why?"

"It was Friday."

—Ingersoll.

A clergyman was much troubled with one of his congregation (an old man, accompanied by his grandson) always falling asleep during the sermon. He thought he would cure him of his bad habit, and so calling on the grandson one day he said he would give him a penny if he would keep his grandfather awake during the sermon. The boy agreed, and all went well for a month, when one Sunday the minister was surprised to see the old man asleep as usual. He sent for the boy and asked him the reason why he did not keep his grandfather awake. "Oh," said the boy, "you give me a penny to keep grandda awake, but grandda gives me twopence to let him alone."

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