

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

(See page 766.)

THE CHURCHES AND THE MINERS.

MR. GLADSTONE never did a more sensible thing than when he wrote to the Coal Owners' and the Miners' Federations, desiring them to send delegates to a Conference at Westminster, for the purpose of terminating a bitter industrial war. The only pity is that he did not take this step two months earlier. Still, we are not blaming him; we do not belong to the irresponsible school of journalists who are always giving cheap advice to persons in authority; and we know it is not an easy thing to carry on the government of a country like England. Nevertheless the pity of the delay remains. The miners have suffered greatly, and their misery has spread itself to other sections of the community. The far-reaching effects of such a

struggle are a lesson in human solidarity. May that lesson be remembered, and a wiser and nobler spirit of social co-operation prevail among all sections of our national organism.

It would be unfair to leave unsaid the word of praise which is due to Lord Rosebery. No doubt the Miners and the Owners were both anxious for a settlement, but the Conference might after all have been abortive if the Chairman had not been a person of skill, tact, and firmness. It is a bitter form of democracy which thinks a man *the worse* for being a lord. The people's cause needs so many wise heads and such a variety of service, that it would be hurtful, as well as unjust, to ignore the work of a nobleman who sinks his caste in the ocean of humanity.

Freethinkers, also, will not hesitate to recognise the labors of individual Christians in the recent coal-war.

Those who have subscribed, those who have administered relief funds, are not to be contemned because they are Christians. While they act as men and women, with hearts to feel for the unfortunate, we shall not narrowly scrutinise their professions of faith. We only object when they give their charity a sectarian color. Even in the *Daily Chronicle* and in the *Sun*, we are obliged to say there has been too much parade of Christianity. The funds of both papers have been swollen by the contributions of all sorts of "unbelievers," including those of Trade and Democratic societies that care very little about any species of theology.

To tell the plain truth upon this matter, it is evident that only a handful of Christians have subscribed for the miners, or for their wives and children. Probably not more than £40,000 has been subscribed altogether. More than this was subscribed in a few weeks for the families of the men who went down in the "Victoria." Six times as much was subscribed for wedding presents to the Duchess of York. What, after all, is there to boast of? There are about forty thousand places of worship in this country, and a single pound from each of them would make up the entire subscription. Individual Christians have acted nobly, but we see nothing to shed a fresh lustre on the Christian faith.

The Christian Churches, as Churches, have once more shown their social impotence. It is always the policy of these bodies to follow, while pretending to lead, the course of events. They oppose or sneer at every reform in its infancy, they patronise it when it is winning, and when its struggles are ended they claim all the credit of the victory. Very often they only come in at the eleventh hour. In the case of this coal war they came in at quarter-to-twelve. A meeting of invited representatives of various sections of the Christian Church took place in London. It was to be a Conference "on labor disputes and the living wage." The Dean of Westminster took the chair, and among those present were the Bishop of Rochester, the Bishop of Ripon, Archdeacon Farrar, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, Mr. J. Carvell Williams, Mr. Samuel Smith, the Rev. Fleming Williams, Canon Scott Holland, Canon Leigh, Principal Dykes, and Mr. Ben Tillett. Mr. Moncure Conway was also present, and we should like to know what section of the "Christian Church" he represented. The Conference met in the Jerusalem Chamber, and it might as well have met at Jerusalem. It was an absolute fiasco, covering the Churches with nothing but ridicule. The Dean of Westminster said it would hardly do to pass resolutions; what was desirable was that "the question" should be discussed "seriously and earnestly from a high and Christian standpoint." Mr. Fleming Williams and Canon Scott Holland protested, but the Dean was master of the situation. The total upshot was the appointment of a Committee to organise a big meeting in St. James's Hall. Perhaps the committee is organising it; probably it is not. Who cares? The war is ended by statecraft, and the Churches may digest their chagrin at leisure.

The conveners of this Conference drew up three resolutions. The first was this—"That in the opinion of this Conference the principle of the maintenance of a standard of decent living should be recognised as an essential condition of the settlement of labor disputes." Several were in favor of this resolution; others were against it; nearly all were afraid of passing it and launching it upon the world. And the cream of the joke was, that these Christian gentlemen thought they were discussing something novel. Well, it was no doubt novel to them; but the principle that the standard of living of the workers is a firm element in determining wages was taught by John Stuart Mill nearly fifty years ago in his classic work on Political Economy. Now (as the Bible says) John Stuart Mill was a Freethinker. The fact is, these Christian gentlemen were sitting on the shells of an egg that had long been hatched.

The great fraud of this Conference was the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. He said that he "felt very strongly"—he always does feel strongly—that "there were objections to passing such a resolution as the

first which appeared on the Agenda." "It was impossible," he declared, "to define the 'living wage' or the 'standard of decent living,'" and it was merely waste of time to try to define the indefinable. (Applause.) They should aim at securing industrial peace. (Loud applause.) Thus spake Mr. Hughes at the Conference, where he stood to commit himself to something definite. But far otherwise did he speak at one of his own meetings in St. James's Hall. Mr. Hughes is a man of business, with a keen eye for popularity. When the miners' wives came to London he took them in tow. He made a display of them at St. James's Hall, and his remarks on that occasion were reported in the *Chronicle*:—

"Even with the *laissez faire* economists, as Mr. John Rae had pointed out, the necessary subsistence wage was not a bare living. It was the standard of living which the laborer had himself consented to abide by. The real progress of civilisation was determined by that. The workman must draw a line somewhere, and he must draw it at the living wage, and by that he meant the wage at which a workman, his wife and children might live in health, decency, and comfort. Could they do that on 13s. 9d. a week? St. Paul declared that the first charge on the production of industry must be for the benefit of the actual worker—the miner that laboreth in the bowels of the earth must be the first to partake of the fruits."

Mr. Hughes is an admirable Janus, who indulges in claptrap in St. James's Hall and grows cautious in the Jerusalem Chamber, though he is not cautious enough to avoid self-contradiction. If health, decency, and comfort cannot be maintained on 13s. 9d., the man who says so must surely have some idea of what they can be maintained on. There is no need to speak on affidavit. Say thirty shillings, or two pounds. It is a small sum after all; very small in comparison with the incomes of the Christian gentlemen (including ministers) who find it so difficult to come to a conclusion. But the *living wage* of the clericals is worthy of a separate article, which shall appear in our next issue, and we hope it will meet the eyes of thousands of the workers.

G. W. FOOTE.

BROTHER BOUNCE.

THE present age has produced a new species of theologian. His distinguishing characteristic is that he avoids all the theology of the past except so far as it can be accommodated to what he conceives to be the thought of the present. He prepares for his congregation a sweet mess, omitting all the brimstone and retaining all the treacle. He has taken as his task the reconciliation of science and religion, and thinks that a very fine emulsion may be produced by mixing the oil of faith with the water of reason. Like those eminent economists who discern the perfect identity of interest between capital and labor, he would put science and religion on one horse without any fuss as to which shall ride behind. He has found out how to sit on two stools without falling, can both run with the hare and hunt with the hounds of free inquiry, and knows of nothing easier than serving both God and Mammon.

One of the most eminent of these modern theologians is the Rev. Dr. Bounce, Ph.D., C.E.S., best known among the elect as Brother Bounce. Brother Bounce claims to be a bit of a scientist, and whereas the old theologians spoke of divine election, justification, and sanctification, the phrase most constantly on his lips is "the process of divine evolution." For Brother Bounce has discovered that not only are evolution and Christianity, when properly interpreted on the true Bouncian principles, perfectly compatible, but that the former offers immense confirmation of the latter. It is true men of God looked askance on Science in her infancy, even cursed and sought to destroy her when in her early years she struggled in her swaddling bands. But since the tender babe has grown and thriven even under persecution, Brother Bounce recognises that their attitude was a mistake. For his part he is always ready to pat Science on the head, and tell her she will make a nice girl, if only she will keep in the place to which God has appointed her.

Brother Bounce has given up what that eminent pietist, Dod Grile, calls "the erroneous doctrine that

God made the world in six days, and was arrested on the seventh." He has long since discovered that in the light of science, days, though defined by morning and evening, may be as long as you please—especially if you will go to the original Hebrew without points, in which, as everybody knows, God telephoned his first communications to the original typewriters. The blessed Sabbath was instituted to commemorate the solemn and momentous fact that the Almighty took a deuce of a time over his handiwork, while even the Theosophists admit there is a mysterious and occult significance in the number seven. If we will only prepare ourselves in a reverential frame of mind to understand the holy scriptures in a Pickwickian sense, revelation becomes intelligible as one with evolution. True, God says days, but he meant incalculable ages. When he speaks of everlasting fire, he means not fire, but something else, for a limited period. These things must no more be taken literally than the back parts which he exhibited to Moses in a cliff of the rock.

Brother Bounce finds that scripture teaches evolution. Does it not say "Every herb of the field before it grew," that is, before it evolved. God Almighty always wanted to let his creatures know this sublime doctrine. But his chosen people had the veil upon their hearts or were so thick-headed they could not possibly understand it, even although Omnipotence revealed it to them. He meant to teach them the facts of anatomy when he gave them to understand that man had lost one of his ribs to make woman. He intended them to learn philology from the story of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. He meant to give them a lesson in natural history when he classed hares among animals that chew the cud. He proposed revealing the truths of astronomy by telling how Joshua stopped the sun, and the facts of geography by speaking of the corners of the earth. To teach the Jews mercy he had to order them to exterminate the Canaanites; and to inculcate toleration commanded them to slay their own relations if they went after other gods. Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord as a demonstration of his skill in practical anatomy. Noah took all the animals into the ark to give a lesson in zoology, and shut it up close to display the principles of sanitation. Jesus was a thorough-going evolutionist. Did he not evolve from water between sixty and seventy gallons of wine for guests well drunk after they had consumed all the liquor at first provided? His respectable papa was such a dabster at evolution that he made the earth bring forth grass, and the fruit tree fruit, before he made the sun. Properly interpreted, the Bible is one long record of the process of divine evolution.

God is as much a creator as ever, only he is seen to be a little more long-winded in his operations. His method is a tentative one, so to speak. Having all eternity before him, he can make as many experiments, and break up as many million failures, as he pleases. It don't matter how many meshes and webs of the Almighty Spider are broken up, he can evolve as many more as he pleases out of his own Infinite Person. If a poor devil falls into a furnace and is roasted to death that is just as much part of the divine process of evolution as the death of the fowl that provides Brother Bounce his dinner. For 'tis a blessed world when you've a safe £500 a year, besides christening, marriage, and burial fees.

Brother Bounce is very accommodating. He believes the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ should be all things to all men. He prides himself on being unsectarian. Christianity to him means anything in general and nothing in particular. The infinite is of course indefinite, and the indefinite indistinct. His dogmas are all as nebulous as the third person of the ever blessed Trinity. He avoids the subject of hell, and will not even affirm that there is a personal spirit of evil named Satan. We must remember there is a deal of metaphor in the sacred scriptures. But it is both crude and rude to say there is no Devil, while it is nothing short of blasphemy to suggest that God is also metaphorical. For, wonderful to relate, there is one thing Brother Bounce will hold on to. He will sink miracles and prophecy. He will not argue with

you about the incarnation or the resurrection. You may take away his angels and devils; but you must leave him his God—and he must be a Person of the masculine gender. Life would not be worth living without our Father which art in heaven, who did such a tremendous lot for his creatures a long while ago, and has done little or nothing ever since.

Brother Bounce is not quite so innocent and simple as he looks. He knows that if he can retain the core of supernaturalism a considerable nucleus will soon gather round it. The gullet that can swallow an Infinite Person need not gulp at lesser mysteries. Give Brother Bounce his God, and he will soon drag a good deal else, including his own fat living, in the deity's train. So Brother Bounce patronises Herbert Spencer. On the common ground of mutual ignorance they can call the unknown the Unknowable, spell it with a capital U, and bow down in solemn awe and reverence before this dark creation. Did not Athanasius, or whoever wrote that magnificent dissection of deity which goes under the name of his creed, inform us that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were incomprehensible, and yet not three incomprehensibles, but one incomprehensible; and if ever a mortal was in the secrets of the Almighty Firm it must have been the writer of that glorious creed. Herbert Spencer, properly interpreted and taken like the holy scriptures in the true Pickwickian sense, is the endorser of Athanasius. Brother Bounce is capable of even higher flights of logical legerdemain than this, and the only drawback to his method of reconciliation, is that people are beginning to understand that whenever he and his tribe speak of God and religion, it must all be understood in a Pickwickian sense.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE BIBLE UP TO DATE.

[CONCLUDED.]

IN considering the Bible up to date, we notice some remarkable special pleading and important concessions upon the part of those who still profess to believe that God inspired the writing of portions, if not the whole of, the Old and the New Testament. In a recently published work, *Christianity in the Roman Empire*, by W. Addis, M.A., it is contended that we owe the Bible to the conflicts of the churches. The Catholic Church, the writer informs us took, a middle course between the conservatism of Christians who simply held to the Old Testament, and the radicalism of the Gnostics who turned Christianity into philosophical speculations. The advocates of the Church confined their speculations to such portions of the New Testament which they themselves selected, and hence that book became an essential part in the furniture of every church. Thus "the most precious monuments of early Christianity were saved from destruction," while a mass of other literature perished, and doubtless "the same fate would have overtaken the four gospels," but for these disputes between the churches. This is a totally different view of the primitive condition of the Bible than was formerly taught by Christians. For ages it was their boast that the New Testament could be traced back to the living days of the Apostles. This idea, it appears, is now being given up. Mr. Addis contends that the early progress made by the Bible and the Church was owing to the unity of nations under the Roman Empire, and that it would be hard to conceive the triumph of Christianity over heathenism, if the political situation at Rome had been other than it was. This may be quite true, but it destroys the once favorite argument of the theologian, that the advancement of the Bible and its faith was to be attributed to divinity.

Dr. Caird, in his *Evolution and Religion*, shows that the opinion that the Bible is the only sacred book, is not tenable. He says: "The conviction that God made of one blood all nations, swept away the religious prejudice which consecrated the history of the chosen people, and of the early Christian Church as the only sacred history." In this, Dr. Caird is supported by Max Müller, who, in his *Chips* states: "The most elaborate arguments have been framed by the Brahmans to establish the divine origin, and the

absolute authority of the Veda. This Veda is the supreme authority of all orthodox Brahmans. To doubt the divine origin and absolute authority of the Veda, is heresy. Buddha, by denying the authority of the Veda, became a heretic." Yet the late Bishop of Lincoln alleged that the Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the source of supernatural truth, and if that "is shaken" the Christian faith is shaken also, and what is still more appalling, "the fabric of human society will be dissolved." It cannot be truthfully said that the sacred character of the Christian Bible is of a higher order than that of the Bible of other religionists, for the Rev. James Freeman Clarke, in his *Ten Great Religions of the World*, says: "The sacred literature of the Chinese is perfectly free from everything impure or offensive. There is not a line but what may be read aloud in every family circle." This cannot be claimed for the English Bible, inasmuch as portions of that book are so obscene, and its language is so objectionable in places, that much of its contents cannot be read aloud in any respectable family circle, or in any decent society. No amount of concession and no new orthodox construction will bring these parts of the "sacred book" up to date. They deserve but one fate in an age of refinement and decency, and that is total obliteration.

The *Church Times*, dated June 23 of the current year, described the "higher criticism," as having descended from the academy to the market-place, where it is putting the souls of the common people in peril. The present mode of criticising the Bible is condemned in the strongest language at the command of the writer. One pious correspondent urges that the new criticism of the scriptures affects a large portion of the Old Testament that is quoted in the New, and "practically stamps the greater part of it as forgery." The same paper contains a review of a work recently written by several Congregationalists, entitled *Faith and Criticism*, corresponding precisely with *Lux Mundi*. The writers, we are told, "accept the most extreme theories with eagerness," but they are assured that all their earnestness and sincerity will not enable them to escape being swallowed up in the gulf of modern Bible criticism. What this gulf is that has been made by the critical spirit of the age may be seen from the study of the writings of Professor Davidson and those of Canon Driver. The former states, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*: "The Gospel of Matthew, as we have it now, could not have been written by Matthew." The present Gospel of Mark was not written by Mark, and its author is unknown. Luke did not write the Gospel of Luke. And of John's Gospel he remarks: "Its existence before 140 A. D. is incapable either of decision or probable showing. No certain traces of the existence of the Fourth Gospel can be found till after Justin Martyr, i.e., till after the middle of the second century." The same Christian writer, in his *Canon of the Bible*, says of the history of the New Testament: "One hundred and seventy years from the coming of Christ elapsed before the collection assumed a form that carried with it the idea of being *holy* and inspired. It is clear that the earliest Church fathers did not use the books of the New Testament as sacred documents clothed with divine authority, but followed for the most part, at least till the middle of the second century, apostolic tradition orally transmitted. Their decisions (the fathers') were much more the result of pious feeling biased by the theological speculations of the times, than the conclusions of a sound judgment. The very arguments they use to establish certain conclusions show weakness of perception. The men who first canonised them (the Gospels) had no certain knowledge of their authors."

Equally destructive of the old notions of the authority of the Bible is the criticism of Canon Driver. He rejects Ezra's account of how he was inspired to write the lost Bible, and also the Jewish account of who did write it. The Canon alleges that "no external evidence worthy of credit exists" as to the age and authorship of the Bible; that the writers of the historical books were compilers, not original authors; that Isaiah was not the writer of several chapters ascribed to him, for they were written by "another prophet

writing towards the close of the Babylonian Captivity." The Song of Solomon is a dream, and the book of Job is a dramatic poem; we have no authentic tradition respecting the authorship of the Psalms, many of which were written much later than the time of either David or Solomon; and that the book of Daniel was written not earlier than 300 B.C., and probably 167—168 B.C. Such are a few samples of the pleadings offered, and the concessions made, by those Bible believers who, while recognising the literary defects of the book, still cling to it as if it were something more than an ordinary work and strive to bring it up to date. One fact should here be remembered. It is not only the nature of the criticism that has to be considered, but the position of the persons who offer it. They all profess to be Christians. It cannot, therefore, be urged that the "malice of unbelief" has prompted the criticism here adduced.

Finally, then, in judging the Bible up to date, we agree with the present Bishop of London, that it is not in the Bible that we discover "the forms of local government which in England have saved liberty and elsewhere have mitigated despotism. . . . It is in the history of Rome rather than in the Bible that we find our models of precepts of political duty and especially of the duty of patriotism. . . . To the Greeks we owe the corrective which conscience needs to borrow from nature." Yet to Secularists the Bible has its value, for it presents to our view the sayings and doings of men who were supposed to be under "the influence of the Lord," and it serves as a beacon, warning us against committing similar errors. But, inasmuch as this book has been used as a weapon of oppression by despots, as an instrument of cruelty by priests, and as an opponent of science by theologians, we must discriminate the useful in its contents from the useless, the good from the bad, and the noble from the ignoble. Further, we must test its teachings by the standard of modern thought—that thought which now rules the empire of man, which is also the foe of the Church, the enemy of idolatry, and the precursor of the happiness and progress of the world.

CHARLES WATTS.

CONSTRUCTIVE SIDE OF FREETHINKING.

FREETHOUGHT in ethical and religious questions is, in truth, no more destructive than constructive. Freethought requires a mind which accepts all demonstrated truth, rejects all demonstrated falsehood, credits or discredits the undemonstrable according to the known facts, studies all things, and remains open to conviction through new studies of the unknown or keener analyses of the known. Freethought is the attitude of a mind in search of all truth, and loyal to it when found. It may be as much constructive as destructive, for truth is not universal negation, but a constructive affirmation of what is.

The attitude of orthodoxy is more responsible for the iconoclastic position of Freethinking than the character of Freethought itself, for when thought first leaped the narrow limits of creed and dogma, and asked for a broader, surer basis of truth, the partisans of orthodoxy pertinaciously defended their creeds and articles. This was to have been expected, for evolution of world-thought is slow. If thought were destined to be free, and all minds might be open to the truth, the whole fabric of creedism as such, with its limitations upon progressive, critical inquiry, must first be swept away. This put the stigma of iconoclasm upon Freethought, but the debris of falling systems must be cleared away before the new and more vital can be reared.

To-day, when dogma is broadening out to express the truth, when creed is merging into broader brotherhood of faith, when synods are reconstructing the confessions, when the first battles for freedom and truth are all but one, this stigma still remains. Many good men earnestly ask: When you have swept away Bibles, traditions, creeds, articles, rites and orders, what have you left us? When you have separated the dross, where is the gold? When you have demolished all those things which have been held as the sanctions

of virtue and good citizenship, the basis of all that is good and imperishable in this life and that which is to come, on what must the whole social fabric rest, and how stable is that basis?

Constructive Freethinking owes the world an answer.

We must think clearly. Two questions are involved. Is a belief in the plenary inspiration of the Hebrew Bible, with an acceptance of those creeds, articles, and rites which have been built upon it, an essential basis of all or any part of morals and religion? The second question depends upon the answer to the first. If it is an essential basis, it may and must be abandoned. Then what is the essential basis?

It is notorious that many who cannot be impeached with Freethinking, who are extremists in defending the Church creeds and traditions, are not even virtuous men and good citizens, while many of our noblest men, with broadest charities, most just and upright in all things, are among the Agnostics.

The expectation of heaven and the fear of hell may incite some to goodness and restrain some from evil, but it is a purchased or a cringing virtue at the best. The man who does a good act or refrains from an evil, solely because the civil law *commands it under penalty*, is a criminal at heart, and no possible interpretation of his purpose can make his act a virtue. Ask any good citizen of this Republic why he respects the property and person of his neighbor, and so refrains from cheating, forging, theft, arson, lying, slander, assault and murder; is it because the law hangs over these crimes its threatenings of fines, imprisonment, death, and their attendant disgrace of family and kindred? No, he has not even thought of the civil law. He has followed the law of his own conscience and judgment, which is paramount. So it is in religious bodies. Those who live the noblest, truest lives, in the fullest consecration to some blessed purpose, never think of heaven or hell as a motive, but are actuated by the strong impulse of love which springs up within them, and is its own ever-present reward and perpetuator. Common virtue and common humanity, as well as the most exalted, never did and never will rest upon anything else than the impulse and judgment of the human mind.

Creeds may be needed to fix the faith of a few, and penalties may still serve to restrain those who, by their unfortunate constitution, are not a law unto themselves; but, as men grow out of creeds by a natural progress of elevation, the "law within themselves" assumes a paramount influence, and becomes a basis for as much nobility of purpose, and richness of moral and spiritual life, as the old biblical basis ever could support. It might be disastrous to those who have known no other basis of life than the Bible to sweep that away, but few, *very few* if any, absolutely reject the authority of Bible, Church and creed, until they have grown out of and beyond the need of that authority.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

Most heterodox church, ethical-culturists, advanced Freethinkers, Rationalists, and Agnostics have outgrown the creeds by this progressive growth. If all men should attain to such a state, the mission of creeds and inspired books would be closed forever.

The religious creeds are not the real basis, and rarely, if ever, have been the real basis of moral conduct, though they formed a seeming (yet, in truth, unreal) centre of the religious aspirations. These, including faith and worship, are as legitimate expressions of the human mind as the conscience, and are a part of the "law within."

Many thinking men have learned these lessons, and are courageously changing bases, while the rest distrustfully await the inevitable result of progress.

It is now evident that our answer to the second question must be an enlarged definition of the "law within," for growth of thought always has made this the real basis.

This Conscience, the "God within the mind," the "Law written in the heart," the "Light within," which we must define, is a double function, or combination of functions, of the mind. It is, emotionally, an impulse and desire to do all good; it is also intellectual judgment of what the good is.

The impulse is a *sine qua non* of Christian character. If any man is found wanting in this, no creed, no articles, no confession, no profession, or solemn lip-service, can make him an exemplary Christian. This is the shame of the churches, that they insist upon faith as the one essential of salvation, and accept within their body many whose looseness of moral principle is a reproach before the world. The melancholy evidence comes from all the churches, that without this impulse toward righteousness, the creed, the Bible, the faith, even God, cannot make them exemplary Christians. If any man have this impulse, he may cast aside all other sanctions of righteousness, for he is a "law unto himself," and could not be richer in faith, hope, and good works, as an orthodox churchman. Such need only enlightenment. He need only to learn what is duty. The judgment must discern the true moral basis and its development into practical ethics and religion. This done, all is done.

Here is the true and immutable basis of ethics and religion, the centre of constructive Freethought. This we offer in lieu of the Bible and its authority, believing that the created facts of God, revealed to our own intelligence, are of more binding authority than any assumed revelation, coming from the lips of priests and prophets centuries ago.

This is the basis which shall enlighten the judgment. Man is a part of the cosmic order, and past or present sinning cannot have affected his position in it. Degradation of his nature by an Edenic fall cannot be admitted. Then, *wherever man sustains a relation to the Universal Order, therein lies a duty*, an obligation which cannot be violated without evil. We might have taken the teleological argument, but, for brevity, we assume its logical consequence as our ethical first principle.

These relations are easily determined, and the duties which inhere in them may be grouped as follows. He owes:

To the Universe or God, the creator and preserver, a reverent and willing submission to all laws, physical, mental and moral, and an active, not merely passive, existence.

To himself, self-preservation, culture, happiness, and self-perpetuation.

To wife, chaste, exclusive love, personal liberty, and equal opportunities of life and development.

To children, pure, healthy bodies and minds, proper care and development in infancy, fullest preparation for entrance upon all the rights and privileges of mature life, and wise counsel in all things.

To fellow men, unabridged rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and co-operation in securing mutual benefits.

To the State, good citizenship, active effort in forming and executing just and equal laws, and conformity to every law, until by reformatory education public thought shall alter it.

To the Past, a cherishing of all that is good in the social fabric, in philosophical, ethical, religious, political, and economic thought, and a rejection of all that is useless or evil.

To the Future, all the progress of which he is capable. He should bequeath more than the legacy of the Past.

To the Race, all that he owes to his God but submission. He owes self-culture, a full active life, a strong, pure manhood, and a broad catholic spirit in all things, that he may be a factor in the evolution of a crowning order of life.

These thoughts may be expanded into volumes. They rest upon the "law within," and are an ever-present, authoritative code to the developed man.

But what of faith, worship, prayer? They are but attitudes of the human spirit toward the great Unknown, the Infinite, the Universe, God.

And what of immortality? If there is to be no future of reward and retribution, what force will the

"law within" have over us? "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." This is but another form of the old question of sanctions. Belief in immortality has nothing to do with the moral acts of men. If there is a future state, it must be a complement to the present. A full, complete earth-life must insure a fitting entrance upon the spirit-life. Our duties and opportunities all lie here. Our motives and sanctions all are here. And our rewards are all here. If immortality is true (and most of us believe it in some form), we shall enter upon it prepared for all its opportunities and enjoyments. If it is but a beautiful dream of the ages, we shall go down to the dust, our bodies dissolving into the elements, our lives breathing into nothing. We shall go to nothing dreadful. The mission of our life will be ended.

—*Freethinkers' Magazine.* JOHN W. SHULL.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

WHOEVER Her Majesty's ministers may decide to appoint as our national Poet Laureate, Algernon Charles Swinburne has won his place as the laureate of world-wide freedom. The Republican and Freethought poet is of aristocratic descent, being the son of Admiral Swinburne and a daughter of the Earl of Ashburnham. He was born April 5, 1837, and was educated at Oxford. His poetic career commenced with the publication, in 1860, of two plays, *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamond*, and from then till now he has poured forth a succession of plays, poems, and essays of enduring value. The first work showing the stamp of genius was his *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), a splendid reproduction of Greek tragedy, full of original power and interspersed with pieces of great lyrical beauty. This was followed by *Poems and Ballads*, which were severely censured for their passion and unconventionality. He contributed to the *Fortnightly Review*, and therein appeared his magnificent "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic." Swinburne is the Titian of verse, and all his characteristic harmony and richness of color appear in his *Songs Before Sunrise*, in which he glorifies Freethought and Republicanism. For force, fire, imagery, and mastery of most varied metres, this work is unsurpassed. It is dedicated to Mazzini, to whom also he has a fine allusion in his tragedy, *Marino Faliero*. Two Freethought poems in the *Songs Before Sunrise*—"Before a Crucifix" and "A Hymn of Man"—must be signalled as instinct with fine feeling and the enthusiasm of humanity. A second series of *Poems and Ballads* appeared in 1878, and this has been followed by *Songs of the Springtides*, *Studies in Song*, *A Century of Roundels*, and a third series of *Poems and Ballads*, all displaying a luxuriant wealth of jewelled language. Among larger works are *Erechtheus*, a trilogy of plays on *Chastelard*, *Bohwell*, and *Mary Stuart*, and *Tristram of Lyonesse*, a volume which contains a fine Pagan ode on Athens. Swinburne's merits as a prose writer and critic are equally great. Ever ready with generous praise for all greatness of soul and detestation for all that is mean, canting and sordid, his *Essays and Studies* are delightful reading. To the *Encyclopædia Britannica* he contributed excellent studies of Congreve, Keats, Landor, and Marlowe. Some of these with other essays are published in *Miscellanies* (1886). He has also published a note on Charlotte Brontë, an essay on Blake, a fine introduction to the works of George Chapman, and separate studies on Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Victor Hugo, all full of rare appreciation of what is best in the world of literature and thought. All his work is characterised by an impassioned love of freedom and nobility of mind, and by a fervid belief in the possibilities of humanity.

ACID DROPS.

John Burns at a prayer meeting! It does sound funny. This is how it happened. John took part in the opening of Battersea Town Hall, and before Lord Rosebery's speech the local choral societies sang a hymn, after which Canon Clarke read a prayer. Happily the solemnity of that bit of humbug did not infuse itself into Lord Rosebery's address, and we do not read that John said "Amen."

Le Soleil, an Orleanist paper, which stands up for God and the King, or rather the King and God, says that a nation cannot do great things without a belief in deity. "An army," it declares, "which did not believe in God and immortality would run away at the first sound of cannon." Would it though? The Catholic Monarchists will find themselves mistaken if they ever have to fight Atheist Republicans.

Professor Drummond, of the Free Church College, Glasgow, is taxed with being an Atheist. The person who taxes him with this awful crime is Alexander Robertson, who lets out at the Professor in a four-page pamphlet, for which he asks one penny. Professor Drummond adheres to Darwinism, and Mr. Robertson says that this means "No God," and involves the "overthrow of all moral responsibility." We agree with the first half of this statement. With regard to the second, we daresay Professor Drummond is as honest as Mr. Robertson.

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon, said Jesus Christ. But, according to *Truth*, there is a vicar in North Wales who, in addition to serving the Lord, is in partnership with relatives in the following businesses: hotel proprietor, cab proprietor, furniture remover, proprietor of saw-mills, joiner, blacksmith, wheelwright, painter, paperhanger, miller, grocer, baker, miner, and toll-keeper. A busy man, indeed! But how much time does he spend in the Lord's vineyard?

"That there are so few ardently religious doctors," says a Christian contemporary, "is one of the mysteries of psychology." Mystery, indeed! Why the wonder is that any doctor is religious at all. Doctors are brought face to face with facts, which are generally the death of religion.

Another murderer is bound for glory. James Stone, who killed a man, his wife and children in cold blood at Washington, Indiana, is one of the elect. When arrested he invited the officers to family prayers, afterwards he said he would go with them. He has left the following letter to his wife and children:—"Dear Cecillia, Sallie, Ezra and Harry,—I don't think I will ever see your faces again. Raise the children to fear God. I will tell you to-day I am happy in the Savior's love. I sought Christ yesterday, yesterday evening, and all last night. I found him precious to my soul and am now ready to die, and am a happy man. Please meet me in heaven, all of you. Tell Cecillia to write to me as soon as she gets this, and that she did just right in telling the truth on me to the Grand Jury. I am saved. Pray for me Cecillia. Good-bye.—JOHN E. STONE"

Heaven with its old polygamists, Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon, never had much of a reputation, but it must be losing any attraction it ever had for self-respecting people. Nearly every murderer who has been hung for years has asserted he is bound there. When Stone is jerked to Jesus, he will find plenty of his own kind awaiting him, and together they may look down across the gulf at the torments of their victims writhing below.

Doe Taylor, another murderer who was jerked to Jesus at the Wise Court-house, Virginia, on Oct. 27, was so thoroughly prepared for the celestial mansion, that he made a little speech on the scaffold as his own funeral oration. He began by saying—"I am going to a place where there is nobody drunk as there are here, and I shall hear no vulgar oaths as I hear here. Some of you are ripe for hell."

Dr. J. Lawrence Hamilton, M.R.C.S., who is by birth a Jew, denounces the Jewish practice of slaughtering by throat-cutting. He says, writing to *Vanity Fair*, "To accept and applaud the dietary of the dirty, foul, filth-feeding ancient Egyptians, whose senseless superstitions were accidentally adopted and incorporated into the Jewish ritual, and to state that these food laws are still superlatively superior to the up-to-date knowledge of modern scientists and food experts is ridiculous. One might as well consult Adam on agriculture, Cain on chemistry, Noah on navigation, Sara on the sewing machine, or Moses on microbes."

On the subject of cattle killing, the Mosaic law orders that for fatally goring a person, an ox shall be stoned to death (Exod. xxi. 28—38). Again, "If a firstling of an ass shall not be redeemed, then thou shalt break his neck" (Exod. xiii. 13). Paul might well ask, "Doth God take care for oxen?" (1 Cor. ix. 19). As to food regulations, the divine character of the law in Deut. xiv. 21 cannot be too sufficiently extolled: "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it to an alien."

One of "our friends the enemy" issues a tract entitled "Professor Huxley Confirming the Bible Word for Word,"

pretending to give extracts from Huxley's writings. A copy was sent to the Professor, who writes that the "extracts" are all impudent forgeries save one, and that is garbled. No wonder Herder said Christian veracity was to be compared to Panic faith.

A correspondent of the *Times* writes from Jerusalem:— "Whilst the Latin monks were assembled in the Grotto of the Nativity, Bethlehem, in the afternoon of October 26, a Montenegrin jannissary entered the Grotto with two Russian gentlemen. The Latin worshippers made signs to the jannissary to retire, but he paid no notice, and as he was making his way to the manger one of the monks interposed and threw him to the ground. He managed to rise and struck the monk with his stick, whereupon another monk came forward with a heavy bunch of keys, and struck him on the head, wounding him severely. Seeing himself surrounded by monks, he drew his revolver and fired at his opponents three shots, killing one instantly and wounding two others severely. The two Russian tourists declare that the monks fired first. Turkish soldiers stationed at Bethlehem to prevent collisions between the rival communities, which are of frequent occurrence, hastened to the place and prevented further disturbance."

Lobengula sent three envoys to the white men's camp; two of them were slain, and the third narrowly escaped with his life. Lobengula's capital has been taken by the white men, who found the white traders and missionaries all protected by the king's order. Still, Lobengula is a bloodthirsty savage. There can be no doubt about it. The white men say so, and they are Christians. That's enough, isn't it? Who says No? Blasphemous wretch! To hell with him! And now let's get on with the slaughter.

Canon Fleming, chaplain to the Queen, is a good type of the flunkey preacher. His funeral sermon on the Duke of Clarence was every way worthy of his parasitical profession. Recently this man of God preached at Stockport, and of course he retailed anecdotes about "Prince Eldie." It appears that two hours before his death the young man rose on his elbow and exclaimed, "Who's that calling me?" and his mother answered, "It's Jesus." Well, that's more than she knew. We should say the "calling" was a result of delirium. Canon Fleming perhaps thinks so too, under the rose; but he is not likely to say so to the flats he addresses from the pulpit.

What is the matter with the *Weekly Sun*? Some time ago the great "Tay Pay" had to apologise to Mrs. Bonner for a gross misrepresentation of her father, yet in last week's issue the offence was repeated in a manner that looks positively malicious. Under the heading "A Bradlaugh Reminiscence" it devotes a quarter of a column to the recent correspondence between Mrs. Bonner and the Rev. Allen Rees. Will it be believed that the *Sun* gives the story told by the reverend gentlemen, and the full text of Sir Isaac Holden's "interesting" supplement, without a single word of Mrs. Bonner's refutation? Nay, that it does not so much as hint that Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter regards the story as false? Really the Christian mind seems absolutely incurable in the matter of unverity. It uses the *suppressio veri* and the *suggestio falsi* with equal ease, apparently thinking that all is fair against "infidelity."

The worst of a pious fraud is that exposure does not kill it. It will survive if it serves the turn. Nothing in the world, said Ingersoll, flourishes like a good, sound, healthy religious lie. This monstrous falsehood about Charles Bradlaugh lauding a brother he despised, and wavering in his Atheism before his death, will probably become a stock tract of Christian societies. It is easy enough to see how the lies about Voltaire and Paine came into vogue. Orthodoxy did not inquire whether they were true; it was satisfied that they were useful.

The Rev. W. J. Jenkins, of Stone-villas, Muswell Hill, Hornsey, and suspended rector of Fillingham, Norfolk, is always getting into rows. Last week he was summoned before the Highbgate Police-court, and fined ten shillings and costs for taking off the cap of a plumber who came to work at his house, and throwing it into the muddy road. The plumber had explained that it was usual to wear a cap when engaged on dirty work, but the man of God, who was

himself wearing a Tam o' Shanter, found such conduct insufferable in his presence.

Miss Jessie Ackerman, President of the Australian Women's Christian Temperance Union, says that an intelligent Chinaman said to her, "You send with one hand salvation, which reaches one of my countrymen, and with the other damnation, which reaches thousands." (Cheers). She was once asked what people needed missionaries most. Her reply was that she had visited almost every heathen country, and her conviction was that there were no people on God's broad earth who were more in need of missionaries than the Christian lawmakers of America and England. (Cheers).

Captain Young, said to be the son of a clergyman, is now doing five years' penal servitude. For a long time he had been swindling ladies, and occasionally seducing them. At Tooting he lived in patriarchal style with four women. One of his victims he got acquainted with at church. There will be no ladies in the church he will attend for the next few years.

Fanny Phillips, while at a Sunday-school connected with St. Bartholomew's Church, Lstwithiel, fell down and died. Nothing hangs to it, of course; but if it had occurred in a Secular meeting-place it would have occasioned a lot of pious outpourings.

Dr. Clement Clemance has been extolling the Bible at Tonbridge, and displaying his ignorance by making it corroborated by the Tel el Amarna Tables. But he fears that the pressure of modern literature and science are crowding the Bible out. He asked his hearers to "study the Bible discriminately." We hope they will do so, and if they don't let it crowd out modern literature and science it will soon cease to hold the exalted position which it held formerly.

A high-colored "infidel-slayer" has been lecturing at Huddersfield. His meetings have been held at the Victoria Hall. The Secularists have applied for the use of the same building, and have been told that it cannot be let for such a purpose. It is open for Christians to attack Secularism, even with the grossest personalities; it is not open for Secularism to defend itself. Such is Christian justice!

Mr. Gladstone wired to Hawarden—"Coal strike over, thank God." What the deuce had "God" to do with it? Perhaps the G. O. M. meant "thank Rosebery."

A man calling himself W. Jones, and representing himself as known to Mr. C. Lewis, of Crewe, has been seeking assistance from Mr. Scroton, a Freethinker at Rushden. Mr. Lewis states that the Cheshire Branch has no knowledge of the said W. Jones. Friends in the Midlands will please take note of this fact.

We take this opportunity to warn N.S.S. Branches against arranging for debates between any of their representatives and Dr. Duffy, who has taken part in such discussions at Camberwell and Manchester. There are reasons why Dr. Duffy should not stand upon a Freethought platform—even as a Christian.

A tract has been sent us, written by the Rev. A. F. W. Ingram, head of the Oxford House, Bethnal Green. It is No. 1 of Addresses to Working Lads, and the subject is "The Manliness of Religion." There is a reference in it to the Greely expedition. Parson Ingram says there was only one member of the company who gave any trouble, and "he was an unbeliever." This man, he says, stole food even from the dying, and gorged himself, and was sick before their dying eyes. Of course the moral is that all unbelievers are wretches.

Well, it is equally true to say that all parsons are honest. Our sub-editor has taken the trouble to go to the British Museum and look through Greely's *Three Years of Arctic Service*, and he finds that there was a private called Charles B. Henry who was shot by Greely's orders. He was a "huge man" weighing 203 pounds, and no doubt he suffered more than his comrades from the shortness of the rations; anyhow he purloined some food from the stores. But our sub-editor is unable to find any statement to the effect that he was an "unbeliever." We therefore invite Parson Ingram to explain.

Truth says, "In the village of Brockworth, Gloucestershire, feeling has recently run very high between the High Church and Low Church parties. The vicar and the High Church party being in the ascendant, the Protestant Union sent out lay-readers to hold private religious meetings. A cottage where such meetings were held was occupied by a woman whose son was gardener to a lady connected with the High Church party. This son was actually informed that his mother must stop the meetings at her cottage, or he must take lodgings in another house, and undertake not to support his mother out of his pay. The young man naturally declined to accept either alternative. As a consequence he was summarily dismissed from his situation. Such is the extent to which liberty of conscience prevails in rural England in 1893."

Particulars of the recent floods in Japan show that the loss of life and property has been about equivalent to that in a small war. Houses and bridges were swept away, and vessels wrecked wholesale. God was working his spite upon the heathen.

God has been planting his footprints on the sea and riding on the storm lately, wrecking a number of vessels and crashing down chimneys and roofs to the damage of life and property. The wildest freebooters never indulged in the wanton destruction which are his everyday performances.

Lao Sessler, one of the most remarkable sculptors of Hungary, has been found dead in a hovel from starvation. The statues of the twelve apostles in the Budapest Cathedral were executed by him. The apostles are all as dead as their stone images or they would have looked after their sculptor.

Civilisation marches ahead among the heathen. The once temperate Japanese now have twenty-five breweries. Here is another chance for wealthy clergymen who cannot invest sufficiently with Allsopp and Guinesses.

The Bishop of Calcutta has every rupee of his salary, which is paid for out of the India funds, at the old valuation of 2s. 2d. per rupee, the present value being only 1s. 4d. No matter how silver may fall, the man of God claims to be paid with golden guineas.

The Duke of Grafton thinks rules and regulations are necessary for the persons who rent allotments from him, and his grace apparently has given the task of drawing them up to his chaplain. They are prohibited from working in their plots on Sunday and Christmas and "each tenant and his family is expected to attend some place of worship on such days with regularity." Apparently his grace considers himself both lord of the soil and of those whose rent he condescends to take.

Colonel Frobisher, speaking at Dartford, said that at a Ritualist Church a lady had the misfortune to spill some of the sacramental wine upon the floor, whereupon the clergyman and some devotees set to work and licked up the wine with their tongues. They must have loved their Jesus.

Madame Blavatsky knew the world well. She was aware that human credulity is a bottomless pit, and that any nonsense could be palmed off on the devotees of the mysterious. When she was writing the "Secret Doctrine"—or rather when she was *helping* to write it—she told the Countess Wachmeister—"If I need a reference or information from some book, I fix my mind intently, and the astral counterpart of the book appears, and from it I take what I need." Somehow, though, the Blavatsky took the trouble to have her references looked up in material libraries. The "astral counterparts" were not sufficiently trustworthy.

Charles Bradlaugh had keen powers of perception and a tenacious memory, and he always declared that when he was struggling with twelve policemen in the precincts of the House of Commons he heard Sir Robert Fowler cry "Kick him out! Kick him out!" Now this Sir Robert, as might be surmised, was a very pious Tory. His biographer says that he "devoted a considerable portion of every day to private meditation, prayer, and Bible reading," and that he "never took part in any important division in the House without commending the cause to God."

London gives the following figures of some of our City churches:

	Attendance.	Sittings.
St. Dunstan-in-the-East	17	700
St. Margaret Pattens	36	450
St. Swithin, Cannon-street	15	300
St. Catherine Coleman	13	240
St. Edmund-the-King... ..	31	200
St. Mary Woolnoth	10	650
St. Mary Abchurch	12	200
St. Stephen's, Walbrook	13	400
St. Andrew Undershaft	45	500
St. Catherine Cree	36	500
St. Helen, Bishopsgate	24	750
St. Peter-le-Poer	28	650

Here are twelve churches, handsomely endowed, and kept going for 280 people, most of whom are probably Church paupers. Good old Church of England!

Sir R. Temple, Mr. Athelstan Riley, and the other obscurantists of the London School Board, are already calling on the Church to prepare for the elections of next year. It won't be their fault if the compromise of 1870 is not upset, but perhaps the final result may not redound to the advantage of the clericals. They will fight to the utmost to retain their hold on children's minds, but they cannot hinder either the spread of education, or of democratic control. The more the question of religion in the schools is stirred, the better. There are also the questions of sectarian training colleges, and the public audit of the accounts of all schools in receipt of public money, which should be kept before the eyes of ratepayers.

Quent the Bishop of Oxford's frank declaration that the church must be sectarian in the sense of teaching its own formularies, the *Reading Observer* says, "By all means let the members of the Church of England throw over the Bible and believe in the Catechism; let them, if they please, advocate their views to the utmost of their ability; but let it not be at the expense of the nation, half of whom repudiate the doctrine and reject the teaching of the Church."

Emperor William seems to have suffered another bad attack of piety. He is reported to have told the last lot of recruits sworn-in that they should all have one will, namely *his* will; and know only one law, namely *his* law. "I require Christian soldiers," he exclaimed, "who say their Lord's Prayer." No doubt Christian soldiers are the best props of despotism. After all, the Emperor is not such a fool.

The Queen "regrets" that she cannot subscribe to the fund for relieving the wives and children of the locked-out miners. Why, certainly.

"Thank God we have a House of Lords." Well, no doubt it is a great blessing, but somehow the blessing is rather mixed. For instance, the Earl of Rothes has just been fined for brutally ill-treating a cat. He is only a student at present, and perhaps he will improve. Still, it is not exactly cheerful to think that he will one day lord it over the British nation. We know, of course, that in the Church of England service there is a prayer in regular use, that God will be pleased to endue the lords of the council and all the nobility with grace, wisdom, and understanding—and God knows they want it. The Lord doesn't seem to attend to that prayer. He thinks twice before damning a person of quality, and a thousand times before giving him a fair share of common sense.

"Meekness is sometimes angry," says the Rev. J. Bernard Snell, "and even patience has sometimes to strike." Quite true, Mr. Snell, quite true. We only object to the "sometimes." Meekness is *always* angry. It is the most malicious thing in the world, especially when it encounters a smiling "infidel." Then meekness cries "Police!" and groans to think that thumbscrews, axes, and stakes are no longer available.

"None but empty hands can grasp a full Christ." So says the Rev. Thomas Cook, the evangelist. Then it is all up with evangelists, unless Christ gets thinner. We never heard of an empty-handed one yet.

Whoever speaks to me of God, wants either my purse or my liberty.—*Joseph Pierre Proudhon.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 26, Ginnett's Circus, Northumberland-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne:—at 11, "Christ and Democracy"; at 7, "A Search for the Soul."

Monday, Nov. 27, Grantham's Assembly Rooms, Blyth, at 7.30, "The Doom of the Bible."

Tuesday, Nov. 28, Free Library Hall, South Shields, at 8, "Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: its Poetry, Philosophy, and Lessons."

Wednesday, Nov. 29, Free Library Hall, South Shields, at 8, "Christ and Democracy."

Thursday, Nov. 30, Ryhope. (No bill to hand.)

Friday, December 1, Co-operative Hall, Chester-le-Street, at 7.30, "Is Freethought Immoral? Reply to the Rev. H. H. Birly."

December 3, Leicester; 10, Liverpool; 11, Wolverhampton; 17 and 24, Hall of Science.

January 7 and 14, Hall of Science; 21, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

E. C. WALKER (New York).—The Married Women's Property Act.

J. BOWLING.—The statement in the tract shall be looked into. It is probably another sample of "Christian charity."

J. MARTIN (Derby).—The matter shall be seen to, and Mr. Foote will advise you by post.

ATHEIST.—(1) Shall be happy to receive the Bruno picture. Kindly send it to 14 Clerkenwell-green, E.C. (2) Send application for shares in the Hall of Science scheme to Miss E. M. Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

W. SCROXTON.—See "Acid Drops."

T. WYLE.—It is only a domestic squabble between rival Christian bodies. You know, they *do* love each other.

E. SMEDLEY.—We cannot argue the matter with you in this column. Our position is stated in the Preface to *Crimes of Christianity*. Persecution, even unto death, is the logical inevitable result of the doctrine of salvation by faith.

JAMES GALE.—Miss Vance will send you receipts. Thanks.

W. ASPIN.—The Psalmist said in his haste that all men are liars. Were he living now, amongst Christians, he might say it at leisure. There is not a word of truth in the story, current among your Christian friends at Royton, that Charles Bradlaugh died calling out for his brother, and that a policeman heard him at the door. Nor did such a story "appear in the papers." It is a recent invention. Charles Bradlaugh was unconscious for a long while before his death.

QUIZ.—(1) Of course the Bible comes to us through the Roman Catholics, as it is clear that they had it before the Protestants. But whether the Bible existed in "the earlier and middle ages" is quite another question. Professor Johnson contends that the whole of Christian literature is of very recent date, and, while we do not yet endorse his theory, we are bound to admit that there is very much to be said for it. (2) The Church of England Prayer-book is largely composed of translations from the old Roman missals. "Agnostic" does not mean "Ignoramus." The reverend gentleman who says so belongs to the latter class.

P. T. WHELAN.—Shall appear.

FREETHINKER.—The first passage occurs in Professor Newman's *Christianity in its Cradle*, the other in Lecky's *History of European Morals*. We have not heard of Mr. Cohen's being "put down" by the blackguard evangelist you mention.

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to hear that, despite the rough weather, you had good meetings at Leicester.

J. G. DOBSON.—See paragraphs. Mr. Foote will write. If the Christian Evidence man cannot get a Committee to adopt him as a representative, he and his fellow Christians have only themselves to blame for the non-arrangement of a debate. The President of the National Secular Society is not going to hold public discussions with persons who represent no one but themselves.

MRS. S. BENVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance, sec., acknowledges:—Wood Green Branch, 10s.

J. PILLBEAN.—Thanks for cuttings.

JOSEPH BROWN.—The Christian Evidence lecturer you mention is quite at liberty, like anyone else, to oppose Mr. Foote at Newcastle; only he will have to reply to what has been said in the lecture and refrain from vulgar personalities. It may be a hard task for him to do, but he will have to try.

F. J. BOORMAN.—A splendid victory. We congratulate Mr. Thompson. See "Sugar Plums."

G. ADAMS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

F. MARGETSON.—Glad to hear you are again in active service at Edmonton.

T. R. ROSCOLLAR.—Rev. J. Cockin simply says that Atheists do not believe in God and Immortality. There is nothing new in the statement. Had the reverend gentleman dwelt upon his future life, and said whether he expected to go to heaven or hell, we should have had something to criticise.

J. H. W.—It is rather stilted. Try to cultivate a fresher style, like that of superior conversation. More studied graces, and subtle effects, will come afterwards. The first great virtue in literature is simplicity. We shall be glad to hear from you when you are in India.

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—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—Secular Thought—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Watts's Literary Gazette—Isle of Man Times—Lucifer—Post—Durlam Free Press—Bolton Times—Bacup Times—Dundee Free Press—Birmingham Daily Post—San Francisco Morning Call—Boston Sunday Globe.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. B. 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.

The wretched weather thinned the audience a little at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, but not nearly so much as might have been expected. Mr. Forder took the chair, and drew attention to the *Freethinker* article on "Did Bradlaugh Backslide?" which he advised all Secularists to keep a copy of constantly by them. Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Churches and the Miners" was much appreciated, and he resumed his seat amidst a remarkable outburst of applause.

The morning lecturer at the Hall of Science to-day (Nov. 26) is Mr. George Bernard Shaw, his subject being "Individualist Socialism." Mr. Shaw is a Socialist who does not conceal his Atheism. He avows it at every suitable opportunity. He is a man of very bright intelligence, and dull people are apt to think him frivolous. But he is nothing of the kind; he is really a man of deep and earnest conviction. We hope, therefore, that he will have a good meeting and a hearty reception at the Hall of Science; indeed, we shall be quite annoyed if our friends do not muster strongly on this occasion. The admission, by the way, is free to all.

Mrs. Louisa Samson lectures at the Hall of Science in the evening. As a lady lecturer is a very agreeable variation in the program, we have no doubt there will be a good meeting, if only the clerk of the weather is in a tolerable good temper. Mrs. Samson's subject is "The Bible and Modern Ethics."

The severe cold and heavy storm that prevailed in Manchester last Sunday affected Mr. Charles Watts' audiences at his three lectures in that city. We are glad, however, to hear that the warmth of his reception somewhat compensated our colleague for the extreme coldness of the day. His address upon his late visit to America was listened to with great attention, and enthusiastically applauded.

This Sunday evening, November 26, Mr. Watts lectures in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, upon his recent American experiences. We hope to hear that our friend has had a good audience. The lecture commences at 7 o'clock.

Mr. Foote's lecturing tour on the Tyneside will be conducted on the new system. There are to be free seats at every meeting. Mr. Foote takes nothing but the surplus after deducting expenses from the proceeds, and he can

hardly be expected to do more than cover his railway and hotel bills. He expects, however, to introduce the *Freethinker* to fresh readers.

Referring to Mr. Foote's lecture at South Shields on Shakespeare's "Hamlet," the writer of "Round the Town Notes" in the *Free Press* pays the lecturer some handsome compliments, and adds—"I am looking forward to the 23th with much pleasure, and I shall be surprised if the hall is not well filled." The Mayor has kindly consented to preside.

Dr. T. R. Allinson lectures to-day (Nov. 26) at Wolverhampton—morning and evening. In the afternoon he lectures at Dudley. We hope the Freethinkers in both towns will go to hear him.

London Freethinkers should remember the Ball and Entertainment at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, Dec. 6. There will be every opportunity for spending a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Dancing will go on in the large hall, and a concert, etc., in the minor hall. The tickets are one shilling. Any profit will go into the N.S.S. exchequer. We hope there will be a large attendance.

Mr. Symes is going to pay another visit to New Zealand, and will probably call at Sydney on the way. We hope his journey may contribute to the spread of the Freethought Gospel.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Bayliss lectured for the first time for the Liverpool Branch, taking as his theme "Voltaire." The lecturer showed that he had been an enthusiastic student of Voltaire's writings, and the intellectual treat was much appreciated. Mr. Bayliss was congratulated by his friends on the fact that he has just taken his B.A. degree at London University. The Branch has secured another valuable recruit to the band of local speakers, in Mr. Ernest Newman, of the *Free Review*, who will make his *debut* early in the new year.

In connection with the Chester Branch of the N.S.S., the second of a course of six lectures was delivered by Mr. F. Goodier, on "Is Unbelief a Sin?" The audience was good, the collection was better, and the Chester Branch is to be congratulated on the success it is achieving in this hotbed of orthodoxy. The third lecture of the series (a historical one on Greece) will be given on Sunday, Dec. 3, by Mr. Bathcote, of Crewe.

On Tuesday evening next (Nov. 23), at 7.30, a meeting of local Secularists will be held in Room No. 9 of the Friendly and Trade Societies' Club, Northumberland-street, Huddersfield. The object is to reorganise the local N.S.S. Branch in order to carry on a more effective propaganda of Freethought. We hope that every Secularist in Huddersfield who sees this notice will make a point of attending the meeting. Any one who cannot attend can send a subscription to the secretary, Mr. J. G. Dobson.

E. P. Powell has an appreciative "Study of Thomas Paine" in the *New York Arena*. He paints graphically from the particulars supplied by Mr. Conway the ingratitude of America towards the great champion of her independence.

Some Freethinkers of Cuba have formed themselves into a group, named after Victor Hugo. A journal is published in Spanish at Santiago called *The Spirit of the Age*.

A new Freethought journal has seen the light of day. This time in the West Indies. *La Antorcha del Libre Pensamiento* is its name, and the place of publication is Havana, Cuba. We wish it all prosperity.

Progress continues to come from Port of Spain, Trinidad. It appears that plain clothes policemen bought the first number to take opinion as to whether it could be prosecuted. The result was unfavorable to the bigots.

Mr. J. C. Drenon, 128 Dean-street, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., promises to trace lost relatives or friends in America for any of our readers free of charge. Inquirers must give full particulars and state they are actual readers of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Drenon was a well-known member of the N.W. London Branch of the N.S.S. from 1882 to 1890

The Edmonton Branch is carrying on Sunday evening lectures in the Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver-street. Mr. Sam Standing is delivering the first four lectures. All seats are free, and discussion is invited.

The Sunday Music Society opened its season last Sunday afternoon in Ginnett's Circus, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Notwithstanding the storm, five hundred persons were present, and Mr. R. Smith's band gave great satisfaction.

Mr. W. B. Thompson, secretary of the Chatham Branch, has won a glorious victory. He has secured the third place on the list of successful candidates for the new Gillingham School Board. Two clericals are above him, but more clericals are below him. Mr. Thompson ran on the "Secular" ticket, and was preached against from the pulpits, especially by the Rev. R. Morris, of St. Mark's Church. Mr. Morris said, "He would not speak of Atheists and Infidels. He would not insult his hearers by warning them against the candidature of an avowed Atheist, a blasphemer of their God. Indelible disgrace would fall upon their church and parish if the election of such were possible. He would pass it over as an impossible event." Mr. Morris is a student of the Bible, which is full of impossible things; he should therefore have been prepared to see the impossible happen near Chatham. Anyhow it has happened. Mr. Morris's church and parish has to put up with the "indelible disgrace." What is worse, he has to sit on the Board with the Atheist; and, as there are only nine members, they cannot get very far away from each other. We congratulate Mr. Thompson; we condole with Mr. Morris.

The new Dundee Branch appears to be making good progress. Last Sunday afternoon it gave an excellent concert, and in the evening Mr. Harkis, of Aberdeen, lectured on "Secularism and the Popular Faith." The hall was crowded on both occasions.

The Ipswich Branch is trying the experiment of a stationed lecturer, having engaged Mr. James for a month's trial. He begins his work to-day at Ipswich, and will not only lecture there in future but also in the surrounding districts. Application for his services should be made to Mr. A. G. Soper, 14 Queen-street.

John Morley as a Freethinker is the title of a new pamphlet by Mr. Foote just issued from our publishing office. It is a very careful statement of Mr. Morley's religious attitude, illustrated by striking extracts from his writings. The pamphlet should be both interesting and useful, and Secularists might lend it to their more orthodox friends with great advantage. It will do such persons good to learn by something more than mere word of mouth, that one of the principal members of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet is a thorough Freethinker.

More than a month ago every copy of the *Freethinker* had inserted in it a prospectus of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited). The result was the receipt by the secretary of a good many fresh applications for shares. To repeat this insertion of prospectuses would be too costly. A new plan has therefore been adopted. Our readers will find a Form of Application for Shares in our advertisement columns, and intending shareholders can cut it out from the page, fill it in, and forward to the secretary with a remittance. This will save a world of trouble, not to say expense; and the advertisement will be kept standing for several weeks.

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* new 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. Fordel will send them on application.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

MR. G. J. HOLYOAKE'S LETTER TO THE INTERNATIONAL FREETHOUGHT CONGRESS AT CHICAGO. (Read by Mr. WATTS.)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I am far enough away to be a Mahatma, but I have no pretensions that way. I know no ghosts, I see no spirits, and, like the Prophet Esdras, can only address you on "things of this world, and such as pass before me in daily life." Mr. Charles Watts, the representative of Free and Secular thought from Great Britain, who will deliver this message for me, is known as an Unsettler of Opinion. That is the name given to those whose aim is to substitute new opinion for old—better for bad. The American poet Whittier owned that he once turned the crank of an opinion mill. I have worked in a similar way a good portion of my life; and, provided good material is used and the work turned out with good finish, opinion-making is as honest and useful a business as any going; and I hope your Chicago Congress will increase the demand for such produce.

In these days, when competition of all kinds is admitted on all hands to be more incessant, sharper, and more engrossing than ever, prudent people are obliged to be more economical than formerly in order to live. Every day there is less and less time to believe in creed, and that of Christianity is the most ponderous, complex, and conflicting in the world. The Moslem creed is better suited to the exigencies of business—you believe in Allah and have done with it. It takes threefold more time to believe in three gods than to believe in one. It takes even preachers—who have nothing else to do—years to adjust the preferential claims of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to the ruinous neglect of secular duties—not to mention original sin, incarnation, salvation by faith, and other engrossing perplexities, which absorb an unconscionable amount of time. Therefore, whoever assists in simplifying Christianity and reducing its time-wasting tenets economises human life and acts in accordance with the spirit of the age. Our English delegate therefore comes to you as an apostle of mental economy and progress.

For myself, I pray, in such imperfect way vouchsafed to me, that your International Congress may advance the principles of intellectual brevity and truth which they represent.

With greetings and regards, I am, very faithfully yours,
GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

THE NEW GOD.

The old idea that God is a person, a being with parts and passions, is not generally acquiesced in by the more intelligent believers in divinity to-day. To have a personal God everywhere would leave room nowhere for anybody or anything else. It is seen that such a God is impossible. But it will not do to give up God altogether. There must be some kind of a deity to fool the people with. God is better than a lottery. More men are getting a living out of the notion of divinity than out of any science.

But the old God is dead. That is recognised. There is no place in the universe for a personal God. The universe makes such a being unnecessary. So we have another God. It is "unchangeable law." There is nothing attractive in such a God. There is no love in this deity. But he is said to be strictly scientific, and hence, as this is the age of science, he is supposed to fill the bill. This new God does not profess to take care of man. If a human being gets in his way he will be crushed, for unchangeable law shows no favors to any.

But why call this law God? What is the use to give a dead word to a living thing? The meaning has gone out of the word God, and it can never be restored. To say that "unchangeable law" is God is to say that there is no God but that it is necessary to have one. So the old toast may still be drunk: God is dead; long live God.—*Boston Investigator.*

An impetuous fellow one evening put his head inside the snug bar parlor of a public-house, and said he—
"Gentlemen, would you like to hear a song? I will sing—"
"No! No!" shouted several of the company.
"Perhaps, gentlemen, you would prefer a recitation?"
"No, we don't want any recitations."
"Would you like to see the Devil?"
Company (getting interested)—"Yes! Yes!" in chorus.
"Go to hell, then."

THE PIG AND THE PARSON.

THE following incident happened at a period when the stipends of clergymen were very small as compared to what they are now, and when in many cases it was found necessary to make a respectable appearance often on very slender means. In several instances the wives of the ministers did much towards increasing the material comforts and the income of the often hospitable manse, by keeping cows, pigs, and poultry, and supplying their neighbors with fruit and vegetables from their gardens or orchards, and with milk and butter from their dairies. It happened, too, in the old-fashioned days, when there was a greater amount of genuine fun abounding, and a penchant for playing practical jokes upon one another that does not prevail to the same extent now-a-days. It illustrates the spirit of wagery and harmless mischief that then prevailed, which, if attempted now, might lead to serious consequences. A young minister in Dunfermline, who had been presented with a small pig, finding that its feeding was getting inconvenient for him as it grew bigger, and that his place was not very suitable for it, resolved to send it out to Cairneyhill to a friend who had ample accommodation for it, and where board and lodgings would be got free of expense for a while. The minister's man was directed to put it into a sack, and to carry it to Cairneyhill; and, as he was a sort of simpleton, he was enjoined to tell no one he met where he was going, nor what was his errand. So away he trudged with his precious burden on his back. Arriving at Crossford, he met three acquaintances standing at a door, who hailed him and asked what he carried on his back. He informed them that he dared not tell his errand, but this he would say—it was neither a cat nor a dog he had in the sack. His cronies said they would not inquire further, and did not want to know; but they kindly asked him into the public-house to share a dram with them, as he would be tired with his journey and his burden. He tried to excuse himself by saying he could not well go in, for the minister would never entrust him "with a pig again!" However, the lads were so decent-looking, and so kind, that he was persuaded to leave his sack at the door just for a single minute, and to go in for the "mouthful" which they kindly offered. In a twinkling one of the three lads snatched the pig out of the sack, and put in its place a young dog. Free from all guile or suspicion, the honest beadle, after taking up his dram, proceeded cheerily onwards with his burden, which he soon delivered up to the minister's friend, along with many compliments from his master. Great, however, was his astonishment to find, when the sack was opened, that a small black dog jumped out and shook itself briskly, instead of the pig with its long white snout and cloven feet! The poor dumfounded beadle, the picture of alarm, called loudly for help, for the devil had been busy since he left the manse, and had transformed the creature from a pig to a pup dog! The minister's friend was also bewildered at the man's tale, and told him to carry back the cur to his master again. "It's not a dog, sir, it's a pig, sir, as sure's death, but Satan has changed him from white to black!" He then very ruefully put the dog back into the bag, carefully tying it, and set out on his return journey. He soon drew up to the alehouse door, and there he espied the same three decent, quiet-looking lads very demurely standing where he had seen them before. He at once told them where he had been, and what a dreadful transformation had befallen the pig. They thoroughly entered into his feelings, seemed as much astonished as himself, and sympathised deeply with him in the strange disaster that had happened; begged him, as he had yet a long journey with his burden, to go in and take a rest for a minute or two. This he was tempted to do, and instantly the dog was taken out, and the pig restored to its old quarters in the sack. The unsuspecting beadle trudged along towards the manse, while many strange and gruesome thoughts passed through his muddled brain. He told the minister of the day's disaster, and that his Cairneyhill friend had at once ordered him to take back the dog immediately to his master. The young minister was much perplexed and greatly annoyed at what had happened, so in disgust he directed the man to untie the sack, and put the pig back into the sty again. "It's no a pig, sir; it's a black pup dog, as sure's death; I'll let you see for yourself!" On opening the sack the beadle screamed aloud with terror as the pig jumped out, and the minister was utterly confounded with the man's most extraordinary story!

Said a colored evangelist: "How can dem infidels say dere am no Debbil? I knows dere's a Debbil, case how, if dere was no Debbil, could dey make his pickter so like 'im?"

A little girl who was taken to the Episcopal church for the first time, heard the clergyman read the text:

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

"Grandma," said the little girl after she got home, "do they hang the prophets on the commandments just the same as they do presents on the Christmas tree?"

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE OMNISCIENCE OF THE ALMIGHTY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A conclusive Biblical refutation of the omniscience of Jehovah is to be found in the fact that he is sometimes described in the Old Testament as having recourse to *tentative methods*, in order to gain the information he required; as, for instance, in the well-known trial of Abraham's faith, we find him having recourse to the good old human custom of obtaining knowledge by means of experiment. But if Jehovah was really omniscient, and therefore capable of perceiving all the inward feelings and intentions of Abraham, why should there have been any necessity for resorting to an experiment of this peculiar kind? But *Mirabile dictu*, we read of those tentative measures in some instances as actually proving abortive for their intended purpose! How, then, can such matters be reconciled with the idea of omniscience and prescience?

W. MASTERTON.

A WELL-MERITED HONOR.

Among those to whom the Royal Institute of British Architects has recently granted its diploma of honorary fellowship, no one (says the *Star*, Oct. 30) had greater claims than Mr. Lerner Sugden, of Leek. Few towns can boast a public building of such grandeur and utility as the Nicholson Institute in the little Staffordshire town which Mr. Sugden has done so much to render beautiful. He it is who is responsible for the exquisite "Leek Reprints" of works by William Morris, Asgill, Ingersoll, and others. He is a Fabian, a strong anti-vivisectionist, a thorough artist, and a true and generous friend.

OBITUARY.

I am sorry to record the death of my dear friend and companion, William Woodhall, on Sunday, November 5, aged 58 years. He leaves a wife and family to mourn his loss. I have lost a dear friend and companion, and the Freethought party have lost a true adherent to their cause. Truth and freedom of thought were his guiding principles. He never spoke evil of anyone, and by his quiet, intelligent, and honest manners he won the respect of all who knew him. I became acquainted with Mr. Woodhall in 1874, and from that time to his decease we were knit together by a friendship and confidence in one another that has never been broken, nor yet marred, by one unpleasant word. From 1874 to 1883 we worked together as colleagues in the local Lodge of the Durham Miners' Association; Mr. Woodhall has acted in an official capacity in this Lodge for twenty years—first as secretary, then as delegate, and later as president. This in itself speaks volumes for the respect in which he was held by his brother workers, and it was only at Mr. Woodhall's earnest request that the members allowed him to resign, that he might have a little rest in his declining days; and, as he said to me, "There were plenty of young men to do the work, and it was time they were learning to do it." As a local worker and defender of his brother workers—none truer than Woodhall. He was ever looked up to for counsel and advice in all matters affecting their interests, and I may say that each and every one of his brother officers reposed great confidence in him. He was also, for many years, secretary to the Page Bank Reading Institution; and, as a token of the respect in which he was held by the members of that institution, on his retiring from office, they presented him with a silver lever watch with an inscription on it, and his wife with a handsome teapot and kettle. And now that he has gone, yet to live in our memory, as a further proof of the kindly feeling entertained for my friend, they have purchased and placed upon his grave a beautiful glass globe containing a wreath and a printed card in the centre, bearing the following words:—"Presented by the members of the South Brancepeth Reading Institution as a tribute of their respect and esteem for the untiring work and devotion to the interest of the Society, of our late member and colleague, William Woodhall."—R. J. ROBINSON.

THE CREDENTIALS OF THE GOSPEL.

In Frode's *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth*, where he narrates how, in 1539, Henry VIII. ordered the Bible to be read in churches, there is the following significant passage (vol. iii., p. 369):—"The gospel had brought with it its old credentials. It had divided nation against nation, house against house, child against father. It had brought not peace but a sword, the event long before foretold and long before experienced."

That the Hexateuch in its known form is of a comparatively very recent origin is fully borne out by the fact that the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. know nothing of a Mosaic code. Jeremiah is the first prophet who has reference to a code, and his quotations are taken from Deuteronomy.—Dr. E. Reich, "History of Civilisation," p. 100.

AN UNLUCKY MAN.

Not long since, in a village in the north of Scotland, the parish minister, meeting a farm servant who was a member of his flock, the following conversation ensued. Parish Minister—"Well, John, and how are things doing with you? I hope you are keeping well?" Farm Servant—"Hech, sir, it's hard work I hae to dae; nae rest from morn' tae night; work an' work, an' nae a minute's rest for me." Parish Minister—"Well, John, we must all do our share in the work of this world. Remember, it is only the preparation for a better world, where there will be no more work to be done." Farm Servant—"Well, sir, that may be for the likes o' you, but I'm no sae sure that there will be naething for me tae dae in the other world. It will be the same thing there, and I'll be told, 'John, clean the sun,' 'John, hang out the moon,' 'John, light the stars,' an' sae on. I've nae doubt they'll find always something for me tae do, unlucky man that I am!"

PREDESTINATION.

A Baptist minister had to travel several miles on horseback through a country where the Redskin had put in an appearance. This minister was what was known, I believe, as a hyper-Calvinist. One Sunday morning he armed himself with a six-chambered revolver to protect himself against an attack by the Indians. A free-will friend pointed out to the good man how inconsistent he was, because if the Lord had fore-ordained that he should be killed by an Indian, it would so happen, and nothing could save him. The minister cast a glance at his friend and said, "Yes, but if the Lord had fore-ordained that the Indian was to be shot by him, how was the will of the Lord to be carried out if he hadn't got his revolver with him." Predestination won the argument on that occasion.

THE PARSON'S HAND.

Mr. Johnson—"I dropped into your church last evening, Parson Limberlip, and found that your pulpit was occupied by Brother Jinglejaw, the 'Screaming Cyclone' as they call him, from Tidewater."

Parson Limberlip—"Yas, sar. We done swap congregations for de day, sah!"

Mr. Johnson—"The parson is vocally and physically a powerful preacher. They tell me he rules things with a high hand over in his parish."

Parson Limberlip—"Not allers, sah! De las' time I wuz ober dar de highes' han' what he done holt wuz a pa'r o' tens, an' I come erway leadin' de parson's kow an' a mo'gidge on his pianner in mer pocket."

WHAT COULD HE SAY?

Matthew Wilks, a noted preacher of the early part of the present century, was once on the way to a meeting of clergymen, and took refuge from a shower, in a shed, at Billingsgate. The fish-women were using the most filthy language, and Wilks felt it his duty to reprove them. "Don't you think," said he, "that I shall appear as a swift witness against you at the Judgment?" "I presume so," replied one of the women, "for the greatest rogue always turns king's evidence." Wilks went to the meeting and related the incident. "And what did you say, Mr. Wilks, in reply?" demanded one of them. "What could I say?" said Wilks.

A Mormon with a plurality of lean wives speaks of them as his "spare ribs."

A man has invented a chair that can be adjusted to 800 different positions. It is designed for a boy to sit in when he goes to church.

Struggling Pastor—"The collections have fallen off terribly." Practical Wife—"It's that new vestryman who passes the plate. He never watches to see what people put on."

"My dear young friend," asked the good man, solemnly, "do you attend church regularly?" "Yes, sir, but I didn't go to-day. She's visiting friends out of town, you know."

Mrs. Frothingham—"Do you know, I think the Rev. Mr. Smallpay delivered rather a striking sermon this morning." Frothingham—"Yes, it seemed to me that he hinted several times in it that if he wasn't given a bigger salary he'd quit."

Overheard in a barber's shop. Modern Elisha, who is inclined to be facetious—"I'm getting to be pretty bald, ain't I? Guess you'll have to cut my hair for about half price, hereafter, eh?" Tonsorial artist, who is equal to the emergency—"Oh, no, sir; we always charge double when we have to hunt for the hair!"

An old village woman was discoursing of the charms of the parish curate to a young lady visitor. "He do be a beautiful young man, Miss," she said, enthusiastically. "Well," replied her listener, cautiously, "some people may admire red hair and——" "Oh, Miss, t'aint his *outwards* I was a-thinking of," interrupted the old woman, "it's his *innards*, Miss, his *innards*!"

SOMETHING LIKE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

It was a big yellow poster on the wall that arrested my attention and my steps. I was on my way to attend a meeting to consider how increased assistance might be given to poor colliers, who are literally starving in this Christian land. It was time that I was at the meeting-place, but the big yellow poster demanded attention. It announced that "Mr. George Wise (Liverpool's champion)" was about to dose the public with "Christianity and Infidelity"—in equal proportions, I presume, like stout and bitter. All the "leading Secularists" were "challenged" to debate with him on the six subjects subjoined; they were to "come early," and bring Sankey's hymns. The subject for that night, upon which the "leading Secularists" were called upon to maintain their position, or evermore hold down their head before the august presence of "Liverpool's champion," was, "Who was Cain's Wife?" But time did not permit me to hear the sweet-souled "champion" on this engrossing subject, and I had to get what Evidences of Christianity I could from a recital of the colliers' woes. A collier's daughter, aged seventeen, had died of starvation, and the father had applied to the relief committee for money to bury her. This would, if granted, have further reduced the amount available for providing food for those still living! There was nothing for it but to devise fresh means of appeal to the charity of the general public. And yet we raise a million and quarter every year to convert the "poor heathen!" "Cain's wife" had to take a back seat on this occasion.

CAUSTIC SODA.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, George Bernard Shaw, "Individualist Socialism" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, Mrs. Louisa Samson, "The Bible and Modern Ethics" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday at 8.30, debating class, Sam Standing, "What is Stronger than Wine, Women, or Kings?" (free). Tuesday at 8.30, athletic class. Wednesday at 8, Pete Curran, "The Relation of Freethought to Socialism" (free). Saturday, in the Minor Hall, social evening (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, musical and dramatic entertainment (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, Marlowe Dramatic Company (tickets 3d. and 6d.).

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, Dr. C. R. Drysdale (President of the Malthusian League), "The Population Question as Taught by the Malthusian League" (free).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Genesis of Life." Friday at 7.30, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver-street: 7, Sam Standing, "Our Faulty Bible" (free).

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, Nov. 30, at 8, musical selections; 8.30, St. John, "Christianity and the Evolution of Society."

South Essex Secular Society, 33 and 35 Salway-road, Stratford, E.: 7.15, C. Ivatts, "Poverty: its Cause and Remedy" (free).

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Hartfield-road Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "A Peep through the Corridors of Space," with lantern illustrations (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Johnson, "Scepticism: what and why?" (in the hall if the weather is unfavorable).

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): lectures at 11.30 and 3.30.

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, H. H. Duncan, "A Religion Worth Knowing."

Bath—Corridor Rooms: 8, J. King, "Health Education."

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, Charles Watts, "America Re-visited."

Blackburn—"Haymarket," Cort-street: 6.30, R. Dawson, "The Population Question."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, Mr. Burkitt, "The English Democracy of the Future."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, F. J. Swan, "What shall I do to be Saved"; 2.30, Sunday-school; 7, A. E. Rowcroft, "The Classes v. the Masses; which should win?"

Dudley—Central Lecture Hall, Flood-street: 3, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "How to Live Long; with special reference to the Vaccination Question, Vegetarianism, and the Drug Treatment."

Dundee—Cutlers' Hall, Murraygate: 11.30, mutual improvement class, "Astronomy"; 2.30, concert; 6.30, W. Zilvy, "Has Christianity Civilised the World?"

Fallsworth Secular Sunday-school, at 10 and 2; 6.30, P. Percival, "The Bible as a Human Production."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, G. M. Wright, "Modern Literature"; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Science of Man—III.," with special lantern slides.

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: Stanley Jones, 11, "The Christian Religion"; 7, "Miracles and Medicine."

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7, readings by members. Hull Sunday Association, St. George's Hall, Storey-street: 2.30, James Needler, "The Environments of Modern Society and Popular Delusions."

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: 6.30, Prince Kropotkin, "Mutual Aid among Animals" (free).

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 3, logic class, L. Small, B.Sc., "Induction"; 7, Mr. Miller, "Crime and its Cure."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 6.30, free dramatic entertainment. Monday from 8 to 10.30, dancing (6d.) Tuesday at 8, debating circle, J. W. Watts, "Immortality."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Ginnett's Circus, Northumberland-road: G. W. Foote, 11, "Christ and Democracy"; 7, "A Search for the Soul" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monthly business meeting is postponed until Dec. 3, at 8.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: C. Cohen, 11, "Free Will and Determinism"; 3, "Is there a God?"; 7, "Christianity and Modern Thought."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Eight Hours Question"; 3, "The Heaven Myth"; 7, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth." Wednesday at 8, literary and debating society, "Socialism v. Individualism."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting.

Wolverhampton—Exchange Assembly Room, Old Churchyard: Dr. T. R. Allinson, 11, "The Air we Breathe," with experiments; 7, "How to Live Long; with special reference to the Vaccination Question, Vegetarianism, and the Drug Treatment."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Nov. 26 to 30, Portsmouth. Dec. 1 and 2, Portsmouth; 3, Luton; 10 to 17 Manchester; 24, m., Battersa; e., Camberwell; 31, Leicester.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Dec. 10, Portsmouth.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Nov. 26, Grimsby. Dec. 3, Bradford; 10, Hanley.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Botherhithe, London, S.E.—Dec. 3, Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Jan. 4, 1894 Hammer-smith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith London, W.—Nov. 26, Camberwell. Dec. 10, Grimsby. Jan. 21, 1894, Hall of Science.

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He was an extempore preacher, and intended to wind up his peroration with the slow, emphasised enunciation of the scriptural words "a mess of pottage." What he really said was "a pot of message—a—a—message of pots—that is to say, a pottage of messes," and with this he sunk behind the pulpit.

One missionary, struggling with a savage dialect in which there was no appreciation of abstract things, asked a chief to give him a word for love—what he liked best. The word was given, and the translator proceeded to use it, much to the amusement of the humorists in the tribe, who finally explained to him that the word simply meant "decayed fish," the chief's favorite delicacy.

In another instance an equivalent expression for "love" was required. The translator asked a native to assist him to the required word. For a long time the native could not understand what was desired. In the end he was asked what he would rather die than do, the interrogator wanting to elicit that he would rather die than hate anybody. Judge of the Englishman's surprise when the native replied, "I would rather die than speak to my wife's mother!"

The Baptists in a Western State made a good many converts and baptised them in a river. One old grizzly trapper was converted, and of course was anxious to get his sins buried in the waters of baptism. When the preacher asked if anyone present knew any impediment or objection to the rite being performed, another old trapper came forward and addressed the preacher as follows: "Well, parson, I know Jim Kearney for many years, it isn't one dip or two dips, nor three dips that will do him any good; if you want to wash Jim's sins away, you'll have to anchor him out in the middle of the river all night."

PROFANE JOKES.

Teacher—"Yes, Willie; every day will be Sunday in heaven." Willie—"Well, what day will they hold their Sunday-school picnics on?"

Master (who has had the floor laid in concrete)—"Well, cook, this is an improvement, eh?" Cook—"Yes, sir, it's ever so much better since it's been consecrated!"

A clothier has excited public curiosity by having a large apple painted outside his shop. When asked for an explanation, he replied: "If it hadn't been for an apple, where would the ready-made clothing shops be to-day?"

Sunday-school Teacher (to new scholar)—"I suppose your mamma is awfully glad you are now big enough to come to the Sunday-school?" New Scholar—"Yes, ma'am. She says she can get a couple of hours' rest on Sunday afternoons now."

Miss Laura—"Oh, auntie! You remember Mr. Meeker, who went from here as a missionary? I have just heard that those awful cannibals ate him." Aunt Sophrina—"La, me! I do hope they cooked him with turnips. The poor dear man was so fond of turnips."

Just previous to giving out the hymn, the minister said—"The storm outside is raging so violently, that I will ask the sexton to be kind enough to close the doors and windows. It will give us all a greater sense of security. The congregation will now sing 'I would not live away, I ask not to stay.'"

The Vicar—"Dear, dear, Mrs. Prickles, I regret to hear that Mrs. Brown has treated you so shamefully. I should counsel you to heap coals of fire on her head—" Mrs. P.—"Ah, sir, that's wot I *would* do, as soon as look at 'er; but I can't afford it at two shillings a hundredweight!"

Sympathetic Village "Chips" (to infirm old parson)—"No gurt shakes, sir? I be zorry vur that. You baan't lookin' no gurt rattle. I think, sir, you an' yore ol' pony an' me an' my ol' 'atchet 'ev all a-got the same compl'ent, all the wus that us wos so long ago new, sir." I. O. P.—"Ah, William, there's no cure for age!" S. V. C.—"No, sir; 'cepts bein' born again, an' I should be afeard to reask that—med be born a maid nex' time!"

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