

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. GLADSTONE ON HERESY.

(Concluded from page 506.)

MR. GLADSTONE, in speaking of the Gospel as something offered to us by God, which we are heretics to put aside in favor of our own opinions, is speaking as a Christian to Christians, and not as a reasoner to reasoners. We shall therefore leave him to settle with his co-religionists what is the Gospel, and what is personal opinion, in the huge body of Christian divinity. And while they are settling this matter, if they ever *do* settle it, we will consider Mr. Gladstone's view of proselytism. "I should define the spirit of proselytism," he says, "as a morbid appetite for effecting conversions, founded too often upon an overweening confidence and self-love." So far as this applies to the ordinary Christian conversionist, who is everlastingly trying to save souls by the exclusive specific of his own little sect, we have not the slightest quarrel with it; but so far as it applies to proselytism in general—that is, to the desire of spreading what one thinks the truth—we should say it is quite unworthy of Mr. Gladstone. All his lifetime he has been proselytising in politics. His great electoral campaigns have been bold efforts to bring multitudes of people to his own way of thinking; and his opponents have not been slow to charge him with "overweening confidence and self-love." Why, then, is it so heinous a sin to imitate Mr. Gladstone in the sphere of religion? What, indeed, is he doing in this very article? Is it not his object to influence the minds of others? And is not that proselytism, in the broad and general sense of the term?

When the opinion a man seeks to spread is unpopular; when the holding of it, and much more the propagation of it, is a barrier to all that the world regards as success; it requires on the average something more than "overweening confidence and self-love" to make a proselytiser. Mr. Gladstone appears to suspect this himself. Why else does he remonstrate with this obnoxious individual, and even appeal to him on grounds of prudence and humanity? Mr. Gladstone reminds him that his "supposed certainty" is only his own "sincere persuasion." He ought to pay "respect" to the "convictions of his neighbors," and apparently this "respect" is to take the form of never confronting their convictions with his own. It is a kind of wickedness to "plant his battering-ram against the fabric of a formed belief." "When he has broken to pieces the creed or system at which his great guns are aimed, what right or power has he," Mr. Gladstone asks, "to dig new foundations for a mind which is in no way bound to his allegiance? He has led his victim out into the desert, to choose for himself amidst a thousand paths."

We must repeat that we have no desire to intervene if these observations only apply to the quarrel between Churches and sects; but we utterly dissent from them as far as they apply to the more general difference between majorities and minorities. Mr. Gladstone's philosophy, in this respect, is nothing but rank and naked Conservatism. He is simply championing the absolute authority of the dead past over the living present.

Why should not battering-rams be planted against the fabric of a formed belief? Did not the early Christians perpetrate this very assault on the fabric of Paganism? The whole argument turns on this question—Is the "formed belief" a *true* belief? For, in the long run, the

truth of a belief involves all its possible *beneficence*. If the "belief" be really true, if the "fabric" be based upon eternal fact, the battering-rams of criticism will not injure it; and if the belief be false, and the fabric unsound, let them suffer a just annihilation.

It is idle for Mr. Gladstone to object that the heretic is "bent in the first instance to destroy," although "his purpose is constructive." We are born into a world which is occupied. Old beliefs, whether right or wrong, have taken up the first and best positions; and from these positions they dominate all the surrounding territory. To leave them unchallenged is like marching through an enemy's country without carrying his strongholds. The law of progress has always been the same, and is never likely to alter. New ideas can only advance by killing old ones. Destruction must precede construction. There is really no opposition between them. Whatever they may be in another world, in this world they are but two aspects of one and the same process, and the more closely you watch them the more you see them melting into each other.

Take the illustration of a great city. Its life is continuous. People often live in the same house for many years. But the city is practically rebuilt every hundred years. New houses are constantly being erected, and old ones pulled down to make room for them. Where the ground is occupied you must destroy before you can build afresh. Of course it is a costly process, but it is inevitable. Enough that it pays in the end.

How feeble and timid is Mr. Gladstone in the region of theology. The heretic, forsooth, has "led his victim out into the desert, to choose for himself amidst a thousand paths." It reminds us of the old rhyme—

Ralph, thou hast done a fearful deed
In breaking away from thy father's creed!

We beg respectfully to ask Mr. Gladstone why a man whose eyes are opened is a "victim," and why he is to be regarded as being led into the "desert." We have known a great many persons who found the "desert" a place with lovelier flowers and richer fruit. And why a *thousand* paths to choose from? Are there really so many when you break away from superstition altogether? Even if you make a wrong choice, you are no worse off than you were at first. All that you have done, at the very worst, is to exchange one wrong road for another. Why then all these tears? Is this a theme for endless lamentation? Nay, is not all that bad imagery about the "desert" with "a thousand paths"—a most *uncommon* desert—a sign of something fantastic in Mr. Gladstone's argument?

Why not candidly admit the fact that thought, if it be free—and only in that case *is* it thought—*will* vary with time, place, and circumstance, with mental constitution, knowledge, and personal environment? The history of Christianity, with all its infallible pretensions, should teach Mr. Gladstone this lesson. After the lapse of nearly two thousand years, here is the picture of Christian "unity" painted with his own hand:—"There is no longer one fold under one visible shepherd: and the majority of Christians (such I take it now to be, though the minority is a large one) is content with its one shepherd in heaven, and with the other provisions he has made on earth. His flock is broken up into scores, it may be hundreds, of sections. These sections are not at peace, but at war. Nowhere are they too loving to one another: for the most part love is hardly visible among

them. Each makes it a point to understand his neighbors, not in the best sense, but in the worst: and the thunder of anathema is in the air."

Mr. Gladstone winds up with an appeal to these warring and anathematizing sections. He pleads for a "readjustment of ideas"—whatever that may mean—at the "present juncture." He begs them to "discern the signs of the times," and to recognise that "creation is groaning and travailing together for a great recovery." For, on the other hand, the "persons adverse to that recovery" are "banded together with an enhanced and overweening confidence," loudly boasting of their "improved means of action," and particularly relying on "the increase of knowledge." "Knowledge, forsooth!" snorts the Grand Old Man. And although he goes on to pay knowledge some guarded compliments, he cannot destroy the significance of that exclamation. It shows conclusively enough that, in religious matters, Mr. Gladstone is outside the great stream of progress.

G. W. FOOTE.

A LOVE STORY.*

READER, I have no love story to tell. The story is that of Professor Drummond, to whom, according to Dr. Washington Gladden, "it has been given more fully, perhaps, than to any other thinker of our time to express the old faith in the terms of the new science." It is told in his recent book, *The Ascent of Man*, the first edition of which, ten thousand copies, was soon disposed of. The success of the work is not strange. Any able attempt to reconcile Christianity and Evolution, Science and Godism, is sure of an interested audience. Professor Drummond's well-prepared lectures have been carefully re-written. He has a story to tell, a wondrous, interesting, all-absorbing story—the story of human evolution. And he tells it in choice language, with some measure of knowledge, and, what is still more captivating, the glow of imagination. It is this which gives the distinctive character and charm of his work. He gives no new fact, but rather views the old in "the light that never was on sea or land, the consecration and the poet's dream." Thus viewed, the long ceaseless process of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest becomes "a love story."

"Love," he tells us, "is not a late arrival, an after-thought, with creation. It is not a novelty of a romantic civilisation. It is not a pious word of religion. Its roots began to grow with the first cell of life which budded on this earth. How great it is the history of humanity bears witness; but how old it is and how solid, how bound up with the very constitution of the world, how from the first of time an eternal part of it, we are only now beginning to perceive" (p. 276). But Professor Drummond is by no means the first

Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law,
Though nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against his creed.

Is his trust anything better than blind faith? Is it founded on fact?

With equal assurance and arrogance, Professor Drummond, in his introduction, sits on Huxley, Leslie Stephen, Herbert Spencer, and other evolutionists, for overlooking what he calls "the missing factor in current theories" of evolution, which it was left to his own spiritual eye to discern. And what is this "missing" factor? Altruism, or, in Professor Drummond's bad phrase, Otherism, or the better one, "struggle for the life of others"—in one supreme word, "Love." But the new discovery of Professor Drummond is no discovery at all. Darwin long ago pointed out how animals gave their lives for their offspring, and how social sentiments are evolved wherever animals are gregarious. Huxley has distinctly said that "social life and the ethical process are part and parcel of the general process of evolution."† Spencer has even said that "self-sacrifice is no less primordial than self-preservation," and that "from the dawn of life egoism has been dependent upon altruism, as

altruism has been dependent upon egoism."* In 1879 I wrote in an article, "The Development of Morals"†: "Deep in the very roots of life, side by side with the instinct of self-preservation, and often in antagonism with it, are the instincts which make for the preservation of the species. Among very prolific animals regard for offspring is not so necessary for the preservation of the race, and among such it is deficient; but it is common to all others, for the sufficient reason that any race in which it did not exist would speedily become extinct. Now, not only is man among the slowest breeding of animals, but his infancy needs care for a more prolonged period than any other, which ensures greater time for the cultivation of the regard necessary for his preservation; and if this regard be not bestowed, the individual dies, leaving the race to be continued by those in whom parental instincts are better developed." I never thought, when I wrote on "The Ascent of Man" fifteen years ago, that I was doing aught but giving currency to the veriest commonplaces of evolutionists. But it is amusing to note these views now put forward as "the missing factor of modern theories," and to find the evolution of the mother and the evolution of the father heralded as discoveries of the Lowell lecturer.

What is the process of evolution? It is the remorseless crushing out of the unfit, produced by famine, disease, and carnage. As Herbert Spencer says: "Throughout the animal kingdom high organisations habitually serve to aid destruction or to escape destruction." With man, ironclads and Krupp guns are the most patent measures of civilisation. And it is not only the superior which prey on the inferior, but the inferior prey on the superior. One half of existing species are parasites.

But, says—I had almost written "sings" Professor Drummond, for there is a lilt of joyous melody through his book, befitting a love story—there is another side to the picture. Though dragons in their prime tare each other in their slime, the outcome is the sublimity of love. "Nearly all the beauty of the world is love beauty," "nearly all the music of the natural world is love music," "nearly all the foods of the world are love foods," and as a climax, with no *nearly*, "all the drinks of the world are love drinks" (p. 297). Ye gods and little fishes! All that is true in this, Darwin, in his section on "Sexual Selection," in the *Descent of Man*, has told before in the clear, dry light of fact. Professor Drummond dishes the facts of evolutionists in a glamor of fiction, and calls it a love story. The imperious instinct of reproduction, which, to the early Christian, was the sign of the diabolical lust of nature, so that Christ blessed the eunuchs, and said that in heaven there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage, is to Professor Drummond the great agency of God in his love story. What a beast such a God must be!

It is easy to picture the beauty and the benefits of heroic struggle, especially of struggle for the life of others. But the mass of the struggle for life and the scramble for love is not heroic. It is sordid struggle for the stern necessities of *leib und unterleib*. It is a struggle in which we are apt to find our highest ideals fade, and our loved ones in danger of degradation in the mire. A love story! But how much love is only *egoisme à deux*; how many love stories are dire tragedy!

A minor poet writes with truth:—

Nothing begins and nothing ends
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own.

What Mr. Drummond calls a love story, gloze it as you may, is the long, remorseless crushing out of many lives to benefit a few. He, the crown of creation, crowns over the process that has brought himself, the full and final flower of evolution, for a while to the top. Verily, "the strangest thing in all the world." Why should he view it from the standpoint of the crushed? Did they not make way for him and his successful book? So he calmly tells the bird in the jaws of the cat, "it is better to be eaten than not to be at all" (p. 260). Mr. Drummond's optimism is of the kind well called by Schopenhauer *infâme*, for the end of it all is to lead us to put our trust in God—which always means trust in God's ministers—instead of self-reliance—to look outwardly instead of inwardly for help; to praise God instead of working for Man. I am

* *The Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man*, by Henry Drummond; 1894.

† *Evolution and Ethics*.

* *Data of Ethics*, chapter xii.

† *The Liberal*, September, 1879, p. 424.

no pessimist. As George Eliot said, "If you like to invent Meliorist, I will not say you call me out of my name." Men and their surroundings may be improved. But the first condition of improvement is to face the facts, not to gloze and distort them. To call the story of evolution in nature a love story—to make out that, when a protoplasmic cell seeks to reproduce itself, that it does so out of altruism, is to distort the facts. It is only a superior description of *Atheist Shoemaker*. It is lying for God.

I have some measure of respect for the old-fashioned theologian, who thinks the mass of mankind are going to eternal hell, and who believes it is all a mystery unfathomable to human intelligence. He may be dull, but he is not necessarily dishonest. But the new-fashioned cocksure, successful theologian, who feels himself "the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time," and smiles at what Dr. Johnson called "the mighty heap of human calamity," and "the miseries which urge impatience to call on death"; who meets the sorrow and sin of the actual world "with many holiday and lady terms," and undertakes himself to justify the ways of God to men, giving us the calm assurance of his own omniscience that all is for the best, and that love is the final result of evolution, makes me feel, like Hotspur, "pestered with a popinjay."

But I must not be hard on Professor Drummond. He is getting on. He sees what the Secularist has ever contended, that there is a natural foundation for morality. He is gradually attaining views of evolution which dispense with miracle. Thus he says (p. 427): "Those who yield to the temptation to reserve a point here and there for special divine interposition are apt to forget that this virtually excludes God from the rest of the process. If God appears periodically, he disappears periodically. If he comes upon the scene at special crises, he is absent from the scene in the intervals." What is Christianity if it is not a supernatural revelation from God, appearing at a special crisis? Oh, says Professor Drummond, Christianity is, too, a result of evolution, a part of the divine process. Evolution works through love; Christianity works through love; they are one and the same. The Freethinker agrees it is a result of evolution, but finds no divine process in the evolution of a faith which shattered Pagan civilisation and replaced it with monkery, crusades, the Papacy, the Inquisition, and the persecution of science.

In his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* Professor Drummond wrote: "The Christian is a unique phenomenon. You cannot account for him. And if you could, he would not be a Christian." Now, in his *Ascent of Man*, he says: "There is nothing in Christianity which is not in germ in Nature. . . . Christianity did not begin at the Christian era, it is as old as Nature; did not drop like a bolt from Eternity, came in the fulness of Time" (p. 441). In the same sense, we suppose we may say that Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man* is as old as nature, yet came in the fulness of time; and I guess that the day will come when Christianity, no longer adapted to its new environment, like other faiths which have at various times gathered up the beliefs and aspirations of men, it too will depart, and all the sophistical attempts to reconcile new science with old supernatural pretensions will be forgotten.

J. M. WHEELER.

QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS.

(Concluded from page 508.)

THERE is another consideration in reference to this subject, which appears to us to be important. Upon the hypothesis that an intelligent Being exists distinct from the universe, the following queries may be submitted: Did he form the rocks for the builders? Animals and plants for breeders and horticulturists to experiment upon and produce varieties? Did he arrange mountains and valleys, seas, and rivers for geographical and navigating purposes? The Theist will doubtless answer that he did produce all these things, and for the objects named. But, before such a position is proved, it must be shown that there was a time when these things were not, which, except in the case of animals, it would be very difficult to do; and, further, it must be demonstrated that this "Being" really did produce all that now exists. What, however, does

this assume? Why this: that there was a place where there was no place. But then the question would arise, How could a "Being" be nowhere, and produce rocks, animals, plants, etc., out of nothing? These things could not possibly have been an emanation from the Being himself, inasmuch as he is alleged to be distinct from all of them. If it were possible to prove this Theistic assumption, then the discoveries in the various sciences of energies, causes, and sequences of recognised natural forces would be nothing more nor less than fictions of the human brain. "Thus," as Dr. Toulmin, in his *Eternity of the Universe*, exclaims, "must it most evidently appear that every step we advance beyond the universe is relinquishing a sublime, an infinite, and certain existence in search of an existence removed from the evidences of our senses. . . . For again let me observe that the unmeasured existences which could produce the universe, itself infinitely splendid, superb, and intelligent, must—were it possible—be still more wonderful and superb than the universe or Nature, which they are said to have produced; and consequently there is greater difficulty in conceiving them self-existent than in conceiving the unbounded universe self-existent."

The Theist's position further assumes that the universe and man are incapable of producing that which we know to exist, and that the present "order of things" could not be the result of certain molecular movements of the elements in nature. Therefore, it is argued that a belief in a "powerful and intelligent Being distinct from the material universe" is necessary to account for things as they are. Now, this assumption is based upon a still further assumption—namely, that we are acquainted with the extent of nature's power. But who has been enabled to fathom such a mystery? Where is the man who has either penetrated into the depths of the earth below, or soared into the regions above, and there sufficiently grasped the extent of natural force to justify him saying "this or that event is beyond the power of nature to produce"? Before we can, with reason, dogmatise upon what nature cannot do, we must know all that she can do, and that is a knowledge that we have yet to learn that any one possesses.

No man can fix a limit to the possibilities of the potency in nature. Why, then, should the power of the universe be limited by man, when he has never known that power to be exhausted? Do diseases or epidemics afflict and desolate society? Nature affords the advantages of science to alleviate the one, and to get rid of the other. If political wrongs curse a nation, and despotism strives to crush the freedom of its people, the heroism in man is at once stimulated, and his love for liberty aroused, so that he nobly and persistently toils to remedy the former, and to maintain the latter. If social inequalities keep men in a false and unfair position in life, the natural yearning which all men have more or less for the improvement of their position in the world stimulates them to try to break down the barriers to social equity and mutual enjoyment. The inspiration to these useful actions springs from natural impulses, and not from any imaginary supernatural agency. Nature has already done a thousand things which our forefathers would have declared to be impossible, and she will doubtless, in the future, under further discoveries and advances in science, do much more which, to us, appears impossible to be accomplished. Whatever, therefore, comes through nature must be natural, for the very reason that it comes to us in that manner. Therefore, upon nature we rely, believing her to be the fountain from which all that is has been derived. We have faith in her capabilities, for we feel assured that "Nature never did deceive the heart that loved her."

But does the Theist, in any way, settle the question by supposing the existence of an "intelligent Being distinct from the universe"? We think not. Taking things and events with which we are familiar, we ask, Are they such as may be ascribed to such a Being? There are thousands of creatures born into this world, of whom only few survive, while others appear under such conditions that they prematurely perish; there are thousands also of organisms who live in and upon each other. One half of all animal life consists of parasites—that is, animals that fasten themselves to the bodies of other animals, and live by sucking their blood. Those which prey upon man are mentioned by Herbert Spencer in his work upon *The Principles of Biology*. These parasites are adapted to their peculiar mode of life, and are the cause of great pain and suffering to the organisms upon which they feed. Besides this, throughout all past

time there has been a constant preying of superior animals upon inferior ones—a perpetual devouring of the weak by the strong; and the earth has been a scene of universal carnage. Now, this supposed intelligent Being either did, or did not, provide that these things should take place as they have done. If he did so arrange, his intelligence, to say the very least, was not put to a good purpose; if, on the other hand, he did not arrange these things, then, in that case, there was a power in the universe that acted in despite of him. If all that is, and all that happens, are not such as an intelligent man would devise, we cannot reasonably ascribe such work to any other intelligent Being, particularly if he be superior to man.

Contemplating the cruelty and the injustice by which we are surrounded—the success of crime, the triumph of despotism, the prevalence of starvation, the struggles for many to get the means of mere existence, the appalling sights of deformity in children who are born into the world so diseased, so decrepit, that the sunshine of happiness seldom, if ever, gladdens their lives; remembering the existence of these evils and woes, we cannot believe that a good God dwells “on high,” who could, and yet would not, remedy this most lamentable state of things. As Dr. Vaughan, in his work, *The Age and Christianity*, declares: “No attempt of any philosopher to harmonise our ideal notions as to the sort of world which it became a Being of infinite perfection to create, with the world existing around us, can ever be pronounced successful. The facts of the moral and physical world seem to justify inferences of an opposite description from benevolent.”

Again, if this alleged power distinct from nature is responsible for some events, why is he not responsible for all? If he control the universe, then he is responsible for earthquakes that swallow up entire villages, destroying the lives of thousands of helpless creatures; for the lightning that kills people, sometimes even when they are at prayers; for storms at sea, which cause good and bad to find a watery grave; for individual organisms that are imperfect and blighted by monstrosities, and for the existence of ferocious wild beasts and poisonous plants. What is the answer of Theists to this grave indictment against their supposed God of infinite goodness? We fail to see any reason for attributing these blots on nature to any intelligence that is superior to man's; for if any intelligence but that which is associated with natural organisms exist and cause these evils, it must be inferior to ours, inasmuch as human intelligence, if it had the power, would prevent such catastrophes.

Finally, as our knowledge is only of phenomena, the laws of which can be directly perceived as operating in nature, we cannot conceive of such phenomena in the absence of matter and force. It is no answer to say “we do not know what matter is.” Rightly or wrongly, we hold that what are termed matter and law are co-extensive with knowledge, and that knowledge includes thought, feeling, and action. We cannot imagine a shadow of a man without the man, and other causes that contribute to its appearance. Neither is it possible for us to conceive intelligence without the causes which we know are necessary for its production and maintenance. True, we are confronted with mysteries on every hand; but so long as they are mysteries we refuse to dogmatise upon them ourselves, or to accept what others say concerning them as being more than mere conjecture.

CHARLES WATTS.

A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

NO. XV.—“ANY IN THIS BOX TWOPENCE.”

THERE is always a certain pathetic interest attaching to the contents of the twopenny box of a second-hand book seller's shop. It is the lowly grave of many lofty ambitions and dearly cherished hopes: the common plague pit into which the unregarded carcasses of literary failures are contemptuously thrown. Jumbled together with reports of agricultural shows and catalogues of bygone exhibitions you shall find a musty volume of Sermons on the Incarnation, which some simple country parson of the eighteenth century fondly hoped would preserve his name from oblivion. Here is a cloth-bound collection of *Fragments of Verse*, the still-born offspring of some poor

poetaster, who brought forth his little best with infinite pains of parturition, and gave it to a world which heeded it not. However feeble the sermons, there must have been some love-lighted eyes that glistened with joy when “father's book” first appeared in the glory of whole calf and wide margins; however bad the verses, the poor poet's heart must have been stirred to its depths when he saw his volume ready to take the world by storm. Alas for the futility of human hopes! The twopenny box is the end of everything.

I, too, have something for the twopenny box. It is not my grand epic on *Man and His Destiny*, for this is not yet ready for publication; but I have two bantlings, neither of which is of sufficient importance to form the subject of a separate article; and these I propose to throw into one. I am the more reconciled to this contemptuous combination since one of the twain refers to the Christian Evidence Society.

It must have been many weeks since I attended the annual meeting of that familiar organisation. It is impossible for me to be more explicit as to time, for the speeches at that meeting made me “shaky in my intellects,” as Artemus Ward says. I cannot even determine whether an account of “An Extraordinary General Meeting of the C.E.S.” which I once contributed to this journal was a record of facts or the figment of a disordered imagination. But the gathering at St. Martin's Town Hall, of which I proceed to give some description, was undoubtedly *bonâ fide*; and let no one complain that it is belated, for the Christian Evidence Society is like the sixteen-a-shilling egg of commerce—it is never very fresh and never very stale.

The annual meeting of the Society was lavishly advertised, but it failed to attract a large attendance. I found about two hundred intensely respectable people assembled when I entered the hall at three p.m. The active agents of the Society—the open-air liars and slanderers—were conspicuous by their absence. One member of this unholy gang entered the room later in the day; but he came in unwept, unhonored, and unsung. The rev. secretaries knew him not, for there they were in the face of a bishop, an archdeacon, several reverend gentlemen, and the subscribers to the funds. That was no place wherein to recognise the existence of “the likes of him.”

We had some prayers, and, if I remember aright, some hymns. Then the Rev. T. T. Waterman, the minor secretary, read the annual report and balance-sheet. The past year, he stated, had been one of great anxiety from the financial point of view. The Society had spent £357 more than it had received. The management expenses had been kept as low as possible. With regard to the work done, Mr. Lee of Plymouth was “reported to have been successful” in his operations in that district; a remarkable address by Sir Andrew Clarke had been published; and certain examinations had taken place. This, as far as I could understand, was the account of work done. But when Mr. Waterman proceeded to read the financial statement his indistinct utterance became more indistinct than ever. Rightly or wrongly, I understood him to say that the income of the Society had been £881, and the expenditure £1,228. Of this latter sum the secretaries appear to have absorbed £532; examinations cost £17; and lectures, etc., about £500. I tried vainly to obtain a printed copy of the document.

The report and balance-sheet did not arouse the faintest sign of interest in the audience; but when the chairman, my lord the Bishop of Bedford, arose to deliver his address, a semblance of life was exhibited by the pious ones. The Bishop, however, soon knocked *that* out of them; for his speech was of the prosiest, dreariest kind. He said that the work of the Christian Evidence Society, although limited in its scope, was exceedingly necessary. It had a special function: to minister to the intellectual needs of man. The Society tried to go to men in doubt and difficulty, to tender its help to the disorganised and distressed mind. His lordship, I may add, would do well to attend some of the out-door lectures of the Society, and see for himself how sweetly and graciously its emissaries “tender” their “help.”

Then the Bishop went upon the war-path and stabbed unbelief under the fifth rib. The arguments of infidelity, he said, would cut away the very ground and basis of all society. It was sometimes asked, Why has not God revealed himself clearly? The question may seem reason-

able, but really it is unreasonable, because it goes right against human nature as we know it. The basis of the demand for "certain knowledge" (the phrase is the Bishop's, not mine) is an attack upon human freedom. Apparently the episcopal idea was that "certain knowledge" would be fatal to free-will, as it would be impossible to disbelieve, and there would therefore be no merit in believing.

At this point I interpolate the remark that the reporters here folded up their note-books and silently fled. Woe is me that I did not follow their example! The Bishop went driving on, pouring out a flood of pious platitudes that would not have stood the test of five minutes' criticism. His lordship evidently thought he had said a very smart thing—and he certainly evoked an approving titter—when he remarked that men were very keen at finding difficulties, but not so keen at finding solutions. He seemed to forget that it is the special business of the Society to find solutions for the difficulties.

Materialism, continued the episcopal chairman, had failed to answer the important questions of life, and it was weaker now than it had ever been. There was, in fact, no alternative to the Christian view. What is there to regulate human life, to stimulate self-devotion, and to do this, that, and the other—except Christianity? There was no answer, and Christianity was to-day stronger than it had ever been.

When the Bishop had at length run himself out, he was followed by Archdeacon Sinclair, a tall, stout, clean-shaven cleric of the robust, good-humored kind. This "venerable" gentleman amused himself and bored his hearers by going over the beaten track of theological controversy, and "refuting" every infidel argument in detail. He congratulated his Christian friends upon the fact that they could again use old Paley's arguments, and that the "doctrine of evolution" (the Archdeacon's phrase, not mine) had been put in their hands. Christianity, amongst many other good works, had vanquished slavery, and that proved Christianity to be the true and best religion.

Then we had an address from a Miss Weston (of Portsmouth), who appears to be a maritime agent of the Society. In a cheery tone she said she had been serving the Lord Jesus Christ in Her Majesty's ships. There was great need of work in that direction. The seamen of old were uneducated, careless men; but to-day the sailors in the navy were given a more or less scientific training. They were men of thought, accustomed to read and reflect, and quick at picking up new ideas. There was much scepticism amongst these men; but Mr. Lee, of Plymouth, had "smashed a good many of their infidel ideas into cocked hats." (This Mr. Lee, I may remark, appears to be a dangerous man and a bold.) Mr. Bradlaugh, many years ago, had said he would get hold of the Navy. He *did* influence the men strongly, and much of that influence remained to this day. The Society could draw the wanderers back to Christ if it had money and plenty of workers.

Then Miss Weston gave me my *coup de grâce*. I had listened patiently right through, hoping that I might be able to endure to the end. But the lady—who, after thirty minutes of rapid speech, seemed as full of words as ever—went on to say that "if Mr. Bradlaugh had in his early days come across an agent of the Christian Evidence Society, the result might have been very different." Is it to be wondered at that, immediately after this thing was said, the doors were quietly opened and the meeting was one Freethinker the poorer?

My second contribution to the twopenny box is a simple illustration of a fact stated in the principles of the N.S.S.—viz., that theology is "the historic enemy of progress." It may be remembered that Miss Ida B. Wells, a colored lady, lately visited England for the purpose of calling public attention to the practice of lynching negroes in the United States. A rev. gentleman invited Miss Wells to address a public meeting in his chapel, and, *mirabile dictu*, requested me to take part in the proceedings. This, of course, I gladly did, and sat upon the platform whilst the lady told her terrible story of cruel wrongs perpetrated in many parts of America upon the negro race. She had herself narrowly escaped death at the hands of an infuriated mob, and her newspaper office and plant had been destroyed simply because she had protested, in her journal, against the lynching of negroes who had been accused of crime, but never brought to trial. Her address was a

harrowing recital of barbarity and injustice, given without a vestige of theatrical effect, and supported in every detail by documentary evidence. Now Miss Wells is a "religious" lady, and her introduction to England was given by a negro champion of Christianity who harbored the delusion that his special mission was to "destroy infidelity." Nevertheless, she frequently stated, with indignant emphasis, in the course of her address, that the ministers and professors of religion in America were almost without exception on the side of the oppressors as against the oppressed. In her innocence she appeared to regard this as a very extraordinary, and indeed unaccountable, fact.

In due course I was called upon to move or second a vote of thanks to Miss Wells, and in doing so I took the opportunity to point out to the lady and to the audience that the religious people of America are to-day doing precisely as their forefathers did of old. William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Parker were denounced from numberless pulpits because they advocated the abolition of slavery. When, I asked, had the oppressed and persecuted successfully appealed to the "religious sentiment" of their time for redress? It was of no use turning to religion for aid in such a cause: if the feeling of humanity and the sense of justice, apart from and above all creeds or lack of creed, could not be aroused, then indeed was the case hopeless. I reminded Miss Wells that her largest and most enthusiastic meeting had taken place at the Democratic Club, where the standard of orthodoxy amongst the members would hardly be satisfactory to the bench of bishops. Let her appeal to the manhood of men and to the sense of brotherhood in humanity. That might help her cause, but "religious sentiment" would be a stumbling-block in her path.

Now I certainly expected to hear some very decided expressions of dissent from a line so little in harmony with church and chapel traditions. To my surprise, however, I found that the audience accepted and applauded the view expressed. It is not, perhaps, unreasonable to hope that the old humbug of Christianity being the friend and champion of the oppressed is now becoming played out.

GEORGE STANDRING.

RECIPE—HOW TO MAKE A CHRISTIAN.

[This letter, at first sight, appeared intended for some religious paper, but as it is addressed to us in the well-known writing of Uncle Benjamin, we submit it to our readers.]

A CHRISTIAN! Oh, my dear reader, have you ever considered how rare a person a real Christian is? Where, in this modern world, are we to look for him? A Christian is the choice efflorescence of long ages of culture. Like the aloe, the blossom appears only once in a hundred years—if that. In these days of School Boards, increased worldly wealth, worldly pleasures, worldly interests, and worldly influences, budding Christians are usually nipped off long ere they reach maturity. It is in their tender years we must watch and guard them from the blights and blasts of scepticism, for, if that once seizes hold, all is over. The problem how to ward off the dangers of doubt is an increasingly anxious one for men of God. I am convinced that, if we desire the old results, we must go back to the old methods. As the result of much earnest prayer, I submit the following:

Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined. To induce the Christian crook, we must begin at birth. At the first cry a good shaking may awaken the young soul to a sense of the awful responsibilities awaiting it in worldly life. Remember that it inherits original sin, and is by nature under the sway of Satan. Let early baptism exorcise, if possible, diabolical possession, and let all your early efforts be directed to inculcating that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. x. 31). Remember that fasting and prayer are the great agencies in removing devils (Matt. xvii. 21). Let the child fast. Teach the young child that Satan goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. v. 8). Remember that the Devil is the prince of this world (John xii. 31). He can work miracles (Rev. xiii. 14; xvi. 14), and transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14). Warn the child of the terrible day of the Lord (Joel ii. 31), when Christ shall come, like a thief in the night (2 Pet. iii. 10), in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God (2 Thess. i. 8). Let it know that it must render an account for every idle word (Matt. xii. 36), and that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). Teach it that it is saved through faith (Eph. ii. 8), and warn it to beware of

philosophy (Col. ii. 8). Let its constant lesson be "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). Should the child ask inconvenient questions, such as "Why should I be damned for Adam's sin?" or "Who made God?" "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. xix. 18). Remember "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. xxii. 15). Remember that it is more profitable to pluck out one eye than to let the whole body be cast into hell (Matt. v. 29), where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. xxii. 31).

Any natural propensities that the child may show should be instantly crushed out, for the carnal mind is enmity against God (Romans viii. 7). Let not the child sing, dance, whistle, or play on Sunday, but make him read the Bible again and again. If he does not understand it, reprove him. If he misunderstands it, correct him. If he question it, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. xxiii. 14). Teach him to fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man (Eccles. xii. 13); and thus, with God's blessing, you may possibly make of him a Christian, and fit him for heaven, where Sabbaths never end.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

SOLD.

Oh, holy Moses! what a sell;
I thought that fellow was in hell.
I never dreamt that I should meet
Bradlaugh on the golden street.
Look here, Pete, what's this about?
Go and kick that fellow out.
Let him have one on the shin.
How the deuce did he get in?
If you don't, I'll get quite cross;
By Jove, I'll go and tell the Boss.
Oh Jerusalem! here he comes.
What! he and Charlie regular chums?
The lies I've told before I came,
To glorify his holy name.
After all he'd turn round flat
And make a pal of a man like that—
Who on earth would rage and scold.
On every new-born lie I told
He jumped, and bursted it with glee.
But here I thought I would be free.
Where are all the heavenly host?
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;
The great white throne and angry God?
This pean is nothing but a fraud.
Where's my wings and harp of gold?
Well, haven't I been nicely sold;
And I a Christian Evidence man—
You never heard of such a clan?
Well, I'm blamed! What's that you say—
Shut my mouth or go away?
Who's that laughs at what I'm sayin'?
"Don't bother me—that's Thomas Paine."
The Atheist? what funny laws.
"You are wrong; he never was.
I'm sick of all that silly stuff;
You've told that lie quite long enough.
But if you would corrected be,
Speak to him, and then you'll see."
I'll speak to him when he comes nigh;
But then I know it is a lie.
I've called him fool and drunken sot,
Perhaps it would be better not.
Is this my seat? "No, not at all;
That's reserved for Ingersoll.
Well, don't you want to cut it fat,
A thing like you on a seat like that."
Who's to wear that lovely crown?
"That's for Foote, you silly clown."
What makes you wear such heavy shoes?
"I've bought them specially for Hughes."
Well, show me where I've got to sit;
I'll hold my tongue. "Ah, wait a bit;
Your name's not entered in the book.
Show your ticket. I thought so. Look!
You spiey idiot; can't you spell?
Read that ticket; it's for hell."

THOMAS MILLAR.

ACID DROPS.

"THE doctors have ordered the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes 'to keep quiet for three months.' The names of these doctors should be known at once, in order that the thanks of a grateful public may be respectfully tendered to them."
—"Dagonet" in *Referee*.

Mr. Hughes's own organ, in referring to his long holiday on the continent, which is to extend to "the end of this year or the beginning of next," states that "there is not the least reason to doubt that, after some months of complete rest from the nervous strain of public speaking, he will be fully restored to his former vigor." We hope, however, he will not be vigorous enough to perpetrate another Atheist Shoemaker story. It would be well if he gained enough moral vigor to apologise for the old one.

Talmage is now like Satan, going to and fro and up and down in the world, and raking in the shekels finely. At one of the Pacific islands he spoke for an hour and a half. The natives did not understand him until he was interpreted, but they never took their eyes off him for an instant. Perhaps they were looking at his mouth.

Meanwhile, we presume, the Brooklyn Tabernacle is being rebuilt. It has been burnt down thrice. Some people hope it will not be burnt down a fourth time at a period of financial embarrassment.

How are the mighty fallen! Even the *Christian Commonwealth* advises the Lord's Day Observance Society not to appeal against the Leeds decision, and not to attempt any more prosecutions, but to trust in future to "moral suasion." Call you that backing of your friends? We really begin to pity the poor bigots, just as we should a ferocious dog that had grown old and feeble and lost his teeth.

It is amusing to hear the lectures delivered by Christian Europe to China and Japan for going to war with each other. It is a trifle worse than Satan rebuking sin.

Poole is not a very go-ahead place, but the town is now in a state of agitation. The Museum committee decided to open the establishment on Sunday afternoon, and the Town Council asked them to reconsider their decision. Councillor Hobgood, a Sunday-school teacher, said that five boys from his class were seduced away to the Museum. Councillor Carter, however, expressed his sympathy with the boys, and thought they would have been a poor lot if they did not prefer the Museum to Councillor Hobgood's teaching. We are unable to learn whether the worthy Sunday-school teacher has recovered from this shocking retort.

Christian rowdyism was rampant again in Finsbury Park last Sunday. Mr. Rosetti, who occupied the N.S.S. platform, called attention to one or two Bible texts, which some of the audience desired him to read. He replied that it was impossible to do so in a mixed assembly. The clamor then grew worse, and the chairman was obliged to close the meeting. Shortly afterwards two Christian opponents were escorted out of the Park by the police, who later on took one Christian to the lock-up.

The young man's name was Callon. He pleaded in defence before Mr. Lane, the magistrate, that "he had mistaken a Christian gentleman for an Atheist." What he did was out of zeal for religion. The magistrate is reported as saying that his zeal did him credit, but Atheists had a right to speak as well as others. Callon was fined ten shillings.

Bishop Moorhouse, of Manchester, is always holding up the colony of Victoria as an illustration of the effects of Secular Education. The criminal statistics of that country, he alleges, are a proof of the immoral results of a godless education. According to a long article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of August 11, the cause of the "moral deficiencies" of Victoria is to be "found easily enough," and it has nothing whatever to do with the schools. This is what the writer says, and his words are well worth preserving: "When in the year 1850 the news rang throughout Europe that in the Great South gold was to be had for the digging, it acted as a mighty loadstone upon the human refuse of the older communities, and the ne'er-do-well, the prodigal son, the dreamer of dreams, the discontented packed up what few traps they had, and, with Cherokee Sal to bring up the rear, started for the new Paradise. What other than strange and extremely undesirable offspring could be expected from such parentage? Begotten in the fever of expectancy and cradled in disappointment, they have increased with the rapidity that characterises all lower forms, until now they have become one of the most conspicuous features of colonial life, and

"But," asked the spiritual adviser, "do you not really want to go to heaven?" "No," emphatically replied the solid matron. "Certainly not, as long as the green peas are in." Then he gave up that coast as hopeless, and went cruising elsewhere in search of subscriptions for the Coal-and-Muffin Fund.

certainly the greatest national difficulty with which Australia has to contend."

This appears a scientific and satisfactory account of the phenomenon. To a certain extent the population of Victoria has been bred from the "human refuse" of other lands. The *Pull Mall* writer suggests that the larrikins should be deported to the smaller islands south of Australia.

An earthquake destroying villages in Sicily and killing several people; the extension of the cholera in Russia, Poland, Galicia, Austro-Hungary, and Holland; destructive hailstorms and sunstrokes, are among recent instances of providential design.

A telegram from Sir W. Robinson, Governor of Hong Kong, to the Marquis of Ripon has been received at the Colonial Office, stating the total mortality from the plague there is 2,504.

The *New York Nation*, alluding to the growth of "Clubs within Churches" in the States, thinks that the Church is probably rearing a viper in its bosom. The secular and social side which is being cultivated is bound to oust the religion. It says: "After the 'smoke talk without the smoke' may come the preaching service without the sermon. Indeed, the tendency at present decidedly is to let the smoke in and crowd the sermon out. The Men's Sunday Evening Club already insists upon a 'short sermon.' From that the step is not a long one to such an attraction as was recently advertised in the notice of an evening service in a country town, 'sermon omitted.' That step taken, could the morning sermon long escape?"

It is said that there are, in the British Museum Library, no fewer than seven hundred books dealing with the topic of Creation. There are still more dealing with the being of a God. But then the mass of readers are always partial to fiction.

The parsons' palaver at Exeter will be a fine opportunity for Mrs. Proudie. Several of the bishops' ladies will be to the front. Among them Lady Laura Ridings, wife of the Bishop of Southwell; Mrs. Temple, wife of the Bishop of London; and Mrs. Creighton, wife of the Bishop of Peterborough, are down on the program for papers. Paul said he did not suffer women to speak in churches; but they shine at Church congresses.

The clericals who are so hot against gambling should really check it in godly circles. One of our Newcastle friends forwards us a big lottery bill which has been sent him by post, together with a book of tickets for him to sell—and he is an Atheist, while the lottery is for the benefit of Inchicore Mission buildings, Church Schools, etc. Among the "special patrons" is the Lord Mayor of Dublin. This sort of thing goes on with impunity, perhaps because it is done for the glory and honor of God—that is to say, for the profit of priests.

Joseph Bennet, a coachman, drove a wedding party to church at Thanington, near Canterbury, on Bank Holiday. A storm came on, and while the party were in church Bennet took shelter under an elm tree. A flash of lightning killed both him and his horse. This is what sapient provincial juries call "a visitation of God."

The Roman Catholic *Universe* is incensed at the recent Protestant demonstration at the Martyr's Memorial at Brentwood, and says that the boy martyr who was burnt there for Protestantism was a "poor, foolish, dissolute, and, indeed, blasphemous young fellow named William Hunter, who was put to death as a rogue and a vagabond in the sixteenth century." All who opposed the Church were, of course, dissolute and blasphemous. That goes without saying.

The Bishop of Oxford, preaching before the British Association, took his text from the Apocryphal Book of Wisdom. The spirit of this book, he said, "was widely different from that of Ecclesiastes and of Proverbs, and disclosed a hopeful view of the prospects and fruits of natural knowledge which furnishes a strong contrast to the feeling which declared that all is vanity." This looks very much as if his lordship gave a preference to the uninspired writings of some apocryphal scribe over the canonical word of God.

It is pointed out by a writer in the *Speaker* that no Dissenter can accept the distinction Mr. Gladstone draws between the ancestor who was guilty of heresy and the descendant who persists in his ways, yet without sin. "Here ancestor and successor stand together; the fathers of Nonconformity are the saints of the Nonconformist, and he

could not allow himself to be legitimated if they were to remain outlawed."

The Lancashire *Daily Post* reports two miracles as having happened last week at St. Winefred's Well. Nobody takes much notice, and only Catholics credit the miracles. They are not old enough to command implicit faith. Now-a-days people recognise that miracles always occur where they are expected and believed in, and nowhere else.

The Rev. James Orniston, writing on "Bishop Making" in the *Gospel Magazine*, says: "A horse-racing premier appointing a chief pastor over Christ's ministers and their flocks is nothing short of a national humiliation, whilst in the sight of God it must, indeed, reckon as a crying national sin."

Religion is largely a matter of geography. Archbishop Benson would have been a Buddhist in China. Not only the Prince of Wales goes to see the divine Sarah on Sunday in Paris, but even the pious Lord Mayor is reported as having high jinks in Antwerp on the Lord's Day. How the Corporation would be shocked at the idea of holding a festival at the Mansion House on the Sawbath. But in Antwerp it comes as natural as drinking claret instead of beer.

"A Banker," who takes three-quarters of a column in the *Middlesex Gazette* to quote the Old Testament against the "rational use of the Sabbath," is a rare old fossil. He may safely be left to the tender mercies of "The Church and Stage Guild."

There used to be a certain Bible Defence Association, operating chiefly in the classic region of Somers Town. The secretary went about with a brick, said to come from Babylon, which he pulled out as proof of the truth of the story of the destruction of that city. What would he say now to the Rev. Mr. Sayce giving up the accuracy of the story in a book published by the S.P.C.K.?

M. Oppert once lectured in Glasgow on the relation of the Biblical record to the Assyrian monuments. He began by saying that he had found many confirmations of the Scriptural history in the cuneiform inscriptions, whereat the audience cheered. Then he added that in some cases the monuments contradicted the Bible. Such a silence fell upon the auditory at this that the Frenchman saw that something must be done, and so hastened to remark, "That shows how mistaken the monuments sometimes are," which called out renewed applause and set everybody at ease.

The monuments say distinctly that the last king of Babylon was not Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar, but Nabonidus, and that it was taken not by Darius the Mede, but by the armies of Cyrus under Gobrias. The city was taken without fighting, and there is no mention of any monarch being slain. But that shows how mistaken the monuments sometimes are.

There are considerably over a hundred thousand Jews in the East-end of London, far more than in Jerusalem and Jericho put together, and, despite the efforts of the Jewish guardians, they are increased by thousands of immigrants from Russia, Poland, and Germany every year. Not one in ten thousand becomes a Christian.

It is computed that, at the present rate of progress, if Jesus Christ delays his coming until all the lost sheep of the house of Israel are gathered into the Christian fold, the whole energy of our solar system will be exhausted some millenniums before the second advent.

Several of the missionaries to the Jews advertise that they teach foreign Jews the English language free, gratis, for nothing. They also teach them English reading and writing, and sometimes procure them decent situations. These Jews are brought to acknowledge not "cheese and crust," as they call the "blessed Savior," but that "dere is some gut in dese blessed Christians after all."

The statistics of Jewish conversions have to be discounted by the number of "come and go Hebrews," who make a trade of being baptised at every new parish where they take up their quarters, and who shift them often. These gentry make a tidy living by becoming Christians continually, and adding to the ecstasy of the old ladies who rejoice when any of the chosen race are saved. Good Jews say these renegades all revert to Judaism, and repeat their Shemang Israel on their death-beds.

We have heard of one Christian who emulated these chosen ones. With an eye to the loaves and fishes of various sects, he was baptised at different times into the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Baptist bodies of Christians.

Then for his own gratification he turned Mormon. When taxed with his misdeeds he excused himself by saying: "Oh! well I ain't bigoted."

At a Spiritist *séance* held at the Arlington Hotel, Monon, James Turpie, a non-believer, caught the alleged spirit, which proved to be Mrs. Carr, the medium. Mrs. Carr's husband became very angry on account of the exposure, and drew his revolver with the intention of shooting. With difficulty trouble was prevented.

The materialising mediums never object to scientific enquirers. What they dislike is enquirers provided with hat pins, bull's-eye lanterns, and the firm grasp of a policeman.

Three hundred and twenty-two years ago August 24 fell on a Sunday. Consecrated to the Lord and his faithful apostle and martyr St. Bartholomew, the Catholics of France gave it a triple sacredness by the extermination of God's enemies. The Huguenots were lured to Paris to celebrate the nuptials of their leader, Henry of Navarre, with the king's sister, and on that eventful Sabbath the streets of Paris ran red with their blood. Men, women, and children were indiscriminately slaughtered, and the pious King Charles IX. stood at his window shooting the flying Huguenots.

For two days the slaughter continued in Paris, and for above a week it was followed in the provinces by the imprisonment, massacre, and pillage of the Huguenots. The number slaughtered has been variously estimated from thirty to one hundred thousand. And what was the inciting cause? Difference of religion.

The news of the atrocity was received with delight at Rome. A jubilee was proclaimed by the Pope, who, with his cardinals, went in procession to church to give God thanks for this crowning mercy. The subject was ordered to be painted in the frescoes of the Vatican, and a medal was struck bearing the effigy of the Pope on one side and a destroying angel pressing the flying Huguenots on the other. A copy of this medal will be on view at Mr. Forder's till St. Bartholomew's Day.

Zola's *Lourdes* has made so much stir in America that already a "Balm of Lourdes" is extensively advertised.

The Rev. M. V. McDuffie, after citing the views of St. Paul on woman, says: "These women suffragists, these so-called 'strong-minded women,' and leaders of society are among the chief agents of the devil in this age of the world."

At a religious convention in Toronto the choir sang a hymn beginning thus:

Toronto '94,
Repeat it o'er and o'er;
Let thousands sing.

This was sung to the tune of "God Save the Queen," which is very good music: but poetry doesn't seem to run high in Toronto.

Man thinks the world was made for his sole benefit, yet, after ages of uprooting forests and draining marshes, three-fourths of the earth's surface is unfit for cultivation on account of mountain-ranges, deserts, swamps, and barren ground.

At a trial at Etah, in India, of four Mohammedans, who had killed a Brahmin bull, they were sentenced to six months' imprisonment each, not for killing the bull, which, after being dedicated to a Hindu god, was turned loose to wander at his own free will, and was held by the magistrate to be nobody's property, but for an insult to religion calculated to provoke a breach of the peace. The prisoners had transgressed the law by doing as they had done in the presence of Hindus, but for whose self-control and forbearance a serious riot might have occurred.

Serious religious riots between Catholic and Protestant Christians have taken place in Quebec. A mob of the former have wrecked a French Baptist Mission, the missionaries barely escaping with their lives. The mob afterwards attacked the French Anglican Mission and the Salvation Army barracks, much damage being done. How the religion of peace and goodwill makes them love one another.

Turner, the artist, was a very reserved character. Into the sanctum of his studio none was allowed to penetrate except Mrs. Danby, his housekeeper, and she related that when she went in of an evening, and saw what he had done in the day, she used to say to herself, "He must be a god."

Blue Grass Blade is the curious title of an "infidel" and "temperance" journal edited by Charles Moore at Lexington, Kentucky. Mr. Moore is a candidate for Congress, and his

rival's organ calls him a "long-eared, long-haired, irresponsible brute." Whereupon he replies: "I have been a long-haired infidel: I have been in gaol for blasphemy, and am now under indictment for 'nuisance,' because I write things against religion that stir up and inflame the public mind." Mr. Moore is what the Yankees call "a lively cuss," and is sure to be in hot water.

The Right Rev. Abbot Snow, O.S.B., gave an address before the Catholic Young Men's Societies, on "How Socialism Undermines Religion." The Rev. Father made it clear that devoting primary attention to the affairs of this world tends to Atheism, and wound up by asking what would it profit a man if he gained a socialistic paradise and lost his own soul?

The Convocation of York has published a Report directed against divorce. It laments the increase of divorce in this country, the number having risen from 122 in 1883 to 190 in 1892. But it has nothing to say on the great anomaly that divorce is possible only to the moneyed classes.

Mr. C. E. Stratton points out, in the *Times*, that if Sunday goods traffic were stopped on the Midland line only, the loss by the spoiling of perishable goods would amount to between £15,000 and £20,000 in a single day.

"Missionaries as Mischief-Makers" was the title of a long article in Monday's *Westminster Gazette*; the verdict being that, while the missionaries in South Africa were well-meaning men, who laboriously dressed up the morals of a handful of natives, they had been at the bottom of nearly all the political and social mischief there during the last eighty years.

Everybody knows that Liverpool is a city of extraordinary piety and virtue. It is in such a satisfactory condition that during the past year it has subscribed several thousand pounds to the Foreign Missionary Society, with a view to bringing the heathen up to the level of the crowds of sober and cultivated people who are to be seen in the main thoroughfares of Liverpool any Saturday night.

PROVIDENCE AND PUNISHMENT.

NATURE nowhere, in no way, manifests government. An overruling providence finds a place in creeds—that is, in the fictions of the Churches; but it exists nowhere else. Consider these few undeniable facts: (1) Nature has never yet been able to distinguish, in the very simplest cases, between right and wrong, crime and accident, sin and misfortune. For example, if a man jump down a precipice, he is dashed to pieces—perhaps he deserves it; but if he should accidentally fall down, he suffers to precisely the same extent; yes, if he is wilfully flung down by murderers, it is all the same in the end. Is that justice? Let us compare. A jumps wilfully off a house and is killed; B accidentally falls off, and meets the same fate; C is flung off by his enemies, and is also killed. The three bodies are taken before a coroner, and the jury, after being acquainted with all the facts of each case, return the same verdict for all three. What should we say if they pleaded that, whereas A, B, and C did all come by their deaths by too precipitate a descent from the top of a house, therefore A, B, and C all alike deserved the fate they met? Such a verdict and defence of it would involve about equal quantities of truth, absurdity, and injustice. But Nature would justify that stupid jury, and they might plead in self-defence that, whereas the three died in consequence of their respective falls, it was evident that Nature regarded them as equally guilty, and they did not in the least desire to improve upon the ways of Nature. Now, if Nature must be taken as the exponent of deity, we can only conclude that deity cannot distinguish between right and wrong, for in the course of Nature, by which he governs (?) the sentient beings of this world, he treats accidents, mistakes, and the greatest misfortunes as if they were the greatest crimes, and oftener inflicts pain upon the innocent than upon the guilty.—*Joseph Symes.*

THE FOOTE TESTIMONIAL FUND.

[Thirteenth List.]

Collected at Mr. Watts's Lecture at Liverpool, £1 6s. 2d.; W. T. J., 3s.; J. Dinnsdale, 1s.; J. de Gruyter, 1s.; W. Owen, 1s.; G. Russell, 1s.; J. Pierson, 1s.; W. Mann, 1s.; Mrs. Mann, 1s.; T. Mew, 1s.; A. Hickmott, 1s.; R. W. H., 1s.; F. Martin, 1s.; J. Bungar, 1s.; Hooker, 1s.; H. W., 1s.; F. K., 1s.; Peters, 1s.; G. Harris, 6d.; A. C., 6d.

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GEO. WARD, *Secretary*, 91 Mildmay-park, N.

SPECIAL.

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

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

August 26, Hall of Science, London.
September 2, Dundee; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—September 2, 9, and 16, Hall of Science, London; 28, York; 30, Dundee. October 3, 4, and 5, Aberdeen; 7, Edinburgh; 14, Glasgow; 21, Bradford; 28, Hall of Science, London. November 4, Hall of Science; 11, Liverpool; 18, Hall of Science, London. December 2, Newcastle-on-Tyne (Sunday Society); 9, 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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

W. LEWARTON.—Thanks for jokes. We are pleased to learn that, as an ex-member of Dr. Barnardo's mission, you are now one of the N.S.S. We should say nine-tenths of the members have belonged to the religious sects. Read Draper's *Conflict of Religion and Science* and our *Crimes of Christianity*.

P. SILAUGHNESSY.—We overlook your incivility. As a Christian you have been trained in a bad school. We adhere to the statement in the *Bible Handbook* that Palestine "always must have been within historic times a barren and desolate land in the main." It is useless to quote the names of Jews and Christians who say it was fertile. Certain parts of it are, but "in the main" it is not so. Pious "authorities" cannot alter the physical geography of a country. Gibbon was quite right in referring to Palestine as of about the same size and fertility as Wales.

ANXIOUS.—It is impossible to satisfy everybody, and there will always be plenty of grumblers. Everything has been done to make the excursion a thorough success; in fact, the arrangements have never before been so complete and effective. Mr. Foote is not helping to run this excursion for his own sake. He is not particularly desirous of a single day at the seaside, even at four shillings. He sacrifices his Sunday just to be with his party on the occasion. It is for them that the excursion is organised. A few do all the work, and some others do all the croaking. The best reply to them is a trainful of London Freethinkers and their friends.

H. HOBEN.—We did not know Celestine Edwards personally, and we never exchanged a single word with him in private or in public. You say he was "the most gentlemanly opponent of Atheism." We do not share your opinion.

REBRAB.—Will try to find room for it. Glad to hear you have found profit in reading the *Freethinker*.

F. PRINCE.—Thanks. We are always glad of such bits.

J. DOMINEY.—Mr. Cohen must himself explain what he meant by saying he was not a Materialist. We cannot be answerable for, neither can we undertake to explain, the expressions of all the lecturers on the Secular platform.

S. H.—We cannot infer your name from these initials. Your letter (if signed) should be addressed to Miss Vance, the secretary, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

H. PROSSER CHANTER.—Your program contained no dates. We judged it to be purely speculative, and our announcements must be definite. We shall be happy to insert a "Sugar Plum" if you send us the information in brief, and also to insert the notices weekly in our Lecture List if you will send them in on the printed model. We are always ready to oblige, but we have no gift of inspiration.

E. G.—The statement in the cutting you enclose is quite correct. You will find some interesting particulars in Mr. Foote's *Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh*. Mr. Turberville, brother of Mr. Blackmore the novelist, did make a will in Mr. Bradlaugh's favor; but he subsequently made a will in favor of another person. This will was disputed, and in the compromise that was effected the sum of £2,500 (we believe) fell to Mr. Bradlaugh. There never was any concealment of the fact; it was publicly announced in Mr. Bradlaugh's own paper.

G. BILLING.—No scholar, even inside the Church, now believes that the Psalms were written by David. The word "printed" in Job xix. 23 is awkward, but the English is not the original text. The idea, we take it, is—"Would the words were accurately preserved"—and the translators rendered it to suit their readers at a time when printing was common. In the same way, Paul's "see through a glass darkly" is an accommodation; the original means "see in a (brass) mirror."

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: W. Mann, 5s.; E. N. (Trinidad), 10s.; a parcel of clothing from a Friend.

P. B. TORR.—Neither neighbors, friends, nor relatives have any right to prevent you from thinking for yourself. Your youth is no excuse for putting your mind in prison; it is, however, a reason for as much consideration as possible in urging your own views. If discussion is forced upon you, your opponents have only themselves to thank if you overcome them. In the case of mother and father, you should combine tenderness with firmness. Let them see that your new opinions are not inimical to natural affection. But do not play the coward or the hypocrite. You have an inalienable right to conserve your own self-respect.

M. H. HILTON.—Glad to hear that your wife is as pleased as you are with the *Freethinker*; also that you find the Second Series of *Flowers of Freethought* very useful. We think you will find the Liverpool Branch fairly active in the winter. It does not seem to like tackling open-air propaganda, on account of the local rowdyism. Thanks for the enclosures.

HASTINGS.—A correspondent informs us that the *Freethinker* can be obtained at the Cigar Box, Marine Parade, Hastings.

PLINY.—(1) A periodic day of rest was observed in Egypt. The seventh day was observed in Babylon, and the Jews copied the practice from their masters. No day of rest was ever ordered to nomads in the desert. They don't want one. See the Second Series of *Flowers of Freethought*. (2) The very designation of Sunday (Sun's day) shows the Pagan origin of this observance.

J. H. POTAGE.—They are of no use to us. Better have them all distributed in your locality. Thanks.

H. R. CLIFTON.—See paragraph. We note that there will be no Secular lecture in Finsbury Park to-day (August 19), on account of the Branch members joining the Federation excursion.

C. HARWOOD.—The Wood Green, Tottenham, and Edmonton friends will be able to go by the 9.50 train mentioned in "Sugar Plums"—that is, if there are not too many of them. In that case, they must get their tickets beforehand. It was impossible to delay the special train for five or ten minutes; it would throw the Company's arrangements into disorder.

J. MENTON.—Thanks, but the cutting was dealt with in "Acid Drops" several weeks ago.

L. SMALL.—We hope the leaflet will do good. It is well written, and should attract those you expect to reach. At the same time, don't be too sanguine. The Rationalist who does nothing for Rationalism is generally a coward or an egoist, and is not to be shamed by a leaflet. Where the "aloofness" arises from ignorance or misconception your appeal may succeed. At any rate, we wish the Liverpool Branch a prosperous winter. Mr. Foote has offered your secretary a date.

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—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Liberator—Western Figaro—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—La Verité—Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Freedom—Für Unsere Jugend—Crescent—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Islamic World—Echo—Twentieth Century—Harbinger of Peace—Open Court—Labor Co-partnership—Liberty—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Kansas Lucifer—Freethinkers' Magazine—Midland Times—New York Herald—McClure's Magazine—Referee—Reynolds's Newspaper—Phonographic Magazine—Blue Grass Blade—Middlesex Gazette—Lancashire Daily Post—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Weekly Globe.

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.

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.

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.

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.

THE heavy rain on Sunday evening did not prevent a good audience from assembling at the London Hall of Science, where Mr. Foote lectured on Lord Salisbury's address to the British Association. The lecture was followed with rapt attention, and the conclusion was marked by a great burst of applause. This evening (August 19) the platform will be occupied by Mr. Charles Watts, who is to speak on the subject of "Christian Biography, as Illustrated by Bible Characters."

London Freethinkers should all remember the annual excursion to-day (August 19). Fine weather has been bespoken for the occasion, and we hope there will be a big muster of the "saints." Those who have not provided themselves with tickets beforehand will be able to obtain them at the station before starting. Full particulars of starting, etc., will be found in our advertising columns.

Mr. Foote accompanies the excursion, and presides at the common tea at Margate at 5.30. The proprietor of the Terrace Hotel is "one of ours," and will be happy to see a good gathering of Freethinkers at his establishment. He has a large room that will accommodate several hundred persons.

Miss Brown, the Federation secretary, has still some of the free children's tickets left—as per announcement in our last issue. Parents who would like to have one or two of these tickets for their little ones should apply to Miss Brown at once. Her address is 22 Pembridge-road, Notting-hill-gate, W.

Miss Brown has arranged for the following friends to supply tickets at the stations half an hour before the starting of the train:—*Holborn Viaduct*—Miss Brown, Messrs. Ramsey, Bater, and Brown; *St. Paul's*—Messrs. Quay and Guest; *Elephant and Castle*—Mr. V. Roger; *Herne Hill*—Mr. F. Cottrell; *Victoria*—Miss Vance, Messrs. Schaller, Munton, and Stace; *Clapham*—Mrs. Fisher; *Brixton*—Mr. H. Hose. Friends having unsold tickets are requested to inform any of the above-named immediately on arriving at the station.

Some of the extreme East and North London friends say that the special train leaves too early; in fact, that they cannot, by bus, tram, or train, arrive at the London terminus in time. Well, to provide for such exceptional cases, an arrangement has been made with the Railway Company. The Federation excursion tickets, up to the number of forty, will be honored by the Chatham and Dover 9.50 train from Holborn Viaduct. No one should wait for this train, and those who must go by it, if they go at all, will have to get their tickets beforehand.

Mr. Charles Watts will meet his Finsbury friends in the minor Hall of Science next Wednesday evening (Aug. 22), with a view to forming the nucleus of his committee in the School Board election contest. The proceedings will, of course, be of an informal, friendly character, and only those are invited who are in full sympathy with the object. Mr. Foote would have been present but for his absence in the country. As it is, he appeals to the stalwarts of the Secular party in Finsbury to rally round Mr. Watts on this occasion.

Joseph Symes writes in the *Liberator*:—"Mr. Foote is better; British friends have had a successful annual Conference in Liverpool, and the Secularists are raising a money testimonial to Mr. Foote for his long and valuable services to Freethought. Well done! We wish the project every success."

Joseph is right. Mr. Foote is better. But he is not up to his old form yet. Circumstances have obliged him to pitch into a lot of hard work when he should have been taking a long holiday. He is now making arrangements for a fair amount of rest and change before opening the winter campaign.

Mr. A. B. Moss, on Sunday last, delivered the annual addresses at the Failsforth Secular Sunday-school. Alderman Healey presided at the afternoon meeting. Instrumental and vocal music was a great feature of the proceedings, and in the evening Mr. Moss performed the ceremony of "naming" two children. Good collections were realised during the day.

The *Freethinkers' Magazine*, for August, gives a portrait of Dr. Edmund Montgomery, of Hempstead, Texas, a pupil of Moleschott and Kuno Fischer and a friend of Feuerbach's, who, from his Texas home, writes in the *Popular Science Monthly* and *Mind*. Dr. Montgomery is a pronounced Atheist, and has the courage of his opinions. Among other contents are papers on "Mental Emancipation," by H. Taber, and "From Protoplasm to Man," by Myron H. Goodwin.

The Fabian Society has issued a new tract (really a large penny pamphlet) on *The Parish Councils Act, and How to Work It*. It is extremely well done, and should have a wide circulation.

Dr. E. B. Tylor read a paper before the British Association on "The Migration of Mythical Beliefs," which he illustrated by the conception of weighing the soul in a balance after death. This idea, found earliest in the Egyptian religion, he traced through the Vedic and Zoroastrian faiths to Buddhism and Christianity.

Emanuel dos Santos, editor of *Progress*, a Freethought organ published at Port of Spain, Trinidad, sends us his photograph, which we hope to reproduce for the readers of the *Freethinker*. We wish our far-off colleague all success in his brave work.

This is a good opportunity to refer to the *Freethinker*

portraits and cartoons. They are discontinued at present, this being the slack time of the year, when it is not prudent to incur heavy expenses. We shall resume the illustrations in September, and continue them throughout the winter. Our artist is preparing some very effective cartoons.

In the *Weekly Times and Echo* Mr. J. Morrison Davidson writes in favor of public crematoria, for the poor to easily dispose of their dead. It is calculated, were the system generally adopted, a cremation need not cost more than £1, even on commercial principles.

The *Athenæum* concludes its notice of Lord Salisbury's address to the British Association as follows: "It is interesting to find the Chancellor of the University of Oxford pointing out, towards the close of his address, what he regards as the great danger which besets scientific research at the present day, 'the acceptance of mere conjecture in the name and place of knowledge, in preference to making, frankly, the admission that no certain knowledge can be attained.' The agnostic attitude here advocated may no doubt be expedient for temporary purposes; but he would indeed be a bold man who, mindful of his triumphs of the past, should venture to hold that any given natural phenomena are destined to remain beyond the reach of scientific explanation. The noble President selected as the subject of his fascinating discourse a few instances in which science, in attempting to assault the strongholds of ignorance, has actually suffered repulse. Men of science, however, are not readily daunted by failure. Others may distrust and indulge in pessimistic views, but they stand firm in the faith of the glorious possibilities of their calling, and continue to press onwards in the assurance of ultimate victory. The unsolved problems of to-day are not to remain for ever unsolved."

Professor Tyndall's widow writes as follows to Mr. H. L. Green, editor of the *Freethinkers' Magazine*, which is now published at Chicago: "Hind Head House, Haslemere, May 6, 1894—Dear Sir, I have been away from home, or I should sooner have thanked you for sending me the—to me intensely interesting—March number of your magazine. I read it through without pause from beginning to end. Here and there I noted a few trivial errors, but I marvelled at the amount of truth that had been gathered together. Throughout, moreover, the tone of the articles is so reverent—I might almost say affectionate—that in reading them I felt that I was in touch with friends. Once more thanking you, believe me, faithfully yours, Louisa C. Tyndall."

Mr. Leslie Stephen, in the thirty-ninth volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, writes on the late James Augustus Cotter Morison, the author of *The Service of Man*, who, he tells us, contemplated a second part to that work, to be entitled *A Guide to Conduct*. Mr. Morison had prepared for an elaborate study of French history during the period of Louis XIV. "No man," says Mr. Stephen, "had wider and more generous sympathies." Mr. Morison was a man of letters, the story of whose mind deserves writing at large. Our sub-editor has in his possession some of Mr. Morison's note-books, which he would be happy to hand over to any biographer.

"Mr. G. W. Foote, the energetic President of the National Secular Society, England," says the *Harbinger of Light* (Melbourne), a Spiritualist organ, "is finding the multifarious duties of office a severe tax upon his strength, and is accordingly taking a holiday to recuperate. It has been suggested that a visit to Australia would prove beneficial in many ways. Mr. Foote is certainly a man of great ability and a brilliant lecturer, but he is an out-and-out iconoclast, and seems to lack the self-restraint and moderation in speech that characterised his great predecessor, Charles Bradlaugh. Freethought advocacy, of the wild-cat variety, is not wanted in these colonies, and up to the present it has not proved a success."

We presume the last sentence is a dig at Joseph Symes, whom we need not defend, as he is well able to take care of himself. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Australia some day, when the *Harbinger of Light* people will be able to see for themselves how much of the "wild-cat" there is in his composition, or in his policy.

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is doomsday. To-day is a king in disguise. To-day always looks mean to the thoughtless, in the face of a uniform experience that all good, and great, and happy actions are made up precisely at these blank to-days. Let us not be deceived; let us unmask the king as he passes.—*R. W. Emerson.*

IS GOD GOOD?

It is an ominous sign of the times when a question such as this comes to be asked in the pulpit. Yet it is the title of a sermon by Dr. A. H. Bradford, delivered in a Hampstead chapel the other Sunday, and reported in the *Christian Commonwealth*. Of course the whole argument is of the old milk-and-water kind, never touching the real crux of the question; but the very fact that such a discourse is considered necessary or reasonable indicates a consciousness on the part of the preacher that some show of reasoning must be made to answer the questionings of even moderately intelligent people. One is at some loss to know precisely what Dr. Bradford meant by saying at the outset: "If the asking of this question implied doubt as to the answer, I should be the last to ask it?" Did he mean that he would have smothered the discussion up if he thought it would not lead to his conclusion? And if so, what right has he to say, as he does later on, that he asks the question "in the spirit in which an earnest seeker after truth asks it"? An earnest seeker after truth doesn't smother awkward questions when he finds he cannot answer them. Perhaps, however, Dr. Bradford merely wanted to reassure the timid in his audience that the coast was clear. It may have been a mere "aside" to the effect: "It's all right, you may keep your seats. You needn't be afraid I will tread on dangerous ground." And if so, the assurance was well fulfilled.

But what a presumption it is for any orthodox, or even semi-orthodox, pulpiteer to call himself "an earnest seeker after truth." In the very terms of his creed he will be damned if he does not reach a certain conclusion, so that the "seeking" becomes a kind of farce. According to his creed, he has got all the "truth" he needs for his "eternal happiness." What is the necessity to seek for more? Either his Christianity is sufficient, or it is not. If it is not sufficient, if it does not contain the whole truth, if there is a mass of necessary truth outside it which requires "seeking," then evidently Christianity is a very incomplete and imperfect thing, hardly of such a nature as to indicate a "divine" origin. If, on the other hand, his Christianity is complete and perfect, the religious "seeker after truth" would appear to be engaged in the rather foolish task of seeking for what he has already found. As a matter of fact, the attempts which one sometimes sees of Christians trying to play with Freethought fire are often laughable; occasionally the thing is dangerous—for the Christian. Really, however, the old stolid, ignorant, self-satisfied Christianity which damned every seeker after truth, and would have looked with horror on the modern coquetting with Freethought which the "advanced" Christians indulge in—the old Christianity was more honest, if less diplomatic, than the new brand. It is said a man cannot serve God and Mammon. However that may be, certain it is that a man cannot serve Religion and Freedom, Orthodoxy and Truth. Some men attempt the performance; the more thorough-going and sincere end in Freethought, the rest develop into dishonest intellectual tricksters, pretending to reconcile what they know to be irreconcilable, and manufacturing arguments to support what they know to be false.

To return, however, to Dr. Bradford's sermon, let us glance at a few of his arguments. And the first is the argument from "conscience." He says: "The first reason for believing in God's goodness is the fact that men are, and always have been, so constituted as to be able to tell the difference between right and wrong, and to realise that they ought to do right." And he takes as analogy a father who advises his child to adopt a certain course, and thereby shows that he loves his child "enough to make it plain that one line is safe and another dangerous." Now it will be seen that this analogy, like many other orthodox analogies, does not hold. The limitations that apply to the earthly father do not apply *ex hypothesi* to God. To say that God merely planted the power of choosing right from wrong in man is to imply that he worked under limitations and restrictions. For might God not have abolished—nay never created—the wrong, and left no necessity for the choice? Some Christians answer this argument by saying that in such case man would be robbed of his glory and honor, that it is the very fact of being able to choose the wrong which makes the choice of the right path so ennobling. What is that, however, but saying that Omniscience could

devise no other way of ennobling man than by the creation of wrong; in other words, that the making of a universe without evil was beyond the power of an omnipotent infinitely-good God?

Yet, even as it stands, Dr. Bradford's argument will not hold water for an instant. Of what use is it that God enabled every man "to tell the difference between right and wrong" if he withhold from large numbers the power, the ability, or the will to follow their knowledge? As a matter of fact, we know that numbers of men choose wrong. Dr. Bradford may explain the phenomenon as he chooses. The fact remains, "God" did not give these men whatever was necessary—he it knowledge, will, or power—to do what was right.

Not alone, however, does the "conscience argument" break down thus. Strangely enough, Dr. Bradford gives his whole case away a few lines lower down when he admits, what indeed is patent to any observer, that "conscience" is a variable standard. He says naively: "There are different ideas of what right is; but did you ever hear of anyone who thought he ought to do what he knows to be wrong?" That is to say, your "right" may be another man's "wrong." Thus the cannibal thinks it "right" to kill and eat human beings—we think it "wrong"; the Mormon thinks it "right" to have a number of wives—we think it "wrong." Dr. Bradford, we will charitably assume, thinks it "right" to deliver fatuous sermons—we should think it "wrong." Yet we have one great consolation—God is at the bottom of each of our "rights," and is "enabling us to choose." We should conclude from this that God is rather flighty, and is at somewhat of a loss to know to other from which. He would also appear to be sublimely indifferent to all the "rights" and "wrongs," slapping them about indiscriminately. Yet Dr. Bradford thinks that the God-implanted sense of right which tells the Mohammedan that Mohammedanism is true, and the God-implanted sense of right which tells the Christian that Christianity is true, alike demonstrate God's goodness. Frankly we fail to see it. Men's ideas of what is right, in a certain stage of human evolution, vary, within certain limits, according to training and custom and knowledge.

In reality, however, this thesis of Dr. Bradford's is our friend, the Design Argument, in a new shape. We have said that men's conceptions of right varied within certain limits. Manifestly a certain amount of morality was necessary for the race to survive. Since morality means those actions which conduce to human welfare, and immorality means hurtful or harmful conduct, it is evident that a completely immoral race could never exist.

When Dr. Bradford comes to the fact that, despite the God-given sense of right, thousands go wrong, he can only fall back on the old mystery-trick. "These," he says, "are mysteries insoluble." This is always the theologian's style. He pretends to tackle a given problem, and the instant he reaches the real crux he flies off and appeals to "mystery." The mystery is insoluble. Better, then, for Dr. Bradford to have kept silence. If it is a mystery, why, there—on Dr. Bradford's showing—is an end of the matter.

The mystery of the case, however, is the mystery of the theologian's own hypothesis. You start out with a theory opposed to fact, and when you find that it does not square with fact you cry "mystery." But the fault lies with your theory. As long as you posit an omnipotent, omniscient, all-good Being, you cannot rationally explain the problem of evil. Either God could have made a world without evil, or he could not. If he could, and did not, he is not all-good; if he could not so make it, he is not all-powerful. Out of this old old dilemma the Theist cannot get. It is to make a loophole of escape that the religions have invented their devils—their evil deities who are perpetually thwarting the good ones. The invention, of course, does not suffice; for the question then comes, Why does the good deity not kill or annihilate the evil one? And again the dilemma reappears. No, the religionist can never explain the problem of evil. And the fault lies with his theory. Let that be set right, let it be squared with fact, and his "mystery" will have vanished; but so will his Theism too.

FREDERICK RYAN.

THE DAY OF REST.—The pressing work is done on week-day, and the rest is done on Sunday.

PAINE IN A CHAPEL.

I AM continually asked to lecture about Paine, and, though compelled by my occupations to decline many of these invitations, in the instances where I have complied the audiences, to me strangers, have manifested the utmost enthusiasm for the outlaw of 1793. Paine has been the means of my first appearance in an orthodox chapel in London. Since the death of Spurgeon, the leading Baptist minister in London is the Rev. Dr. Clifford, who is eloquent, and much more generous in his sentiments towards heretics than Spurgeon, though quite orthodox. The young people of his society have a large Bible class, and have instituted courses of lectures from "representatives of various schools of thought." Not long ago they had a lecture from a Jewish rabbi, and were fiercely attacked in one or two Christian papers for that. But, unsubdued by that attack, they straightway requested me to lecture to them about Paine, without the slightest suggestion of any restriction on my liberty of utterance. On the contrary, it was made evident to me that they desired introduction to the genuine Paine, just as he was; and that I tried to give them. The beautiful Westbourne Park Chapel was filled. Dr. Clifford was in the pulpit with me; the usual prayer, hymns, and Scripture readings preceded; and the applause during the lecture, especially at passages read from Paine, and the speeches that followed from Dr. Clifford and others, showed that the demonstration was by no means to the lecturer, but to the "doubly-damned Tom Paine." And although the event has elicited from the religious organ which jealously guards Baptist orthodoxy demands for disciplinary dealings with Dr. Clifford, I observe that it is all on my account, nothing at all being said against Paine. In fact, although most of the English papers have recently contained articles or reviews concerning Paine, I have not seen one which has assailed him as a religious heretic. His political principles cannot now be objected to, being really the present Constitution of England, or what liberal Englishmen wish it to be considered. Your readers will, I trust, understand that it is not merely the biographical interest of these gleanings concerning Paine which have induced me to occupy lately so much of your space with them. By history this Thetford Quaker has been set for the falling and rising of many, a sign to be spoken against, that thoughts out of many hearts should be revealed; and his epoch will not be quite closed so long as the world is without one genuine republic.

Westbourne Park Chapel gave me a good point of view from which to inspect a collection of political coins and medals struck a hundred years ago, and now in the British Museum. One is a halfpenny, of January 21, 1793: *Obverse*, a man hanging on a gibbet, with a church in the distance; motto, "End of Pain." *Reverse*, an open book, inscribed "The Wrongs of Man." A token: bust of Paine, with his name: *reverse*, "The Mountain in Labor, 1793." A farthing (1791), with Paine gibbeted; *reverse*, breeches burning, and legend "Pandora's breeches"; beneath, a serpent decapitated by a dagger, the severed head being that of Paine. Another farthing with Paine gibbeted; *reverse*, a number of combustibles intermixed with labels issuing from a globe inscribed "Fraternity"; the labels inscribed "Regicide," "Robbery," "Falsity," "Requisition"; legend, "French Reforms, 1797"; near by, a church with flag, on it the cross. Halfpenny, not dated, but no doubt struck in 1794, when the rumor reached London that Paine had been guillotined: Paine on gibbet; above, a devil seated, smoking a pipe; *reverse*, a monkey dancing, with legend, "We dance, Paine swings." A farthing: three men hanging on a gallows; inscription, "The Three Thomases, 1796." *Reverse*, "May the three knaves of Jacobin clubs never get a trick." The three Thomases were Thomas Paine, Sir Thomas More, and Thomas Spence. (In 1794 Thomas Spence, an author, was imprisoned seven months for advocating the republican principles applauded in Westbourne Park Chapel, and especially for publishing some of Paine's political works at his press, which he called the "Hive of Liberty.") Among these coined curses, much repeated, there are two of an opposite character. One farthing represents Pitt on a gibbet, against which a ladder is resting; inscription, "End of P [here an eye] T." *Reverse*, face of Pitt conjoined with that of a devil, and legend, "Even Fellows." Another farthing resembles the last, the inscription on *reverse* being, "Such is the reward of tyrants, 1796." These anti-Pitt farthings were struck by Thomas Spence, 8 Little Turnstile, Holborn, a few steps from the book-store of free-thinking works long kept by the venerable Edward Truelove, who owns the table on which Paine wrote several of his republican works. Should there ever be a Paine Exhibition in London, it will bring forth many historical relics, and exhume strange facts and records that have never seen the light.—M. D. Conway, "Open Court."

BOOK CHAT.

DR. CHARLES H. S. DAVIS, the American scholar, who is bringing out a new translation of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, says the book shows that thousands of years before Christ the Egyptians held lofty conceptions of the Deity; that they believed in one God, self-existent and omnipotent; and their moral ideas were of the purest and best. "Undoubtedly," says Mr. Davis, "the ancient prayers and hymns which we find in *The Book of the Dead* were learned by heart, and recited from memory, long before we have any history of Egypt." "Not one of the Christian virtues," wrote Chabas, in reference to the book, "is forgotten in the Egyptian code—piety, charity, gentleness, self-command in word and action, chastity and protection of the weak, benevolence towards the needy, deference to superiors, respect for property in its minutest details."

Dr. Otto Stoll, in his *Suggestion and Hypnotism as Popular Psychology*, makes up with German audacity a hypothesis on the suspicious and mysterious deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. He thinks that perhaps they only had suggested catalepsy, and were buried in two great a hurry. Anyway, there ought to have been an inquest, and probably Peter and his apostles would not have come well out of the inquiry.

A new edition of a work issued in 1880, under the title of *Spiritual Dynamics*, by Dr. G. Wyld, who was then president of the British Branch of the Theosophical Society, appears with the title *Theosophy*. Dr. Wyld is a Christian Theosophist, or rather we should say a Christian Spiritist. He resigned his position in 1882, when H. P. Blavatsky, in her journal, the *Theosophist* (May, 1882; Supplement, p. 6), used these words: "There is no God, personal or impersonal"—for, in his view, "if there be no God, there can be no Theosophy," which is the wisdom of God.

Dr. Wyld's portrait is prefixed to the book, and it lets us know we have to do with a refined fanatic. We should say credulity was very largely developed, for the doctor tells almost as stiff yarns as H. P. B. herself. To prove that matter can pass through matter, he instances an iron ring found, after a dark *séance*, upon the wrist of a certain medium, who has, we believe, since been caught in fraud. Dr. Wyld thought it could not get over his hand, but a committee of the Society for Psychical Research—a society mostly composed of spookists—gave the guarded verdict: "We cannot infer that it is impossible that the ring should have come into the position in which we found it by known natural means." The "mejum" refused to be put under chloroform to test if it could be got off by natural means. As a matter of fact, there are some people who, like the Davenport brothers, can slip their hands out of anything on their wrists.

Dr. Wyld seems to us a credulous Spiritist. He proved his faith by his works—becoming bail for the medium Slade, who was convicted for fraud in 1876. He even endorses the mediumship of Monck, who was in the same year discovered at Huddersfield with all the apparatus of deception. He calmly tells us that the housekeeper of the Cure d'Arns performed a miracle like unto one ascribed to J.C.—"with two or three pounds of flour (all that remained in the house) the housekeeper made about two hundred pounds of bread for the orphanage. She asserted that the batch rose and multiplied under her hands. Those who believe in spiritual powers and in the promises of Christ have no right to deny this statement." Let us hope the children did not suffer from flatulence.

The last sentence quoted from Dr. Wyld lets us into the secret of his, and so many other people's, credulity. They are taught in childhood, and receive on the most meagre evidence, the miracles of the old Jews. They find better attested ones among the spiritists and Catholics to-day, and are bound to credit them also. They then invent speculative Theosophic theories, or "spiritual dynamics," to account for the alleged facts, and make Jesus either an adept medium or magician. They forget that the first and most difficult thing is to get the facts. On the whole, we incline to agree with the Yankee who, after forty years' investigation of Spiritism, said: "I've found many liars and many lunatics, but nary spook."

Zola's *Lourdes* winds up with a description of the sufferings and death of Bernadette Soubirous, the sickly girl of fourteen, to whom the apparition of the Virgin is said to have appeared in 1858, and who was put in a convent, where she died after much agony in 1879. Zola's concluding words express his sympathetic view of Bernadette and the cult to which she has given rise: "Ah, sad men; poor, sick, illusion-famished humanity, which, in the lassitude of this dying century, bewildered and injured by the too greedy acquisi-

tion of science, believes itself deserted by the doctors of the soul and of the body, in great danger of succumbing to an incurable disease, and goes backward and asks for the miracle of its cure at Lourdes—mystical of a past forever dead! There, Bernadette, the new Messiah of suffering, so touching in her human reality, is the terrible lesson, the holocaust cut off from the world, the victim condemned to abandonment, solitude, and death, afflicted with the downfall of having been neither woman, nor wife, nor mother, because she had seen the Holy Virgin."

* * *

In No. 1 of *The New Science Review* Mr. M. D. Conway writes on "Thomas Paine and the Republic of the World." Mrs. Bloomfield Moore, a wealthy crank, puts forward the crank, J. E. Worrell Keely, as "a Newton of the Mind." This is New Science with a vengeance. Another paper is on a far superior man, Nikola Tesla, the Herzegovinian scientist.

* * *

Mr. C. H. Bond has been studying the brains of the heathen Chinese, and reports thereon in *Brain*. He finds that in Ah Sin the cerebellum is inordinately large as compared with the cerebrum. The proportion, in the specimens he examined, stands in the relation of one to five, instead of one to eight and a half, as in the average Englishman, and is therefore very nearly what is to be found in the chimpanzee (one to five and three-fourths). The total brain weight was found to be 1,182 grammes, or 176 grammes less than the average; but the Chinese brain exceeds the average in the convoluted complexity of the frontal lobes.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL meeting held at the Hall of Science, August 2. The President in the chair. Present: Messrs. G. Standing, J. M. Wheeler, R. O. Smith, J. Neate, J. Cohen, G. Ward, W. G. Renn, H. Rowden, R. Dowding, B. Munton, C. Thomas, Miss Vance, and the Secretary; Branch Secretary, R. Hose.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Treasurer's report received.

On behalf of the West London Branch Mr. Munton moved, and Mr. Ward seconded, that "No delegate be allowed to attend meetings of the Council whose Branch is more than twelve months in arrears." Carried.

The date of the Annual Sunday Collections for the funds of the Federation was fixed for September 2.

The Excursion arrangements were discussed, the President urging all present to interest themselves in the sale of tickets.

Lists for September were ordered to be printed, and the meeting closed.

ANNIE G. BROWN, Hon. Sec.

N.B.—The matter for September Lists *must* reach the Secretary not later than Aug. 20, to enable them to be printed and delivered by the last Sunday in the month.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. W. S. Rennie, of Aberdeen, at the early age of twenty-eight. He was a Secularist and a leader of the local Labor party. Although a working stonemason, he had found—or rather made—time to keep well abreast of the literature and thought of the age. He was certainly a young man of great promise, and his premature death is a serious loss to the party of progress. At a crowded public meeting in the Trades Council Hall, soon after his decease, it was resolved, on the motion of Councillor Maitland, that a Memorial Fund should be raised to relieve the distress of his family. We hope this appeal will meet with a liberal response. Our own mite is at the service of the Treasurer, Mr. W. Drack, 138 Skene-street, Aberdeen.

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FACTS OR FICTION.

[TRANSLATION.]

Professor F. Max Müller, Oxford,—

HONORED SIR,—Having devoted many years to biblical study, I find it strange that no stone, no papyrus, should give the faintest indication that the Israelites dwelled three centuries in Egypt. It is more remarkable still that no mention whatever is made on Egyptian monuments of the plague, the slaying of the first born, and the destruction of Pharaoh's entire army in the Red Sea—all national calamities. Can you explain this to yourself or to me? I beg you to give me your opinion about this matter. It appears to me that those episodes are fairy tales à la Haroun al Raschid.

M. William Groff has certainly discovered the names Jacob-al (or ar) and Josep-al (or ar) on a propylon at Karnak, but leaves us in doubt whether they are proper or geographical names (*vide* Lettre de M. William Groff à M. Révillout, *Révue Egyptologique*, 4e année, Nos. I, II, pp. 95-101, an 1885). It occurs to me that the Egyptians, who so faithfully chronicled their dynastic changes, would undoubtedly have transmitted their greatest national calamities to posterity. Please write to me about the matter. I should like to know what you think.—With profound esteem, I remain, devotedly yours,

December 6, 1893.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

[TRANSLATION.]

HONORED SIR,—The Egyptians readily forgot anything that did not suit them. They scratched out the names of unpopular rulers, and made no further mention of them. But this does not prove that the records in the Old Testament are historical. They are historical legends, and cannot be anything else. Brugsch pretends to have discovered the seven barren and fat years, but I do not know, in this moment, in which of his works.—Most respectfully and devotedly yours,

December 7, 1893.

F. MAX MÜLLER.

In his homily on "Faith," the writer of Hebrews xi., *inter alia*, confirms the foolish tale of the destruction of the first-born and the drowning of Pharaoh's legions. He was evidently *inspired* to repeat lies.

C. K. L.

A Gloomy Religion.

Mr. H. H. Johnston, who knows as much about the Boers and their habits and character as most men, speaks of their religion as being fiercely Calvinistic. "Their form of Christianity," he says, "is harsher than the harshest Presbyterianism; they are great Sabbatarians, and their religious services are gloomy beyond belief, consisting of dreary prayers, lengthy psalms sung to dreary chants, interminable sermons, and readings from the sternest portions of Scripture. The Boers simply worship the Old Testament, the study of which has become almost a craze among them, to such an extent that they identify themselves with the children of Israel, and in their treks through the wilderness imagine themselves to be repeating the wanderings of the chosen people. This is why, on the older maps of Southern Africa, there are so many 'Moses' Fontein,' 'Nilstroom,' 'Mounts Pisgah,' and 'Sinai.' The natives whom they encountered and dispossessed were compared to the Amalekites and the Canaanites, and their extermination was demanded from the pulpit in the words of Deuteronomy xx. 10-14. Slavery has always been a tenet of the Boer faith, and has been justified by the same references to the Old Testament as were formerly in vogue among the ministers of religion in the Southern States of America."—*Morning*.

At the old Five Points Mission the boys were paid a premium for each new pupil. One recruit was catechised by the lady teacher; his usher sat behind with a pin. Lady—"Who made you?" (A jab of the pin.) Pupil—"God Almighty!" L.—"Who died to save sinners?" (Another goad of the pin.) P.—"Jesus Christ." L.—"Correct again; but so much animation is unnecessary. What is the fate of the impenitent?" (Prod.) P.—"Hell and damnation."

They stood beneath the summer skies and watched the twinkling stars in ceaseless brilliant twink. It was a night to bring the angels from the blue that they might lay their gentle hands upon the evening air, and, touching every heart-string, fill the world with harmony. "And this is love?" she said, looking into his face. "And love is religion," he continued, stooping to kiss the pretty pinkness of her cheek. "What religion?" she asked, "Presbyterian, or Methodist, or Baptist, or Episcopalian?" "None of these, angel mine," he whispered, folding her to his throbbing heart; "none of these; it is You-an'-I-tarian." Devotional exercises were continued until a late hour.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Christian Biography, as Illustrated in Bible Characters." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club. Thursday at 8, members' special meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.15, F. Haslam, "Believe or be Damned." CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "The Gospel of Secularism."

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7. A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution." HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): Thursday, at 8, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is the Bible Reliable?" 3.30, "Secularism and its Aims." Wednesday, at 8, St. John, "The Meaning of Materialism."

LEYTON (High-road, near Vicarage-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

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

WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road): 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Apostles' Creed and the School Board."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Shadows of Superstition"; 7.30, S. R. Thompson, "The God the Christians Worship." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Gods and God-Makers."

COUNTRY.

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

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Fryer, "The Present State of the Labor Question."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Ann-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, T. Hammond, "Nebulous Christianity."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, John Walter, B.A., "Darwinism Up to Date." (Free)

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday and Saturday, at 8, dancing class for members and friends.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, W. Heaford, "Christian Errors and Secular Antidotes"; 8, "Jesus and His Teachings"; 7, "Religion Inimical to Humanity." (Morning lecture, weather permitting, near Monolith.)

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRIGHTON (The Level): 3, R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods." (At Star Assembly Rooms, 6 Whitecross-street, if weather unfavorable.)

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell, "Lord Salisbury's Darwinism and Design."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall-square): 11, Sam Standring, "The Natural Man"; 3, "The Spiritual Man"; 6.30, "The Social Man."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—August 19, Reading.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 41 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Aug. 19, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 26, m. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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