

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

Owing to a delay at the engraver's the Cartoon we promised for this week has to stand over till our next issue.

NAUGHTY LADAS.

LORD ROSEBERY is at once the hero and the villain of the hour. His horse "Ladas" has won the Derby, and his lordship is threatened with the loss of the next general elections. That terrible old shrew, the Nonconformist Conscience, is in a state of passionate objurgation. She dares not talk Billingsgate, but she looks mischief and murder. Her excited virtue demands a victim. She foams with pious malignity. Her idea of virtue is self-denial, and she hates all who do anything because they find it pleasant. The sin of any act, in her view, lies in its agreeableness. She is ready to allow *some* concession to human weakness, but it must not go beyond tea and muffins, with a prologue of prayer and an epilogue of exhortation. Anything else is earthly, sensual, and devilish. And the man who indulges in unpermitted recreation is to be hunted down, were he as lofty as Nebuchadnezzar. Of course Lord Rosebery is something less eminent than that old potentate, but in default of the Prince of Wales he is the biggest game available, and unless he repents in sackcloth and ashes the Nonconformist Conscience swears he shall fall from power and go out to grass.

The first champion of the Nonconformist Conscience is the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Everybody knows he is a good man. His very looks betray him. Nobody could imagine him smiling at Arthur Roberts or laughing at Fred Leslie. His very recreations are all full of piety. Instead of going to the theatre, or playing a game of billiards, he sits down and writes a pious narrative. Of course it may not be true, but then it is edifying; and telling lies is much less heinous than drinking sherry at Epsom or betting a sovereign on the Derby. Thus it is that Mr. Hughes, the author of the *Atheist Shoemaker* romance, stands up before the world and rebukes Lord Rosebery for running Ladas. In the *Daily Chronicle*, and in the *Methodist Times*, he warns the Premier to prepare for the worst. His lordship knows what to expect if "the enthusiasm of the great Nonconformist Churches is chilled." The Liberal party has already suffered by "the removal of Mr. Gladstone's serious and religious influence"—although it appears that the Grand Old Man, being out of office, and no longer a slave to the Nonconformist Conscience, has actually congratulated Lord Rosebery on winning the race of the year. Mr. Hughes goes even farther. He censures "the tone of levity which the Prime Minister cultivates in his public addresses." His lordship has a pretty wit, but he should not give it exercise. This is a serious and sober country, with a serious and sober religion. Lord Rosebery, before he speaks, should go through a course of Jeremiah. And if Jeremiah palls, he can always fall back on Mr. Hughes.

Our own position is one of impartiality. We were never on a racecourse, and we never made a bet, except in the domestic circle with the wife of our bosom, who is always right. We mean she always wins; anyhow we have always to pay. Such is the extent of our gambling. It is not a pastime for which we have any inclination. But

some people like to "have a bit on," whether they win or lose, merely for the fun or excitement. It is very wrong, no doubt, but human nature is not perfect—even after eighteen centuries of Christianity. Some human beings are *far* from perfect, and the confirmed gambler is a dangerous person, like the confirmed drunkard. He is nearly as dangerous as the confirmed bigot. Not *quite* so dangerous, for you can avoid him; whereas the confirmed bigot, if he has the opportunity, will go after you and *make* you acquainted with his Inquisition.

A man may be no patron of gambling, and yet refuse to scream himself hoarse against it. To begin with, it is not confined to the racecourse. It is just as prevalent on the Stock Exchange. It is the genius of many forms of commerce. The market share-list is brother, or first cousin, to the betting odds. And in the next place, it is a remarkably easy form of virtue to look after your neighbour's morals. It is difficult to keep yourself fairly clean, just, considerate, and good-tempered in the bustle of life; and if a really honest man is told that an immoral man lives round the corner, he is likely to reply, "Well, I dare say there is; but I am not going to kick up a row outside his front door. I don't think I'm good enough. Are you?"

But you will never get a man with a Nonconformist Conscience to talk in that way. Being a pharisee, to begin with, and having sometimes a very dirty mind, which loves to dwell on the worst sins and weaknesses of his fellow men, he is always for a policy of repression. This has been his characteristic for centuries. He is in league with the constable. Men must be *made* moral, and "moral" means acting up to *his* standards. The Puritans tried this game in the seventeenth century. They had even the impudence to sneer at Shakespeare. They put a strait-waistcoat on human nature, which by-and-bye got it off and went "a buster" at the Restoration. During the eighteenth century they were under a cloud, but in the second half of the nineteenth century they have had a time of prosperity. They oppose Sunday freedom and every form of "carnal" recreation. And therefore one is justified in looking with suspicion on their crusade against gambling. Their motive was hit off by Macaulay, who said that the Puritans put down bear-baiting, not because it hurt the bear, but because it was pleasant to the spectators.

History is full of warnings against the policy of repression, except in relation to overt crime; and even in that case, the prison is more re-assuring to society than helpful in reformation. Human nature will have excitement, and the lower forms will obtain until they are displaced by the higher. In other words, progress is entirely a matter of evolution. A crusade against tails would never have abolished them; they disappeared as our simian progenitors gave up climbing trees, used their front extremities as hands, and their hind ones as feet.

For these reasons, among others, we are quite unable to sympathise with the Nonconformist outcry against Lord Rosebery. There is nothing to be ashamed of in owning a good horse—one of the most beautiful things in "creation." Nor is there anything to be ashamed of in running horses against each other, unless there is wickedness in cricket, football, or cycling. And surely it is not Lord Rosebery's fault that gambling takes place in connection with *amusements*. Anyhow, we hope he will not play the hypocrite. He is asked to assume a virtue if he has it not, but it is better to be himself, even if he loses the Premiership. He may run that "naughty Ladas" a dozen times, and *we* shall not see it, for our preferences do not lie

in that direction. But we know that it takes all sorts of men to make up a world. In our opinion, two men alike are one too many. Still, if there *must* be two of one sort, we should decidedly prefer two Lord Roseberys to two Price Hugheses.

We would observe, in conclusion, that the prevailing form of religion in this country is itself answerable for very much of the grosser vice of the people, which is largely a reaction against the foolish, and even wicked, austerity of the Churches. Man's life is robbed of color in the name of God; the Sunday is almost entirely wasted or perverted, when it might be made a day of innocent recreation and ennobling education; and money is raised to convert the "heathen," which might be spent in rationalising and elevating a multitude of Englishmen. We have plenty of sour religion, but we also beat the world in drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution.

G. W. FOOTE.

TIC! TAC! TOC!

Adapted from the French of Paul Combes.

THERE once was a cuckoo. Not one of those who make their well-known call in early summer, but a *chef d'œuvre* of art and mechanism. It was connected with a clock which marked the minutes and seconds, and indicated the phases of the moon. At each hour a round door, representing the sun, opened; the bird came out, cried cuckoo from once to twelve times, and then retired. The oak clock-case was equally exquisite in workmanship. The artist had chiselled it with loving care. Flowers, fruit, leaves, insects, and birds were accurately carved. The dial was represented by a globe, which completely revolved around a zodiac in twelve hours. On the pediment was inscribed a name and date, Hans Claudius, 1483.

By profession a clockmaker, Hans Claudius was, by taste, a philosopher—a dangerous thing in 1483—Luther's birth year—when the fermentation of the Renaissance had reached Nuremberg, where Hans lived. He had pondered too deeply the mechanism of clocks, and studied too closely the works of nature outside, to be satisfied with the scheme of the world as propounded by theologians. He doubted if the stars were made on purpose to guide man at night, and if the universe was altogether designed for human benefit. He consigned his thoughts to writing, and in an evil hour entrusted it to a friend. On the morrow he was arrested for heresy. The ecclesiastical judges could make little out of his manuscript, but they discerned its purport was offensive to ears devout. Subjected to a stern interrogation, his own love of questioning betrayed him. Asked to admit that God had created all for the benefit of man, he asked: "How know you that human existence is anything more than the incidental accessory, the mere ticking of the clock of the universe, which you take to be an essential function?" This embarrassing question settled his fate. He was burnt in the public square of Nuremberg as an Atheist. The friend who betrayed him obtained the cuckoo clock as a reward for helping to eradicate the pestilent errors of heresy.

Its creator killed, the clock remained. Generations have passed; yet its mechanism is so sound that it still remains, and the story of its maker has suggested thoughts of heresy to many of its beholders. Its beautiful carving is all disfigured by the holes drilled by the wood beetle, known as the death-watch. These insects, whose love-calls are regarded by superstition as signals of death from a spirit-world, now add their tickings to the ceaseless vibrations of the clock. Stranger still, and only to be accounted for by the fact that freethought is in the air, they exhibit the philosophic questionings, and even the heresy of the martyr clockmaker.

Tic, a wood-drilling death watch, who resides on the left of the clock pediment, one day forgot his love and love calls in meditation upon his dwelling-place. "What is this live on, eat, and travel through?" he asked. Finding no answer, he bored on, piercing through the clock case until he reached the interior. One thing Tic was sure of: he was in motion, it was inert; he was alive, it dead. At length he discovered the cuckoo. At first frightened at the appearance of life, he shammed death after the manner of insects

in danger. But, investigating cautiously, he found all the movements were perfectly regular, and even the abnormal cry of the cuckoo came but at regular intervals. "True," he said, "there is motion, but it is not like mine; the wheels go round, but do not advance. Whence comes the motion?"

(To be concluded.)

THE BIBLE FETISH.

THE stupid and degraded Bibliolatry which regards the Bible as a paramount authority over reason and conscience, and considers that the citation of a Bible text should settle everything, even when the text itself is notoriously inaccurate or unsettled, is a palpable remnant of fetish worship, which has been encouraged by the paid professors of Christianity, who put the Bible forward as a supernatural book differing from all others. The superstition has its root in early fetish worship, and to trace its real nature we must go back to the ideas among which it took its rise.

When learning was in the hands of the few, to the many all writing seemed magical. Poggio Bracciolini, the apostolical secretary to the popes, who was probably concerned in many literary fabrications, delighted in telling the story of the countryman who, being sent with a letter and four rabbits, ate one on the road, and was dumbfounded when the person to whom he delivered the missive told him he had eaten one, and that the writing proved it.

Respect for writing is universal in Africa, and one of the reasons for doubting the story of Omar having destroyed the Alexandrian Library is that Moslems show superstitious veneration for all literature, and will not destroy even a chance scrap of writing, lest it should contain the sacred name of Allah. Fetish worshippers regard writing as connected with fetish. Gree-grees, or written charms, are in common use among natives of Africa. Among the tribes that have become Mohammedan, or live in contact with them, the gree-grees usually consist of passages from the Koran, written on strips of paper, and sewed up in little leather bags. They are supposed to have many occult virtues to preserve their wearers from misfortune.

In the Bible the use of these written charms is directly enjoined. Of the words of the Shemang Isroyel, Deut. vi. 8, 9, says: "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates."* In the earlier story in Exodus xiii. it is the Passover redemption of the firstborn that is thus inscribed as "a token upon thine hand and for frontlets between thine eyes;" while in Deut. xi. it is the promise of rain and grass for the cattle. Jesus Christ notices how the scribes and Pharisees "make broad their phylacteries," the phylacteries being these inscriptions on the forehead.

It is related in the Talmud that the emperor Antoninus sent a valuable diamond to the learned Rabbi Judah, the compiler of the Talmud, requesting a token of friendship in return. The rabbi sent him a Mezuzah—i.e., a strip of parchment inscribed with verses from the Pentateuch, usually the Shemang Isroyel, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," and so arranged as to be placed upon the door-posts of a house in compliance with the scriptural injunction. "My friend," said the emperor, "this gift of thine seems of slight value compared to my costly offering." "There is a difference between my gift and thine," returned the Rabbi. "That which thou gavest to me I must watch and guard lest it be stolen from me; but this will watch and guard over thee, even as it is written, 'when thou walkest it will lead thee, and when thou liest down it will watch over thee.'" The story is doubtless an allegory illustrating how the learned of the Rabbis became a source of wealth when put at the service of emperors and rulers.

A species of Bibliomancy in use among the Jews consisted in appealing to the first words heard from any one reading the scriptures, and regarding them as a voice from heaven. For instance the Rabbis, were particularly down on Acher or Elisha ben Abuyah, whom some have tried to

* Possibly the legend of the angel passing over the marked gate-posts may have been derived from this custom.

identify with Paul. Acher, it is said, was led into thirteen synagogues. In the first was read "There is no peace unto the wicked," in the next "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" Similar sentences being heard in all the synagogues, it was sagely concluded that Acher was obnoxious to Jahveh.

In the Middle Ages, when the Church was supreme, a use for Bibliomancy was found in the detection of heretics. The open Bible would, it was thought, give an answer for or against the accused. At any rate, it was an oracle which enabled the judge to interpret pretty much at its own pleasure.* Witchcraft was also tested by the Bible. The suspected old woman was taken to the village church, and weighed against the big church Bible. If she weighed more than it, she was declared innocent; but alas for her if the Bible was so heavily bound that it outweighed her. This method, however, was usually too merciful to be popular, and the rough and ready one of sink or swim was in greater favor.

Bibliomancy, in the early Christian Church, was used in the consecration of bishops. The practice is said to have been condemned by several councils, but the superstition has remained in all parts of Christendom down to our own time. In the Gallican Church it was long used in the election of bishops, children being employed on behalf of each candidate to draw slips of paper with texts on them, and that which was thought most favorable decided the choice. In the Greek Church we find the custom prevailing at the time of the Consecration of Athanasius, on whose behalf the presiding prelate, Caracalla, Archbishop of Nicomedia, is said to have opened the gospels on the words, "For the Devil and his angels." The Bishop of Nicea saw them, and adroitly turned over to another verse, which was instantly read aloud: "The birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof." But this passage seeming irrelevant, the former became gradually known, and the result was much pious strife. On more than one occasion kings have gone to war because they have supposed themselves commanded to do so by reference to the Bible.

In former times, among the common people in England and Scotland, the sick were fanned with the leaves of the holy book, and the precious volume was put under the heads of women after child-birth, and into the cradle of infants to shield them from evil spirits until baptised. The Bible was consulted on New Year's Day with special formality, each member of the house, before he had partaken of food, walking up to it, opening it, and placing his finger at random on a verse—that verse declaring his fortune for the next twelve months. An improvement on this still survives, or it did in my young days, of selecting the day of a girl's birth from one of the thirty-one verses of the last chapter of Proverbs, and taking that verse as an indication of her character and fortune. Both John Bunyan and John Wesley believed in their fate being directed in chance Bible texts, and the poet Cowper shared the same superstition. Early Methodists used Bibliomancy, and the *Encyclopædia Perthensis* makes the statement that, "some of their members having been driven to despair by texts occurring to them that threatened the most awful judgments, their late pastor, Mr. Wesley, to prevent such fatal consequences from recurring, improved upon the system of *sacred lottery*, by printing several packs of cards with a variety of texts, containing nothing but the most comfortable promises; and thus his disciples drew with courage and comfort in a lottery where there were various prizes, great and small, and no blanks."

Bible fetishism is not quite dead. Everywhere in religious circles we still find the very letters of the book revered, and anyone who dares to question any of its statements is regarded as a person in danger of supernatural vengeance. A Bible text is considered sufficient to establish any antique absurdity, and the authority of Moses outweighs the evidence of Darwin. While this superstition remains it is the duty of Freethinkers to take every opportunity of setting the old Jewish literature in its proper place as a human production, to be judged by the same canons of criticism as all other human productions.

J. M. WHEELER.

* One Peter of Toulouse, being accused of heresy, denied the charge, but was condemned because a monk who stood near took up the gospels on which he had sworn, and, opening them suddenly, read the first words, "What have I to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?"

THE THEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION.

THE great change that has taken place during the last decade in the manner in which Christians have expounded their views is deserving of special attention. It is an unmistakable indication of Freethought progress. Finding that the old mode of advocacy has become quite unsatisfactory to the intellectual demands of the present age, Christians now adopt a course of pleading that their predecessors would no doubt have regarded as extremely heretical. It argues badly for the reliability of any faith when its adherents, not content with modifying their methods of exposition and defence, adopt a course of propaganda that is the very opposite to that which was originally relied upon as being correct. It clearly shows that Christianity, like all movements, has to adapt itself to human requirements in order to save itself from utter extinction as a professed factor in daily life. The recent metamorphosis that has taken place in the presentation of Christian views is a striking proof of its human origin and of its imperfect character. From its very inception the religion of Christ has varied according to the mental calibre of its professors. So numerous have these changes been that at the present day we look in vain for any serious attempts to practise its primitive teachings.

Except among vulgar theological enthusiasts, the old plan of terrifying the multitude into Christian belief by threatening divine wrath upon all who did not accept the orthodox faith is abandoned; and the spread of rational ideas has almost banished from the minds of the people the barbaric notion that God will punish everlastingly those to whom a knowledge of his existence has not been vouchsafed. Moreover, the Christian clergy, who have always been at the rear of every advanced movement, both social and political, now admit, by their actions, that temporal salvation and social regeneration are the most pressing needs of the time. Still, with characteristic effrontery they proclaim that Christianity is the power which is to render this world a truly happy abode for mankind. The Spencerian analysis of ethics shows that happiness is the ultimate aim of the human race. Judging by all the historic records of Christian martyrdom, how few of the victims have died uttering a hope other than that for their own glorification. While such martyrs may be worthy of honor, their aim was happiness for themselves, nevertheless. However sublime and noble the deed may be which renders a hero's name immortal, he finds his highest happiness in the performance of that service which constitutes his heroism. Although an orthodox Christian may deny that happiness should be our chief object in life, his principal hope is to secure an eternity of it in heaven by renouncing it here on earth. We have had too much of this pietistic cant which exalts the desire for eternal personal happiness in some future existence as a holy aspiration, while it stigmatises the effort to obtain as much as possible of it in this life as "worldly and vain."

It is true the profession of Christianity is still retained in our midst; but it has to be turned to a very different account to what it was in former times. Now the gospel of eternal life is subordinated to the Secular gospel of everyday existence. Pleas are being constantly heard from the pulpits for healthier social conditions, for more humane legislation, and for juster institutions, whereby existence on earth may be made nobler and happier. This is a mighty and salutary change; but to what do we owe this transformation? Not to the influence of a faith that is said once to have been delivered to the saints, but rather to Secular effort, which includes the spread of scientific knowledge, and the application of the lessons it inculcates, together with the fostering of that mental liberty which has been purchased by the Freethought pioneers who stripped ecclesiastical authority of its power over the human mind, and exorcised the phantom of Christian superstition. These are the agencies that have driven the Church to recognise, most tardily and reluctantly he it said, the importance of giving practical attention to mundane existence, and to the duty of developing its potentialities. It is the Secular demands of the age that have forced ecclesiastical dignitaries to manifest a desire to ameliorate the social condition of the masses. The determination upon the part of the working classes to have better surroundings in their struggling life has brought the clergy to their senses; it has made them cease, to a great

extent, their tricks of celestial ventriloquism, and has induced them to abandon their magic-lantern show of Paradisaical joys as a recompense for the wrongs endured hitherto by the many at the hands of a favored few. What the masses want, and what they will have in the future if possible, are increased comforts and happiness in their daily lives, and the clergy feel that, unless they face this fact and assist in the acquirement of such necessities, their occupation will be gone.

There can be no doubt, in the mind of the candid thinker, that an entire transformation has taken place in reference to the value and claims of theology. James Cotter Morison, in his *Service of Man*, writes: "The decay of belief, now general over Christendom, may be regarded from two points of view, and traced up to two distinct causes—one rational, the other moral. The current faith has come increasingly into conflict with Science in proportion as the latter has extended in depth and area. The isolated points of collision of former days have been so multiplied that the shock now is along the whole conterminous line between science and theology; and it would not be easy to name a department of inquiry which has not, in some measure, contributed aid to the forces arrayed against the popular belief. More important still is the changed tone of feeling with regard to this subject. Time was, and even a recent time, when the prestige of Christianity was so great that even its opponents were overawed by it. But now men are ready to openly avow that they find a great deal in the Christian scheme which is morally shocking; and, in the estimation of many minds now-a-days, probably the moral difficulties outweigh the intellectual." Thus, as time rolls on and the intellect of man becomes more and more developed, the fundamental truths (as they were once thought to be) of Christianity disappear. In the process of boiling down tough, old ecclesiastical dogmas to suit modern digestions, the vital essence of Christianity appears to have evaporated, for all that remains of any value, and which can be assimilated by healthy, intelligent beings in this century, had been prescribed as wholesome nutriment by men who knew not the Christian faith. The theological world is now floundering in a chaos of perplexity as to what is really accepted as its creed, and as to what is in reality its true way of salvation. Orthodox Christianity has become like a scarecrow in the field: its fluttering rags of dogma are being torn off bit by bit, and blown away with every gust of scientific Freethought.

The essential doctrines of Christian theology are entirely discarded or ignored by the leading minds of the present day. The notion of the alleged Fall of Man has been destroyed through the result of geological research; the figment of the Atonement has been banished to the limbo of legend; the supposed efficacy of prayer has been tested and found wanting; and, instead of believing in miraculous intervention by some capricious God, men rely upon the stability of natural laws, and will give no heed to old-world stories of their arbitrary inversion. The story that Christ came to bring salvation to all mankind is repudiated more and more as mental activity takes the place of intellectual apathy. It is thought that, even if Christ were crucified, there is no historical proof that the object of his death was the salvation of the world. Has the world been saved by his crucifixion? At present only about two-thirds of mankind have heard of the "glad tidings of salvation," and the majority of those who have heard of it show by their lives that they do not practically believe in Jesus as their Savior. Society is now practically recognising the superiority of Secularism, since it teaches us to discriminate between the true and the false, to take the gold and reject the dross, to accept what is good, not on the *ipse dixit* of external authority, but on its own self-evident merits and acknowledged value.

CHARLES WATTS.

CHRISTIANITY NOT A PERFECT RELIGION.—No one can watch the sincerity of religious endeavor, the warmth of religious feeling, the nobleness of religious conduct among races whom we are inclined to call either pagan or savage, without learning, at all events, a lesson of humility. Anybody, be he Jew, Christian, Mohammedan, or Brahman, if he has a spark of modesty left, must feel that it would be nothing short of a miracle that his own religion alone should be perfect throughout, while that of every other believer should be false and wrong from beginning to end.—*Max Müller.*

GOSPEL FORGERIES.

(CONCLUDED.)

THE gospel of Matthew commences with a genealogy of Jesus Christ, who is said therein to have been descended from Abraham through "Joseph, the husband of Mary." This implies that Joseph was not his father; but, if that be so—that is, if he were created without the intervention of a human father—Jesus could not have been descended from Abraham, and so could not have been the promised Messiah. But this genealogy does not agree with the genealogy given by Luke. The two genealogies are utterly irreconcilable. It may be that both are false, but it is absolutely certain that one of them must be so. It follows, therefore, that at least one of the statements is an interpolation and a forgery, or that the writer, consciously or unconsciously, wrote that which was untrue.

The gospel of Luke opens with an account of the miraculous conception by Elizabeth, the wife of the priest Zacharias, of John the Baptist; and, subsequently, of the meeting between her and her cousin Mary, when we are assured that, at the salutation of Mary, "the babe leaped in her womb." Of this, even were it physically possible, there is no corroboration, nor indeed could there well be; but it is passing strange that the wonderful offspring of these two wonderful women—these women being not only relations, but intimate friends—should have grown up to manhood without knowing each other. Jesus was unknown to John when the one was baptised by the other; and even when John was in prison he was doubtful of Jesus, or he would not have sent two of his disciples to ask this question: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Surely it would be impossible for any historian to be the author of statements so directly opposed to each other.

Both Matthew and Luke are made to declare that the father of Jesus Christ was the Holy Ghost; and Matthew is made to assert that it was so, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel." But the prophecy of Isaiah did not refer to Jesus Christ; and the Jews who were the persons most interested in the matter showed, as a nation, that they, at all events, did not believe that this prophecy referred to him. As to whom the prophecy did refer there can be no doubt, because the whole history of the transaction—and it is given with unusual minuteness—is contained in the 7th and 8th chapters of the book of the prophet. Here it is in few words:—

Ahaz was King of Judah "when Rezin, the King of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, King of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it." Thereupon, Isaiah, instructed by the Lord, went to Ahaz and told him to "Fear not." Subsequently "the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying—'Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.' But Ahaz said—'I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.' And he said—'Hear ye now, O House of David. Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (Isaiah vii. 10-16). What followed is told in the next chapter, thus: "Moreover, the Lord said unto me—'Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz.' And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me—'Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria'" (Isaiah viii. 1-4).

The crucial point here is as to whether the woman who bore Maher-shalal-hash-baz was, or was not, a virgin at the time of his birth. Undoubtedly she was not, for she was the wife of the prophet himself. Learned men say that the Greek noun which is translated "virgin" is a wrong translation, for that the true meaning of the word is

"a young woman." Now, if the words "young woman" be substituted for the word "virgin," the whole passage becomes plain. The birth of a child was predicted as a sign that certain national events were about to take place; and this child, we are expressly told, was the son of Isaiah, by his wife. Were it not so, why was the mother spoken of as "the prophetess," and why was it said that the child should cry "My father and my mother"? The statement is, that as soon as the prophecy had been uttered, Isaiah "went unto the prophetess"—for what purpose there can be no doubt, because we are told that he took with him *faithful witnesses to record* the time, so that if "she conceived and bare a son," as had been promised by the Lord, they might be certain that the child was the child of the prophecy. This prophecy, then, is *valueless as regards a supernatural birth*; whilst it refers to the son of "the prophetess" only, and *not* to the son of Mary.

As to the birth of Jesus Christ being miraculous, the only person who could *know* the truth of the matter was Mary herself; and she always asserted that the father of Jesus Christ was Joseph, and *not* the Holy Ghost. Did she not? Well, on one very important occasion she said to Jesus: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father (Joseph) and I have sought thee sorrowing." And we have it, on the testimony of Luke himself, that "when Jesus began to be about thirty years of age he was supposed to be the son of Joseph" (Luke iii. 23). This of itself is proof positive that up to that time, at all events, Mary had never stated that Jesus was other than the son of Joseph. And her silence is all the more suggestive and remarkable, because she lived in an age when superstition was so gross that it was the common belief of all classes that "gods" could, and did, have actual intercourse with the "daughters of men." An anecdote, illustrative of this degrading superstition, is related by Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 18, chapter iii., paragraph 4.

One other thought in regard to this subject is worthy of consideration. It is this—that, had Mary been so "highly favoured among women" as she is represented to have been, it is only reasonable to suppose that she would not have been permitted to have had other children by Joseph; but that she had other children, who, of course, were the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, is certain. Matthew himself records the fact in these words: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brothers, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" (Matt. xiii. 55, 56).

In Matthew it is related, and in Matthew only, that at the birth of Christ certain "wise men" were guided to him by a "star"; also that Herod "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under." In Luke it is stated, and in Luke only, that an "angel" suddenly appeared to some "country shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night," giving them "good tidings of great joy"; and that then there appeared "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all men.'" All these are fabulous statements. A star is a sun like to our sun, and our sun is so large that a tunnel through its centre would be 800,000 miles long, or more than thirty-two times longer than a tunnel through the centre of the earth would be. As to the massacre, if so barbarous a project had been executed, an insurrection must have been caused; for it is not in human nature that the parents of a wide district would have submitted tamely to having their infants torn from their arms and butchered before their eyes. Yet there is no record of such an insurrection, no corroboration of so atrocious a crime. As to the appearance of the angelic host, that is a fairy-tale which must be taken for what it is worth.

The second chapter of Matthew ends thus: "And he (Joseph) came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets—'He shall be called a Nazarene.'" If this be not an interpolation, then Matthew, so far from being inspired or a man of truth, was not even versed in the Jewish writings, for they contain *no such prophecy as that to which allusion is made*.

Finally, the views here enunciated are strictly in accordance with the most important prophecy regarding Christ which is to be found in the Bible. It is the prophecy of

Moses, who said: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, *of thy brethren, like unto me*" (Dent. xviii. 15). These words mean, if they mean anything at all, that God would raise up a Jewish *man* in all respects like Moses himself, to be such a prophet as he was. They could not mean that the Lord would raise up a "god" or an angel to the office, because such a being would be transcendently superior to any mere man, and could not by any possibility be of the *seed of Abraham* (Gen. xxii. 18).

N. M. X.

"LORD PROTECT US!"

If Jack-the-Giant-Killer had begged the giant, who was about to kill him, to protect him, he would have played a weak and foolish part. If the three "Hebrew children" we read of in the Bible Gulliver, *alias* the book of Daniel, had appealed to Nebuchadnezzar to save them from Nebuchadnezzar's fury, they would have done just what Christians do and have done for many ages.

Jack was in no danger except from the giant; Shadrach and Co. were in no danger except from Nebuchadnezzar. And to pray to the author of the danger to protect them in it would have been mad enough. But Jack and Shadrach and Co. did not commit so foolish an act. That has been left to Christians.

The Christians teach that their God is all-powerful, knows everything, creates all the dangers which threaten man's health, happiness, and life. And yet they pray to him to protect them from himself! There is not a single danger which "God" does not create for them. Storm, sickness, war, flood, famine, wild beasts, reptiles, murderous neighbors, are all "God's" own creations; and he guides and directs them all. To ask him to protect you from these is to ask "God's" protection from "God."

If "God" were not, according to their own showing, these dangers would not exist. Only get rid of "God," if they are right, and all dangers go at the same time. To ask the author of all evil to protect you is worse than madness. Prayer is indescribably silly.

If now you say a devil, or several, create and "run" all the evils of life, and that "God" is doing his best to counteract the devils' doings, there is some approach to reason in that. "God" is no good at all, unless there is one or more devils to oppose.

In the olden times, when men believed bad "gods" sent evils and good "gods" good things, worship was not absolute madness. The basis was logical, however unfounded. But when they turned "gods" into devils, and especially when they made one "God" the author of all evils and of the devils themselves, worship became worse than mad. And so it continues.

However, it is this madness which must eventually destroy all worship and all belief in supernatural fictions. Truth and logic must prevail by-and-by, and the human intellect must at length recover its health and clearness. Then prayers and "God" will be impossible.

We can afford to wait patiently for this consummation; the parsons are coming round to us. The intellect of the world is all on our side now. It is only low cunning, panic fear, hypocrisy, and self-interest that are arrayed against us. "God" must go, and worship must cease. Science, as well as common sense, has passed that sentence.

JOS. SYMES.

SOME DERIVATIONS.

EXTREMES meet in philology as well as in philosophy. In both, for instance, God and Devil are one and the same. The Gipsy word for God is *devil*. It comes from the Sanscrit *deva*, with the base *div*, to shine, to twinkle, meaning light, splendor. From *deva* come *defos*, *theos*, *deus*, *davva*, *divya* (=divine), *dio*, *divus*, *divinus*, *daimon*, *demon*, *diable*, and *devil*. From the Vedic *Dyans* come the Greek *Zeus* and the Latin *Jovis*. The English *day* and the French *jour* are different permutations from the same root.

The Slavonic word for God, *Boz*, found in Bucharest and Bactria, is appropriately enough the same as *Bogie*, bug (=a fright) and *lumbag*. Puck is probably a relation, and when boys play "Buck! Buck! how many horns do I hold up?" they invoke the name of this deity.

Another word with suggestive kindred is *glory*. The Sanscrit *Sri*, to glow, is, too, equivalent to light, splendor, making in Greek *klios*, in Latin *clarus*, clarify, clear, glare, Norse *glowan*, Anglo-Saxon *gluen*, glance, gleam, glent, glim (a candle), and glimmer. Thus extremes meet in glory and in glimmer.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

ACID DROPS.

MR. HOLMAN HUNT, the artist, is the new president of the Sunday Society. In his address he spoke as a Christian, and referred to Atheism as "the root of the evils of our time," though he thought that honest men were driven to it by orthodox bigotry. Among the subsequent speakers were Mr. Moncure Conway, Mr. Gavazzi King, and Mr. R. M. Morrell, neither of whom can be called a Christian. Mr. Holman Hunt would do well to take their private opinion of Atheism before speaking about it again. He might also reflect that his own religious views are not at all vital to the Sunday movement, the pioneers of which were all, or nearly all, Freethinkers.

Woman's Suffrage seems likely to be obtained. When it is a reality the ladies will tone down and abandon hysterics, especially the Christian form of that disorder. They are badly in its grip at present. Miss Frances Willard, for instance, referring to Sir John Hall, ex-Premier of New Zealand, where Woman's Suffrage obtains, said that "it took two thousand years of Christian life to produce such a man." She did not say how many years of Christian life it took to produce John Ballance and Sir Robert Stout, both Premiers of New Zealand, and both Secularists. Nor did she say how many years of Christian life it took to produce John Stuart Mill, who wrote his book on *The Subjection of Women* when the cause was laughed at. Christians talk as though great causes began when they took them up, whereas they never take them up until they are winning.

Primitive Methodists have been holding a Conference at Chester, and one of the speakers, a Mr. T. Lawrence, of Leicester, was very strong against gambling. Not satisfied with denouncing it, and calling on his co-religionists to discountenance, preach, and pray against it, he went on to say that he would make it a penal offence for the proprietors of newspapers to publish betting articles. What a *spiritual* remedy! Somehow or other, it is always the man of God who first cries "Police!"

The parsons have been having an Anti-Gambling Demonstration in Exeter Hall. Is it the sporting Premier who is waking them up? One thing is certain, while gambling is directly prohibited in the Koran, there is nothing against it in the Bible. Indeed, the very apostles, after the suicide of Judas, drew lots to see who should be added to their number.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells recently said that if we "threw up our national recognition of God"—that is, went in for Disestablishment—he for one "looked for the gradual downfall of our country." This right-reverend father-in-God has since died; and, if the New Testament be true, he is now taking his bath in some hot wells indeed. England still stands where it did.

Dr. Parker has visited Edinburgh and delivered himself as follows: "The man who would get into a pulpit, such as they had in the Free Church of Scotland, and would take evangelical money for preaching wrong doctrines, was a knave, whatever his talents and genius." Is this a fling at Professor Drummond?

If the New Testament is "gospel," Dr. Parker is himself a "knave." The money he takes for preaching is far in excess of the "blessed be ye poor" maxims of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Barry relates that a heathen judge in India, being informed by a witness that he was a Christian, inquired, "Are you a S. P. G. Christian or a C. M. S. Christian?" Whether the question was serious or sarcastic it was equally significant.

How anxious the Catholic priests are to promote education may be gathered from their denunciations of Mr. Acland and their opposition to Mr. Morley's proposal to make elementary education compulsory in Ireland.

Zola has failed again in his candidature for the French Academy, not a single vote being cast in his favor. On the other hand, his romance of "Lourdes" has been placed on the Index. Zola considers himself highly honored by this act, which will probably help the sale of his romance when published in book form.

According to the *Annals of Lourdes*, there have been during the past year seventy attested cures of fourteen different diseases. Out of the vast number who make the pilgrimage in hopes of relief the percentage is very small. Among the diseases said to have been relieved are mentioned cases of cancer, consumption, paralysis, fits, asthma, rheumatism, and ruptures. If the Virgin can cure a rupture, why not a wooden leg? If she would make an amputated arm

grow again, that would be something to excite the admiration of the faithful.

The belief in judgments is by no means extinct. As an example, the Rev. W. C. Metcalfe writes to the *English Churchman* deploring the sins of his generation. He says: "When we think of all these evils, and, noticeably, the open desecration of the Sabbath, it will be no surprise to those who know God if he should visit England with a heavy penalty for her idolatry and her apostasy from the faith once delivered to the saints." It is this sort of gentry who always know God, and, in fact, pride themselves upon being hand in glove with the Infinite Upholder of the Universe. We should like to have a decent god's opinion upon them.

The controversy about immured nuns in Mexico has led to the citation of a letter from the Rev. Father Mahoney to the *Daily News* of April, 1849, detailing the horrible sights found in the vaults of the Inquisition at that time.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews announces a deficiency of £5,000, and in an "Important and Pressing Appeal," which it advertises in the religious journals, says its work demands an annual income of £40,000. God's chosen people make costly converts, and this sum does not go very far in their conversion.

In consequence of the evidence that the Egyptians had garrisons in the Peninsular of Sinai at the alleged time of the Exodus, Professor Sayce and other theological scene-shifters have altered the situation of the mountain on which God and Moses met to a distance of some hundreds of miles from the traditional spot. Mr. Symes suggests that God's interview with Moses took place on one of the mountains of the moon.

The Americans like a big job, and the religious people there are now subscribing to re-build Solomon's temple in all its glory. Nobody at Jerusalem wants it, unless it be some building contractor; but probably the religious dupes will be eased of their dollars none the less.

Dr. Stubbs, the Dean of Ely, in a sermon at Shoreditch Church last Sunday, tried to explain "original sin," and succeeded in explaining it *away*. Modern science, he said, teaches that "original sin" is real enough, though "heredity" is the word it prefers to use; for "original sin is nothing more nor less than the brute inheritance which every man carries with him." Dr. Stubbs's explanation, we dare say, looks plausible enough to the eyes of an orthodoxy which is anxious to find accommodations with science. But it is really a fallacy, if not a subterfuge. Inherited tendency is not sin; it is an advantage if good, a misfortune if bad. Instead of calling for punishment, it calls for allowance. A man who is cursed with an hereditary tendency to drink or passion does not deserve hell; he deserves commiseration. The analogy breaks down at every point, as it is apt to when theologians masquerade in garments taken from the scientific wardrobe.

Dr. Horton, the Hampstead preacher, is a man of "courage." The *Christian World* says so, and who can doubt it? Dr. Horton delivered a lecture on "The Authority of the Bible," and actually allowed people to ask him questions! We might regard Dr. Horton as worthy to rank with the Spartans who died at Thermopylae, if it were not for the fact that questions are allowed in Secular Halls—and discussion too.

Dr. Horton holds views of his own on Inspiration. He can disbelieve every bit of Jonah, yet regard it as inspired. He has "no doubt" that a great deal of the revelation in the Old Testament was "delivered in a state of ecstasy." Very likely. Some of it, we imagine, was delivered in that form of ecstasy which is called "three sheets in the wind."

The "Life of Billy Bray" is said to be "wonderfully popular" in Methodist circles. Naturally. There are lots of Billy Brays in Methodist pulpits.

The International Sunday Observance League presented resolutions to Mayor Hopkins, of Chicago, requesting him to close Sunday baseball games. The Mayor is reported to have said that he saw nothing harmful in Sunday amusements for the people, and, in fact, acknowledged his own love for Sunday ball when fishing wasn't good.—*Ironclad Age*.

Rev. F. Leydon, a priest of St. Mary's Catholic Church, of Aurora, Ill., is charged with having betrayed Miss Stessia Cummings, a member of his church. The rev. had been appointed guardian of the girl at her father's death. He secured her a position in Chicago, where he visited her frequently.

The case of Rev. Dominick O'Grady, who murdered a beautiful young girl at Cincinnati recently, is similar to this. She also had been placed in the priest's care by a dying mother. He had promised to desert the priesthood and marry her. Under this promise he betrayed her. Postponing marriage from time to time, the girl learned that he had no intention of making reparation for the wrong, and endeavored to free herself from his vigilance. He shot her in the street while she was going to work.

Our readers will remember that the Picton Lecture Hall was refused to the National Secular Society, on Whit-Sunday, by the Liverpool City Council, which endorsed the decision of the Libraries Sub-committee. One of the ostensible—that is, in this case, hypocritical—objections was that the Secularists applied for the use of the Hall on a *Sunday* for the purpose of offending the feelings of other people. Subsequently the same Hall was applied for by the Theosophists, also for a *Sunday* (June 17), and the application was granted. This partiality, however, did not commend itself to some members of the City Council, and Mr. Taylor opposed it at the next Council meeting. He was supported by 27 members, 20 voting on the other side; and the Theosophists have thus to share the fate of the Secularists. Which is as it should be. For the Hall should be let, or refused, to all on the same conditions.

The *Warrington Guardian*, in mentioning a little book on *Church Work*, by the Bishop of Manchester, extols his lordship as the Christian gentleman and the gentlemanly Christian. This C. g. and g. C. was asked to help remove the Blasphemy Laws, and he answered that it was best to let sleeping dogs lie. Apparently a weapon of persecution is felt as a handy instrument to a Christian gentleman, and a gentlemanly Christian.

The *Scarborough News*, noticing the visit of Prophet Baxter, gives him a good dressing, not forgetting to expose the money-making character of the proceedings. The writer does not hesitate to say there is a deal of shop about them, and that the books which are hawked on Sundays, as sold without profit, will yield a very good profit indeed, sold in large quantities direct from publisher to purchaser.

Dr. Story, in closing the Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, ventured to prophesy that "the Church which outlived the sardonic scepticism of Voltaire and the critical assaults of Hume will not go down before the science of Darwin and the philosophy of Spencer." Prophet Story, perhaps, overlooks a few facts. The works of Voltaire and Hume never penetrated to the mass, nor, as yet, have those of Darwin and Spencer. But the class who are influenced by such works are daily becoming more numerous, and are in turn influencing others. Moreover, the work of Voltaire, Hume, and other early "infidels" has already borne much fruit, and compelled the Churches to abandon all their old positions.

The Church is gradually becoming secularised. Of this Hospital Sunday is good evidence, and now the London Reform Union propose that there shall be a London Reform Sunday, which is hardly likely to be taken up by the City churches, always excepting the exceptional one of Canon Shuttleworth.

The *London Welshman* devotes an article to that eminent Welshman, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. It says "Mr. Hughes is not afflicted by any hesitancy or doubt. Things seem verities to him, therefore verities they must be," which is a very polite way of saying that it is useless to look to him for accuracy.

It is not often that a lady seeking an engagement is bold enough to advertise herself as an Agnostic; but last week in the *Daily News* there was an advertisement, "Lady, 32 (Agnostic), for some years engaged in teaching, desires engagement as housekeeper."

At Stavropol (Caucasus), a few days ago, Bishop Agafon received into the Greek Orthodox Church over two hundred Kalmucks, who had, in a body, renounced their Lamaist faith. These converts are not always very steadfast in their newly-adopted religion. Last year the same Russian Orthodox prelate inducted some three hundred Shyite Mussulmans into the national Church, who, a few months afterwards, returned in a body to their old faith.

It is stated that, had the movements of the British in Uganda been unsuccessful, King M'Wanga and the Catholics would have refused assistance to the British against Kaba Rega, and, with the remnant of the Mohammedans, would probably have taken advantage of the absence of the troops in Unyoro to massacre the Europeans left behind by the Unyoro expedition. The power of Maxim guns proved more potent than their Christianity.

Vienna has had such a terrific hailstorm that the Viennese say the like has not occurred since Jahveh pelted the Amorites from heaven. It caused so many accidents and such vast devastation that when it was over the city looked as if a hundred explosions had taken place at the same time. All the windows in the city facing the wind may be said to have been smashed—a million panes of glass, perhaps. In the public gardens dead pigeons, blackbirds, thrushes, and sparrows covered the ground. Several persons met their death, and over two hundred were injured, the majority having their legs broken by falling in the darkness. It is a moot point whether Jahveh gets into these tantrums through rage at the stupidity of his own people, or on account of the spread of infidelity.

A writer in the *Spectator* has been instancing some of the mistakes made in early youth in regard to Scripture, which sometimes last through life. It mentions a lad who got the beginning of the Lord's Prayer in his head so thoroughly as "Our Father we chant in heaven" that when he saw it in print as "which art" he thought it a misprint, not understanding how a personal God could be spoken of as "which." Another thought that in the Church Service it should be "The Scripture moveth us in Sunday places," while a girl read the words, "A general Confession," as "A general confusion," and thought the rustling of the dresses as people knelt down made the words appropriate.

The *Tablet* makes the statement that Dr. Barnardo has got over £7,000 on the plea that a part of his premises were in danger of being bought over his head by a community of Catholic nuns. It denies that there was ever any such intention, and says: "There can be no sort of question that the charitable public which has passed over this sum of £7,000 has done so under a grave misapprehension of fact. Will Dr. Barnardo refund the money? and, if not, why not?" The *Tablet*, however, is too conversant with the methods of professional philanthropists to suppose that the returning of money ever enters into their schemes.

Dr. Barrett says that "the authority of Christ has now taken the place of the authority of the Bible." There can be little doubt he is, in the main, correct. But the question arises, On what does the authority of Christ rest? At the best, Christians have only the words of reporters, who are not even said to have been authorised by Christ to jot down his remarks.

Mr. Joseph Coulson, of Gillington, Bradford, a local Methodist preacher, fell to the ground whilst in the United Methodist Free Church of that district, and died almost immediately. Such events are only "judgments" when they happen to unbelievers.

The papers have been commenting on the barbarous custom of the Koreans, who recently cut up the remains of Kim Ok Kim, the Korean conspirator, into eight pieces, corresponding to the eight provinces of Corea, and each portion was sent under escort to its destination. This savage practice at one time evidently obtained among God's chosen people, as appears from the nasty story in Judges of the Levite who "took a knife and laid hold on his concubine and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coast of Israel."

The Rev. Peter Melnis Neilson, of Stratford, E., was arrested for wife desertion at Southampton, just as he was bound for the steamship to convey him to New York.

The *Christian Commonwealth* does not like Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man*. It complains that he "practically ignores the Bible account," and says it is "simply impossible to reconcile his theory with the statements in the Book of Genesis." Our pious contemporary admits, however, the bare possibility that "further investigation will compel us to modify our present view of the meaning of Genesis." What is this but saying that Genesis is to be clung to in all circumstances, and made to mean whatever is demanded by Science? In other words, is not our pious contemporary, after all, treating the Bible like "a nose of wax"?

"Much indignation" is reported from a Kentish village, where the vicar buried a child without any service because it had not been baptised. The only person who does not seem to be affected is the child, who is really beyond the reach of "Christian charity," and doesn't care a straw whether the vicar holds his tongue or gabbles at ten miles an hour—for the usual consideration.

There is a fine, spacious liberality about a certain gentleman who has enjoyed the hospitality of Norwich workhouse. He left the establishment three times in seventeen days. The first time he left a Churchman and came back a Roman Catholic. The second time he came back a Wesleyan. The

third time he came back a Churchman again. Perhaps it is his poverty, and not his will, that prevents his returning as a Mormon.

The question of permitting marriage with a deceased wife's sister is again raised in the House of Lords, and the bishops and church party are vehement in opposition. The funny thing is that the Bible is, in spirit, in dead opposition to the canons of the Church, for it enjoins (Deut. xxv. 5-9) that a man shall marry the widow of his brother under penalty of having his face spat upon by her. This divine law would suffice of itself to show the barbarous state of God's holy people, the main necessity being to hold the family together.

There is another text, in Leviticus xviii. 18, which prohibits marriage of a wife and her sister in her lifetime; but the latter clause indicates that it was considered quite proper after death. Indeed, we find that Adonijah, the elder son of David, thought it right that he should take his father's concubine; but Solomon kept her, and slew his half-brother for his presumption.

The clericals in France have been making much of a national holiday in celebration of Joan of Arc. Their predecessors put her to death, but they now adopt her as "venerable," to use her fighting for the crown as a weapon against the Republicans. The Bishop of Vannes said France was in a particular degree the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Joan re-conquered it from the English for Christ, and gave it to King Charles to use it for Christ's service. All who now joined in the criminal object of withdrawing it from the pale within which Joan brought it would be, like the English, thrust out of the kingdom. Poor Perrinaic, a Breton maid who accompanied Joan, and was also burned as a witch in 1431 in the close of Notre Dame, in virtue of an ecclesiastical sentence, was, of course, not mentioned.

The *Vegetarian* is still an organ of piety as well as of dietic reform. It quotes, apparently with approval, the nonsense we have criticised from the *Hospital* about Atheism and suicide; and, judging from its printed reports, some of the "brethren" are very fond of citing the Bible. Well, you can cite the Bible for anything. Even the Devil has been said to cite Scripture for his purpose. Still, the Bible is a queer vegetarian handbook. It reeks with flesh and slaughter. The very first row in the world, according to Genesis, arose out of the Bible God's partiality for roast lamb, and his scorn for new peas and asparagus.

Paragraphs on suicide have again been going the round of the press, attributing its increase to the decline of religious belief, although the immense majority of cases are of persons afflicted with a preponderating amount of that commodity. This is taking a concomitant for a cause. Civilisation is helping a decline of religious belief and its wear and tear, pulling people from their old grooves, tends to increase suicide. But is the remedy more religion? We opine it is rather less. Pay attention to the improvement of the condition of this life, remove the terrors of an alleged devil and his angels, and the dread of a future hell, make Sunday a day of gladness instead of gloom, give working men and women some better choice than that between the gospel-shop and the grog-shop, provide more open spaces and opportunities of fresh air, pure water, and good food. Above all, remove the wearing anxieties of poverty, and you will do more to diminish suicide than all the preaching or Bible-reading of all the pilots to skyland.

The population of India is now estimated at three hundred millions. The immense bulk of these are heathen, daily dropping through the bottomless pit into the lake of brimstone and fire; or is it through the lake of brimstone and fire into the bottomless pit? We wonder how any serious Christian can realise this awful condition of things without rushing out to India to try and save them. The worst of it is, these poor benighted heathen do not want Christianity, and even contrive to get along with fewer crimes and far less drunkenness than those who are deluged with the blessed gospel.

The Hull Primitive Methodist Council protests against Sunday music in the Parks as calculated to "secularise the Sabbath." This is a credit to clerical sagacity. Still, the Sunday music will go on, despite the sky-pilots' alarmed instinct of self-preservation.

"General" Booth made a statement on Monday evening with respect to the "Darkest England" scheme. He had received a total of £161,608. The expenditure had been £219,628, so that there was a debt upon the scheme of £58,000. The "General" gave a lot of figures about free meals and shelters, but the solid "constructive" work of the scheme seems yet to be begun. But everything comes to him who waits—if he only waits long enough; and some of

us may live to hear something definite about that "over-sea colony."

Richard Lisle, a farm servant at Seaton Carew, is supposed to have drowned himself. His watch, a few shillings, his Bible and hymn-book were found in the stable, and his coat and cap near the sea. He had recently been converted by a lady evangelist. Perhaps the poor fellow's head was turned by

Beautiful land, wonderful land,
Wonderful land a-b-o-o-ovo.

The Bishop of Winchester is the gentleman who professed to have converted the boy murderer, George Mason, after finding out that he was an Atheist, although nobody else in the world appears to have been aware of the fact. His lordship has recently been preaching from the text, "Doth God care for oxen?" He expressed the opinion that God does; although it would seem to be quite another species of four-footed animal that God really cares for, if we may judge from the Bishop's sermon and the remarkably kind way in which Providence looks after his secular comforts.

FOOTE TESTIMONIAL.

THE TREASURER TO FREETHINKERS.

It is desirable to close this Fund at as early a date as possible. I will feel obliged if intending subscribers will shower in their subscriptions early, that I may not be inundated at the last moment. Subscriptions hitherto have mostly been from private individuals, few of the Branches having yet responded, and from these I hope for a general and a generous response.

Mr. Foote is your President, having received his mantle from Mr. Bradlaugh. He has neither a *regium donum* from the State nor any salary for all the time he gives to the cause, now extending to twenty years. During these years he has escaped crucifixion and burning, thanks to the precious efforts of our Carilles, our Holyokes, our Bradlaughs, etc., who have softened and civilised the laws of the present time; but a spirit of intolerance still remains. He has had to do his share of imprisonment for the mere expression of opinion; and, at the present moment, he is exerting himself to further improve the law that the expression of opinion shall be free.

I call on all delegates who attended the late Conference at Liverpool, and the secretaries of all Branches throughout the country, to let me have their responses, if possible, during the next week or two. Don't forget that the Price Hughes's, the Lord's-day observationists, and the champions of Christianity in general, all have their eyes on you, watching what regard you shall exhibit to the *man* who has so thoroughly exposed the Atheistic Shoemaker Lie.

From stamps to Postal-orders and cheques, all will be gladly received by your willing servant,

GEORGE ANDERSON.

[Fourth List.]

W. Baker, £1 4s. 10d.; D. Church, £1 1s.; H. Stevens, £1 1s.; W. H. Morrish, £1 1s.; J. Procter, £1; F. W. Donaldson, 10s.; A. Stirling, 10s.; Mrs. Collins, 10s.; Mrs. Stevens, 10s.; Mr. Church, 10s.; V. Caunter, 5s.; A. Z., 5s.; H. O. Strong, 5s.; K. Hunt, 5s.; Hull Branch N.S.S., 5s.; J. Payne, 4s.; J. Titherington, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.; Evan Jones, 2s. 6d.; F. J. Whebell, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Ridgeway, 2s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. E. Stapleton, 2s. 6d.; N. Ashworth, 2s.; J. Howarten, 2s.; J. Leach, 2s.; W. H. Jones, 2s.; Misses and Miss Pine, 2s.; G. W. Harvey, 2s.; L. F. Milne, 2s.; Miss Radford and Miss Roe, 2s.; J. P., 2s.; W. B. Coppock, 2s.; Mrs. Ashworth, 1s.; R. Dawson, 1s.; A. Dawson, 1s.; J. Whitby, 1s.; H. Pect, 1s.; R. Arnold, 1s.; Friend, 1s.; J. Robinson, 1s.; W. Taylor, 1s.; Jos. Proctor, 1s.; R. Proctor, 1s.; J. Crozier, 1s.; T. P. Haslam, 1s.; Mr. Adams, 1s.; W. E. Taylor, 1s.; A. Jones, 1s.; S. Armfield, 1s.; J. Terry, 1s.; W. T. Pitt, 1s.; J. Atkins, 1s.; D. T. Bullows, 1s.; R. Meredith, 1s.; G. Marriott, 1s.; C. Ward, 1s.; J. Dolman, 1s.; W. Parrott, 1s.; Mrs. Brown, 1s.; J. F. Mout, 1s.; J. Newstead, 1s.; H. Blount, 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Winterton, 1s.; J. E. Harley, 6d.; Mrs. Harley, 6d.; W. Ormerod, 6d.; Isabella Taylor, 6d.; Mary Taylor, 6d.; T. Hollis, 6d.; S. Hones, 6d.; W. C. Webber, 6d.

GEO. ANDERSON, *Treasurer*, 35a Great George-street, S.W.
R. FORDEE, *Sub-Treasurer*, 28 Stoncutt-street.
GEO. WARD, *Secretary*, 91 Mildmay-park, N.

That happiness is the supreme end is beyond question true, for this is the concomitant of that highest life which every theory of moral guidance has distinctly or vaguely in view.—*Herbert Spencer*.

SPECIAL.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—June 17 and 24, Hall of Science, London. July 1, Liverpool; 8, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON.—We are very sorry to learn that Mr. Thomas Slater is no better. Will you kindly convey him our best wishes?

W. HUNT.—See "Acid Drops."

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: W. Mann, 5s.; J. France, 3s. 6d.; G. Willock, 4s.

X. Y. Z.—Thanks for cuttings.

RESPUBLICA.—See paragraph.

D. G. LINDSAY.—The Conference is the place for the discussion of such matters. It is useless to re-open the question until next Whit-Sunday.

J. HENSON.—Shall appear. It would be interesting, and useful, to have a number of brief, well-written accounts from various persons of how they came to renounce Christianity.

NEMO.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

E. PONSONBY.—*Bible Romances* would have been finished had it not been for Mr. Foote's illness. Unless something unforeseen occurs, the remaining numbers will be published in July. The work will then be issued as a volume like *Bible Heroes*.

W. G. M.—(1) We never heard before of the Plumstead Freethinker who is reported to you as having been converted five years ago on his death-bed. (2) Individual Secularists are not debarred from receiving legacies; but a bequest to a Secular Society, or to an individual for the purpose of propagating Secularism, is invalid, and can be set aside.

E. G. TAYLOR.—Mr. Foote did not refuse to meet the Rev. W. Howard at Liverpool. The matter was left in the hands of the local Branch, and Mr. Foote went so far as to draw up his proposition; but Mr. Howard wanted to draw up his own proposition and edit his opponent's. The same thing was attempted at Spennymoor, and the Branch dropped the negotiations. Mr. Foote does not intend to give the Christians their own way in these matters. They have had it long enough. One would think that "Has Man a Soul?" could be debated without an elaborate apparatus of "propositions."

C. HUGHES.—We are much obliged for the copy of Dr. Pearson's letter to you. We will keep it by us for use at some favorable opportunity. It would hardly be understood without a preliminary explanation.

C. WILSON (Birmingham).—Say what you will take for the lot, and we may be able to find you a purchaser. We cannot explain why the *Freethinker* is not procurable at your newsagent's before Saturday. It is published on Thursday morning, as it always has been.

W. J. DUNHAM.—Miss Vance will see and let you know.

J. W. E.—(1) Your mother's will cannot be set aside on the ground that you are an Atheist. (2) Cutting and sewing a monthly is easy enough, for there is plenty of time; but it would be troublesome and expensive in the case of a weekly journal, especially when the circulation is so much larger.

C. WRIGHT.—The painted tomb of Rekh-mâ-ra, a Theban prince who lived in the sixteenth century, before our era, portrays the black-skinned negro, the olive-colored Syrian, and the red-skinned Egyptian with all the physical peculiarities that distinguish their descendants to-day.

JACOB PRICE.—Thanks. The *Parian Chronicle* was written by the Rev. Joseph Robertson. It contains some useful information on forged writings and inscriptions.

E. H. DALY.—Can you say from what paper the cutting about the Rev. T. Connellan was taken?

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—Tit-Bits—Liberator—New Zealand Methodist—Two Worlds—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Scarborough Evening News—London Welshman—Isle of Man Times—Scottish Guardian—Illustrated Church News—Liver—Crescent—Islamic World—Freidenker—Für Unsere Jugend—La Verité Philosophique—Western Figaro—Truthseeker—Crusader—Twentieth Century—Progressive Thinker—Bournemouth Guardian—Kentish Mail—Eastern Daily Press—Hampshire Telegraph.

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.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, 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*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was another fine audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Suicide of Theology." The lecture seemed to be very highly relished, and the applause at the end was markedly enthusiastic.

Some months ago the Fabian Society asked Mr. Foote to give one of two special lectures it was arranging for in June. It was anxious to hear the Secularist Social Program expounded. Mr. Foote replied that he had no authority to speak on such a subject. He was willing, however, to speak on "A Secularist's View of Social Progress." This was accepted, and the date fixed was Friday, June 22. On that evening the address will be delivered in the Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand. The chair will be taken at 8, and the admission is free.

Mr. Charles Watts had three very good audiences last Sunday at Sheffield. An interesting discussion followed each lecture. Friends mustered from York, Barnsley, Mexbro, and Chesterfield. Sheffield always gives our colleague a hearty reception.

This evening, June 17, Mr. Watts lectures at the Hall of Science, London, when he will state "Why," in his opinion, "people do not attend Church."

Mr. G. J. Holyoake is not yet able to leave his house, but he says he is "crawling on the highway to health." "I hope," he adds, "to have the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with the world I thought I had left." We quote from the *Co-operative News*.

The Finsbury Park Branch arranged, as usual, for a Hospital Sunday collection. Their boxes contained £30 19s., which sum was duly acknowledged in the *Daily Chronicle* list on Tuesday "per Miss E. Robins." We happened to see that lady on Sunday afternoon at the Park gate. She had been out collecting since eight o'clock in the morning, and was holding a heavily-laden box, which must have taxed her strength. Certainly she looked very tired. It was a man's job properly, but the ladies get most money.

The members of the North-west London Branch collected £2 14s. in Regent's Park for Hospital Sunday, and about £2 for the cabmen on strike. Future outdoor meetings of the Branch will commence on Sunday afternoons at 3.

The London Secular Federation's annual excursion takes place on Sunday, August 19. Metropolitan Branches of the N.S.S. should note the date and arrange to participate in the outing. A special train will be chartered for Margate; or, failing that, for Hastings or Tunbridge Wells. Of course it is sure to be fine weather. There can't be any bad weather left by that time—unless Providence has laid in a special stock for 1894.

"At the annual Conference of the National Secular Society, at Liverpool, Mr. George W. Foote was unanimously re-elected President. He is the right man in the right place, and this endorsement by the English Secularists, coming so soon after the "Atheist Shoemaker" Foote-Holyoake-Hughes controversy, is peculiarly significant and decidedly gratifying. American Freethinkers have a very warm place in their affections for both Mr. Foote and the Society over which he presides. Long life and great prosperity to both."—*Truthseeker*.

The *Truthseeker* for June 2 is a Paine Memorial number, commemorating the restoration of Paine's monument at New Rochelle. It gives a catena of extracts in eulogy of the author-hero of the Revolution from contemporaries and succeeding admirers, and Mr. G. Macdonald contributes a poem written for the occasion.

The continued necessity of circulating the "Lie" pamphlet is evident from the translation of Mr. Hughes's book into German. We are sending a number to the editors of German papers and others in Germany. We receive from New

Zealand a copy of the *New Zealand Methodist* (April 7), in which Mr. Holyoake's vindication is reprinted and loudly trumpeted, but with no word of Mr. Foote's reply.

We hear from our friend, J. van der Ende, that the Free-thought cause is progressing in Holland. The cheap Dutch translation of Büchner's *Force and Matter*, issued this year in celebration of the German Atheist's seventieth birthday, is selling well, over three thousand copies having been disposed of in two months. Mr. Ten Bokkel has issued a popular pamphlet on *How Did Religion Arise?* and Mr. van Ende is bringing out a pamphlet entitled *Twenty-five Proofs of the Truth of Christianity*, the proofs consisting of illustrated instruments of torture. The pamphlet will have a satirical introduction by Torquemada, Hoochstraat, and Spenger, commending the rack, wheel, thumb-screw, and Spanish boot as the best and most efficacious proofs of Christianity. Mr. van Ende is engaged in gathering materials for the history of Free-thought in Holland, a most important undertaking, which we trust will be successfully carried out.

The gold medal of the Linnean Society has this year been awarded to Professor Ernst Hæckel, of Jena, for his valuable contributions to zoological science. Professor Hæckel, as is well known, is one of the foremost evolutionists of Germany, and carries the doctrines of Darwin to their legitimate conclusion in the rejection of all supernaturalism.

The *Fortnightly* for June contains an able and sympathetic paper on the late Robertson Smith, by his pupil and friend, Mr. J. G. Frazer, author of the *Golden Bough*, who, by the way, pays a just tribute also to Mr. McLennan as the founder of comparative sociology in this country.

Mr. Frazer gives Professor Robertson Smith credit for the germ of his own great work. His words deserve extract, and here they are: "That mystical or sacramental sacrifices have played an important part in the history of many religions was first, I believe, pointed out by Robertson Smith. The peculiarity of these sacrifices is that in them the victim slain is an animal or a man, whom the worshippers regard as divine, and of whose flesh and blood they sometimes partake, either actually or symbolically, as a solemn form of communion with the deity. The conception of such a sacrifice and the observance of such communion are, of course, familiar to us in the Christian doctrine of the Atonement and the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. But Robertson Smith was the first to show that conceptions and sacraments of this sort are not confined to Christianity, but are common to it with heathen and even savage religions. Whether he was right in tracing their origin to Totemism may be questioned. But that religious ideas and observances of this type are world-wide, and that they originated, not in an advanced but in a low stage of society, and in a very crude phase of thought, is not open to question. The discovery was Robertson Smith's, and it is of capital importance for the history of religion." With this we entirely agree, but we think that Dr. E. B. Tylor and Herbert Spencer both pointed out the importance of these mystical sacrifices earlier than Professor R. Smith.

La Lanterne says that civil funerals are on the increase in France. When Free-thought overcomes the superstitious terrors cast round death, the priest will no longer be able to dip his fingers in the last pie.

The *Dublin Catholic*, which is what Roman Catholics would call a Protestant journal, is edited by the Rev. Thomas Connellan, a converted priest, against whom a charge was trumped up of the paternity of a child by a beggar-woman. The *Catholic* gives a full report of the case, which resulted in a verdict for Mr. Connellan, and describes the proceedings as a vile plot got up by his clerical opponents.

Our friends in America have instituted a voluntary Free-thought Letter Writing Corps, the members of which agree to write in unison to papers or to members of Congress or Senators, in regard to topics affecting the Free-thought movement. Something of the sort might be advisable here. The Jesuits have long been in league to keep their views well before the public eye in this way.

The Austrian Emperor has had to give in. Dr. Wekerle, the dismissed Hungarian Premier, has been recalled; Dr. Szilagyi retains his post as Minister of Justice, and the Civil Marriage Bill will have to be passed by the Upper House. The clerical party has been completely defeated.

Dr. Pearson, the author of *National Life and Character*, whose death we have already referred to as a great loss to sociology, sat in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria from 1878 to 1892. From 1886 to 1890 he was Minister of Public Instruction, and his tenure of the office was notable for his successful efforts to make primary education secular as well as compulsory.

Mr. Acland has decided to provide that in future a reasonable number of visits by elementary scholars with their teachers to art galleries and museums may be allowed to reckon as school attendances.

The residence of Thomas Paine in Paris, from 1796 to 1802, has (says the *Athenæum*) been identified by Mr. Moncure Conway as No. 4 Rue de l'Odéon, at that time No. 4 Rue du Théâtre Français. He resided with Nicolas de Bonneville, whom he assisted in editing the *Bouche de Fer*, and who translated into French several of Paine's productions of this period. Paine bequeathed his property to Madame Bonneville and her children. Proofs that the curious old house is the identical one have been submitted to eminent official gentlemen in Paris.

Mr. S. Standring writes: "Last Sunday evening, when lecturing for the Independent Labor Party, on Clifton Hill, New Cross, a party of Christians, led by one of the Finsbury Park rowdies, caused a great commotion on the ground of my being a Secularist and Atheist. A rush was made at the platform, upon which the police interfered, and arrested the noisiest Christian, who seemed beside himself with venomous rage. The lecture proceeded to the end, whilst the police paid special attention to the other Christian roughs."

One of our readers and his wife were present at this meeting, and were defending Secularism against the filthy lies of certain tract distributors, when a Christian lady asked what they would substitute for the Bible? "Common sense," replied the lady Secularist: whereupon the gospel-fed dame said, "You ought to be burnt." And when the Secularist rejoined, "No doubt you would like to burn me," the sweet Christian answered, "I would." The emphasis and expression of this female follower of the meek and lowly Jesus were a beautiful illustration of the glorious gospel of love.

Mr. A. B. Moss proposes to devote a part of his annual holiday to a lecturing tour. He is engaged to lecture at Failsworth on Sunday, August 12, and will be happy to visit other places in South Lancashire and Yorkshire. Branches would do well to avail themselves of his services, and those who wish to do so should write to him immediately. His address is 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.

Mr. Charles Watts has just issued a new pamphlet (3d.) on *Christianity and Civilisation*. It is written with his usual carefulness, and should have a good circulation.

The Humanitarian League's memorial to the Prime Minister on behalf of the Sport Regulation Bill, and the discontinuance of the Royal Buckhounds, lies at our publishing office for signatures. We scarcely need invite support to such a laudable object.

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland says that "no one who has scanned the religious movements of the last two centuries with any intelligence, and observed the progress of contemporary thought, can persuade himself that the existing relation of the Church to the doctrine contained in the Westminster symbols can remain permanently unmodified." Science, he said, had not extinguished faith; yet "it has made it hard to believe in some of the Biblical tales that in our childhood we never doubted." Dr. Story is also for dropping hell-fire. Altogether, it is clear that "Stands Scotland where it did?" must be answered in the negative.

JUSTICE AND THE GODS.—*Are there any marks of a distributive justice in the world?* If you answer in the affirmative, I conclude that, since justice here exerts itself, it is satisfied. If you reply in the negative, I conclude that you have no reason to ascribe justice, in our sense, to the gods. If you hold a medium between affirmation and negation, by saying that the justice of the gods, at present, exerts itself in part, but not in its full extent, I answer that you have no reason to give it any particular extent, but only as far as you see it at present exert itself.—*David Hume, "Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding,"* sec. xi., p. 116, vol. iv. "*Philosophical Works*"; 1875.

PROTESTANTS AND SCIENCE.—Protestant ministers cried out against Galileo's assertion of the earth's movement just as loudly as Catholic priests; indeed, it was observed that here, for the first time, ministers and priests agreed; and Descartes wrote that there was a good time coming for the theory of the earth's motion, as the priests would probably begin to allow it now that all the ministers condemned it.—*Matthew Arnold, "A French Eton,"* 1892, p. 178.

WHEN THERE IS NEED FOR ASSES.—One cannot bring the masses to shout hosanna until one rides into the city on an ass.—*F. Nietzsche,*

A FREETHINKING ARABIC POET.

THE eminent service rendered to English literature by Mr. E. Fitzgerald's splendid rendering of the Persian poems of Omar Khayyam, followed as they have been by the closer, if less poetic, translations of McCarthy and Whinfield, suggests that there may be a fine field for an Arabic scholar in the poems of Abu-l-Ala, the celebrated heterodox Arabian poet, some specimens of whose work have been translated into Latin by Fabricius in 1638, and into French by M. de Sacy in his *Chrestomathie Arabe* (iii. 81 *et seq.*), but which are quite unknown to purely English readers, although there is a copy of his principal volume of poems, *Siktu, z. zend* ("The Falling Tinder-Spark"), in the British Museum (*Bib. Rich.* 7595).—Abu-l-Ala himself wrote a commentary on the poems, which he entitled *Dhau-s-sikt* ("Light of the Falling Spark"). A study of the text of Abu-l-Ala was issued at Bonn, in 1843, by Charles Rieu. In 1889 A. Freiherrn von Kremer, of Vienna, gave a very full account of his philosophical poetry, which, he says, recalls F. Rückert's *Wisdom of the Brahmins*, in the Proceedings of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. His poems gave much scandal to the devout, apparently for similar reasons to those which made the quatrains of Omar Khayyam objectionable. A serious vein of pessimism and scepticism pervades them.

In my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* I have given a brief sketch of the life of Abu-l-Ala, who is also known as Ahmed Aboul Ala ben Suleyman, and Al Tenuki, because he was of the Tenuk tribe, and Al Maari because he came from Maara, a village of Syria, where he was born in the year 363, after the Hegira (A.D. 973). He was blind from the age of four through an attack of small-pox. Notwithstanding, he became the most eminent poet of his age. Of a learned family, he received a good education, going to Aleppo and Bagdad University. He, however, returned to Maara, where he lived in seclusion composing his works. He gained so much reputation by his writings that pupils and learned men visited him from all parts. One of his visitors was the poet Abu Nask, Al Manazi. Abu-l-Ala complained that he was isolated from the world, which spoke badly of him. Al Manazi replied, "What can they have to say to you, who have resigned to them both this world and the next?" Abu-l-Ala lived very simply, although he was the chief man in Maara. To one who asked why he did not turn to God, who had given him so much wealth and service, he answered: "I own no more than my means of subsistence." He called himself "the doubly imprisoned captive." This, Ibn Khallikan says, was in allusion to his voluntary seclusion and blindness. I suspect it was from holding that the ego was imprisoned in a body bereft of sight. He took no pains to conceal that he believed in no revealed religion. Thus he says in some verses quoted by Chauffepié, "I look at the Magian in amaze. His opposing god and devil frighten me. I am not less astonished at the Indian who purifies himself with the urine of the sacred cow. The Christians rile me in making God capable of injustice, and supposing they can change his decree; and the Jews disgust me in pretending that God is pleased with blood and the smell of sacrifices. I am not less astonished when I find a people so silly as to travel from the ends of the earth to sow pebbles and kiss a black stone" (ceremonies performed by the pilgrims at Mecca). "Surely," he concludes, "these irrational people are blind to the light of truth."

D'Herbelot also cites the following: "Issa has come who has abolished the law of Moussa, and Mahommed following has introduced five prayers a day. His followers thus waste their time from sunrise to sunset. But, tell me frankly, since you have lived under one or the other of these revelations, did you more or less enjoy the sunlight or the moonbeams? Answer me honestly, and I will continue to give hints of my opinions." The hint appears broad enough in the following verses: "The Christians wander about hither and thither, but the Moslems have entirely lost their way. The Jews are mummies enwrapped in old bands, and the Magi of Persia are mere dreamers. The world is divided between two sorts of persons: some have sense and no religion, others religion without sense." The rhythm of these verses, as far as I can judge, resembles that of the old Hebrew poets. Probably Abu-l-Ala would have appreciated Ecclesiastes. Among the sayings of Abu-l-Ala are the following: "Religions are the causes of

corruption, drawing men into antagonism, and entrapping them into error." "All religious systems are but stories without proof." "Take the astronomer's mirror and seek the stars. They will bid you taste the sweets of your honey, for you know, without doubt, of your burial, but you know not of your resurrection." "Death is a long sleep without waking, and sleep a short death which waking soon follows." "Should the inhabitants of the tombs awake from their sleep of death, there would be no room for the living." "If it were true, as Aristotle taught, that men may awaken from death, heaven itself would become too narrow for us." "Twere well to either live for ever, or else to die without resurrection." "The pearl which has once emerged to daylight goes no more back to the oyster-shell." "What belongs to the body returns to dust, but I cannot find where souls go."

Abu-l-Ala was a vegetarian, and is said to have held the opinion of the Brahmins that it was wrong to kill animals. He was considered an Atheist by the learned of his time, though his commentator, Ibnu-s-sid, of Badajos, wrote a work to defend him from the charge; but, according to Ibn Rashik, in the *Annudaj*, without much success. That he was a Freethinker is sufficiently evident from the citations given; and that he escaped persecution and enjoyed esteem in his lifetime says much for the tolerance of the Caliphs of Bagdad. He reached a good age, was esteemed the greatest poet of his time, and is said to have left one hundred thousand verses, besides writing a large work on literature, entitled *The Forest and its Branches*. Ibn Khallikan gives the following account of his death: "His illness lasted three days, and on the fourth he died, having none near him but his nephews. On the third day he told them to write down what he was going to say, and they took paper and pens for that purpose; but he dictated to them observations which were quite incorrect, on which the Kadi Abu Muhammad Abd Allah al Tenuki said: 'May God lighten your grief! the shaikh is already dead!' The next day Abu-l-Ala expired." He died A.H. 449 (A.D. 1057), and ordered the following verse to be inscribed on his tombstone: "I owe this fault to my father, none owe the like to mine."
J. M. W.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING held at the Hall of Science, June 7; the President in the chair. Present: Miss E. M. Vance, Messrs. R. O. Smith, G. Standring, J. Neate, W. H. Baker, W. E. Webber, G. Ward, W. G. Renn, R. Dowding, F. Schaller, G. H. Baker, C. Thomas, and the Secretary.

The West London Branch, through its delegate, offered to contribute the sum of £1 towards the funds of the Federation, if the other Branches would contribute 10s.

Messrs. Standring, Smith, and Forder were appointed as a sub-committee to consider applications for grants from Branches.

Correspondence from a local association in regard to the School Board Election was referred to the three Branches in the Finsbury division. A long discussion then ensued on the question of School Board candidates, and it was ultimately moved by Mr. Renn, seconded by Mr. Ward, "That the Executive be asked to secure, if possible, a Secular candidate in Finsbury." Carried.

The Annual Excursion on August 19 was discussed, and it was formally moved that the excursion be by train, and several towns were proposed, Margate receiving the largest number of votes. Messrs. G. Ward, A. Wheeler, F. Schaller, W. H. Baker, and Miss E. M. Vance were elected as a committee for carrying out the arrangements.

The President generously presented the Federation with the first Lecture Lists for the season, and those for July were ordered to be printed.

A vote of thanks to Mr. J. Anderson for his assistance as Secretary *pro tem.* concluded the business.

LANNIE G. BROWN, *Hon. Sec.*

N.B.—Secretaries are requested to note that the matter for July lists must reach the Secretary not later than Monday, June 18.

Obituary.

WE regret to record the death of Mr. Alfred Butterworth, of Rochdale, President of the local Branch of the National Secular Society. A large number of persons attended the funeral, and Mr. Sam Standring spoke at the graveside; his remarks being fairly reported in the *Rochdale Times*.

BOOK CHAT.

PROFESSOR EDWIN JOHNSON, as readers of the *Freethinker* are aware, holds that the whole of Christian literature extends back but some four or five hundred years at most. In *The Pauline Epistles, Re-studied and Explained* (Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's-court; 3s. 6d.), he goes even further than in his *Rise of Christendom*, and contends that the epistles attributed to Paul are the fabrications of a literary coterie working after 1492, the date assigned for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. The difficulties in the way of the acceptance of any such views are obvious, and it is to be regretted that Mr. Johnson, who is fully aware of this, dwells too much in the circle of his own ideas and researches to meet the objections which suggest themselves to the person of ordinary education. For instance, Paul, as well as Seneca, is often referred to by Chaucer; but then, despite the dated tomb in Westminster Abbey, the reader finds that the Canterbury Tales are also supposed to be a work of the Tudor period. Wiclif is dismissed as "a purely mythical person." The authority of paleographers as to the age of manuscripts, too, is challenged. "All an expert can pretend to do is to state what age the MS. in question was intended to represent by those who laid down the scheme of centuries." Monumental evidence is barely noticed, and the conclusions of thousands of men working at historical problems from different standpoints are lightly dismissed.

* * *

That very much of early Christian literature lies under suspicion of forgery is known to all scholars. The epistles of Paul hardly seem the likeliest sort of forgery to be put forward by a monkish or priestly corporation. Possibly the cloven foot peeps out occasionally, but it is a striking fact that the sixteenth-century reformers never thought of questioning the writings, but rather based their Protestantism upon Paul, finding sufficient in the epistles attributed to the Apostle to show that the Church which they opposed was of later growth. We do not urge this as standing in the way of examination, but it is a consideration when the question is simply, Are the writings attributed to Paul forgeries?

* * *

It is this question of growth which, it seems to us, Professor Johnson overlooks. His most astonishing chapter is the last, in which he urges that Hebrew letters are modern, and Hebrew literature a creation since the revival of letters. Not to find traces of growth between the laws of Moses, the prophecies of Isaiah, and the wilderness of commentary in the Talmud almost, it appears to us, puts one out of court in the discussion of the question. While we agree that the period of growth may not by any means have been so extensive as the orthodox make out, it can hardly have been comprised within the narrow limits assigned by our author.

* * *

Professor Johnson seems to lay too much weight on merely negative evidence. The so-called second-century literature does not mention the Epistle to the Romans. The name of Tertullian does not occur in the dictionaries of Photius and Suidas. These may be circumstances warranting suspicion, but they cannot be considered decisive. He gives us, moreover, no clue as to how the forgeries, which he believes were concocted in the West, got imposed upon the Greek Church.

* * *

Of course Professor Johnson has much to say for his thesis, and throughout evinces himself a scholar. Here is a little fact worthy attention. Jerome includes Seneca as the eleventh in his list of the Illustrious Men of the Church. Accordingly, letters were written which were supposed to have passed between Paul and the stoic minister of Nero. The latter says: "We were highly delighted with your book of many epistles which you have written to some cities and chief provincial towns; and, further, that the emperor is extremely pleased with the sentiments of your epistles." Genuine remains, however, of Seneca suffice to show that these writings are spurious, and the fact throws doubt upon the others of Jerome's list of Illustrious. Professor Johnson's volume, indeed, throughout has information and suggestions of value to the critical inquiry into the origins of Christians, and we regret that he fails to make his case clear to the ordinary reader. As it is, he appears to overturn all received history with such ease that we are left with an impression like that of having witnessed an extraordinary feat of strength, which we suspect must have been performed with pasteboard weights, and rather consists in clever jugglery than a veritable *tour de force*.

* * *

The most recent find of early Christian literature is a Latin translation of the alleged epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians. Dr. Sanday has been dilating upon it in the *Guardian*, and the handwriting is assigned to the eleventh century. But the work has been examined by

"J. M. C." (the initials of the Rev. J. M. Cotterill, author of *Peregrinus Porteus*) in the *Scottish Guardian* (April 6 to June 8), and he finds it to be a fraud as late as the sixteenth century, bearing evidence of being made up from a Latin translation of Clement of Alexandria.

* * *

This new bit of evidence, so far from being confirmatory of the genuineness of Clement's epistle, throws doubt upon it altogether. The epistle of Clement is said by Eusebius to have been commonly read in the churches. MSS. must have been numerous. What were the chances that Clement of Alexandria should use one particular MS.; that the Codex Alexandrinus, from which the epistle was first printed in 1633, should use the identical same MS.; that a MS., said to have been discovered by Byrennius in Constantinople, after Mr. Cotterill had challenged the genuineness of the epistle, and photos of the Alexandrian MS. had been published, should contain exactly the same text and be wanting in the same parts; that a little later a Syriac manuscript should turn up with exactly the same defects, and that now a Latin translation should be added to the pile! J. M. C. says of the only possible theory, other than that of fraud—viz., that these were all taken from one MS.: "It would be nothing unreasonable to select four out of a vast number of MSS., and to argue from certain errors in common that these four were derived from one archetype of ancient date. It is a widely different matter when the authorities are limited to four and no more." The facts given by "J. M. C." are strongly confirmatory of the view that forgery not only abounded in the sixteenth century, but is still going on. But the question needs to be approached with a caution similar to that used by the Rev. J. Black in propounding, in his *Palaeomaiica*, the view that the received Greek Testament is of Latin origin.

A HELPLESS GOD.

Four-fifths of the world is still in darkness. Without our aid God cannot spread the light. He is doing the best he can. We must do the best that we can. If God, sitting in the heavens and seeing this tremendous darkness, could sit there and do less than his best, he is not our God. He is doing the best he can with the power he has got.—*Bishop Foster before the Methodist Social Union.*

DOUBTING Thomases have often wondered why
Any God of endless goodness and of might
Should permit himself to stand serenely by
While unrighteousness existed in his sight.

Unenumerated heathen every day,
Never having heard of heaven or its king,
By perversity of nature go astray,
And Jehovah doesn't do a blessed thing.

And the Infidels have noted that his hand
Isn't lent to any visible degree,
When the blizzard goes careering o'er the land,
Or the hurricane depopulates the sea.

Even innocence may not enlist his aid
Though it supplicate protection in his name;
For the strength to meet temptation prays the maid,
But the parson keeps a-calling just the same.

But an answer to the question now is gained.
And the esoteric riddle has been solved;
All the hidden ambiguity explained
By the notion Brother Foster has evolved.

This Jehovah he discusses is so weak,
And so much does he resemble feeble man,
That whenever his assistance we bespeak
We can only hope he does the best he can.

We should not be asking favors of him, then,
As perchance he is commercially depressed,
Or perhaps he isn't luckier than men,
And is not in a condition for his best.

After all the difficulties he's endured
Since his trouble with this universe began,
It is meet reward for him to be assured
Brother Foster thinks he does the best he can.

GEO. E. MACDONALD (*Truthseeker*).

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RETRENCHMENT.

'Tis a time of deep depression, there's retrenchment in the air ;
There's a cutting-down of prices and of wages everywhere ;
There's a turning of old garments, and a patching of old pants,
And a tendency to cotton to one's wealthy maiden aunts.

People say that we began it, but we really needn't mind,
For it isn't to this planet that the trouble is confined :
It's a kind of epidemic, and, I've recently been told,
They're retrenching up in heaven, and economising gold.

Even there the horrid poison the celestial ether taints ;
They are cutting up old rainbows into haloes for the saints ;
The harps which once were golden are not golden any more,
And they're serving out tin-whistles to the angels by the score.

The pearly gates have vanished, and a pearl you never see ;
And amethysts are scarcer there than lawyers used to be.
The cherubim are wearing leather slippers on their feet,
And they're substituting copper for the gold upon the street.

There's Saint Peter in a fury, for they've got his golden key—
He nearly used an adjective commencing with a "D"—
He fastens up the portals, and it goes against his grain,
With a common kind of padlock and an ordinary chain.

Then there's Abraham, and Moses, and the ancient Jewish lot—
Well, they've got a little "corner," and intend to make a "pot."
The Hebrew kings, who used to frighten subjects with their frowns,
Are "advancing" to the seraphs on the jewels in their crowns !

It's an awful kind of crisis, and a pretty state of things,
When an impecunious cherub has to pop his harp and wings ;
But it's worse when weary angels can't sit down and rest their bones
'Cos a "ring" of Hebrew prophets has a lien upon their thrones.

What is looming in the future? What is coming? Who can tell
That the trouble's not extending to the other place as well?
Don't imagine, gentle reader, that you'll find it, when you go,
Any better, one iota, in the regions down below.

'Cos it's rather more than likely, I imagine, on the whole,
They're retrenching there in sulphur, and economising coal ;
Instead of grilling pleasantly, in privacy and ease,
You may have to share a gridiron with a cargo of D. D's.

IRONBARK (*Liberator*).

The Modern Preacher.

It is no light thing to have secured a livelihood on condition of going through life masked and gagged. To be compelled, week after week, and year after year, to recite the symbols of ancient faith and lift up his voice in the echoes of old hopes, with the blighting thought in his soul that the faith is a lie, and the hope no more than the folly of the crowd ; to read hundreds of times in a twelvemonth, with solemn unction, as the inspired word of the Supreme, what to him are meaningless as the Abracadabras of the conjuror in a booth ; to go on to the end of his days administering to the simple folk holy rites of commemoration and solace, when he has in his mind, at each phrase, what dupes are these simple folk, and how wearisomely counterfeit these rites ; and to know through all that this is really to be the one business of his prostituted life, that so dreary and hateful a piece of play-acting will make the desperate retrospect of his last hours—of a truth here is the very abomination of desolation of the human spirit indeed.—*John Morley*.

NATURE AND MAN.—We have never witnessed the construction of a world. We only perceive the everlasting flux and reflux of phenomena, the ceaseless pulsation of nature and life, evolution, transformation, birth, death, and birth again. But Nature herself is dumb as to her whence or whither.—*Professor W. Knight, "Aspects of Theism," p. 69.*

CHILDREN AND THE TRUTH.—They will ask you whether the story of the creation of the universe is true ; whether such and such miracles really happened ; whether this person or that actually lived, and actually did all he is said to have done. Plainly, the right course is to tell them, without agitation, or excess, or vehemence, or too much elaboration, the simple truth in such matters, exactly as it appears to one's own mind.—*John Morley, "On Compromise."*

PROFANE JOKES.

A CANDIDATE was being examined by four professors. Feeling extremely nervous, his memory failed him several times. One of the professors, growing impatient, at last thundered out : "Why, you cannot quote a single passage of Scripture correctly !" "Yes, I can !" exclaimed the candidate. "I just happen to remember a passage in Revelation : 'And I lifted up my eyes and beheld four great beasts.'"

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

"Are you the celebrated Madame Bombaston?" he asked, after he had climbed four flights of stairs and was admitted into a mysterious apartment. "Yes," replied the bizarre-looking personage who received him. "The great clairvoyante?" "Yes." "And you foretell the future?" "Yes." "And read the mind?" "Yes." "And unfold the past?" "Yes, yes!" "Then," said the visitor eagerly, "tell me what it was my wife asked me to take home for her to-night!"

"Mamma, dear," said a little girl, "does God know I have two prayers to say, one one night and the other next night?" "Yes, dear, God knows you have two prayers to say, one one night and the other next night." "Mamma, dear, does God know I am going to say to-night, 'Now I lay me down to sleep'?" "Yes, dear, God knows you are going to say to-night, 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'" "But mamma, I'm not going to say that one ; I'm going to say the other one."

Mother (sadly)—"Well, I suppose poor dear Mrs. Field is in heaven now." Mathematical son—"Oh, no, mamma! it takes three days to resurrect, and she won't be in heaven until six o'clock to-night."

A provincial sportsman, fishing for trout in a Western county stream, found his fly suddenly snapped up by a large bat, which dangled and flapped its wings at the end of the line. "Well, Tom, lad, 'ave you got anything yet?" asked a companion. "Y'as," replied Tom, looking amazedly at his catch. "What is it, Tom?" "I dunno, unless it be a cherubim."

Sunday-school Teacher—"I told you last Sunday that I wished each of you would try to make at least one person happy during the week. Did you?" Boy—"Yes, I made grandma happy." Teacher—"That is noble. How did you do it?" Boy—"I went to visit her, and she's always happy when I go away."

A lazy fellow who was idling away his time was asked by a minister where he expected to go when he died? "I shall not go," was the reply ; "I expect to be carried!"

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHO WAS MELCHIZEDEK?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I notice that "Lucianus," writing under the above heading, in your issue of June 3 last, appears to be unaware of a history of Melchizedek, which the Rev. Robert Taylor terms "the gospel of the wildman of the woods," and which he rendered into English and published in the *Lion*, No. 10, dated September 5, 1828, p. 313, and from which he asserts that all the Bible references on the subject are taken. The gist of the story (I copy from notes) is, that Melchizedek's brother, Melchi, was to be sacrificed as an atonement for his kins, and country, folk. Melchizedek, having interceded unsuccessfully for sparing his brother's life, prayed God that the earth might swallow up the sacrifices. God granted his prayer, and neither man, nor altars, nor temples, nor beasts, nor any living creature of the whole city remained, but all were swallowed up ; therefore Melchizedek was said to be without father, without mother, etc. (Heb. vii. 3).

If the statement is correct that all Bible references to Melchizedek are taken from this gospel, the matter seems an important one, as it tends to show how Bible stories were embellished. Hence, in this case, Melchizedek, who lost his parents in a natural (? earthquake) or supernatural way, is represented in the Bible as being without father, without mother, without descent ; having neither beginning of days nor end of life, etc. The story, too, of Melchi's atonement may have suggested to gospel authors the idea of the son of God being sacrificed as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. There is this similarity, at least, between the two atonements. They were both equally futile in results. Melchi's people, for whom he was sacrificed, were swallowed up ; and, in the other case, if death came into the world through Adam's disobedience, a propretation ought to have done away with it ; otherwise, as Asgill contended, it is equivalent to pardoning a man for horse-stealing, and hanging him all the same.

W. CABELL.

As Funny As Any.

While Joe Jefferson was down at his Louisiana plantation last year the wife of one of his neighbors died, and Mr. Jefferson called to express his sympathy and regrets. While he was at the house the clergyman arrived to make arrangements for the funeral. Neither the man nor his wife had been a church member. The husband was prostrated with grief, but he aroused himself as the clergyman entered.

"Is there any particular portion of the scriptures you would like me to read at the funeral?" asked the clergyman. The husband sat up, mopped his eyes, and thought for a moment.

"Well, you might try that bit about Samson and the foxes!" he exclaimed, finally. "I guess that's about as funny as any of 'em."

WHAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL THEORY OF CHRISTIANITY?—A total denial of the value of things of this life as compared with the inestimable value of the possessions in another. Christianity writes an infinite denominator under the finite numerator of this world, and thus reduces the value of the fraction to zero.—*Judge J. B. Stallo.*

No indwelling deity now regulates the life of the burning sun, no guardian angels drive the stars across the arching firmament; the divine Ganges is water flowing down into the sea, to evaporate into cloud, and descend again in rain. No deity simmers in the boiling pot, no presiding spirits dwell in the volcanoes, no imprisoned demon shrieks from the mouth of the howling lunatic. There was a period of human thought when the whole universe seemed actuated by spiritual life. For our knowledge of our own history, it is deeply interesting that there should remain rude races yet living under the philosophy which we have so far passed from since physics, chemistry, biology, have seized whole provinces of ancient Animism, setting force for life, and law for will.—*Dr. E. P. Tylor.*

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 postcard.]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Why People do Not go to Church." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends (admission 2d.). Tuesday, at 8, dancing. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Reform of the Sabbath."

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM: Pilgrimage on Saturday, June 16. Meet at Brompton Oratory at 4 sharp.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Railway Arches, Goldhawk-road): 9.15, Excursion by brakes to Chertsey (adults 3s., children 2s.). Monday, at 8 (at "Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate), half-yearly general meeting.

WIMBLEDON (Liberty Hall, Broadway): 7, entertainment and dance (free). Tuesday, at 8, concert and dance (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.15, F. Haslam, "What is Our Religion?" 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. Snell, "What is the Word of God?"

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, A. Guest, "Morals of Missions."

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Bible Saints and Sinners."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band stand): 11, C. Cohen, "Science and Man"; 3, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture. Corner of the Grove; Thursday, at 8 St. John will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell: the Christian Trinity"; 3, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism." Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Puckington-street): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is there Design in Nature?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life."

LAMBETH (Kennington-green, near Vestry Hall): 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature."

LEYTON (High-road, near Vicarage-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Religion and Morality."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Does Man Survive Death?"

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Paul and his Teaching"; 3, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life"

TOTTENHAM (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, Sam Standing, "The Wages of Sin."

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 11.15, St. John will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road): Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life."

WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "What Must I do to be Saved?"

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Trial of Christianity"; 6.30, S. E. Easton, "Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BOLTON (Borough Chambers, Rushton-street): 7, T. Halstead, "My Reasons Against the Abolition of the House of Lords."

BRISTOL (Shepherd Hall): 10, meet for ramble to Aust.

HULL (St. George's Hall, Story-street): 7, George Grainger will lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Ann-street): 11, committee meeting and Tontine Society; 7, J. F. Roales, "Metaphysics as Christian Evidences."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. Hammond, "The Failure of Theism" (Free.)

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing class.

READING: Excursion to Marlow by steam-launch "Mystery," leaving Caversham Bridge at 9.30, calling at the Kennet's Mouth at 10; returning from Marlow at 4.30.

SHEFFIELD (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King street): 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, annual meeting—report and election of officers.

SUNDERLAND (Bridge End Vaults): Carl A. Arstad, "Did Christ Practise all his Precepts?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SUNDERLAND (Ryhope-green): 11, Carl A. Arstad, "Noah's Ark and the Deluge."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 17, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Battersea.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—June 17 m. Mile End, e. Lambeth; 24, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Edmonton.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—June 17, m. Kingsland, a. Regent's Park, e. Hammersmith; 24, m. Leyton, a. Victoria Park, e. Walthamstow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 41 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—June 17, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 24, m. and e. Camberwell.

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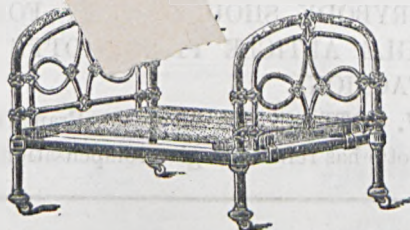
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