

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN.

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### THE PARSONS' LIVING WAGE.

IN our last week's article we criticised the attitude of the Churches towards the working classes, with especial reference to the late Conference of "representatives of Christian Churches" in the Jerusalem Chamber. It will be remembered that the Conference was a ridiculous fiasco. The upshot of it was simply and absolutely nothing. The Christian gentlemen there assembled could not bring themselves to pass a resolution in favor of "a living wage" for the workers. Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, in particular, asserted that no one could define it, and the discussion was therefore a waste of time. But suppose the question had been one of "a living wage" for the sky-pilots; would not a minimum figure have been speedily decided? Thirty shillings a week would have been laughed at. Two pounds would have been treated as an absurdity. Men of God, who have to live while they cultivate the Lord's vineyard, want a more substantial share of the good things of this world. Nothing satisfies them but the certainty of something very valuable in this life, as well as the promise of the life that is to come. No doubt is entertained in the clerical mind as to the laborer being worthy of his hire. But they give their first attention to the clerical laborer; partly because they know him most intimately, and have a deep concern for his secular welfare; and partly because

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charity begins at home, and looking after one's self is the primary law of Christian prudence.

A burning and a shining light among the Nonconformists of the last generation was the famous Mr. Binney, a shrewd preacher who published a book on *How to Make the Best of Both Worlds*. We believe he combined precept and practice. At any rate, he expounded a principle which has always had the devotion of the great bulk of Christian ministers. These gentry *have* made the best of both worlds. Most of them have been comfortably assured of good positions in Kingdom-Come, and most of them have been comfortably provided for in this land of pilgrimage, this scene of tribulation, this miserable vale of tears. Come rain or shine, they have had little cause for complaint. Hard work has rarely brought them to a premature old age. Famine has never driven them into untimely graves. Even the worst paid has had a hope of better things. There were fine plums in the profession, which might drop into watering mouths. What if the curate had little pocket money and a small account at the tailor's, with a large account at the shoemaker's through excessive peregrinations on shanks's mare? There was a vicarage, a deanery, a bishopric in perspective. A fat purse might be dandled some day, and the well-exercised limbs repose gracefully in a carriage and pair. If the worst came to the worst, one might marry a patron's daughter, and get

the reversion of the living ; or even snap up the ninth daughter of a bishop, and make sure of some preferment.

Yes, the clericals, taking them altogether, have had a very good "living wage." After all these centuries, it is high time they began to think about the comfort of other classes of the community. And yet, after all, is there not something indecent in their talking about a "living wage" for the workers? Are they not parasites upon the said workers? Have they not, also, had ever so many centuries of dominance? Is it not disgraceful that, at this time of day, there should be any need to discuss a "living wage" for the workers in a *Christian* civilisation? Really, the clericals should not, in this reckless way, invite attention to their past sins and present shortcomings. If they stand up for the workers now, it shows that they have not stood up for the workers before. They have been so many hundreds of years thinking about it—or rather *not* thinking about it. It is *interest*—nothing but *interest*—which informs their new policy. They always find out what *pays*. Never did they fight a forlorn hope or die for a lost cause. As the shadow follows the sun, so priests follow the sun of prosperity. They are the friends of power, whoever wields it ; of wealth, whoever owns it. When they talk about the rights of the people, it means that they feel the king-times are ending. Byron said they *would* end, nearly a hundred years ago. Blood would flow like water, he said, and tears would fall like rain, but the people would triumph in the end. Yes, and the end is near ; the people *are* triumphing ; and the fact is visible to the very owls and bats of theology.

But let us return to the "living wage" business. There were several Bishops at the Jerusalem Chamber meeting, and in view of their incomes their patronage of the working man is simply disgusting. Pah ! An ounce of civet, good apothecary ! The bishops smell to heaven. Whatever they say is an insult to the miners—because they say it. The "living wage" of the poorest bishop would keep fifty miners' families ; that of the richest would keep two hundred. "Nay," the bishops say, "we are poorer than you think." Only the other day, the Archbishop of Canterbury stated that most of the bishops spent more than they received. Indeed ! Then the age of miracles is *not* past. By what superhuman power do they make up the deficiency? We tell the Archbishop that *he lies*. It is not a polite answer, we admit, but it is a true one ; and this is a case where good plain Saxon is most appropriate. Edward White Benson forgets that bishops die. Their wills are proved like the wills of other mortals, and the Probate Office keeps the record. Of course it is barely possible—that is, it is conceivable—that bishops' executors make false returns, and pay probate duty on fanciful estates ; but the probability is that they do nothing of the kind. Now some years ago (in 1886) the Rev. Mercer Davies, formerly chaplain of Westminster Hospital, issued a pamphlet entitled *The Bishops and their Wealth*, in which he gave a table of the English and Welsh prelates deceased from 1856 to 1885, with the amount of personalty proved at their death. Of one bishop he could find no particulars. It was Samuel Hinds, of Norwich, who resigned as a disbeliever, and died poor. The thirty-nine others left behind them collectively the sum of £2,105,000 ; this being "exclusive of any real estate they may have possessed, and exclusive also of any sums invested in policies of Life Assurance, or otherwise settled for the benefit of their families." Divide the amount of their *mere personalty* by thirty-nine, and you have £54,000 apiece. That is how the Bishops spend more than they receive ! One of these days we will go to the trouble and expense of bringing the list up to date. Meanwhile it may be noted that there is no falling off in the figures towards 1885. No less than five bishops died in that year, and they left the following personalties : —£72,000 — £85,000 — £29,000 — £85,000 — £19,000 ; which more than maintain the average.

So much for the poor bishops. As for the rest of the clergy, it is enough to say that the Church they belong to has a total revenue of about £10,000,000 a year. Probably twice that sum is spent on the sky-pilots of all denominations, which is more than is received in

wages by all the miners in Great Britain. It is a fair calculation that the average sky-pilot is six times as well paid as the average miner. Yet the latter works hard in the bowels of the earth to provide real coals for real consumers, while the former is occupied in open air and daylight in damping down the imaginary fires of an imaginary hell. It is easy to see which is the more useful functionary, just as it is easy to see which is the better paid. Let us hope that the miners, and all other workers, will lay these facts to heart, and act accordingly. There are too many drones in England, living on the common produce of labor. The number of them should be diminished, and a beginning should be made with the mystery men. Were the great Black Army disbanded, and turned into the ranks of productive industry, the evils of society would begin to disappear ; for those evils are chiefly the result of too much energy and attention being devoted to the problematical next life, and too little to the real interests of our earthly existence. We should also be spared the wretched spectacle of the well paid drones of theology maundering over the question of a "living wage" for the honest men who do the laborious work of the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### RELIGION AND POLITICS.

RELIGION is now so much a matter of lip phrases, that its practical bearings are often overlooked. There is, however, a very real connection between religion and politics, just as there is between Church and State. This may not appear on the surface, but if we look at its fundamental conceptions, and trace their development in history, it becomes evident enough. In the past, religion stands as one of the principal instruments of government. Our bishops in the House of Peers are one of the survivals of the time when the Church had an evident and ostensible share in government, and reminds us that they even claimed the right of deposing one monarch and placing another on the throne, as in the case of Stephen and Matilda.\*

The fundamental conception of mono-theistic religion is, that the world and its affairs are governed by a Supreme Sovereign, whose will is law. Where this faith is held most intensely, its outcome is mental slavery. If there be such a being, man is a slave. The Moslem submits to *kismet*, assured that, in the words of the Koran, God has written our fates upon our necks. The logical Christian Theist is a Calvinist. Man, in the hands of God, is but as clay in the hands of the potter, who of the same lump makes one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor. He can damn his creatures to eternal hell for doing that which he has made them do, with no better reason than to show forth his own glory, and none can say him nay. He runs the entire concern to suit himself. Man can do nothing but submit. As Bakounine says, God being everything, the real world and man are nothing.

Religion is the intangible but real substratum of all political and social injustice. Political tyranny and social oppression are backed up and made possible by the belief in an arbitrary God, who has allotted our destinies here below. There is a well-known story of a Protestant who asked Talleyrand how ever the Catholic pastors induced their flocks to believe in such an absurdity as the doctrine of transubstantiation. "Why," replied the princely priest, "we first get them to swallow the doctrine of the Trinity." So, should we wonder at the patience exhibited by the masses under all suffering and oppression, we must first reflect that they have been taught from earliest youth that they are the subjects of an irresponsible God. As Burns says :

The fear of hell's the hangman's whip  
To haul the wretch in order.

The very first Bible lesson, that of the story of Eden, inculcates the duty of obedience and the dread consequences of rebellion. Man is forbidden to touch the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Thanks to woman, he

\* Whether this be fact or only the invention of the monkish chroniclers, the claim of the Church is equally shown.

disobeys, and, as a consequence, is cursed with all his posterity.

Paul, writing to the Romans in the time of Nero,\* tells them (ch. xiii.), "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." "Pay ye tribute also," says the apostle, or the monk taking his name, "for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." And this is the very thing which has received their continual attention. Peter is at one with Paul on this point. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God." He tells us to to "Fear God. Honor the king," and adds, "Servants [*i.e.*, slaves], be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Peter ii. 13-18). Jesus says, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven," and in his story of the rich man and Lazarus makes the former go to hell because he is rich, and Lazarus to heaven because he is poor. Abraham replies to the cry of the former in hell, "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." These texts, whatever their original intention, are used for the express purpose of keeping the people contented with whatever form of government and social circumstances may exist.

The disposition of mind fostered by religion is that of subservience to authority. General Booth knows this, and in his interview with Raymond Blathwayt took care to impress upon him that the Salvation Army, quite as much as the Catholic Church, systematically taught obedience. "The State—aye and the Church too—will come to recognise me and my Army as their best friends before they have done with us," he said; and he added, "we will aid, with all our heart and soul, the forces that make for righteousness towards God, and for loyalty to her Majesty the Queen." Booth claims no more than his due. The tendency of all religious organisations, as of religion itself, is to make adherents docile subjects. It points their attention to another world, belief in which distracts attention from the evils of this, or serves as their consolation. A fabled heaven, like a foreign war, serves to divert attention from home grievances. Injustice is endured because supposed to be the will of God; and poverty, with its attendant miseries here on earth, is suffered in the hope of an exceeding great reward in heaven. When this fancy is resigned, people will set to work in earnest to attain what of worth they can here and now. Whether the men of God know it or not—and I give most of them the credit of being too dull to perceive the fact—they are really the agents of the ruling classes to keep the people quiet while they are being exploited. Their real aim is not human development, but human repression. Why are Freethinkers hated and tabooed? Not simply because they differ from the majority on speculative topics, but because it is felt that their dissent from established religion undermines the whole claims of the privileged classes.

Viewed historically the Christian Church is neither more nor less than a vast corporation for the exploitation of the masses. I should be the last to deny that it has rendered some services in return for the funds it has absorbed. But this has been its chief function. And not only that of the great historic corporation, seated at Rome, but of each and every one of the offshoots that have started business on their own account. It happens at present that the Church of England is ranged on the side of one political party, and the bulk of the Nonconformists on the other. But this is simply owing to the question of Establishment and Endowment. Were it possible, as happily it is not, for any

government to satisfy the Nonconformist ministers, by letting them share in the endowments of the Church, we should soon find that they are as much a reactionary force as the present clergy. For their fundamental theory is the same. It is that of reliance upon God and prayer and of directing attention to another world. If their theory is sound, this life is an insignificant affair. If there is a God who created and rules all men and all things, it is an impertinence to attempt to interfere with his arrangements. If he answers prayer, the remedy for social inequalities and misery is simply to pray. If their theory is false, the remedy is to disregard all theories and think and act for ourselves. The attitude of the religionist is that of prayer and prostration; the attitude of the Freethinker is that of independence and self-reliance. From a political point of view, "religion," like "party," may be defined as "the madness of the many for the gain of a few."

J. M. WHEELER.

#### PROF. HUXLEY ON EVOLUTION AND ETHICS.

THE Romanes lecture, delivered some time since at Oxford by Prof. Huxley, caused, as the readers of this journal are aware, a great sensation in England, and during my recent visit to America I found that it had produced a similar excitement in that country. The lecture has been as extensively criticised in the United States as it has been in Great Britain. The view taken by the Professor is not altogether new, and yet in some particulars it is different from the moral theories that are usually associated with evolution, and which, coming from one with the world-wide reputation of the lecturer, has given rise to a good deal of controversy.

Professor Huxley opens up his subject by employing, as an illustration, the well-known nursery tale of Jack and the Beanstalk. The processes of nature first mount upwards, and then return to the point from which they started. All nature is ever in a state of change, its mutations are as constant as they are varied. Plants and animals originate, grow, reach their height of development, and then decay and die. Water flows to the sea, is lifted into the clouds and returns to the springs. The heavenly bodies wax and wane. Worlds are formed out of nebula, and having played their part, break up and return to chaos. The one distinguishing characteristic of the universe is its impermanence. "As no man," remarks the Professor, "fording a swift stream can dip his foot twice into the same water, so no man can with exactness affirm of anything in the sensible world that it is. As he utters the words, nay, as he thinks them, the predicate ceases to be applicable; the present has become the past; the 'is' should be 'was.'" And what is true of the individual, is true of the whole. This is cyclical evolution which is the law of the universe.

In the struggle for existence man has come out at the top, but this very supremacy to which he has attained, has given rise to an intensity of pain and suffering. The Professor says: "This baleful product of evolution increases in quantity and in intensity with advancing grades of animal organisation, until it attains its highest level in man. Further, the consummation is not reached in man, the mere animal; nor in man, the whole or half savage: but only in man the member of an organised polity." Thus it will be seen that the very qualities which raised man to his present exalted condition, have become defects and obstacles in the way of his further advancement. This probably will, to many, seem paradoxical, and yet that it is a fact, cannot be denied. Man conquered the lower animals, made them subservient to his use by the most unscrupulous, and often cruel, means. Nay, more, the higher races of the human family have subjugated the lower ones in precisely the same way. As Prof. Huxley puts it: "For his successful progress, as far as the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger; his exceptional physical organisation; his cunning, his sociability, his curiosity and his imitativeness; his ruthless and ferocious destructive-

\* It is noteworthy that, although the New Testament is all supposed to have been written under the Empire, it is always kings and kingdoms that are alluded to. Perhaps this is to be included among the signs of later date.

ness when his anger is roused by opposition." But having reached the elevated position he now occupies, these very qualities have become evils, many of which it is now deemed the highest virtue to suppress. Man, in a moral state, would gladly see the tiger nature die, but that is what it will not do. It is still in human nature, potent and powerful, to influence to action, and the acts thus incited bring suffering and pain. These acts are sometimes called crimes, and are punished as such by Society occasionally, even to the extent of destroying the offender. Now it is just here that ethics come in to furnish a law by which the tiger element in human nature can be controlled and directed.

The struggle for existence has been transferred from the sphere of the physical to that of the intellectual; but this has not lessened to any great extent the influence of those powers so conspicuous in human nature, which prompt to immorality and crime, and which ever entail pain and suffering. The suppression of some of these and the regulation of the rest, comprise the function of moral science. The question still arises, how is this to be accomplished? No doubt this is one of the most difficult problems that have presented themselves to the mind of man. The following passage from Professor Huxley's lecture puts the question in its true light: "The propounders of what are called the 'ethics of evolution,' when the 'evolution of ethics' would usually better express the object of their speculations, adduce a number of more or less sound arguments in favor of the origin of moral sentiments, in the same way as other natural phenomena, by a process of evolution. I have no doubt, for my own part, that they are on the right track; but the immoral sentiments have been no less evolved, there is, so far, as much natural sanction for the one as for the other. The thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist does. Cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and the evil tendencies of man may have come about: but in itself it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil, than we had before."

This teaching is in harmony with what J. S. Mill long since taught, and to my mind the facts here presented show the fallacy of the belief in the goodness of the supposed "God of Nature." "For," as Mill observes, "however offensive the proposition may appear to many religious persons, they should be willing to look in the face the undeniable fact that the order of nature, in so far as unmodified by man, is such as no human being, whose attributes are justice and benevolence, would have made, with the intention that his rational creatures should follow it as an example. If made wholly by such a Being and not partly by beings of very different qualities, it could only be as a designly imperfect work, which man, in his limited sphere, is to exercise justice and benevolence in amending." This really means that, supposing nature has a God for its author, he produced it so badly that when it is not modified and improved by man, it is guilty of the most "protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow creatures."

We do not look to Cosmic evolution for a moral guide. What we call virtue demands a course of conduct of the very opposite character to that by which the race has been evolved in the struggle for existence. In the words of Huxley: "In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help his fellows; its influence is directed, not so much as to the survival of the fittest as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence." Thus we enter upon a new region. We not only leave Cosmic evolution behind, but we proceed to combat it with all our power. We make laws to curb it and we use our utmost efforts to crush it. We, relying upon the stability of certain laws, seek to obtain our ethical code in a different direction. And this is accomplished by purely natural means. As Mill affirms: "Though we can do nothing except through laws of nature, we can use one law to

counteract another. According to Bacon's maxim, we can obey nature in such a manner as to command it. . . . If therefore the useless precept to follow nature were changed into a precept to study nature; to know and to take heed of the properties of the things we have to deal with so far as those properties are capable of forwarding or obstructing any given purpose; we should have arrived at the first principle of all intelligent action, or rather at the definition of intelligent action itself." It is through our ignorance of nature and of its true functions that the progress of ethical culture has been retarded.

Professor Huxley did not, unfortunately, consider that it fell within his province to formulate in his lecture an ethical code. But it will, I think, be seen that the facts adduced require us to accept the principle of utilitarianism if we desire a practical moral guide. Of course some may prefer the intuitive theory, but it will be very difficult to show how any such intuition could possibly have been evolved in the teeth of the facts of Cosmic evolution already referred to. For surely an intuition would have prompted the very opposite course to that which we call moral if it had sprung from the struggle for existence. The laws of society have other bases than those of Cosmic evolution, and morality is not a question so much of physics as of sociology. The evolution of ethics does not depend so much upon the struggle for existence as it does upon an altruistic development. This Professor Huxley has clearly shown in the Romanes lecture, which is, so far, a valuable contribution to the literature on the subject.

CHARLES WATTS.

#### THE PHANTOM CHRIST OF THE CONGREGATIONALISTS.

IN many discourses in recent years it is the fashion to point, not to the Bible, but something behind it, *the living Christ*. It is not obvious to an outsider how anyone can act on the advice, and go to the living or the dead Christ, except through the gospels and epistles. To the average Englishman a metaphysical or philosophical conception of Christ is beyond his comprehension and of no interest. Still, the retranslation and reconstruction of sacred books in modern times, renders it impossible for reading men to accept the views of their forefathers. Their views were formed before historical inquiries and biblical criticism were entered upon. Anyone who will take the trouble to examine the lives of Christ issued before the past fifty years, or which are modelled on the same method, will find one invariable and obvious fact. The patent pointed characteristic of all them is, that the conclusion was arrived at before any inquiry or argument was begun.

The process of evolution was unknown, and is not applicable to any ancient writings on this subject. Those who profess to take an historical view of this subject, and omit to recognise the fact that Jesus and his apostles were born in a Jewish atmosphere, will find themselves unable to explain the meaning of the Christian movement. They were Jewish in nationality and thought. To begin with Christianity as a new thing, as a new birth of thoughts and doctrines peculiar to what is called the Christian era, is one of the greatest delusions current among mankind. No doubt the error arose from the method of inquiry adopted. It is even now usual to begin the inquiry at the year one, instead of 1893. The rational method is to carry the investigation backwards, step by step, making no assumption whatever, and taking nothing for granted, for from what can we reason but from what we know? On opening the new work issued under the title of *Faith and Criticism*, there are certain phrases used by one of the nine writers taken from Prof. Huxley, strikingly illustrating the view here contended for. The writer tells us that the Christian may, and ought to hold with the Agnostic that it is wrong for anyone to say he is *certain*, unless he can produce evidence that logically justifies it. And he ought also to hold it to be immoral to maintain that men ought to believe some propositions, without evidence of their truth. This looks, on the

face of it, like a new method among Congregationalists, and one that ought to commend itself even to opponents. But we must not be too harsh in assuming that the writer means what Prof. Huxley means by his words here quoted, for he says, "Proof, after all, is only a sufficient reason for believing," and this is how he applies the Agnostic method. A Christian's statement of the grounds of his faith, "produces the evidence that constitutes *for him* its logical justification." Again, illustrating it still further, "Jesus is a proper name, it carries back behind all churches, behind all doctrines, ere even the Christian faith began to be, and brings us face to face with a historic personage; he is the ultimate fact of the Christian faith." Not a word about how we are to get behind all objective existencies to the "historic personage," but he goes on to relate that "After this he is Jesus Christ—and establishes a relation to all mankind." Of course this is only assertion, no *evidence* is offered. He states that his object is to *explain* the beginning and course of conscious life in Christ, a little matter we are unable to understand by his explanation. There is one thing obvious to anybody, he piles up forty pages of words about Jesus and Christ, without offering any evidence of such a historic person. Still, he is candid—the only reply the Christian can make in sustaining his faith is, that "faith in Christ, of which his experience is the outcome, supplies the *only* explanation of that experience. Experience verifies and strengthens the faith from which it proceeds." The evidence is included in the belief, and the belief included in the experience, and they are all included in one another. Exactly the same line is followed by Dr. Milner. The belief of the bishops is derived from the cardinals, and theirs from the Pope, and all from the Church. But the question is still—what is that which they all believe? Answer: "The same thing!"

If this is not arguing in a circle, it resembles it very much. Of course the subject is enlivened by a number of texts which may lead some to imagine that the writer intends to mean something, although we miss what it is. But another writer in the same volume treats of the relation of Christ to Revelation, while the one already noticed was that of Christ to the Christian.

Here we have another pile of words covering forty-seven pages—all intended to help those afflicted by the modern epidemic, "Higher Criticism." How many will get cured, must largely depend on the hold it has taken of the patients. The remedy appears harmless enough, perhaps a little coloring matter, but nine-tenths transparent liquid originally.

It seems there is "an old inveterate error," and that can only be erased by "boldly saying, Revelation is Christ." It is not a truth or scientific, "It is a matter of will, not of thought." The main thing is not freedom of thought, that is a far less precious thing than "freedom of soul," of which we get no definition. But there are a number of words given that may be appreciated by the initiated—"Only a soul can free a soul, as only a soul can mediate between soul and soul." Perhaps further light may come from jingling another row of words. Christ "belongs to our personality as Christians, and is the ground of our self-certainty . . . of whom we are *surer*, in the classic examples of faith, than we are of ourselves or our subjective experience." The matter is summed up thus concisely—this is the true congregational faith, or at any rate the latest formula—"There is but one Revelation, and it is Christ. There is but one Christ, and the Bible is his prophet. The Bible is the musical echo of the Revelation."

Perhaps it would be rash to say that these two essays cannot be surpassed in mystifying the subject, but honesty compels us to admit that they are fairly successful. That they will not fail to obfuscate the intellect of any true believer who reads them, there can be no doubt. How far the use of the terms "ultimate fact," "historic personage," and the like, are justifiable as applied to the word "Christ," is open to doubt. But the Christ of the Congregationalists is something admittedly independent of Church doctrines and the Bible, as they do not believe in him

because of the Bible, but rather believe in that because they believe in Christ. Their Christ, then, is revealed within them, or the work of their own imagination. One thing is obvious, they abandon all the evidences by which the faith was once sought to be established. Perhaps that is a necessity of their times.

The Bible, being transformed into "a musical echo," and Christ into a fact in "Christian experience," places the matter beyond the reach of the Freethinker. But he is absolved from all anxiety by the adoption of the new rule that we are not called upon to believe anything about which there is no evidence to justify the belief. The results will, therefore, vary, as does the credulity of the individual.

This divesting Jesus of all his human characteristics, as carpenter, street preacher, and clothing him with new congregational vestments, is as much a work of fiction or art, as Shakespeare's "Hamlet." If this mode of interpreting Christ is allowable, that is, disregarding history or objective facts, why not any other ideal? Every denomination of Christians may fairly formulate a Christ as the Noncons do, and why not the Socialist? By ignoring the records, the Socialist might easily string words together, making an ideal equality teacher walking the streets of Jerusalem, and claim such attention as the appeal to such an authority may be assumed to command. But since this idea suggested itself to me, there has been a protracted discussion in a London daily, in which Jesus has been claimed as the Christ of Socialism, the early prophet of that faith.

Perhaps a still wilder theory is that propounded, which passes all comprehension, in the words of the late Lord Tennyson:—

Ring in the Christ *that is to be*.

No one is likely to go beyond that at present, not even the Congregationalists. C. C. CATTELL.

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#### THE GREEK CHURCH.

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THE ignorance of the clergy of the Greek church is quite upon a par with their venality and rapacity. It is related by Von Maurier, in his *Das Griechische Volk*, that, out of a thousands priests, scarcely ten could write their own names; such of them as could wearing a little inkhorn in proof of their rare accomplishment. M. Ubcini, the author of one of the best books that has been written on Turkey, mentions that a country priest, having occasion to visit Salonica, took the opportunity of consulting a brother cleric upon some points which had long perplexed his own mind. He asked, "Is it true that Jesus Christ is God? I have heard some people say so. Then, again, I have heard others say he is a man. If he is God, how can he be a man? If he is a man, how can he be God? Which of these things is one to believe? It is certain one can't believe both." We do not know whether he returned home satisfied upon these knotty questions.

Being generally poor, they haggle over the fees they exact from their congregations, in return for performing the offices of religion, and are as hard in driving a bargain respecting a baptism, a marriage, or a burial, as if they were selling a cow or a pig. But they manage to establish a powerful influence over the members of their flocks, by threatening them with excommunication—which shuts the sufferer off from the rites of the church, from employment, and from intercourse with his fellow-men; and if he dies without absolution, it is an article of popular belief that his dead body will become a vampire, will not rest quietly in its grave, and will wander restlessly up and down the country.

According to Sir John Cam Hobhouse, who was Lord Byron's travelling companion in the East, "The chief part of the service of the mass in the Greek Church seems to consist of frequent crossings, performed with the thumb laid on the two forefingers, and ten thousand repetitions of 'Lord have mercy on me,' sung through the nose, and apparently kept up as long as the breath of chanter will last." Another of their strange performances consists in kneeling down and knocking the head incessantly against the ground. During the season of Lent, this has to be done by the monks three hundred times in twenty-four hours; and so grotesque a piece of business is supposed to

be transacted in honor of, and for the purpose of pleasing Almighty God!

The religious literature of the Greek Church, comprises innumerable legends concerning the "saints"—that is to say a horde of native hermits and monks, overgrown with hair and hideous dirt, who passed their lives in caves, like so many wild beasts, and who, quite as often as not, went mad under the combined influences of solitude, fasting, and religious reveries. And these legends are read by the priests to the people in a language which the people do not understand; but from which they imagine they derive the same sort of benefit which a Protestant fancies he obtains by reading the Bible. Great stress is laid by the clergy upon the rigid observance of fasts; and a thief or a murderer who can readily obtain absolution for having committed the worst of crimes, especially if the man he has robbed or slain was a schismatic or an infidel—will be denied "the consolations of the church," if he had omitted to keep either of the *Tesseracosti*, or four fasts. An Englishman long resident in Bulgaria, states that "during a fast of sixty days, the scrupulous peasant mother will refuse her sick infant any other nourishment than bread, onion and garlic, and cabbage water. The child may die, but the fast has been observed." Religion is everything, but infanticide is nothing. One Basil, a notorious brigand, after an affray in which a family were murdered by his band, saw one of his men making free with a pot of butter. "Pagan!" he cried, dealing him a severe blow, "hast thou no fear of God? Is it not Friday?" The brigand understood the spirit of religion called Christian, as well as Mr. Moody or Mr. Varley.

Hearing confession is one of the most important functions of the Greek priesthood, and granting absolution, one of the most lucrative; because the more flagitious the crime, the larger is the sum of money demanded for condoning it. An old Greek said to M. Ubicini, "You may accuse yourself to the Pneumatics (the confessor), of no matter what crime, absolution certainly follows if you pay in proportion to the offence; for every sin with us has its price." The traveller Choiseul-Gouffier declares that in his time, ninety years ago, every pirate had a papas or caloyer who regularly absolved him and his crew on their return to shore, and who had a regular tariff of crimes, with the price of absolution for each. If a man's house is robbed, a few piasters will purchase excommunication of the suspected party, and a few more will purchase him absolution. "Crimes against property," says Messrs. St. Clair and Brophy, "false witness, and many such acts as are not only against the precepts of every Christian religion, but also punishable by law, are peccadillos, for which absolution may be purchased from the priest at the rate of an egg a piece. By these means, and by the sale of the 'aghiasmos'—that is to say, the monthly blessing and springling of the houses with holy water—the poor priests make up their scanty subsistence."

The Greek Christians hate the Roman Catholics, and abhor Jews. "A Greek," says Mr. Brown, "will beg your pardon for mentioning a hog or a Jew in your presence." When the Greek revolution broke out fifty years ago, nearly all the Jews in the Island of Hydra were put to death by the Greeks, and at the capture of Tripolitza by the Greeks about 5000 Jews perished. Turks and Jews were treated alike, and their dead bodies were cast off like dogs." In fact, to kill either a Hebrew or a Mussulman, is looked upon in the light of a meritorious act.

Mr. Brown mentions, in illustration of the contempt felt for the Hebrew, that a Corfiote peasant, by order of his lord, and on a fast day, shot a Jew usurer to whom his lord was deeply in debt. The man cut off the ears of the dead Jew, brought them to his employer, and laid them on the table. His master paid him for the job, and invited him to take some meat and drink to cheer up his spirits. But he refused it, saying "No, master, I have perilled my life to please you, but I cannot peril my soul by breaking the fast."

—*Liberator*.

J. SYMES.

Man is greater than these phantoms. Humanity is grander than all the creeds, than all the books. Humanity is the great sea, and these creeds, and books, and religions, are but the waves of a day. Humanity is the sky, and these religions and dogmas and theories are but the mists and clouds changing continually, destined finally to melt away.

—*Ingersoll*.

## ACID DROPS.

Mr. H. A. Jones, the dramatist, has been telling the Puritans some wholesome truths. They may be very good men (he says) according to their lights, but they are terribly narrow. The late Lord Shaftesbury, for instance, was a painfully good man; but just look at his portrait, note his intense, narrow, ascetic face, and then look at the portrait of Shakespeare, and note its broad blandness and benignity. Such is the difference, Mr. Jones seems to say, between the parson and the dramatist, the church and the stage.

A very good type of Puritanism, with its everlasting fussiness about other people's morality, is the *Methodist Times*. It has a great belief in repressive legislation. It would worry men and women, especially women, into the kingdom of heaven. And its style of address is always superlative. The little notion it is advocating at any time is always a safe short-cut to the millennium. "Take this," it exclaims, "and be saved"—with a look which says, "If you don't, may you be damned!"

The last number of the *Methodist Times* called for "one million new pledges" to teetotalism, which is a very large order. But the prodigiousness of the demand is eclipsed by the half statement and half prophecy with which it concludes its frenzied appeal. "We have only," it says, "to cross the Jordan of Total Abstinence to find ourselves in the full enjoyment of everything that, with the blessing of God, is necessary to a healthful and happy life." This is the sort of thing that Matthew Arnold was fond of bantering. It shows such an ignorance of history and human nature. In a country where thousands of professed Christians get drunk, thousands of other professed Christians will become teetotallers. And no doubt it is a very good thing for them. But the average man will drink something, and the fact must be faced. He doesn't like cold water; besides, it is sometimes the most dangerous liquid he can imbibe. Teetotal drinks are expensive and not very palatable. Tea, coffee and cocoa have to be made, and must be drunk hot. What is the average man to drink then? Would it not be well to make his liquor as innocuous as possible? Pure beer and light wine are certainly better than heavy beer and inflammatory spirits. Why not try to reform the drink if you cannot revolutionise the consumer? But no; your Christian ascetic, and compulsory reformer, would rather let a man, if he will take something stronger than ginger-beer, get beastly drunk, and the beastlier the better.

We have another word for the *Methodist Times*. It is this. Jesus Christ crossed the Jordan and took a dip in it, but he never crossed "the Jordan of Total Abstinence." Why was this? How was it he neglected the one indispensable condition of "a healthy and happy life"? And why does a Methodist editor want to be so much better than his Savior? In one sense, of course, it is a justifiable ambition. But not in the Christian sense. Admitting Jesus Christ to be God, it is blasphemy to improve upon his example.

Still another word for the *Methodist Times*. It says that "the will of the people has declared itself most unmistakably for entire abolition of the sale of intoxicating liquor on the Sunday." Well, we doubt it; and, if it were true, we should deny its justice. Drinking can only be wrong on Sunday if it is wrong on Monday. The man who says it is *always* wrong is logical, but where is the logic in distinction of days? We believe this Sunday Closing is a dodge of the clericals. They have come to regard the "pub" as a rival to the gospel-shop. They think that if they can empty the "pubs" on Sunday they will fill the churches and chapels. Well, they won't. Protection in this, as in other matters, will prove a failure; in fact, it has proved to be so already in Wales and Scotland.

Charles Bradlaugh was in favor of dealing in some way, perhaps by Local Option, with the liquor traffic, but he was against Sunday Closing; and, by the way, the *Methodist Times* has made the discovery that he was "one of the wisest and most fearless of the champions of the working classes." Yes, he was; and what is more, he was a champion of the working classes before Christian editors found it profitable to patronise them.

One of these days, in fact as soon as possible, we shall devote two or three articles to this Drink question. It is our decided opinion that the licensing laws, besides being very arbitrary and often very absurd, are directly responsible for the aggravated drinking habits of the people; and that absolute Free Trade in drink would be far preferable to the existing system. Let the reader who is tempted to consider this a wild paradox wait until we have written the promised articles. Our columns shall be open afterwards to any competent replies.

The men of God, disregarding the practice of their Savior at Cana of Galilee, are being gradually forced into the ranks of prohibition. Of Congregationalist pastors 2,100 out of 2,725 are total abstainers. In Scotland 95 per cent., and in Ireland the Congregationalists are, without exception, opposed to all intoxicants. Out of 1,758 Baptist ministers 1,424 are teetotalers. This because the deacons put on pressure that the men of God may show a good example to the young people.

The Highlander loves his Jesus hot and strong. If we may believe the *Rothsay Express*, some of the Bate churches celebrate the Holy Communion with whiskey. They think it makes a far better holy spirit than wine, especially in cold weather.

A certain North London "infidel-slayer," having to deliver a lecture, and being anxious to get a good audience, put on his bills that Mr. Foote had been invited to attend and offer opposition. It was a falsehood. The printed bill reached our office on Friday, and the infidel-slayer's letter on Saturday. The *Freethinker* published on the Thursday showed that Mr. Foote was engaged on the evening in question. Not that this matters, in one sense. The President of the N.S.S. is not likely to run after this reverend gentleman. If the reverend gentleman wants discussion he can run after Mr. Foote. Freethought platforms are always open.

According to the *St. Barnabas Parish Magazine* of Blackburn, "The senior editor of the press is the Devil, and on the whole the press does the work of the Devil. Take the reviews—take them as a whole; they are not in sympathy with Christ's teaching, but are simply the pagan principles of ancient Greece and Rome dressed up in modern attire. Take the popular novel—is not this one of the most powerful instruments of the Devil?" In this lamentable state of affairs it must be a great consolation to God Almighty to know that *St. Barnabas Parish Magazine* is ready to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Some person has discovered a prophecy and denunciation of the present fashion among ladies in Ezekiel xiii. 18, "Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes." A Hebrew scholar has, however, come to the rescue of the seamstresses at the expense of the knitters of cuffs. He says it should read, "Woe to the women who knit coverings for the juncture of the hands." This shows the beauty of the Hebrew language as a medium of divine revelation.

Herr Reichard, a Protestant student of theology, and Herr Sonnenburg, a publisher of Treves, were condemned some time ago to six and three weeks' imprisonment, respectively, for making a slanderous attack on the usages of the Catholic Church, and insulting the Bishop of Treves in a pamphlet published by them under the title of "The Holy Coat Pilgrimage to Treves under the Era of Bishop Korum." The sentence on Herr Reichard has now been commuted into one week's detention in a fortress, and that on Herr Sonnenburg into a fine of £5.

There is an article in Mr. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* on "Christ's Old Coat" which is exhibited at Treves. The subject is laughable, but it has a serious aspect. Such a ridiculous superstition shows what is the inherent tendency of the Catholic Church, which is ready to pander to the grossest credulity for the sake of profit. It also shows that this Church is still, as she ever was, and ever must be, the foe of all true progress. Here in England, such Catholic prelates as Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Vaughan pretend that their Church has become civilised. They say she has even forgotten to persecute. But we know better. She persecutes to the full extent of her power. Two persons in Germany, a Protestant student and a publisher, have been fined and im-

prisoned for speaking of the Coat of Christ disrespectfully! This has happened in the country of Martin Luther; nay, in the land of Goethe and Heine. Surely it is enough to set every man who is not a Papist on his guard against this Catholic Church, which sticks at no lie and hesitates at no crime.

The clerical majority of the London School Board has decided to send a circular to the teachers. It sets out informing them that in religion the Bible is their text-book, but it goes on to say the children are to be taught the relation in which they stand to God the Father as their Creator, God the Son as their Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier, although the two latter of these three Gods are not mentioned in the text-book. The object of the circular is to make the teachers either orthodox or hypocrites.

The *Guardian* and the *Church Times* and their clerical writers are continually putting forward schemes to get money for the Church schools and religious teaching. The simple fact is, that the Church schools are dwindling by degrees and becoming, in many places, quite inefficient. They cannot meet the demands of the Education Department, which grants them more than three-fourths of their income, and they are trying all sorts of schemes to obtain public cash without public control. They did their utmost in 1870, and if they fancy they can get better terms now, we trust they will find themselves mistaken.

The Roman Catholics are industriously circulating a petition on the subject of religious education. It states that they find difficulties to maintain their schools through the increased cost of the Education Department, complains that they have to pay rates for the support of schools they consider "dangerous and hurtful," and asks that the Education rate should be distributed in due proportion among all the schools. Do they think, then, that the State deems it needful to endow Catholicism, and all other isms, under the pretence of education?

In the matter of downright impudence, Brother Bounce (O.E.S.) isn't in it compared with a dignitary of the Catholic Church. Here is Cardinal Vaughan, for instance, declaring at Coventry—"The Catholic Church had always been a distinct friend and promoter both of knowledge and liberty." Shades of Galileo and Bruno! did you ever hear the like!

"God will surely hear our prayers," said Georgina Barrett, a poor old lady of seventy, who, with her sister, for weeks had lived on bread and water, in dire poverty under the eye of their Almighty Father in this Christian land. For two weeks they had but a pennyworth of coal to keep warmth in their bodies. But no help came, and she died at 80 York-street, in the West-end of London, surrounded by wealth, gaiety and fashion. What a triumph for Christianity that the last recorded utterance of a woman starved to death should be, "God will surely hear our prayers."

According to a Teheran telegram, an earthquake at Kushan has destroyed no fewer than twelve thousand lives. Where was their Heavenly Father?

By last week's storms God destroyed over 250 lives on our coasts, but double that number were saved by Man through lifeboats and other means.

The Church could not do anything to stop the coal strike. But it comes in at the end with a special form of prayer, composed by the Bishop of Ripon for the occasion: God, who was too indolent to stop the war, is now thanked for making temporary peace.

In Vienna, the other day, a youthful seamstress was sentenced to eight days' arrest because at a meeting of women she spoke of what she termed the uselessness of the belief in another and a better world, and quoted Heine's celebrated line to support her—"Der Himmel überlassen wir dem Engeln und den Spatzen" (We will leave heaven to the angels and the sparrows).

A story is told about Lobengula and the Jesuit missionaries. With customary African hospitality, he told them to take some women as wives. They got the interpreter to inform him that they believed in celibacy. The king was

astonished at their doctrine, and requested the interpreter to ask them if they had got any mothers. All the Matabele sincerely believe in a future state.

The Rev. Mr. Macintosh, vicar of Thirsk, was correspondent in a divorce case, *Hartley v. Hartley and Macintosh*. The petitioner desired his wife to drop the acquaintance of her spiritual adviser. After hearing evidence of what went on, his lordship granted a *decree nisi* with costs, and gave the petitioner the custody of the children.

Thomas William Matthews, the mission-hall keeper at Bostal Heath, Croydon, who was in the habit of indecently assaulting the girls who attended, and on one occasion did so during the service, has been sentenced to twelve months' hard labor.

The Rev. Mr. Purell, of Oakley-street, Chelsea, having only £150 per annum, cannot pay his way, and his washerwoman has had to summons him for £2 2s. 8d., the balance of her bill since February last. Defendant's representative offered in court to pay 10s. a month, but the magistrate made an order for the whole amount to be paid within that period.

At Bath, the Rev. W. Tanner has been fined £1 and costs for an aggravated assault upon one, Frederick Chappell.

Most of the recent suicides have been exceedingly pious. In the case of the young lady at Monte Carlo, a piece of paper was found in her pocket bearing the words "Do not forget my soul after I am buried."

The young Christian Socialist who threw himself over a railway arch at Sheffield in despair of doing aught to affect appreciably the sum total of human misery, had taken an active part in the local Y.M.C.A.

The watch-case polisher at Coventry who went wild from want of work, hoped God would prosper the baker who had supplied him with bread, and the courier who shot himself at Chelsea, because penniless, wrote: "May God Almighty have mercy on me, and pardon my deed." These were not Atheists, Mr. Talmage!

A parson of the Established Church is alleged to have used the following expression: "If his congregation did not help those who deserved to be helped, they were no better than thieves, publicans, actors, and actresses." If such a phrase were used, it is only what we should expect from a State Church professional clergyman. There are more criminals among the clergy of the State Church, in proportion to their number, than among any other body of men in the State. Hardly a day passes but some Church of England clergyman is charged with swindling, drunkenness, or bestiality. Reproof from such a gang may be treated with contempt. Satan reproving Sin was mild in comparison with them.

London, continuing its papers on the City Churches, shows that whereas the sixty churches of the City, which are sparsely attended, have an attached income of something like £70,000 per annum, the churches of Whitechapel, containing twice as many inhabitants as the City, only number nine, and receive between them a trifle above £3,000 each year. The same paper also tells us that the trustees of the City Parochial Charities offered the incumbent of St. Mary Abchurch the sum of £180 on condition that he took up his residence in the rectory; but he preferred to continue to let the building at £300 a year.

Some people fancy the "sale of souls" no longer obtains in the Church. Clerical agents are not under this mistake, as evident from a circular offering the reversion of a good vicarage, of which the present incumbent is aged seventy-two. The income is £540 a year, with "a model village," no Free-thinkers we presume, and the price only £1,900, or less than four years' purchase.

A Swedish church at Hyde Park, a suburb of Chicago, had lately become convinced that the hour for the general wind-up of all sublunary affairs was at hand. On Sunday, Oct. 5, thirty-five women donned their ascension robes and waited expectantly in the church for the sounding of the archangel's trumpet. As usual, he failed to keep the appointment. The

women watched all day and far into the night, but they saw nothing of the herald of the "risen Lord." He did not even send a telegram explaining the cause of his non-appearance. In this he was discourteous, to say the least.

A gipsy woman at Leeds has been committed to trial for telling the fortune of a Spiritualist. In this matter the law is the reverse of a sieve. It carefully catches all the small offenders, and lets the big ones escape.

Mr. W. T. Stead should bring an action for libel against *Hygiene and Food and Sanitation*. The former paper showed that his boasted Mattei cures consisted of nothing but distilled water sold at two shillings per ounce. The latter in its issue of Nov. 18, says: "Mr. Stead must have deliberately lied to Dr. G. W. Potter and the Medical Committee. . . The evidence is indisputable: that Mr. W. T. Stead is a dangerous and pestilent quack—dangerous by reason of his undoubted journalistic talents, and pestilent by the shameful use to which he has prostituted them in propagating successfully the meanest of swindles under the guise of morality, religion, and regard for the public well-being." It further calls him "the lying advance agent of a gang of mean swindlers." Mr. Stead should consult his spiritual guides as to the advisability of vindicating his character before a law court.

The sisters Fox were the originators of American spiritism in 1848, at Hydesville. After a successful career, they fell into drinking habits and poverty, and gave the show away by proclaiming that they made the spirit raps by cracking the joints of their toes. Eventually they returned to spiritism, their old followers being the only persons that would assist them. Now they are dead—dying in great indignity—they are canonised as messengers from the spirit world, and it is proposed to erect a memorial temple at Brooklyn at the cost of 250,000 dollars.

An enterprising Jew has conceived the scheme of making Jerusalem a seaport by cutting a canal from the Mediterranean. The only objection to the scheme—if objection it can be called—is that, as a good deal of Palestine is below the sea-level, Jerusalem might be swept to Jericho and Jericho into the Dead Sea.

As illustrative of the faith cure, a good story is told of a man who stuttered and bought an appliance which he was assured would cure him. He wore it and was cured. Subsequent disclosures were made which threw suspicion on the efficacy of the appliance, and though the man still wore it his stuttering came back. His faith was shaken.

It seems that poor Lord God Almighty has found a new enemy, and the Devil a new friend, in the bicycle. The Rev. S. Hocking denounces it as the great promoter of Sabbath breaking. Some churches have tried to get up bicycle church parades and morning services for the wheelmen, but so many bicycles have been stolen that the cyclists want the churches to insure their machines.

One of the yearly meetings of the Society of Friends in America has added to its other oddities a decision that members who use tobacco are not for the future to be recognised as officials of the body.

The Cardinal Bishop of Grasswardein, Hungary, has published an allocution on the Civil Marriage Bill. He counsels his flock to submit in so far as consenting to be civilly registered, but declares that if they do not also partake of the marriage sacrament provided by the church, they will be held as excommunicate, and their children deemed illegitimate. As, however, the law will not so deem them, they can afford to snap their fingers at the church. Having lost its teeth, it can only gnash its gums.

The Rev. W. Carlile, of the Church Army, announces that Tom Mann has at last made up his mind and will not join the Church. The workers will have the more trust in him for his decision, and it would have been better still if he had never "swithered" upon the subject. The politician who only wants a seat in the House of Peers in order to reform the Upper House is more likely to do a good turn for himself than for the people.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

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

*Sunday*, December 3, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester:—3, "Christ and Democracy"; 6.30, "A Search for the Soul." (Admission free).

December 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.—December 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Sheffield; 24, 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.

W. P. REDFERN.—Shall appear.

C. DOEG.—Send poster to the office. Mr. Foote will be there on Monday.

L. N. CLIFFON.—Send us Wolverhampton bill.

J. DOWMAN.—It is rather long, but we will try to find room in some future number. The subject will not hurt by keeping.

J. G. FINLAY.—Thanks. It will certainly be useful, though not in time for last week's *Freethinker*.

F. MALVERN.—*Daily News* of the previous Wednesday, *Daily Chronicle* of the previous Friday.

J. GRAY.—Both the dictionaries you mention are extremely good and trustworthy. Dictionaries only register pronunciation, however; they do not make it. It is determined by current usage in educated circles.

A. ASTALL.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. LEACH.—The address of the Unitarian lady who advertised to lend books was Miss Rawlins, 3 Sandon-terrace, Liverpool.

T. MAY.—Shall appear.

A. BELL.—You will find the dates in the *Secular Almanack*.

W. MORLEY.—Paragraph already written.

W. SIMONS.—You sent to the other papers first, and from them we have already done a paragraph on the subject.

MANY correspondents remain unanswered in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence in the north.

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—Crescent—Islamic World—Liver—Natural Food—Isle of Man Times—Wiltshire Times—La Gazette—Commonweal—Hull Daily News—Dundee Advertiser—Kansas Lucifer—Food and Sanitation—Commerce—Freedom—Brown's Book-stall.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

### SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Dec. 3) in the Secular Hall, Leicester. Our local readers will notice that the subjects have been transposed. "Christ and Democracy" will be taken in the afternoon, and "A Search for the Soul" in the evening. The admission at both lectures is free.

Mr. Foote had good audiences at Newcastle on Sunday, the evening audience being a specially large one, but the "free admission" worked out rather badly. The part of the Circus that could be entered without money and without

price was occupied by too many of the baser sort of Christians, who have yet to learn the elementary decencies of a public meeting. They were invited in free, and they abused the lecturer's hospitality. In the evening, indeed, there was organised disorder. Mr. Foote got through his lecture all right, but directly it was over the row commenced. Questions were asked, several times with gross impertinence, and the chairman was openly insulted. Five Christians mounted the platform for discussion. They were allowed ten minutes each, and had a very fair hearing, although the tone of most of them was insolent, while many of their remarks were foolish and brutally ill-mannered. One of them, with a peculiarly vulgar style, which was picked up, it seems, in the new school of Christian Evidence, said he had been told that there were four million Secularists in England, and that "they were the biggest boozers of the lot." One of our friends overheard this fellow say to a Christian friend, as he mounted the platform, "my gang's up there"—pointing to the gallery. They were up there, evidently. No sooner did Mr. Foote begin his reply, than the orthodox rowdies broke out in chorus. Such a scene had not been witnessed before at a Freethought meeting in Newcastle. The chairman was defied and told to "sit down," and the lecturer was hooted and howled at so vociferously, that he was obliged to tell the interrupters how strange it was that they objected to the Darwinian theory of their animal origin, yet persisted in making animal noises. It was impossible for Mr. Foote to deal with the points (such as they were) raised by the five speakers; the Christian rowdies simply would not let him. He therefore set himself to prevent their breaking up the meeting. By means of great exertion he obtained a hearing for some closing observations, which were very loudly applauded by the audience in the body of the building.

A Christian Evidence lecturer was speaking at the Town Hall while Mr. Foote was speaking in the circus. A large part of his audience marched up in procession from the Town Hall, headed by a band. They arrived at the Circus door an hour and a half after the beginning of Mr. Foote's lecture. Of course they were refused admission, though a dozen or so slipped in and contributed to the row in the gallery. "Let us in; it's a free meeting," the mob shouted. "The lecture's over," was the reply. "We want to ask questions," they exclaimed, a few candid ones adding "Let us in if only to make a noise." The upshot was that the door had to be barricaded and the police had to intervene.

This is the sort of spirit which is deliberately cultivated by the new school of Christian Evidences. Coarse insults and vile personalities are to do duty for argument, and Freethought is to be discredited by turning its meetings into scenes of disorder. Well, the pious policy will fail. The worst culprits will be spotted and refused admission. Further, the "free admission" can easily be suspended, when it only brings in a swarm of ruffians, who would be kept out by a charge of a single penny—their motto being, "Base is the bigot who pays."

A child was to have been named at Mr. Foote's evening lecture, but in the circumstances it was impossible. The ceremony was performed afterwards, in presence of the members, in the anteroom. Mrs. Dawson, the little boy's mother, is the wife of the Mr. Dawson whose departure for America was marked by a testimonial from the Newcastle Branch. She will join her husband over there shortly. Mrs. Dawson's mother was present. She is a professed Christian, but she said she liked the lecture, and, as for the disorder, if that was the result of Christianity, she would cry "Away with it."

Freethinkers came in to hear Mr. Foote from all parts of the district, one coming all the way from Alnwick, a distance of thirty-three miles. Their reports of the spread of Freethought in their various localities were most encouraging.

The Newcastle Branch, despite the difficulty as to halls for special lectures, is holding its own. One of its members lectures on the quayside. Twelve months ago he was a Sunday-school teacher. He looks too bright and intelligent for that occupation.

Mr. Foote was to have lectured at Jarrow on Monday, but the arrangements broke down, and a meeting was hurriedly

fixed up for Blyth. Owing to the very short notice there was but a moderate attendance. A local preacher offered opposition; but as he had not heard the lecture, and as he started by declaring that every Atheist was a liar, his criticism was not very profitable. There is talk of a public debate at Blyth. Mr. Foote is, of course, ready to meet a local representative of religion, such as the minister of a Christian church or chapel.

Although the weather was far from propitious, Mrs. Louisa Samson had a very fair audience at the Hall of Science last Sunday, and gave a most interesting lecture on "The Bible and Ethics." Mrs. Caudwell (Mrs. Samson's mother) sang a charming ballad, and was greeted with much applause.

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience last Sunday evening in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. It was the largest he has had in that hall during the present year. His subject was "America Re-visited," and, judging from the enthusiastic and repeated applause, our colleague's views on the great Republic pleased the crowded meeting. Mr. Ridgway presided. All the *Freethinkers* on hand were sold. Mr. Watts lectures to-day (Sunday, Dec. 3), morning and evening, at the Hall of Science, London. In the morning he gives his impression on his recent visit to America. We expect our friends will muster in large numbers to hear this lecture, which we are informed in an exceedingly interesting one.

Mr. Watts presided on last Thursday week at the debate in Manchester between Mr. Heaford and the Rev. Dr. Duffy. Mr. Watts writes us in the highest terms of Mr. Heaford as a debater. He handled his subject in a masterly manner, and won the good opinion of the audience.

Readers of the *Freethinker* are again requested to note the National Secular Hall Society's announcement in our advertising columns. There is a form of application for shares in the Hall of Science scheme. We appeal to the earnest friends of Freethought to support this enterprise, and to do so without further delay, in order that we may be in a position to make a definite statement, early in the new year, as to the rebuilding of the premises.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1894, issued by the National Secular Society, is now on sale at Mr. Forder's. It is edited, as before, by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler. Besides articles by the editors, it contains others by Messrs. Watts, Moss, Heaford, Ball, G. Standring and S. Standring. The Calendar has been overhauled, the information about the N.S.S. and its Branches is right up to date, and the other pages are filled with readable and useful matter. Secularists should order copies immediately. The Almanack is now the property of the N.S.S., and any profit will go into its exchequer.

It is not our intention to issue a Christmas Number of the *Freethinker*. The Summer Number cost us a good deal of labor, and we have barely got back the money we invested in it. The present is, of course, a better season for selling such publications—or rather it would be in the ordinary course of things. But the coal war and the general depression of trade have given it quite another complexion. We shall therefore drop the Christmas Number project, and make a Special Number of our first issue in the new year. This will be a less costly undertaking, but we hope it will prove satisfactory to our readers. Everything in this New Year's Number will be specially written for it, and the illustrations will be of the highest possible excellence.

Wolverhampton Freethinkers will have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Moss lecture to-day, Sunday afternoon only. The lecture will be preceded by a dramatic recital.

A Social Evening will be given by members and friends of the West London Branch, at the Hall of the Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway, W., on Thursday next, Dec. 7. In addition to a good program of songs and recitations, Miss Vance's Dramatic Company will assist with sketches. Admission will be free.

Mrs. Frederika Macdonald, translator of *The Iliad of the East*, will lecture under the auspices of the Glasgow Branch of the National Secular Society at their Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, on Sunday Dec. 10, her subjects being "Buddhism and Theosophy, a Renaissance of Superstition." This is Mrs.

Macdonald's first lecturing visit to Glasgow. On the Monday she will lecture for the Society at Dundee.

We are pleased to notice that the veteran Mr. George Jacob Holyoake is to be entertained to a Press dinner at the National Liberal Club.

London Freethinkers are reminded of the Ball and Entertainment at the Hall of Science next Wednesday. There will be dancing in the large hall and a concert in the minor one upstairs. Tickets are one shilling, and any profit will go to the benefit of the N.S.S. We hope to see a large gathering.

In consequence of the bad catering to which the London Secular Federation has been subjected, the committee have decided that their annual dinner shall be held at the Holborn Restaurant, the reputation of which is sufficient guarantee that a capital repast will be provided, with all the appointments of a first-class character. The dinner takes place on Monday, Jan. 8, at 8 p.m. prompt. Mr. Foote will occupy the chair, and a good program of music, etc. will be provided. Tickets will be 4s. each, and it is hoped that, notwithstanding the increased price, friends will muster in stronger force than on any previous occasion. Tickets are obtainable of all Branch secretaries; of Mr. Anderson, at the Bookstall, Hall of Science; of Mr. Forder, 28 Stone-cutter-street; and of E. Pownceby, 9 Finsbury-street, E.C. Early application is requested.

The Sunday Society got Museum Sunday observed at a few places, notably by Mr. F. Harrison at the Positivist Hall. Mr. Beerbohm Tree delivered an excellent address at the meeting of the Society in the large hall of the Working Men's Club. He observed, "the hypocrisy in connection with this whole question seems to me absolutely 'pyramidal,' as the French say. What about the train traffic? What about the omnibus traffic? What about the Post Office? What about the police? What about the Monday newspapers? Do these good people who hold up their hands in holy horror at the thought of employing half-a-dozen attendants to minister to the enjoyment of thousands refuse to take in the newspaper on Monday morning? The only case on record of such religious scruples prevailing, is that of a Glasgow Bank Director, who subsequently absconded."

Prof. Max Muller writes to the *Times* of Nov. 28 that the King of Siam, who is a Buddhist, has sent a generous contribution towards the publication of the Sacred Books of the East. The fund will be used to issue more of the Buddhist Sacred books, and thus, in the words of the Professor, "enable a large public to appreciate the truth and beauty, if not of esoteric, at least of real and historical Buddhism; of that Buddhism which teaches men to bear affliction with a hopeful spirit, and not to return hatred for hatred, but to overcome evil by good." And he gives the reference S.B.E. vol. x., Dhammapada, cap. 1, verse 5.

Writing to a Lancashire correspondent, Mr. Acland says that if clergymen and others do not cease inducing persons from claiming free education, the Education Act will have to be altered so that people may have free education without claiming it.

We don't much believe in Government pensions, but if they are knocking about they may as well fall to deserving objects. We are therefore, in one sense, glad to see that Mr. John Bedford Leno, the old Chartist and Freethinker, and a poet to boot, is to receive a gratuity of £50 from the fund at the Prime Minister's disposal.

#### HOW TO HELP US.

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

## AND THE SUN STOOD STILL.

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."—JOSHUA x. 12, 13.

IN the days of my youth I was a regular attendant at what pious people call "a place of worship"; although I cannot help observing now that if there be a God who needs the homage of mankind, I fail to see why any one place on earth is more appropriate than another in which to go through this interesting though humiliating performance. But as I have said I used to go to church frequently when I was a Christian, and sometimes for a change I would pay a visit to a chapel to hear a famous preacher, like the late Mr. Spurgeon, or to contrast the methods of chapel with those of the Established Church. Since I have developed into a pronounced Freethinker, however, and become a teacher of the Secular Philosophy, my engagements on Sundays have rendered it impossible for me to pay much attention to the Christian clergy—except such of them as favor me with a visit when I am lecturing, in order to show how utterly untenable are my present views of the Bible and theology. A few Sundays ago I had a morning off; and as most of the Secular lecturers were occupying platforms at a considerable distance from my residence, I walked into the Old Kent-road and turned into the first chapel I came to. It happened to be a fine old historic building called Marlboro Chapel, and its pulpit had been occupied at various times by some excellent specimen of Christian gentlemen, such, for instance, as Mr. Henry Richard, late M.P. for a Welsh constituency, and a much esteemed representative of the Peace Association; also the Rev. W. A. Essery, a speaker of remarkable power and eloquence.

On the morning in question the pulpit was occupied by a young man of more than ordinary courage and ability for a Christian occupying the position of preacher to such an "eminently respectable congregation," named the Rev. J. Wilkins; and the text chosen for the sermon was the one at the head of this article. The reverend gentleman began by saying that if it were admitted that God was omnipotent, such a miracle as staying the sun and the moon would not be impossible to him. But he (the speaker) thought there was no need for any such explanation. Every school-boy now knew that, so far as this earth is concerned, the sun never moves; in point of fact, that relatively to the earth it is always in the same position.

Nor could it be supposed that the more stupendous miracle of the earth standing still took place, because the consequences involved in such a miracle would be so great. The movement of the planetary system was such that any deviation from the natural course in one part would involve a deviation in every other part. Mr. Wilkins had, however, what he considered a much more reasonable explanation. The Bible was composed, said he, of history, philosophy, and poetry, and this passage he thought, when rationally considered, would be regarded as poetic. Did not the Bible say that "the hills clapped their hands and the mountains rejoiced?" yet nobody proposed to take these words as being literally true. No, they were to be taken merely as the utterances of the poet. And in this sense, the statement that the "sun stood still" must be regarded. It was poetry, and nothing more. Some of the members of the congregation winced at this statement, and one at least made a wry face as though this was indeed a bitter pill to swallow, with little indeed of the soothing syrup of theology to make it palatable.

But I must needs show that Mr. Wilkins's way of getting over the difficulty will not help him much; or rather, if the argument is any good at all, it is too good—it goes too far. For if Mr. Wilkins explains one miracle in this way, why not another, indeed why not all? Why not say that when the Bible declares that

Balaam's ass spoke it means that he spoke in a poetic sense?—that the ass or the writer of the story was a poet. Or again, that when Samson slew a thousand people with the jawbone of an ass, the Bible writers only meant us to regard this as poetry—it was a poetic jawbone. That Jonah did not live and pray in the inside of a whale's stomach for three days and three nights; but that this and a multitude of other alleged biblical miracles, are only so many illustrations of biblical poetry.

It is well that Mr. Wilkins dismissed the idea of the sun standing still as being in itself improbable. The magnitude of the sun is so great, that to suppose it to stand still at the command of Joshua, even with the assistance of the anthropomorphic God of the Bible—old Jahveh—is infinitely absurd. Imagine a body whose solid contents comprehend 356,818,739,200,000,000, or three hundred and fifty-six thousand billion of cubical miles, coming to a sudden standstill, and what would be the consequence? The planetary system would be thrown into disorder, and our insignificant earth thrown off into infinite space. Or fancy even our little globe coming to a standstill—ceasing to revolve round the sun. The result would be that the earth would fly off into space, every form of life destroyed, and the earth itself would become engulfed in one or other of the big bodies that revolve in space.

No wonder Mr. Wilkins thinks that the biblical statement is easier of belief if regarded as poetry. By and bye it will be found that the Bible consists not only of ancient philosophy and poetry and quasi-history, but also that it is made up largely of fiction, which will assuredly destroy its supposed value in an age of science and Freethought.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE monthly Executive Meeting was held at the Hall of Science on Nov. 23; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. V. Roger, S. Hartmann, J. M. Wheeler, C. J. Hunt, J. Samson, J. E. Brumage, G. J. Warren, E. Bate, J. Marshall, J. Potter, G. Ward, C. W. Martin, M. Steel, C. Cohen, G. H. Baker, R. Forder (hon. sec.), E. M. Vance (asst. sec.)

Minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed, cash statement received, and minutes of Organisation Committee's meetings discussed and confirmed.

The President reported circumstances which made it advisable that the financial business of the Society should be placed upon a footing which would obviate all mistake or misunderstanding. To this end it would be necessary to have a definite entry in the Minutes. He had himself prepared two memoranda, which he would lay before the Executive. After some explanation and discussion, the first was moved by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Samson: "That the Secretary shall henceforth bring to the Executive meetings a statement of the Society's liabilities, actual or immediately prospective; that the Executive shall vote specific payments on account of the said liabilities, which payments shall be drawn by cheques from the Society's banking account; that any urgent payments to be made between the Executive meetings, and not thus provided for, shall be made by the President's order; and that such vote of the Executive (conveyed through the Secretary), or such order of the President, shall be a sufficient authority to the trustees of the banking account to sign cheques for such payments." Carried.

The second was moved by Mr. Steel and seconded by Mr. Forder: "That all money received by the Secretary, from subscriptions, lectures, meetings, or any source whatever, shall be paid immediately into the Society's banking account; and that the Secretary shall bring the bank pass-book and cheque-book to every ordinary Executive meeting." Carried.

Mr. Hartmann moved the addendum: "That payments made on the President's order be specifically reported at the next ordinary Executive meeting." This was seconded by Mr. Roger, and carried.

Mr. Steel was appointed as an additional auditor, and a letter from the Finsbury Branch, relating to the Children's Party, was read. Other minor details were discussed, and the meeting adjourned until Thursday, Dec. 21.

E. M. VANCE, Asst. Sec.

During the absence of Mr. Symes in New Zealand, he will leave Mr. Huntington in charge of the *Liberator* at Melbourne. Mr. Symes has long needed an efficient assistant, and we trust he has now secured one.

## CHATS WITH A JEW.

ON the occasion of one of my visits to Mr. Kohn, I mentioned to him the views put forward by Mr. Alexander Vance in his *Hellenic Sacra* and *Vox Clamantis*, and since advanced by Mr. H. Martyn Kennard in his work on *Philistines and Israelites*, to the effect that the Jewish race were really part of a far mightier people than was ever comprised in the narrow and sterile territory of Judea. His eyes lighted up. "Yes," said he; "it was our race who ruled as Shepherd Kings in Egypt." I knew Josephus identified the Jews with the Hyksos, but regarded this as a bit of racial buncombe. However, I remarked: "Of course you were not known as Jews till settled in Judea." "Name is nothing in matters of race. I am English," replied proudly this German Jew of Spanish descent. He went on to explain that the journey of Abraham into Egypt meant the migration of a large tribe moving from Chaldea, via Arabia, into Lower Egypt, and thence spreading along the African shore of the Mediterranean. "What was their religion?" I asked. "At the same stage of evolution," he replied, "all religions are the same. The common propitiate evil spirits; the instructed meditate on the great being who is all that has been and shall be. The Egyptians called him Amen, the hidden god, the Lord of the new moon festival, or Nuk Pu Nuk, I Am that I Am. Ilu, El, Elohim, Allah, Jehovah, Iao, Jove or Ain Soph, are one. The Kabbalah identifies Jahveh Adonai, and Amen.\* You keep this old name in your liturgies. Your Christ says 'swear not at all,' yet swears 'Amen, Amen,' or 'verily, verily, I say unto you.' 'The instructed see not merely the cloak, but what the cloak covers.† We Idishim have always understood these things, and worshipped the one without images, for we are a nation of kings and priests." I thought of his dark-eyed daughter Rachel, and what a capital princess or priestess she would make; but I reminded him how his ancestors were always running after other gods. "Yes," he allowed; "the knowledge of Ain Soph was always for the few." That the knowledge of Jah or Jehovah was extended beyond Judah, he instanced by the names of Uriah, the Hittite; Jehoram, king of Hamath; and Yahumelek, Prince of Tyre. Babylon was the real old seat of empire, and the Jews were the dispersed Babylonians, who afterwards built up Jerusalem. This he illustrated by the two Talmuds, the earlier being the Babylonian and the later the Jerusalem. The Palestinian Jews were admittedly only a remnant of a great race dominant in the days of Solomon, who was identical with Shalmaneser, whose kingdom extended from the River Euphrates to the borders of Egypt.

Much doubting this reconstruction of ancient history, I ventured to remark that the timidity of the Jews hardly suggested their having ever been a dominant race. This evoked such a fierce torrent of invective that I was almost sorry I spoke. "You Christians," said he—despite my protest that I was no Christian—"you have killed out all our brave men, burnt, imprisoned, tortured, and starved them, and then reproach us with cowardice and cunning, because only the timid and shrewd could escape your persecution. But we rule you still, though in another way, and all the *Judenhasse* which continually breaks out among you is just on account of this."

Though unconvinced, I could but think there was something in what the old Jew said. LUCIANUS.

Henry Melville, who studied the secrets of Freemasonry for forty years (an occupation which will induce most people to set him down as a crank), and who in some respects anticipated and even went beyond the views of Professor Johnson as to the concoction of past history, states in his curious book *Veritas*, 1874 (p. 96), that in the Calendar of the Book of Common Prayer for 1642, the 30th of January is marked "K Char. *Martyr*." I had the curiosity to look up the Prayer-Book at the British Museum (press mark C. 30, a. 32), and sure enough the fact is as stated. The imprint is "Printed by Robert Barker, printer to the King's most Excellent Majesty, and the assignee of John Bill 1642." No one now-a-days will suppose that the Prayer-Book prophesied an event seven years in advance. Melville draws the seemingly wild inference that the decollation of Charles had an astronomical significance. I suggested that possibly the title-page was printed in 1642, and the calendar in the reign of Charles II. This seems the most plausible explanation; but an authority at the British Museum told me they had no theory there. The book is kept in the large room among the case curiosities.—J. M. W.

\* Thus:—A 1, M 40, N 50 = 91. J 10, H 5, V 6, H 5, A 1, D 4, N 50, I 10 = 91. This suffices a Kabbalist.

† A quotation from the *Zohar*.

## THE EGOISM OF MARTYRDOM.

THE Christians tortured for opinion's sake,  
And bound by brutal brethren to the stake,  
Believed that after death a life began,  
The fruit of this probationary span;  
And that this after-life, as scriptures tell,  
Will either smile in heaven or shriek in hell;  
And, as they thought that Christ a one could save  
Their deathless souls from fires beyond the grave,  
They chose the stake, and suffered fleeting pain,  
To flee from endless loss to endless gain;  
They feared to face the terms of longer life,  
And so, by suicide, gave up the strife;  
To purchase heaven, they gave their transient breath;  
They yielded life to 'scape intransient death,  
And with voluptuous suffering did enlace  
And hug their priceless pain with mad embrace.

Each mind creates its own supremest good,  
But knows it not till bribes have been withstood:  
A man gives darling gold to save his breath,  
And some give breath to save their souls from death.  
We all select, according to our lights,  
The thing that least dismays, or most delights;  
In all our rash, as well as cautious, acts,  
We seek what least repels, or most attracts.  
All motives, aims, and deeds, both low and high,  
Caress the sleepless, all-pervading "I."  
Each act of "sacrifice," love, hate, or greed  
Is merely love of self, expressed in deed.  
As planets try, but fail, to leave the sun,  
Our acts must always bow to "number one."

Let truth be told, nor care if comfort dies,  
But let our out-and-inmost self despise  
The base and baseless pleasantness of lies.  
The man, the "I," is product of the all  
That constitutes this small stupendous ball;  
And he, himself, within himself is shut,  
At once the Archer, Arrow, Bow, and Butt!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## GARIBALDI. A SAINT.

As you are aware, in the North of Italy and Ticino, for some time past, there was nothing else talked about but the dry weather; and for the purpose of getting some rain, all the saints of the calendar were, for their amusement, carried about in procession. A wealthy Novarese farmer, having spent some hundreds of francs in benediction, three days of prayers, wax candles, offerings, etc., without result, came to the conclusion that there were neither saints nor madonnas in Paradise now worth a dry fig for imploring favors near the throne of God. And do you know what he did? One fine day he mustered his laborers, also all those of his neighborhood, and greatly surprised them by presenting to them a small statue of Garibaldi. "This man," he said, "has done some miracles for us in life, why should he not do so in death?"

Shortly, Garibaldi was religiously carried in procession among the arid fields; and twenty-four hours after the rain came! It will now require a special spiritual missionary to bring those good Novarese back to the Roman Catholic Apostolic Christian faith.—Translated from the "*Ilvezia*," of *San Francisco*.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## CHRISTIAN PAGANISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

As supplementary to Mr. Wheeler's recent articles on Pagan Survivals, I note the following from the Rev. S. Baring Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, p. 424. "From my experience of English dissenters, I am satisfied that their religion is, to a greater extent than any one has supposed, a revival of ancient Paganism, which has long lain dormant among the English peasantry." It is rather rich that this charge of Paganism against the dissenters comes from a High Church clergyman—a patron of ritual that is almost entirely Pagan. LITTLE JULIAN.

The London Missionary Society is getting into financial difficulties. Last year there was a deficiency of £22,000. It was expected that the present year would show a similar deficit. There was an adverse balance from the previous accounts, and the society's assets were mortgaged to the bank. Fifty meetings have recently been held to send round the plate in different churches. The wiser part of the world are, however, quite indifferent to the needs of the London Missionary Society, which is a society not for missionising London, but for raising money from Londoners to missionise the foreign heathen.

## THE POWER OF PRAYER.

Parson Sandy, a colored divine of deep lore, and Simon, a theological student, roomed together. The other morning, when Simon arose, he discovered that his watch had been stolen. When Sandy, who had left his bed early, came into the room, Simon spoke to him about the missing watch, and asked his advice as to the best course to pursue for its recovery. "De bes' plan, Brudder Simon, is ter pray ter de Lord. Ef yer prays wid ferventness, de Lord will see dat de watch is returned." "Does yer believe dat, Brudder Sandy?" "Yes, Brudder Simon. Ax de Lord, an' he will answer yer pra'". "Will yer pray for me, Brudder Sandy!" "Yas, Brudder Simon, I'se always willin' ter pray." The two men kneeling, prayed. When they arose, Simon said: "I feels dat de Lord is gwine to answer my prayer." "I'se glad ter hear it," responded Sandy. "In fack, I know dat he is," and drawing a horse-pistol and levelling it at Sandy's head, Simon continued: "Gimme dat watch or I'll shoot de top of yer head off." Sandy produced the watch, when Simon continued: "De power of prayer and hoss-pistols is astonishin' ter de human un'erstandin'."

The Koreshans, who believe in the Messiahship of O. R. Teed, hold that hell is indeed open to all. Their organ, the *Flaming Sword*, says: "Ann Lee, and every Shaker, professed Christian, or votary of other religion or no religion, who dies, goes to hell and will remain there, either in the spiritual or natural division of it, until he overcomes and destroys everything in himself that can die; until he utterly kills the old man, and his 'corruptible puts on incorruption, and his mortal puts on immortality.'"

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

## LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Charles Watts, "America Re-visited" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Life: Secular and Theological" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday at 8.30, debating class, J. T. Blanchard, "The Eight Hours Question" (free). Tuesday at 8.30, athletic class. Wednesday at 8.30, Freethinkers' Annual Ball, concert in the minor hall (tickets 1s.) Thursday and Friday at 8, dancing classes. Saturday, in the minor hall, social evening (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, H. Snell, "Secularism and Social Reform," followed by dramatic recital (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering. Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, E. Calvert, "Human Progress" (free).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30 (in small hall), debating society, Mr. Hale v. Mr. Lee, "Does the Bible Teach Eternal Punishment?"; 7.30 (in large hall), Mr. A. Westcott, "A Modern Inquisition; its Victims and How they are Tortured," illustrated by oxy-hydrogen light. Friday at 7.30, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver-street: 7, Sam Stranding, "Christ and Labor" (free).

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, Dec. 7, at 8, social evening, dramatic sketches, etc. (free).

Islington—Milner Lodge, 18 Waterloo-terrace, Upper-street: 3.30, members' quarterly meeting.

South Essex Secular Society, 33 and 35 Salway-road, Stratford, E.: 7.15, B. Hyatt, "I go a-fishing" (free).

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Hartfield-road Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, a lecture.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Consolations of Religion" (in the hall if the weather is unfavorable).

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

## COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Room No. 6): 11.30, songs, recitations, etc.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: A. B. Moss, 11, "Bruno and Spinoza"; 7, "The Gospel of Evolution."

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

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: Stanley Jones, 3, "The Christian Religion"; 6.30, "Miracles and Medicine."

Brighton—6 Whitecross-street; 7, A. Simson, "Tylor's Anthropology," followed by a variety entertainment.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, J. Hill, "The Age of the Earth"; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, R. Forder, "The Bible and Ancient Monuments."

Dundee—Cutlers' Hall, Murraygate: 11.30, mutual improvement class; 2.30, concert; 6.30, A. J. Guthrie, "Christianity and Civilisation."

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

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, impromptu speeches; 6.30, J. Wallace, "The Philosophy of Socialism."

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7.30, a paper on "Shelley." Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7.30, important business meeting.

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate; G. W. Foote, 3, "Christ and Democracy"; 6.30, "A Search for the Soul."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society: 7 (in large hall), L. Small, B.Sc., "The Origin of Life."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 6.30, J. Harvey Simpson (of the Manchester Crematorium), "Cremation" (free). Tuesday at 8, debating circle, C. Pegg, "Quotations from Secular Authors." Monday from 8 to 10.30, dancing (6d.)

Nelson—Page's Shop, 36 Leeds-road: Tuesday at 7.30, business meeting.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, W. R. Stansell, "What we (Secularists) Want and What we Don't Want"; monthly meeting after the lecture.

Nottingham—Shortland's Café, 3 Derby-road: 7, J. Hooper, "The Bible in 1790 and 1890."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: C. Cohen, 11, "The Origin of Species"; 3, "The Rise of Christianity"; 7, "Are Christians Sceptics?"

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rookingham-street: 7, W. Dyson, "Jesus: God, Man, and Myth."

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

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, R. Weightman will lecture.

Wolverhampton—Athenæum Assembly Room, Queen-street: 3, A. B. Moss, "The Drift of Darwinism," preceded by a dramatic recital, "Marc Antony's Oration" (free).

## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

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

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

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

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

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith London, W.—D.C. 10, Grimsby. Jan. 21, 1894, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Dec. 3, Battersea; 10, Camberwell; 17, Deptford Liberal Club.

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TALMAGE CORNERED.

THE editor of the New York Recorder, desiring to learn more of an offer by Talmage, sent a reporter to interview him.

"Is it true," asked the reporter, "that you offer 100 dollars to any infidel who can prove that he has read the Bible through twice in course?"

"Yes," answered the doctor; "and you may have noticed I added that it must be proved by witnesses." Dr. Talmage rubbed his hands and smiled blandly.

"Well, doctor, that witness clause is just what the Recorder would like to know about. Are you yourself in a position to prove by any single credible witness that you have read the Bible through once?"

Dr. Talmage started; his features took on an expression of consternation, and he coughed slightly.

"Ahem!" he said. "That is a matter—um—that—it—ah—lies with me—ahem!—entirely to decide. Yes, as I was saying—ahem!—that is a matter that I don't care to go into—um—ah."

The reporter suggested that the reverend doctor might be expected by the infidels to at least show that he had fulfilled the terms of his own offer.

"Ye-es," said Dr. Talmage. "But that is my own look-out. Is there anything else you would like to ask me about?"

"Have you nothing more to say on this subject?" was asked.

"No," said the clergyman.

The reporter then left, and it is very safe to say that Dr. Talmage will maintain a masterly silence in regard to this matter in his sermons.

"Oh," said little Daisy to her mamma, "I was in the parlor last night behind the sofa, when the curate came in to see sister Kate, and they did sit close together, and the curate said, 'Katie, dear, I love you,' and Katie said, 'Oo, oo,' and then the curate kissed her on both cheeks, and said, 'Dear Katie, how good the Lord is to us poor sinners,' an' Katie said, 'Oo, oo,' an' then—an' then —" "Well," said her mamma, "you wicked child, what did you do?" "Why, mamma, I felt so good I blurted right out, 'Let us pray'—oh! an' you ought have seen 'em jump."

A FREETHINKER'S DEATH.

"TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN."

An inquest was held yesterday, at Mansfield, on the body of T. Douglas Pomeroy, who was found in a yard on Saturday night in a dying condition by two policemen. The Coroner, previous to the jury viewing the body, read the following letter which the deceased had left—a letter addressed to all whom it may concern, dated Friday night, Nov. 17th, 1893—and which ran as follows:—

"Do not judge me too harshly, I can get no sleep. This awful cough tears my chest up at each cough, and keeps me awake. It is a living death. I cannot sleep owing to this continuous pain. My father was a large confectioner and hotel proprietor, at 4 Mall Bridges, Clifton, near Bristol—W. C. Pomeroy. As a boy I often went the drive with him out to the Bristol Union, of which he was one of the Guardians. I cannot live this living death. No sleep, and coughing up nearly all my inside. My nearest relative's address, Mr. F. Lowell, 10 Rochester-square, Camden Town, London, N.W. My best wishes to my good friends at the Hall of Science, Sheffield. They will remember 'George Brinsmead's' musical sketches, 'Our charity concerts,' etc., and they can take it I pass away a true Freethinker. I can only say may they have their reward here. Oh, God! if there is a God, have mercy upon my soul, if I have a soul.—T. Douglas Pomeroy. Note.—It is a beautiful world for the rich." It was found that deceased, who was about forty years of age, died of congestion of the brain. The doctor said he probably left the inn having had very little beer, but the cold being so intense he turned giddy and fell to the ground, causing the wound on the head.—Yorkshire Evening Post.

The Church has impeded, but has not, and it cannot stop the onward march of the human race. Heresy cannot be burned, nor imprisoned, nor starved. It laughs at Presbyteries and synods, at Ecumenical councils, and the impotent thunders of Sinai. Heresy is the eternal dawn, the morning star, the glittering herald of the day. Heresy is the last and best thought. It is the perpetual new world: the unknown sea, toward which the brave all sail. It is the eternal horizon of progress. Heresy extends the hospitality of the brain to new thoughts. Heresy is a cradle; orthodoxy a coffin. Why should a man be afraid to think, and why should he fear to express his thoughts?—Ingersoll.

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