

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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“PROGRESSIVE” HUMBUG.

“WHAT’S in a name?” asks Juliet. Well, a good deal, replies Laurence Sterne, who traces the whole of his hero’s misfortunes to the sinister name bestowed upon him at his birth. “Give a dog a bad name, and hang him,” says the proverb. Give a rogue a good name, on the other hand, and it is astonishing how long he will flourish.

Bad causes like good names as well as bad men. For this reason the Chapel party, in the London School Board struggle, have dubbed themselves “Progressives.” It is a fine and taking designation. It makes the ordinary Liberal and Radical open his mouth in a rapture. There is nothing like it for catching cheers, and perhaps for catching votes. On the strength of this excellent name, both speakers and hearers work themselves into a perfect frenzy of virtue. They feel they have inherited the mantles of all the prophets and martyrs.

But these people have no right to the name of “Progressives.” There is nothing progressive about them. Their faces are turned backwards, and their feet follow. They declare that wisdom reached its climax in 1871, when the London School Board adopted the “Compromise.” They assert that the Compromise is like Shakespeare, not for an age, but for all time. To harbor a thought against it is blasphemy; to upset it is sacrilege. The Compromise is the everlasting Ark of the Covenant, and the Bible is the fetish inside. Whoever stretches forth his hand to touch it, even with the best intentions, deserves the fate of Uzzah.

Where is the progress in this attitude? Why should London be bound for ever by a decision arrived at in 1871? Why should the men of that generation sign away the rights of posterity? Even if the Compromise were wise then, it may not be wise now. To say that it has “worked well” is only to say that its supporters are satisfied with it—which requires no demonstration.

What is the Compromise? It is an arrangement between Christian sects in the interest of their own religion. Two hundred and fifty denominations could not all have their own way. It was necessary to move along the line of least resistance. The common point of agreement was the inspiration of the Bible. To read the Bible in the schools, therefore, was a distinct advantage to every denomination. Children would be prejudiced in favor of the book as the revelation of God. That was half the work. It was the first preparation of the raw material. Afterwards the ministers of the various sects could obtain a supply of the article in this state and work it up into their several patterns.

In accepting this Compromise the Nonconformists were traitors to their essential principles. They object to a State Church; not to the buildings of brick, stone, mortar, and wood, but to the apparatus of religious teaching. But if it is wrong for the State to teach religion to adults in churches, it is equally wrong for the State to teach religion to children in schools. Nay, worse. For adults can decline to go to church, but children must go to school. The only ground on which the Nonconformist can object to a State Church is the principle that the State should be absolutely neutral in matters of religion.

The Compromise was not a treaty, it was only a truce. It is the nature of religion to be bigoted and intolerant. It is also the nature of religion to be grasping. As time rolled on the strongest party was sure to turn the Compromise, if possible, to its own advantage. The strongest

party was the Church. The “Diggleites” are Churchmen. They have tried to turn the Compromise in the direction of their own doctrines. These doctrines are also shared by the Nonconformists. But as the Church party is moving in the matter, the Nonconformists are bound to oppose. It is simply the old war between Church and Chapel.

Having decided to fight the Church party, the Nonconformists went to work very cunningly. They formed a “Progressive Council.” Into this they coaxed or finessed the official Liberals and Radicals, and to give it a very “advanced” color they offered the chairmanship to John Burns. They also bagged a few red-hot Socialists like Graham Wallas and Clem Edwards, who were adopted as candidates on the “Bible-Reading” ticket. The next step was to nobble the press. This was done thoroughly. The Liberal and Radical press of London has been turned into a gigantic agency for running Chapel candidates. Other candidates have been systematically boycotted. The *Star* and the *Sun* ventured to report the first of Mr. Watts’s meetings, and referred to its “immense enthusiasm.” But they never repeated the indiscretion. Mr. Watts has even been accused of splitting the “Progressive” vote. This complaint is Pecksniffian. Mr. Watts is a true Progressive. He has no connection with the fraudulent house over the way. He is opposed to Chapel as well as to Church.

Let us devote a few moments to John Burns. He has thrown his principles to the winds, and echoed the whining of the tabernacle. Not satisfied with doing this, he has called those who stuck to their principles “faddists.” He has declared *ad nauseam* that the Compromise satisfies the majority. But have the minority no rights? If not, John Burns should step out and make room for the Tories, who command a majority in London. He has emphasised the fact that few children have been withdrawn from religious instruction. Does he not know that many parents hesitate to inflict martyrdom on their little ones? He has pretended that there was no serious demand for Secular Education. Does he not know that nearly twelve thousand votes have been polled for that policy in the very constituency of West Lambeth where he was speaking? Three years hence there will be a “secular” candidate in West Lambeth, and he will go to the poll. John Burns will then have an opportunity of showing whether he has deserted his principles for ever.

One Nonconformist hero is out of the fight. He is enjoying a six months’ holiday. We refer to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. This gentleman sent a long letter to the London papers from Florence. It was printed in leaded type in the *Daily Chronicle*, which has not thought Mr. Watts’s large meetings worth a passing mention. Mr. Hughes wishes to save London from “the horrors of theological controversy.” This is an unfortunate expression. Mr. Hughes should explain why theological controversy is always so “horrible.” We have our own opinion, but we should like to have his. He also wishes to obviate “the grave peril of an anti-Christian reaction.” What is this but an admission that agitation and debate tend to the advantage of Secular Education? He says that if the Church party win “it would be awfully possible that London might tread in the footsteps of Paris and Rome.” He is fond of truculent adverbs, but he does not explain them. Why should not London follow in the footsteps of Paris when it advances in the right direction? Paris has settled this religious question. It has also done away with the scandal of

starving children sitting to be instructed. The Christians of London might imitate the "infidels" of Paris in this matter.

Mr. Hughes begs the electors of London to place the administration of the Education Act "in the hands of the Progressives"—that is, the Nonconformists—who "have no axe of their own to grind." This is a characteristic piece of impudence. It is cant and humbug. No axe to grind! Oh yes they have. They want to make the Board schools recruiting grounds for their Bethels. Mr. Hughes has the Chapel axe to grind, and Mr. Riley the Church axe. Common sense and equity suggest that neither should be provided with a grindstone at the public expense. Let them grind their axes at their own cost, and tomahawk each other afterwards if they choose—but not on the School Board, nor in the public schools.

The "Progressives" are trading under false pretences. They must be confronted and exposed. Mr. Watts will do something in this direction if he gains a seat on the new Board. That will be a good beginning. And three years hence we must raise the standard of Secular Education in every division in London. G. W. FOOTE.

VOLTAIRE.

Two hundred years ago, this 21st of November, was born the brilliant Freethought soldier, Voltaire. His name was long a terror to the orthodox. None was more hated, none more reviled. The reason is simple. He attacked bigotry and superstition, not in the dull and decorous fashion of pedants writing for the few, but with the wit and pleasantry of a practised writer for the people. He made the bigots and tyrants appear ridiculous as well as odious. Those who felt the sting of his lashes denounced him as a Mephistopheles, whose writings all good people should avoid as they would a pestilence; and all whose interest lay in the perpetuation of absurd dogmas stigmatised Voltaire as a mere mocker, railing at all things holy.

In the sketch of his life and works which, with the assistance of my ever-ready friend, the editor of this paper, I have just issued, I have sought to give a very different view. I have tried to look at Voltaire, not as he appears either in the eyes of his enemies or in those of his friends, but as he reveals himself in his letters and in his works. I find there no mere brilliant mocker, but a deeply earnest and keenly sensitive nature, bent on the destruction of cruelty and intolerance, and therefore striking at the superstitions of which these vices are the outcome. His keen eye saw at once the atrocities and absurdities which followed from people believing they were the exclusive possessors of a divinely-revealed faith. He saw it was essential that the superstitions in which intolerance had its root should be proved detestable and ridiculous. Men, he said, will not cease to be persecutors until they have ceased to be absurd; and, more than any other man, he caused the world to smile at its own absurdities.

Voltaire's motto was, "Straight to the Fact." He brought all histories and creeds to the test of fact and common sense. Was it true or not that an Infinite Deity had chosen barbarous Jews as his peculiar people? Was God born of a virgin? Did he live in obscure circumstances, and was he put to death with ignominy while deserted by his disciples, in spite of the signs and wonders which he wrought among them? To ask these questions in the light of common sense, to subject them to the cross-examination applied to ordinary principles of evidence, was to answer them with laughter. But, as Mr. Morley has said with truth: "There is no case of Voltaire mocking at any set of men who lived good lives. He did not mock the English Quakers. He doubtless attacked many of the beliefs which good men hold sacred; but, if good men take up their abode under the same roof which shelters the children of darkness and wrong, it is not the fault of Voltaire if they are hit by the smooth stones shot from his sling against their unworthy comrades."

Voltaire not only fought against intolerance and oppression; he protected the oppressed. The record of his services in undoing, as far as possible, the foul wrong perpetrated on Jean Calas, on the Servens, and on La Barre, is a noble one. Voltaire was a true philanthropist. He did more than any other one man to extirpate the worst evils from which humanity suffers, and he carried on his efforts with

unflagging industry and unceasing verve in extreme age, when lesser men would have thought it time to rest from their labors. Truly he was the Grand Old Man of Freethought.

It is only dull people who associate brilliancy with superficiality, and imagine that because a man is witty he must, therefore, be shallow. Going over the writings of Voltaire, I am as struck by the soundness of his judgments as by his facility of expression. For instance, in regard to the one point wherein his historic judgment was directly contested by Gibbon—viz., the character of Tiberius Cæsar—modern criticism has tended to confirm the view of Voltaire, who dismissed the gossip of Suetonius, accepted with scarce a question by Gibbon, who owed so much to Voltaire. A book might be written on Voltaire's anticipations of modern thought. He accepted the view of man's savage origin. He derived the belief in ghosts from dreams, and discerned the magical nature of early religion. He anticipated most of the social and political problems of our time. He stated the population question before Malthus. He cleared the way for modern science.

It is to the brilliant iconoclasts of last century that we owe the freedom of this. Of these Voltaire was the chief. They looked up to him with admiration and respect, and, animated by his example, made the eighteenth century the beginning of a new era, the Age of Reason. Let us, too, take inspiration from their works, and wage the noble warfare against the oppression of stultifying creeds and dogmas, for the sovereignty of reason, the emancipation of the human mind. J. M. WHEELER.

SECULAR IDEAS AS TO RIGHT AND WRONG.

(Concluded from page 731.)

IN considering the question of right and wrong we ought not to ignore any facts, however unpleasant they may be to some of us. Human nature has its dark as well as its bright side. There are men so constituted and so surrounded by depraved conditions that, from their actions, one would suppose they prefer doing wrong rather than right. In many instances men are ferocious, cruel, and brutal. They practise lying and deception, and injure and destroy their fellow creatures. Such persons are too often born in moral corruption and trained in the lowest form of criminality; they grow up destitute of any self-respect, and without any sense of right action. People of this class are the unfortunate victims of a bad environment, which has contaminated their natures both before and after birth. If these "heirs of unrighteousness" were spoken to as to the duty they owe to themselves and to society, probably the replies would be: "As life and society were thrust upon me, why should I respect either? Why should I prefer the straight to the crooked path—the beautiful in nature to the repulsive? What advantage is truth to me when I profit by lying? Why may I not repudiate the tyranny involved in the injunction that I ought to be virtuous? If I am happy in following my present course, why should I bother about the effects of my conduct upon society?" It will be readily seen that the man who raises the foregoing questions has no conception of moral duties and the influence of right action. Moreover, it is well known that vicious and immoral men are the first to object to the same kind of conduct which they practise being directed against themselves. A man may delight in lying, but no liar likes to be deceived, and no brute in human form desires to be injured himself. Those who inflict pain upon others are the first to shudder at the lash being applied to themselves.

Society itself, notwithstanding the boasted influence of the Bible and the loud professions of Christianity, has peculiar ideas of right and wrong. It condemns the killing of one man as a criminal act; but he who kills thousands is made a hero. In the one case detestation is evoked, while in the other honors are bestowed. Hence, the only sense to which the soldier is amenable is that of duty, not of right. The public regard his acts as being performed for a good purpose—namely, that of destroying those who are looked upon as enemies. Our forefathers, we are told, made this island inhabitable by destroying the wild beasts that once infested it; but it appears to us that a greater

work than that remains to be done, which is to subdue the wild passions of man. Christianity has failed to accomplish this desirable result. As the London daily *Times* sometime since remarked: "We still seem, after hard upon nineteen centuries of Christian influence and experience, to be looking out upon a world in which the ideal of Christianity, which we all profess to reverence, is worshipped only with the lips. . . . Throughout Europe we find nations armed to the teeth, devoting their main energies to the perfection of their fighting material and the victualling of their fighting men, and the keenest of their intellectual forces to the problem of scientific destruction. Beneath the surface of society, wherever the pressure becomes so great as to open an occasional rift, we catch ominous glimpses of toiling and groaning thousands, seething in sullen discontent, and yearning after a new heaven and a new earth, to be realised in a wild frenzy of anarchy by the overthrow of all existing institutions, and the letting loose of the fiercest passions of the human animal."

Alas! it is too true that the world, for the most part, has hitherto worshipped force. Poets, from Homer downwards, have thrilled thousands with graphic descriptions of scenes of splendor and of glory. Military renown has been regarded with greater interest than have the triumphs of ethical culture. Such men as Alexander the Great and Napoleon have been exalted to the highest pinnacle of fame, and their deeds have been extolled as if these men had been the real saviors of the people. This is a mistaken adulation and an undue exaltation, which is opposed to the Secular idea of right. What can be more wicked than devastating and depopulating countries in order that one warrior may rival another in what is called military glory. As John Bright said at Birmingham in 1858: "I do not care for military greatness or military renown. I care for the condition of the people among whom I live. . . . Crowns, coronets, mitres, military display, the pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge empire are, in my view, all trifles, light as air, and not worth considering, unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people. Palaces, baronial castles, great halls, stately mansions, do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage." Right cannot advance if brutal force remains in the front.

It may be urged that, if our estimate of men in modern "Christian England" be correct, there is but little chance of establishing any system of right. Happily, although what we have written is unquestionably true in some cases, it is not true of all men. There are other members of the human family who possess dispositions which enable them to act rightly, so that the world will be the better for the part they have played in the great drama of life. These workers for the public good are influenced by higher laws than Bibles or Parliaments can command or enforce. According to the Secular view of right, all persons should be instructed in the duties of citizenship; they should be impressed with the necessity of taking an active interest in all things that pertain to the welfare of life, and to consider political and social rights as well as those that refer merely to ordinary every-day conduct. Of course, as civilised beings, we require some centre of appeal, some test by which we can determine what is right and what is wrong. However defective our standard may be considered, and however varied the results of an appeal thereto may prove, we know of no higher authority to do right than because it accords with the general good of society. We regard it as utterly futile to go back to Bible times, when theology was supreme, to find a test by which modern conduct shall be regulated. Doing right in those times meant obeying the will of the despot, and complying with the wish of the priest. At that period right had no relation to the requirements and independence of the individual. In the evolution of human life the chief business of men is to translate might into right, and to substitute mental freedom for intellectual subjection. Under the influence of the Secular idea of right, it will be found easier to speak the truth than to endeavor to deceive. Candid and fair dealing will be looked upon as the sovereign good of human nature; and the acquirement of, and adherence to, this commendable habit will be found less difficult than mastering the technicalities of law, the reasonings of metaphysicians, or the verbose quibbles of theologians.

The Secular method of establishing the true idea of right is to continually augment our experiences with the acquirement of additional knowledge. Although instances may be quoted of greater fidelity being found in some of the lower animals than is perceptible in many men, the power of foreseeing events in the case of the most intelligent of "the brute creation" is not very strongly marked. The Secular idea of right is that the best judgment possible should be exercised upon all occasions for the purpose of discovering what is most calculated to promote individual and general happiness. Moralists dilate upon the varying rules of conduct that obtain in different nations and under different governments. Now, while it is quite true that various conflicting ideas of right and wrong exist in different countries, that fact does not exempt people from performing the duty of considering, in every case, what is the right course to adopt to secure the welfare of the nation in which they live. The principle of improvement applies to all conditions and to all races of men. Take the important feature of family life; on this point opinions are entertained of the most opposite character. In one country men believe in one god and in having many wives, while in another country men believe in three gods and having only one wife. And yet both beliefs are deemed right. The Secular idea is that we should study what is right for us to do under the conditions in which we live. In this country there is no doubt that the development of the affections, and of a due regard to the rights and enjoyment of others, points to the conclusion that the union of one man with one woman is the best solution of the marriage problem. True, the Bible sanctions polygamy, but with that we are not now concerned; monogamy is accepted as the best matrimonial arrangement for us under present conditions.

It is supposed by some persons that it is too late to discover anything new in morality. This, however, is a mistake, because the acquirements of modern life impose upon us duties that were unknown to the ancients, and which require, upon our part, an intelligent apprehension to enable us to perform them with credit to ourselves and for the benefit of others. Science and learning are valuable in proportion as they tend to make better men and women, and inspire within them a desire to promote general happiness. The endeavor to advance human felicity is the best evidence of the existence of a living, active morality, and of a proper sense of right. Let us, then,

Rest not! life is passing by,
Do and dare before you die.
Something mighty and sublime
Leave behind to conquer time.
Glorious 'tis to live for ye
When these forms have passed away.

CHARLES WATTS.

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY AT PRESENT?

WE shall very soon need to have periodical issues of authoritative creeds up to date; for Christianity is so rapidly changing that we none of us know what it is from one month to another. Perhaps we may have theological weather reports and forecasts, as in meteorology. We much need them.

A gentleman last week was entreating me to "return to the fold." I said, "I shouldn't have far to go probably." Misunderstanding me, he quickly replied, "Indeed, you wouldn't!" When I explained that the distance between me and foremost Christians had been reduced to a narrow line by their coming so rapidly after me, he felt reluctantly bound to admit that I was right.

Yes, verily, I am in imminent danger of becoming a Christian again at no distant date. Should I die of old age, I must, it seems to me, die within "the fold"; for Christianity is after me—is rapidly changing its very nature in order to embrace me and all mankind. I do not need to change; Christianity is changing to accommodate me. Formerly that religion would call upon us to repent, now she does the repentance herself, the kind and agreeable creature! It was such as myself that formerly needed a radical change; now I remain as I am, and Christianity says, "Don't trouble yourself, stay just as you are; I can

readily adapt myself to your needs. Just let me know how you will take me, and I can change in a jiffy! I am nothing like I used to be, I assure you. In old times I commanded, threatened, swore, stamped, raged, cried, promised, bribed. But I am out of all that, long ago. Now I make myself agreeable, 'All things to all men, that I may win some'—support and cash."

To hear a modern sermon, who would believe that hell-fire or an angry God had ever been mixed up with Christianity? Who would dream that the religion of Jesus had ever been associated with dungeons, prisons, tortures, fires, and blood, to judge it from the forms it now takes on?

In old times men were judged by this religion, and declared to be utterly and absolutely corrupt, and doomed to hell for ever and ever. God was so angry and vengeful in the olden times that nothing milder than earthquakes, plagues, famines, and wholesale destruction could at all express his fatherly feelings; but now he is mild as a sucking dove, and ready to put up with anything if you will only just call yourself a Christian and support his cause. In those days nothing less than the life-blood of his only begotten son would pacify him, nor even that without miles of red tape and ceremony. Now he never dares to be angry; but, like a whipped cur or professional beggar, will endure any treatment if you will only be one of his elect.

I am sure I am not misrepresenting the case nor exaggerating the change. Only last year Professor Mivart wrote on "Happiness in Hell." True, the Jesuits won't admit that yet; but they have neither roasted Mivart nor called him a heretic, and that shows how they are moving with the times. A few generations back they would have made hell for a man who dared so to endanger their trade as to suggest that people might be happy who rejected or neglected the means of salvation.

Protestants rarely speak of hell now, except as a thing to jest about. And as for the Devil—he is become altogether so comical that his name provokes a smile even amongst the saints.

Last year, too, two Australian Presbyterian moderators buried Inspiration and marched over to the Rationalist camp. They are still Christians, and carry Christianity with them.

Talmage, the infallible, when here, told us evolution was infidelity out and out; Professor Drummond says evolution and Christianity are both one. This is encouraging.

Thomas Paine, one hundred years ago, took up the only rational position possible regarding the Bible. He was replied to, prosecuted, badgered, abused, sent to hell without mercy; a confession of his sin being invented for him by the Christians. A thousand pulpits and thousands of Sunday-schools have abused his memory, and generations have shuddered at the sound of his name. But all that is over and gone, and Paine is almost a Christian now, though he has not changed in the least to please that superstition or its votaries.

About thirty years ago there were few names more hated and abused than that of Colenso. He dissected the Pentateuch and Book of Joshua, and forever destroyed their credit as books written by the parties whose names they bear, or as books alleged to be of such ancient dates as it was orthodox to believe. Now the general conclusion amongst leading Christian scholars is, that Colenso and Co. were substantially right. It is no longer necessary to believe that the "five books of Moses" are the books of Moses, or that the "book of Joshua" is by Joshua. Nay, if you would not like to be set down as unlearned, unfashionable, out of date, etc., you must now believe that the Pentateuch, and much else in the Bible, are rank forgeries which never saw the light until many centuries after the dates of their alleged origin.

Archdeacon Farrar, in his new work, *The Second Book of Kings*, says it is incredible that Deuteronomy could be written before the seventh century B.C. The old orthodox belief was that it was written about 1450, or in the fifteenth century B.C.

There is enough heresy in that admission to have damned generations of immortal souls a few years ago; now it is fashionable to hold the view Farrar expresses. It is impossible to say now what amount of heresy will endanger a parson's salary, whatever may be the risk his soul may run. In former days safety lay in believing as

much as possible and striving to believe more—it was expected of you to keep as far away from infidelity as possible, and even from rational views of the Bible. Now the fashion is completely changed, and the clergy seem to compete with each other as to which shall go farthest in dropping the old beliefs. So far is this gone that now you cannot find a respectable or a scholarly clergyman willing to defend his standards. All such low and vulgar work is left to the uneducated and the blatant.

The Old Testament is so battered and shattered that the clergy do not know what fragments to cling to. And even the New Testament is also undergoing visible and rapid disruption. Dr. Samuel Davidson has recently brought out the third edition of his *Introduction to the New Testament*. I have not yet seen it, but from Mr. Wheeler's article in the *Freethinker* (August 5) I gather that Davidson has not retained any nearer to the old orthodox views. He holds that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not considered to be an apostolic work until the fourth century. He thinks second Thessalonians to be spurious. Davidson does not believe that any James wrote the Epistle that bears his name. "No tangible evidence," he says, "connects the present gospel (the first) with the apostle Matthew." It contains, he says, mythical elements. Luke's gospel, he says, contradicts Matthew; and the second gospel was not written by Mark. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus Dr. Davidson treats as forgeries; so also the second Peter. The predictions of Revelation have not been fulfilled, he says, and their fulfilment cannot be in the future. The Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians are spurious, and the fourth gospel is not by John.

All this and much more make me confident that we Atheists are in the right, for every year brings the foremost Christians nearer and nearer to us. We have not changed. We simply go on in front and leave the Christians to follow, as they perforce must. We cannot bribe them, cannot intimidate. We have no revenues to offer them, no "wages of iniquity"; we have no prisons, stocks, or torture-instruments with which to threaten them. Still they follow us. Even while they abuse us they follow.

And what is Christianity now? Well, just what and just as much as each one cares to take of the gospel wreck. You can take what fragments of the Bible you please; you can drop the Trinity as a bugbear. The miraculous birth of Jesus—well, don't mention it. The sacrificial death of that individual—to be sure, you can explain it to signify whatever you like. The Holy Ghost—you can call it colic or flatulence, only do it in polite language. Satan must not be seriously introduced; hell had better never be so much as alluded to—say Gehenna, and show that you know something of the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The end of the world you need not trouble about; it will not be in your day; and the Second Advent has been indefinitely postponed. Repentance is no longer necessary—a few pounds to a church fund is a much more acceptable offering, besides being thoroughly respectable. "Godly sincerity" is quite consistent with the extremest hypocrisy, if only you do not behave vulgarly. Don't violate the proprieties, and you are sure to be saved.

All this being so, I do not think I will enter the fold, but just wait for the fold so to widen out as to embrace me. I am fully expecting to die a Christian without, in the least, changing my belief or practice, for Christianity is after me; it is so diluting and spreading itself that I should have to leave the world to escape it.

After all, though I rejoice at the change our Freethought has produced, I would rather have the ancient stiff and stubborn saints, early Christians, Puritans, Methodists, etc., to deal with than the limp and hypocritical pretenders of to-day, who live upon Christianity, while in thought and practice denying the whole essence of that superstition. When I cease to admire sincerity and begin to look favorably upon hypocrisy, I shall just walk over into the fold for the sake of the good things there to be found. No doubt the sincere Atheist is a fool to prefer abuse to the wealth and ease the Churches offer; but still, a clear conscience is not a thing to fling away. Self-respect is worth having, even with poverty.

—*Liberator*.

JOS. SYMES.

Teacher—"What is the conscience?" Small Boy—"It's what makes you sorry when you get found out."

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A CHRISTIAN AND A RATIONALIST.

Arranged by Rationalist.

CHRISTIAN: Christ came on earth to save sinners—to plead and beg people to be saved by him. It is the sinners whom we must likewise try to save. Remember what our Savior said about leaving the ninety and nine to save the one lost lamb.

RATIONALIST: I beg of you to spare me the painful and silly rehearsal of these matters. I am in no mood to be over-indulgent or gracious, and, to be perfectly frank with you, religious discussion makes me, to use the classical vernacular of the street urchin, a trifle tired.

C.: You are positively stubborn. I tell you, my friend, that you are beyond all possible hope of redemption. I believe you are a good man, and by far too intelligent—

R.: To believe any of the twaddle and rot preached now-a-days to foolish children and brainless old maids.

C.: I am surprised and pained to hear you talk so. Why can't you believe in religion?

R.: I do believe in religion, but the religion I believe in is not orthodox. I do not believe in praying one day in the week and robbing my fellow men the other six.

C.: I am not aware that any one else believes in such a practice.

R.: I do not know whether they believe in it or not, but, at any rate, about nine-tenths of the self-styled orthodox Christians practise it all the same. Why do they not live up to what they preach?

C.: Why, that is perfectly absurd. You are speaking from heat now—not from the coolness of your reason.

R.: It may be that my remarks are absurd, but they are not more so than for you to talk your orthodox religion to me. I have outgrown such swaddling-clothes—such fairy stories—such silly nursery tales.

C.: But remember that the greatest minds—men with the greatest intellects the world has ever seen, have been believers in the Bible.

R.: I am not prepared to grant that. In fact, I believe the contrary to be the truth. For every great man you will point out to me as a believer in the divinity of the Bible I will undertake to show his equal, if not his superior, who holds the contrary.

C.: I cannot enumerate them now, but I am surprised to hear you make this assertion. From one of less reading and education I might have been prepared.

R.: I thank you for your delicate compliment, but it is the effect of that reading and study of the subject which inspires me to boldness.

C.: How about Mr. Gladstone? Can you name his equal in this age who is an Infidel or Agnostic, which, after all, are synonymous?

R.: I beg your pardon, but the words are not synonymous. There is a radical distinction between them.

C.: Well, then, it is a distinction without a difference. For my part, I understand them to be the same. Atheists, Agnostics, and Infidels are all one and the same.

R.: It seems to me you have forgotten your little Latin, and less Greek, to speak so re-assuringly. Atheist is from the Greek *Atheos*. The *a* is a privative prefix, and signifies *without*. Hence, an Atheist is one who is "without God." The word "infidel" comes from the Latin, and is made up of *in* and *fides*, literally rendered, no faith; and is the term given to one who has no faith in the divinity of the Bible, or, in other words, to one who denies that the scriptures are the inspired words of a God. Agnostic is from the Greek, being formed by the Alpha privative and the Greek *gignomi*, to know. Taken together, they mean "not to know," and in consequence are applied to those who neither assert nor affirm, but who are sufficiently honest and modest to admit that such matters are beyond their comprehension.

C.: I am obliged to you for all this information. But to the point I asked you in reference to Mr. Gladstone. He is a believer. Can you find his equal in your Latin and Greek category?

R.: This does not rise to the dignity of an argument. It is a mere comparison. It proves next to nothing; it is at best an argument *ad hominem*—an argument from the man. It is not convincing, for great men are not always great, to

use a paradoxical expression. In other words, while a man may be great in some particular branch or given subject, it by no means follows that he is great in everything. For example, Blind Tom was a great musician, but no one claims that he was a great mathematician; and even the great Newton made two sets of holes, large and small, in his fence, for the large and small hens to pass where the one large hole was sufficient.

C.: But what does it prove?

R.: Simply this, that Sir Isaac might have been a great philosopher, but a poor carpenter. So, also, your great men may be implicit believers in the Bible, but they may also be very poor reasoners. But I see you smiling. You think I am unable to answer your question. Well, sir, I will name one who is Mr. Gladstone's equal in point of everything, unless it be cunning or diplomacy, and that is our own great and generous Ingersoll.

C.: Ingersoll?

R.: Yes; Robert G. Ingersoll. History fails to show a greater man, a better man, a purer man, or a more honest man. He is the grandest specimen of manhood in this world. He is greater than his century; braver than ever Napoleon was; truthful as Washington, and better than any character mentioned in your Bible.—*Progress*.

(To be concluded.)

THE ARK ON ARARAT.

"IN Ermony (Armonia) there is a mountain called Ararat where Noah's ship rested, and still is upon that mountain and men may see it afar in clear weather. That mountain is full seven miles high, and some men say that they have seen and touched the ship, and put their fingers in the parts where the devil went out when Noah said *Benedicite*. [This alludes to a mediæval legend. It is remarkable that Noah should have spoken Latin!] But they that say so speak without knowledge; for no one can go up the mountain for the great abundance of snow, so that no man ever went up since the time of Noah except a monk, who, by God's grace, brought one of the planks down, which is yet in the monastery at the foot of the mountain. This monk had a great desire to go up that mountain; and so upon a day he went up, and when he had ascended the third part of the mountain he was so weary that he fell asleep, and when he awoke he found himself lying at the foot of the mountain. Then he prayed devoutly to God that he would suffer him to go up; and an angel came to him and said he should go up—and so he did. And since that time no one ever went up; wherefore men should not believe such words" (*Sir John Maundeville's Travels*, chap. xiii.; A.D. 1322.)

Did the knight of St. Albans himself believe in the monk and his vision? He must have written the above with a twinkle in his eye.

Some years ago a crazy traveller, named Nouri, repeated the monk's achievement, and rediscovered the Ark. Little did the good Christians who welcomed the story as a providential confirmation of God's word in an unbelieving age imagine that it was but a revival of a mediæval legend, which even the credulous globe-trotter, Maundeville, could not quite swallow. J. A. RICHARDSON.

The Judas Myth.

There was once upon a time a person called Jacob, who had twelve sons, and one of these sons, Judah (or Judas), sold his brother's blood for twenty pieces of silver, which price, in a later manuscript (*Zechariah*), was amended, being there quoted, in the form of a prophecy, as thirty pieces of silver. And there was a great leader called Moses, who sent out twelve men, one of a tribe. Therefore there was, by theologico-typical necessity, a second Moses, who had also twelve messengers; and a second Judas, who sold a second Joseph for a second thirty pieces of silver; and the goodly price of him that was prized was, in proper sequence, cast to the potter to buy a field; and so the sequel of Judas, the boy, the twelve disciples, the betrayal, and the field was faithfully extracted and quaintly compounded without tormenting the historian's intellect, whether for needless facts or original ideas.—"*Ecce Veritas*," pp. 81, 82.

DANCIN' DAVID.

THERE was a lad was born lang syne ;
The first of ancient kingly line—
A saintly loon to God's ain min'—
The name he bore was David.

David was a daffin'* lad,
Dancin', daffin' ; dancin', daffin' ;
David was a daffin' lad,
Dancin' daffin' David.

His first exploit whan but a loon,
And ere he wore the regal gown,
Was whan he crack'd Goliath's croon,
An' proved the worth o' David.

An' syne as king o' Jewish race,
He focht sae hard to keep his place,
That bluid was spilt without surcease,
In aid o' saintly David.

Afore the ark he jigged sae weel,
An' hoched and blew in holy reel,
That his guid wife turned on her heel
An' flyted† saintly David.

But a'e guid wife was far ower few
Whan fair Bathsheba cam' in view ;
But that bit daffin' made him rue,
An' wrocht foul shame on David.

This auld-time saint gae‡ thro' the mill,
An' whan o' life he had his fill
He dee'd as kings and commons will,
An' God was prood o' David.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

ACID DROPS.

THE loving spirit of religion has been much in evidence in London during the past week. The old School Board spent its last sitting, like so many of its predecessors, in religious wranglings, and ever since Nonconformist and Church preachers have been at it hammer and tongs, the one leveling accusations of Romanism, and the other of irreligion. Well, the more they quarrel the sooner sensible people will show them that they are tired of disputes which pervert the cause of education into an occasion for sectarian strife.

Riley is not the only Romanising member of the London School Board. Canon Bristow was a leading member of the Secret Society of the Holy Cross, whose text-book, *The Priest in Absolution*, was suppressed for its gross indecency.

The *Daily News* remarks: "Mr. Riley, who now whines so pitifully because notice has been taken, not of his private devotions, but of his published manual of worship, was foremost in putting impertinent questions about their religious belief to Nonconformists, who protested against the inquisitorial policy of the Board. Is Mr. Riley ashamed of praying to the Virgin, and of calling the Pope his 'Father' ? If not, why does he object to comment upon facts which he has himself brought before the world ?"

Mr. J. Allanson Picton, who was a member of the first London School Board, has given his view of the Compromise, which was arranged by Mr. W. H. Smith. It was simply permission extended to Methodists, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists to put their hands into the ratepayers' pockets for the expense of teaching in public elementary schools the doctrines which all those denominations held in part. The Compromise between Church and Chapel, as an auditor at one of Mr. Watt's meetings called out, was "between two thieves." Honest people should rejoice when the rogues fall out.

Whatever the result of the present election, the shameful boycott used by the so-called Progressive press against all independent and really progressive candidates shows that the next election must be decided, so far as we can determine it, on the issue of Secular Education ; and candidates must be found who will everywhere oppose the Compromise. Nothing but a severe lesson will force the Nonconformists to take up the just principle, that the State has nothing to do with religion.

That they will be forced to this at last there is abundant evidence. Mr. Schnadhorst stated at Tower Hamlets that,

"if the School Board was captured by the Church party, there would be nothing for it but secular education, pure and simple." Yet the Nonconformist organs are ridiculous enough to blame the Secularists for helping the Church party to win

It is amusing to watch these Christians when they get a bit warm. They accused Mr. Foote of bad manners when he applied the word "lie" to a long circumstantial story written by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and which he refused to retract when it was shown to be false in every important detail. But here they are, in this London School Board contest, flinging "lie" at each other with fine impartiality. The *Daily News* has used the word again and again in denouncing the misrepresentations of the Diggleites ; and it was employed last Monday evening by the Rev. A. W. Oxford in St. Martin's Town Hall, Westminster. "L" in Diggleites, he said, stood for "lies," and "E" for the effrontery with which they told them. The Christians always keep a large stock of advice on hand, but it is only meant for Freethinkers. They don't use any of it themselves.

In Massachusetts, and other of the American States, they have taken an effective means of preventing School Boards becoming the scenes of sectarian strife by prohibiting, by law, ministers of all denominations from being eligible as candidates.

Mr. S. Reeves, the "secular education" candidate, failed to obtain a seat on the Liverpool School Board. He wanted 7,000 votes to win—about the number thrown away on "outside" candidates. The new Board consists of 6 Roman Catholics, 5 Churchmen, 3 Dissenters, called "Progressives," and 1 Wesleyan. We pity the poor children.

Mr. Gladstone is said to have stated: "I believe that, in the future, man's state will be one of enlargement." This is no doubt characteristic ; but Mr. Gladstone would probably be puzzled to find Scripture authority for his belief.

The floods in our river valleys have occasioned widespread distress. Their worst effects are sometimes seen after subsidence. The receding waters leave heavy deposits of foetid mud behind them, and these may bring fever in their train.

The *New York Sun* has a good word for the heathen Chinese, who, it says, never drinks to excess. Though rice-wine is cheap, "the drunkard is practically unknown, except where he is a civilised Christian ; and the diseases resulting from the abuse of alcohol have no place in Chinese pathology." The reason it gives is that alcoholic drinks are always taken as food in moderation. They are served on the dinner table, and seldom or never at other meals, and are never used alone.

The Rev. George Stephens, of 141 Adelaide-road, Hampstead, has been fined 20s., with the alternative of fourteen days' imprisonment, for being drunk and disorderly in Oxford-street. He pushed one lady nearly under a vehicle.

Colonel Wremerskirch, of the Belgian army, pretends to write in favor of peace principles, and says that "nations in other times famous for science, literature, arts, and achievements have disappeared from the terrestrial globe, not by their patriotism, their militarism, their virtues, and their glory, but in consequence of the ravages of commercialism, Epicurism, philosophy, Atheism, and Chauvinism." Bacon said "Atheism never did disturb States," and most people fancy commercialism tends towards peace except when combined with gin and gospel.

The Colonel's proposals for peace are truly military. He wants to see a great increase in the army, and proposes a system of compulsory service, which, he says, was the only one known with the celebrated armies of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon, who, according to him, gave to military service an authority "royal and divine." Experience, however, shows that a big army is like a whip in the hands of a child—he is pretty sure to use it, even though it will only get him into trouble.

The Bishop of Liverpool hankers after the good old times before Free Education, which, his lordship says, "was never asked for." When he lived in Suffolk he "never heard farm laborers complain of school fees." Very likely. The poor devils complained of very little in those days. They don't complain of much now, though the case will be altered, we guess, when the Parish Councils get into working order.

Jesuit education has been much extolled, and certainly the Jesuits have turned out some notable scholars. Among the Freethinkers brought up in Jesuit schools may be mentioned Camille Desmoulins, Chaumette, Dulaurens, Proudhon, Raspail, "George Sand," Pascal Duprat, Chaho, Rochefort, Renan, and, greatest of all, Voltaire.

* Love-making.

† Scolded.

‡ Went.

We are constant readers of the *Tablet*, and we are glad to notice that the Roman Catholic organ reciprocates our attention. Indeed, it appears to keep a file of the *Freethinker*, for it turns back to an April issue in order to try and damage the Rev. Stewart Headlam, by an extract stating that he was well received at the Hall of Science.

Mr. F. Edmund Garrett, the author of *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, remarks on the silence with which his revelations of the Mahatma hoaxes have been received. No precipitated letters or astral doubles have appeared to disperse the evidences of fraud and chicanery. The oracles of Avenue-road are dumb, and, as Mr. Garrett says, are left stewing in the Judge's juice.

From what transpired at the Marylebone Police-court on Monday last, it appears that a Mr. Swallow, one of the largest cab proprietors in London—and who, during the recent summer, has been winning golden opinions from his friends by hurling wholesale charges of immorality against the Freethinkers who frequent Regent's Park—on Sunday last met his match. Espying a well-known sceptic strolling about with his wife and children, he proceeded to regale the latter with an imaginary account of their bread-winner's peccadilloes, till, as the sceptic explained next morning to the magistrate, "I stood it till I felt a twitching in my right arm," with the result that this right arm presently darted out with such astonishing swiftness as to close the Christian cabman's right eye. The plaintiff, who presented a pitiable spectacle in court, and who so equivocated when cross-examined by the defendant as to bring on himself the censure of the magistrate, looked horrified when he heard the decision. "I believe every word you have stated," he said to the defendant; "but you should not have allowed your arm to twitch. The fine will be only nominal. Five shillings." This decision gave great satisfaction to the Freethinkers present, who pretty well filled the court. Strange to say, not a Christian turned up to support their mammoth brother in affliction.

The minister of Prospect-street Presbyterian Church, Hull, speaking of the man with a legion of devils, interpreted the word "legion" literally, and propounded this arithmetical problem: "If the devil, good general though he is, could afford to depute six thousand devils to try and ruin one man, how many devils must there be in Prospect-street Church to-night?" One hearer has worked it out, and finds the answer to be, "A devil of a lot!"

They have a character at Beverley known as "Praying Billy." Billy believes it his mission to preach and pray in sundry places as the spirit moves him, and the spirit often leads to a disturbance. Arrested for causing an obstruction, he declared in court: "Yes, I have just gone where God told me to go, and just done what he wanted me to do. God sent me there, and the devil sent you to stop me." The magistrates—the Mayor, Mr. R. Hill, and Mr. W. H. Fisher—decided to impose a fine of £1 and costs. This "Billy" refused to pay, and hence the only course was to distrain upon his goods. In the good old days "Praying Billy" might have been a prophet, saint, or martyr.

An American, who thinks there is nothing new under the sun, suggests that old Jahveh had his travelling trunk lined with gold as a means of storing electricity. This accounts for Uzzah being electrocuted when he touched the Ark of the Lord, and for the other misfortunes which followed those who interfered with Jahveh's abode.

Ingersoll says if you explain a mystery, it is gone; if you don't explain it, you are gone.

The poor curates are again reminded, by the *Ritualistic Church Review*, of the advantages of celibacy. Horace Smith, in his *Tin Trumpet*, hinted at other advantages than those meant by the *Church Review*, when he defined celibacy as "a vow by which the priesthood swear to content themselves with the wives of other people."

Last week the *Two Worlds* contained a denunciation of Mr. Huggins, a medium of Gateshead, as a fraud, and this week Mr. J. A. Stansfield writes: "I am very sorry to have to inform you that Mr. Kenvin, from Middlesborough, was found to be fraudulently imitating spirits at a *séance* held in Nottingham last night; and as I have been the means of his coming here, I feel it my duty to inform you of what took place."

The *Sydney Bulletin* (Sept. 28), in an article on Mrs. Besant, says: "She is an interpreter, not a creator; she has the feminine quality of receptivity in a very high degree, and the masculine quality of originality in a very low degree. Constance Naden, who had both, died young; and Mrs. Besant should live to be ninety, though nothing she has written will remain; and some things that Miss Naden wrote are imperishable, for of such is the law of compensa-

tions." The *Sydney Bulletin* finds the explanation of the lady's changes of opinion in that "Mrs. Besant is ruled by her emotions, not by her intellect, keen though it be."

The *Westminster Gazette*, alluding to the credulity of the Theosophists, says: "It affects their ethics as well as their logic. It is a queer enough spectacle to see Mrs. Besant, who regretted that her strict intellect could not accept miracles on the Christian evidence, greedily swallowing the 'precipitated' revelations of the Mahatma. But it is a queerer and a much sadder spectacle to find her, on the tardy discovery that she had been deceived, leading the way in a condonation of the deception which makes her whole Church, as it were, a party to it." The *Westminster Gazette* concludes its observation on the whole case by the remark that it illustrates how inevitably the miracle-seeking instinct of this and all similar epochs is linked with the moral crookedness of "Theosophistry."

Sir Robert Ball says there are stars so distant that, if the news of the Incarnation at Bethlehem had been telegraphed to them at the time, the news would not have reached them yet, though travelling at a speed of 180,000 miles in every second.

Politicians do not put their deity to as much use as they did formerly. Sir F. Milner, M.P. for Bassetlaw, is, however, an exception. Replying to the resolution of the Notts Congregational Union, approving of the policy of disestablishing the English Episcopal Church in Wales, this pious baronet is indignant that such a resolution should have been passed, and declares: "I will use every effort to frustrate a policy which I verily believe, if effected, would call down on the country the wrath of the Almighty." Sir F. Milner is doubtless in a position to know the purposes and intentions of the Almighty, who appears to be a wrathful being after his own heart. Our only question is, whether the Almighty he is evidently so intimate with is not, perhaps, after all, the Almighty Devil.

Floods, gales, shipwrecks, and earthquakes, involving considerable loss of life, have been among recent manifestations of our heavenly Father's ever-watchful care. There is not a sparrow falls without his cognisance; but they fall all the same.

A painful sensation was caused in Leicester by the announcement of the suicide of the Rev. T. P. Tretheway, a nephew of the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse. Financial difficulties are stated as the cause of suicide, though the deceased had a stipend of £300 a year.

At Dunkalk two young men went into the Roman Catholic Cathedral to pray. While kneeling at the altar rails one named Roddy suddenly became insane and attacked his companion, who ran out for the police. On returning, Roddy was found hacking at an old woman lying in a pool of blood in the centre of the nave, who is in a precarious condition.

The lady missionaries of Ningpo are going to fire Christianity at the empress of China, much as the Nihilists fire manifestoes at the Czar of Russia. They have had snippets of theology printed on a strip of red satin. This they are going to enclose in a handsome box, which they will present to the empress on her birthday. The empress is said to be a lively young lady, and will probably get a laugh at the missionary manifestation.

It is positively asserted in Rome that various High Church lights of the Church of England will shortly confer with the Pope on a basis for Christian Reunion. Cardinal Vaughan's attack on Anglican orders is, however, felt to stand in the way. The policy of the Roman Church is not to compromise, but to insist on submission, with promise of much toleration afterwards.

The *Glasgow Herald* says Mr. Hugh Price Hughes cannot be taken seriously as a theologian or thinker. "He can popularise some modern religious ideas, but he has not systematised the ideas he has adopted. His lack of anything like scientific precision is glaringly manifest in his style. His pages are all sprinkled with such terms as 'gigantic,' 'terrific,' 'absolute,' 'profound,' 'immense,' 'intense,' 'stupendously significant,' and 'audaciously sublime and gloriously transcendental.'"

To a man of God it of course comes natural to suppose that his will is also the will of the Almighty. The Rev. T. B. Dover, one of the Romanising members of the last London School Board, says: "Without the fear of God it is doubtful whether it will remain a country at all." Possibly Mr. Dover thinks that England will be washed away into the Atlantic Ocean whenever the time arrives that Freethinkers and Jews are not compelled to pay for the religious education of other people's children.

Dean Hole's *Recollections* contains the following story: "A clergyman called upon the wife of a professional book-maker, and reminded her that her husband had promised to be in church on the preceding Sunday, but had not made his appearance. 'Well, sir,' she said, 'the fact is, he was obliged to go from home on a little racing business, but he left word that he should be with you in spirit.'"

A note, coming presumably through the dead-letter office, has reached the *Standard* from Messrs. Nahum, Tate, and Brady, re-telling one of Dean Hole's stories. "If," they write, "Dean Hole had been a Devonshire boy, he would have known how to relish a squab pie, and he could not have failed to call to mind the gleeful gusto with which a West Country choir sang out the second verse of the one hundred and eleventh psalm, or the beaming smile of intelligent sympathy with which the congregation welcomed the words—'And in the pie, and in the pie, and in the pie us search delight.'"

The *Church Times*, speaking of missions in India, says: "Francis Xavier seems to have baptised a million converts himself in the sixteenth century. There are only a quarter of a million more now, after a lapse of three centuries." This does not look very wonderful progress for a religion with God for its author and supporter.

The Government of Madras has passed orders giving magistrates power to prevent the practice of hook-swinging in the Southern Presidency. The immediate cause of the action of the Madras Government appears to have been the death of a man through injuries due to hook-swinging at a festival held in Trichinopoly.

The hook-swinging of the Hindu fakirs is, after all, only another manifestation of the detestation of the flesh which forms a cardinal item of Christianity. The priest gains a reputation for sanctity by his celibacy, the fakir by his austerities; but the former never subjects his power of self-control to such a public test as the fakir who swings with a hook through his muscles.

The *Jewish World* has been raising the question, "If Moses came to London?" He might be disgusted at the extent of the pork trade in Chicago, but he would surely rejoice in London at the extent to which his brethren contrive to "Spoil the Egyptians." They, however, do it rather by lending than borrowing. Moses, Jahveh, or the author of Deuteronomy made a curious slip when he said to his people, The stranger "shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him."

The Rev. D. J. Burrell, in the *Christian Intelligence*, classifies the sensational preachers as of three kinds—those who indulge in pulpit buffoonery, in heresy, and who prophesy smooth things. The last are the most numerous and worst.

A correspondent of the *Yorkshire Post*, in the course of his canvass for the Church candidates in the Manchester School Board election, called at a decent-looking artisan's house. A girl of sixteen or seventeen came to the door, and the following dialogue took place:—"Is your father in?" "No." "Is he a Nonconformist?" "No." "Is he a Roman Catholic?" "No." "Is he a Churchman?" "No." "What is he, please?" "He's a brass finisher." "I mean, where does he go on Sundays?" "Oh, he goes to the 'Brown Cow' on Sundays."

The Rev. H. E. Jennings, incumbent of St. Clement's, East Dulwich, a member of the Council of the Society of St. Osmund, writes to the papers to say that that Society is a very innocuous one indeed; as we daresay it is. Neither Mr. Jennings nor his colleague, Mr. Athelstan Riley, however, explains why, in their service, they pray for the Pope as the head of the Church. It is not easy to reconcile this with adherence to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church, which expressly say that "The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England."

The *Yorkshire Post* allows a correspondent to parade Bishop Moorhouse's nonsense about the results of Secular Education. This anonymous writer winds up by declaring that the next plank in the platform of the Secular Education party will be the destruction of Church schools. Well, it all depends on what is meant. Church schools have a right to exist if they can. But have they a right to exist when they are chiefly supported out of the public taxes? We think not.

Mr. Foote lectured at Derby to a full house, though "the rains descended and the floods came." Some days afterwards, on another wet evening, the Young Men's Christian Association meeting in the Temperance Hall was a failure, though several popular speakers were announced on the program.

Among the "Radical" papers that have boycotted Mr.

Watts's candidature in Finsbury is the *Morning Leader*. One of our friends wrote a letter of complaint to the editor; he was a reader of the journal in question from the first, but he did not receive a reply. A few days afterwards the following passage appeared in a *Leader* editorial: "In the leisure of that retirement which, we trust, will come to the Diggletes, they will reflect no doubt on the dangers of being led by an ultra-logical enthusiast, more especially when they see how near he has brought them to that *horror of horrors, a purely secular educational system.*" (The italics are ours.) If this passage is serious, it shows the "Radicalism" of the *Leader* in a vivid light. If it is sarcastic, it illustrates the *Leader's* sincerity.

Emperor William, addressing the Guards' Recruits, told them to remember their oath. "My commands," he said, "no matter whether they call upon you to defend the Fatherland or to maintain order or religion, you have to obey to the death." This is a very pleasant gospel for the Emperor. The other fellows have to do the dying. Some day or other the Germans will refuse to fight for "religion" at William's order; and if their rifles should go off the wrong way, it will be very awkward for him.

There is a pretty row amongst the Christian Evidence people at Newcastle. James Marchant, who advertises himself as "ex-Secularist," has struck out a new line of business. He is attacking the Catholics, and this has brought upon him the censure of Mr. Waterman, one of the London secretaries of the Christian Evidence Society, and the public repudiation of the Newcastle Branch. Marchant doesn't mind this, however; all he wants is a crowd, and a good collection.

Mr. George Wise was brought to Newcastle by the Christian Evidence people, and "Olympia" was taken for his lectures. Marchant was billed to lecture at Sunderland, but he broke his engagement there and ran up to Newcastle, where he orated at the Circus, which is next door to "Olympia." By the aid of lavish advertising and a brass band, Marchant spoiled his rival's meetings; and there is weeping, and wailing, or, at any rate, plenty of gnashing of teeth, in Christian Evidence circles on the Tyneside. How they love one another!

KEEPING HELL-FIRE ALIGHT!

It is a common thing for Christian ministers to pretend, when debating with sceptics, that the old ideas about hell are no longer held by Christians. When talking to their congregations they, however, adopt a very different tone. A little book, *The Blessed Sacrament* (Mowbray & Co., Farringdon-street), much in favor among Church parsons, in its sixth edition, reveals the pleasing fact that an effort is being made to keep the fire of hell well alight. The following quotation might have been written by Spurgeon:—

"When they who have led lives of pleasure, of covetousness, of self-willed sin—when such, I say, come to lie upon their death-beds, they may perhaps feel that awful, impossible wish that they could pass into nothing, for to be nothing were better than to be in the strong grip of Satan, amid the intolerable heats of hell. Dying sinners may feel that their immortality is to be an unendingness of pain, of remorse, of despair; and the deadness and the dumbness of passing into nothing, though it would surely make even a dying sinner shudder, would be more bearable to think of than the life in hell—the living in fire, the feeding on fire, the breathing fire, the being clothed in fire, the thirsting for cool water where all, all is fire—above, beneath, on this side, and on that side, a far-stretching country of burning fire," etc.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ELECTION FUND.

Further Subscriptions Received:—

C. M. B., £10; Collected at Mr. Watts's Lecture at Liverpool, £1 12s.; Collected at the Hall of Science, 19s. 3d.; W. S. Hurstleigh, 10s.; J. Murray, 5s. 6d.; Fairplay, 5s.; T. Holstead, 2s. 6d.; Denny, 2s. 6d.; P. S. C., 2s. 6d.; H. Abbott, 2s. 6d.; C. Heaton, 2s.; Miss Simpson, 2s.; Mr. Simpson, 1s.; Kelsey, 1s.; J. Burns, 1s.; J. Wildman, 1s.; and sixpence each from the following: H. E. H., A. Watts, E. M., H. J. Z., E. Stevens, J. K., H. Hayman, Belstan, and C. Brown; H. M. Ridgway, 5s. Per Charles Watts from Liverpool: William Robinson, £2 10s.; E. Sims, 10s.; A. Friend, 10s.; Mr. Sykes, 2s.
GEO. WARD, *Treasurer*, 91 Mildmay-park, N.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 25, Co-operative Hall, Carr-street, Ipswich :—
11, "Secularism and Social Progress"; 3, "Heaven and Hell :
Where and What?" 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

December 2, Camberwell; 9 and 16, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 2, Newcastle-on-Tyne (Sunday Society); 3, West Auckland; 4, York; 9, Manchester; 10, Derby; 23 and 30, Hall of Science.—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.

C. E. SMITH.—See "Sugar Plums." Thanks for scraps.

JOSEPH BROWN.—As the *Newcastle Leader* has not reached us, we cannot criticise Archdeacon Farrar's sermon reported in it. No doubt it is flabby and flatulent.

E. SMEDLEY.—Thanks for cuttings. Your friend is playing tricks. "Hate" in the text always meant what it means now. As to Shakespeare, he is not so obscene as the Bible by a long way; besides, you forget that the Holy Ghost should be cleaner than the Swan of Avon. With regard to hospitals, they are subscribed to by Freethinkers as well as by other citizens, although the Christians are in power in every one of them, and maintain religious tests even in the nursing departments.

A READER.—Apply to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

H. BRYCESON.—We wish hundreds had acted in the same way. See paragraph.

J. H. R.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. M. JACOB.—We hope this will meet your eyes. Thanks for your good wishes, as well as for the subscription.

WOOLGAR.—We are obliged.

A. A.—Thanks for the *Sketch* drawing.

T. EVANS.—Hardly up to publication standard.

T. ELLIOTT.—It appeared in the *Freethinker* many years ago, and has appeared in scores of journals since. Thanks, all the same, for your trouble.

S. G.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. J. MARSH.—John Trevor is a well-meaning sentimentalist. He will never debate the "God question" with Mr. Watts or anyone else. That is our opinion, anyhow. Still, there is no harm in trying his metal.

J. HENSON.—Much obliged.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Derby Daily Telegraph—Glasgow Herald—Reading Observer—Hull Daily News—Liverpool Mercury—Isle of Man Times—Retford Record—Dover Observer—Independent Pulpit—Truthseeker—Sunday Companion—Twentieth Century—Chatham and Rochester Observer—Freidenker—Der Armo Teufel—Western Figaro—Birmingham Daily Gazette.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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.

MR. FOOTE had a splendid audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, including a considerable proportion of ladies. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed as he exposed the real objects of Church and Dissent in the School Board struggle. After paying a handsome tribute to Mr. Charles Watts as a "secular" candidate, and to the men and women who were so zealously supporting him in Finsbury, Mr. Foote delivered a peroration which was vociferously applauded. The standard of Secular Education, he said, had been unfurled, and if its champions were repulsed they

would attack the superstitionists again and again, until they achieved a final victory and saw their routed foes flying to every point of the compass.

The Ipswich Branch was inaugurated by Mr. Foote some two years ago, when he visited the city in company with Mr. Forder. To-day (November 25) Mr. Foote visits Ipswich again, and delivers three lectures in the Co-operative Hall. The subjects are interesting, and the Ipswich friends hope to see a good many "saints" from the surrounding district.

Mr. Touzeau Parris occupies the platform at the Hall of Science this Sunday (November 25) both morning and evening. His subjects will be found in the Lecture Notices. They are sure to be ably treated, and we hope to hear that Mr. Parris has excellent audiences.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Liverpool last Sunday to very enthusiastic audiences. Friends were present from Warrington and Southport. There was a good gathering in the afternoon, and in the evening the hall was filled. Great interest was manifested in Mr. Watts's candidature for the School Board, and between four and five pounds were received towards his expenses.

Mr. Robert Forder lectures to-day (November 25) in the Secular Hall, Manchester. South Lancashire friends should give him a hearty welcome. Mr. Forder is a most loyal servant of Freethought, and his lectures—which are now but occasional—are always full of interest and instruction.

Mr. Sam Standing polled 1,962 votes at the election for the Rochdale School Board—a result which, although insufficient to place him on the list, is by no means discouraging, since he had been only resident in the town during the last three months.

The electors of Bradford have fifteen votes each for the School Board. Freethinkers should give the whole fifteen to Mr. John Grange, who stands on the plank of Secular Education. They should also induce as many friends as possible to go and do likewise. We heartily hope that Mr. Grange may be placed at the head of the poll.

The Camberwell Branch are maintaining their open-air platform at Station-road during the winter months, and will continue to do so, weather permitting. Freethinkers in the district are invited to support by their presence.

On Friday evening (Nov. 16) a capital meeting was held in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, in favor of Secular Education. Mr. G. W. Foote presided, and his address evoked much enthusiasm. Mr. George Standing followed with an exceptionally able and telling speech; after which he took the chair, which Mr. Foote vacated in order to rush off to another meeting in Finsbury. Speeches were afterwards delivered by Messrs. Moss, Snell, Heaford, and Dobson—the last being the "secular" candidate in East Lambeth. All the speakers were in their very best form, and their efforts were highly appreciated. A resolution in favor of Secular Education was carried amidst great applause.

The *Daily News*, which has carefully boycotted Mr. Watts's election meetings in Finsbury, while giving glowing reports of "Progressive" meetings less numerous attended, was obliged to mention his candidature in its School Board article on Tuesday. This is what it said: "Mr. Watts takes the place of Mr. Forder, who came forward on the same platform and stood at the head of the unsuccessful candidates with a total of 8,943 votes. This might, perhaps, be taken to indicate about 1,500 Secularists among the 87,000 electors, and as Mr. Forder last time came within about 140 of the lowest successful candidate, Mr. Watts may not improbably come in this time. Election candidature, like rebellion, is justified by success, and it cannot be denied that Secularism came so near winning a seat last time that his prominent representative of the party has a right to try his chances. At the same time it puts the practical effect of the cumulative vote in a very striking light to perceive that, with an electorate of 87,000 voters, about 1,500 of them stand a very fair chance of returning a member. A fifty-eighth part of the electors may get one-sixth of the representation. This is the representation of a minority with a vengeance."

Perhaps the *Daily News* does not believe in the cumulative vote. We do—at least in School Board elections, where it is so important that the voice of minorities should be heard, in order to prevent the frightful blunder of stereotyping our educational system. Anyhow, the cumulative vote obtains, and it is as fair for the "Progressives" as for the Secular Educationists. The *Daily News* should not go into figures without stating that in 1891 only about sixteen per cent. of the Finsbury electors voted at the School Board elections. When that fact is stated the "fifty-eighth part" is seen to be "Progressive" arithmetic.

Mr. Montefiore, the Jewish candidate in the City of London, will have nothing to do with the religious question. He says it is one for Christians, and he will not meddle with it. This is at least amusing. For ever so many centuries the Christians persecuted, plundered, and massacred the Jews; and now the Jew looks on with a wreathed upper-lip and raised eyebrows, while the Christians "go for" each other.

Young Freethinkers are invited to correspond with I. C. McCorquodale, 14 New Inn Entry, Dundee, who desires to extend the working of the discussion circular commenced a few months ago. In connection with the circular, in which members touch upon polemical matters, the leading foreign periodicals of liberal tendency, printed in the English language, will be circulated. Intending members should write as early as possible (enclosing a stamp), when fuller particulars will be given in reply.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, who has just been elected President of the Secular organisation in the United States, forwards us a copy of his long-announced *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*. It is a big, handsome volume of nearly a thousand pages, adorned with many fine portraits, a few questionable ones, and one execrable caricature of Mr. G. W. Foote. Mr. Putnam is to be congratulated on the completion of this arduous labor. He has surveyed Freethought from 1492 to 1892, and the result, if somewhat diffuse, is intensely interesting. The style is graphic and vivid. A noble enthusiasm shines forth from every page. Some of the philosophical chapters on Spinoza, Comte, etc., are written with care and insight as well as impartiality. We shall take an early opportunity of dealing at greater length with this noticeable and really valuable book.

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* for November gives a portrait of Mr. J. D. Shaw, of Waco, Texas, who has for many years sustained the *Independent Pulpit* with credit as an organ of Freethought. "Corvinus" begins a caustic criticism upon the attempts to reconcile Religion with Science, and Dr. T. W. Bowles writes well on "Orthodox Religion."

Mr. Forder is issuing a subscribers' edition of 250 copies of *Voltaire: His Life and Works*, at two shillings. They will be printed on superior paper and bound.

The *Co-operative News* (November 17) has an interesting article on "Morelly's Code of Nature," a work attributed to Diderot, and included in the Amsterdam edition of his works in 1773. As the Code virtually forms part of d'Holbach's *System of Nature*, it probably underwent Diderot's revision. It is issued in pamphlet form, with an Introduction by Mr. Foote. Mr. Morley, in his account of Diderot, has no mention of Morelly, but he was evidently a remarkable man. He put forward an ideal communist scheme, under the title of *Naufrage des îles flottantes*, 1753, in which he anticipated many ideas usually accounted modern. We hope the able article in the *Co-operative News* will elicit further information concerning a notable work.

As two clergymen are putting themselves forward as candidates for the Gillingham District Council, we are very pleased to notice that the Co-operative Society have put forward Mr. Boorman, a well-known Secularist, as a candidate for the New Brompton ward. We hope all our friends in the Chatham district will work for Mr. Boorman's return.

A meeting will be held at Mr. Davey's, 21 Castle-street, Kingsland, at 12 o'clock on Sunday morning next, to which all Freethinkers in the neighborhood are invited, to consider what steps should be taken for a more effective open-air propaganda in Kingsland during the next season.

London readers are reminded that the Freethinkers' Annual Concert and Ball takes place on Wednesday next. In addition to the dancing a good concert will be provided, and we hope to see a large gathering.

Mr. Millar, the Trades Council candidate, has won a seat on the Birmingham School Board. He ran on the "secular education" ticket, and was supported by the local Secularists.

Mr. A. B. Moss had good audiences on Sunday at Bolton, and met with a very cordial reception. In the evening Mr. Moss told what the Secular party were doing in London in regard to the School Board elections, and a strong hope was expressed by many that Mr. Watts would be successful in Finsbury.

Mr. Foote's recent visit to Plymouth has stirred up the local Freethinkers, and a meeting was held on November 14 for the purpose of re-forming the Branch of the National Secular Society. A few of the weaker brethren suggested

that a Society should be formed distinct from Secularism, in order to avoid prejudice; but the majority would not hear of it, and it was resolved to sail under the old flag. One incentive to this course was Mr. Foote's promise to visit Plymouth again in the spring. Mr. Smith was elected president, Mr. Pascoe treasurer, Mr. Rennolls librarian, and Mr. Berry secretary. The address of the last is 3 Union-terrace, Plymouth. Nineteen members joined on the spot, and no doubt a good many more will be enrolled before Christmas. Readers of the *Freethinker* in the district are earnestly invited to communicate with Mr. Berry without delay. Union is strength.

The Birmingham *Argus*, referring to Mr. Foote's lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall, allows that he presented his views "with a great deal of eloquence and power." It estimates the audience at 2,000 persons. But, if the Town Hall seats 3,500, there must have been nearly 3,000 present.

The Derby *Daily Telegraph* gave a fair report of Mr. Foote's recent lecture in the Athenæum on "Why I am an Atheist." Mention is made of the "large and appreciative audience."

Sketch publishes a cartoon that would have been "awfully blasphemous" in the pre-*Freethinker* days. A district visitor is reading the Bible to a sick old woman lying in bed. She comes to the passage, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," and the female Methusaleh exclaims, "Let 'em gnash 'em as 'as 'em; I ain't had none for this last thirty year." It is an old joke in a new position.

The Hull Branch is not able to obtain a hall at present for lectures with a charge for admission. Mr. Stanley Jones's recent meetings at Hull were, therefore, on the "free admission" basis. The hall was crowded, the collections covered the actual expenses, and two new members were gained by the Branch.

The Hon. Lyulph Stanley, a leading "Progressive" on the London School Board, being interviewed by the *Pall Mall Gazette* (Nov. 19), made the following admission with respect to Mr. Gladstone's letter on the Education question: "Mr. Gladstone's view, for years and years, has been that public education should be secular, and that was the line he took in 1870, when the Education Act was going through the House of Commons. He said then to a member of Parliament, who was talking to him—referring to Dr. Hook, Dean of Chichester—that he was the grand man, who had found the true solution of the question by united secular and separate religious instruction, and that we should all have to come to that at last."

WINWOOD READE.

II.—THE ISLAND OF ST. VINCENT.

READE enjoyed our company. I had arranged a cavalcade for the morrow, and requisitioned all the horses, about eight or nine. M. de Bonnefoy, and several French officers, joined us. Reade was up before daybreak, and met us at the jetty. We started for the stable-yard. The place was closed. One of the officers incautiously opened a little side door, and entered the yard. A loud bark, followed by a shout and a curse, "*Diable!*" startled us. The officer rushed out, clapping his hands on the back part (Hebrew: *achere*) which Yaveh showed to Moses. A dog had bitten him. I could not help laughing at this *fâcheux contretemps* and got into the saddle. The injured officer found the ride across the island somewhat painful. Reade and I kept close together, and spoke enthusiastically about the glorious view that presented itself. The air was beautifully fresh and cool, tempered by the tradewind. We were out till afternoon, and returned to the steamer for another symposium. Reade, who did not speak French fluently, threw the officer into convulsions of laughter by his quaint remarks about gorillas, which he had not seen, and the rascally niggers (men and brethren) debased by Christianity and trade rum. After copious libations, one of the gentlemen begged me to bring Reade again, saying: "*Votre anglais est impayable.*" I counselled Reade to pay a visit to Senegal, and gave him letters of introduction to M. Guimberteau, my kind host, and others.

The worthy Consul, Mr. Miller, having heard of our doings, invited us to spend the Sunday evening in his mountain villa. An English captain joined us. On arrival

we were struck with Mr. Miller's beautiful garden—an oasis in a desert. The soil had been brought from Europe as ballast. The island is of volcanic formation, and destitute of vegetation. The soil, a misnomer, appeared to me a kind of powder and ashes, mixed. After tea the kind hostess requested me to play on the harmonium. My instrument is the piano. Yet I think I managed fairly well, and played two of the mournful preludes of Chopin—the Andante from the "Kreutzer Sonata," and part of the Recordare from Mozart's "immortal Requiem." The hostess observed that the music reminded her of heaven. True. The Recordare transports me to an abode of bliss that can only be imagined by the initiated, the elect, and not revealed by the gods—where everything is ethereal, beautiful, and pure; when the mind has disentangled itself from the grip of that loathsome envelope, the body.

The descent from the mountain was not accomplished without a slight accident. The Captain, who did not sit firm in the saddle, was shot over his horse's head into the dust, and Reade and I had to put him up again. In the morning I received another visit from Reade, who was preparing for his trip to Senegal. The Brazilian mail steamer, "La Navarre," came into harbor, and I was transferred on board. Several Italian operatic artistes, returning from Rio de Janeiro, were among the passengers; and music became one of the chief attractions. Reade now began to regret that he could not join us. The following day he invited me to dinner at the hotel. We were by ourselves, and talked seriously about what we were going to do. He took everything *au sérieux*. I never could. I consider our existence on this dirt-ball a grotesque farce. We must make the best of it by making merry over it, à la Scarron. I quoted the *Ode of Horace* to Thaliarchus:

. atque benignius
Deprome quadrimum Sabina
O Thaliarche, merum diotâ :
Permitte divis caetera !

"Bring up the more generous wine, four year old, from our Sabine jar; leave the rest to the gods."—"Tous les méchants sont buveurs d'eau; c'est bien prouvé par le déluge." Reade said to me, "You are always thirsty! Just like a tender plant." "Yes, but you never drink water!" "Bah! Think of all the damned sinners drowned in the flood. How the waters stank of carrion! Noah's gorge must have risen at it. No wonder he asked for something short." "But, surely, you do not believe in such a silly fable?" "Pourquoi pas?" Yavch ought to be honored for having produced the vine, or anyone else. Wine maketh glad the heart of man. "Farceur!"

But Reade, very serious, observed that he could not look upon life in that light. He considered the earth a charnel-house. I tried to laugh him out of it. He then observed that, being very young (about six years his junior), I would, with advancing years, become more thoughtful and sedate, and employ my diversified talents for the benefit of mankind. Mankind. "*Razza maladetta!*" I have not changed at all. Each year has confirmed my view that our race, originated by a fortuitous circumstance, and has no future; that the earth will be destroyed, or rolled back into father Sun, in so many millions of years, and that there will be an end of all—a consummation devoutly to be wished. If I thought there were a personal god, I would curse him every day of my life for making the innocent suffer.

Through the books of Winwood Reade runs a vein of sadness. He thought that with the diffusion of true knowledge the race would become noble, elevated—virtuous, in fact. I do not think that any such happiness is in store for mankind. Schopenhauer was right when he asserted that there is hardly one noble character among many thousands. And, to make them all noble, convert them into angels! I dared not tell Reade about Schopenhauer. "*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*" would have made him more gloomy still.

At last the hour of separation struck. Reade embarked on board the colonial steamer. Waving of handkerchiefs, a last fond look, and the vessel left for Senegal. My gloomy thoughts were soon dispelled when I found myself surrounded by a hundred and fifty first-class passengers bound for Europe, and all in the best possible spirits. The captain declared, on arrival at Bordeaux, that the consumption of champagne had been enormous.

Eight months later I heard from Reade, who had returned to England and published his book. He was then

a member of the Conservative Club, St. James's, and wrote to me on paper bearing the stamp of that highly-refined, aristocratic, and essentially patriotic Tory institution. As an enthusiastic follower of Darwin, he threw himself heart and soul into the cause of progress. His bold assertions, his splendid style, attracted the attention of *littérateurs*, scientists, and politicians. They could not refute his arguments, but resorted to weapons which the men who wear the sable livery of obscurantism know how to handle so well—calumnies, slanders, abuse, and lies! "*Omne hoc balatronum genus.*" An aged scientist, of the anti-Darwinian school, who would have made a good bishop, and who tried to harmonise biblical fictions and ethnological facts, took up the cudgels against Reade, and a pack of howling ecclesiastics, who found the ground under their feet shaken by Reade's incontrovertible arguments, made scurrilous (mostly anonymous) attacks upon the young author. His dignified demeanor, answering vile abuse with dispassionate argumentation, simply astounded me. A fellow who had dared to give me the lie—why, I would have fattened the region kites with this slave's offal. The aged professor who cast ridicule upon Reade's African exploration never had the courage to venture into a tropical jungle in search of gorillas. He had the impudence to deny the existence of the famous apes. His experience had been acquired at the University, in the cushioned chairs of the British Museum, and the menagerie of Regent's Park.

In 1872 Reade published his famous work, *The Martyrdom of Man*. The reptile brood renewed their attacks. As a man endowed with the most noble sentiments and delicate sensibilities, he must have smarted under the blows of his cowardly assailants; but he bore all this wretchedness with resignation and fortitude, just as he had endured great privations and illness in the interior of Africa. The letters he wrote to me at that period are unfortunately lost. They contained not a word of abuse. He believed that time would prove him to be right and his assailants wrong. How true! If there is a Providence, good heavens, that Providence has amply avenged him; for his enemies are all in the dust, where serpents crawl. *Apropos*: Serpents do not eat dust, as it says in Genesis; they are fond of dainty bits, and leave dust, or mould, alone. I have dissected several of these beautiful animals, but discovered no dust.

In 1873 he was sent by the proprietors of the *Times* as special correspondent to the Ashantee war (*Battue*, I call it). His feeble constitution became seriously impaired by exposure in that fever-stricken land.

In the beginning of 1875 symptoms of pulmonary consumption and heart disease declared themselves. He wrote his last work, *The Outcast*, when death held him in its grip. Two devoted friends carried him to the Old House, at Wimbledon, thinking that the fresh air would benefit him. On Friday, April 23, he became very weak, and his friends perceived that the end was near.

On Saturday afternoon he expired in the arms of his beloved uncle, Charles Reade, fully conscious of all that was passing around him, and convinced of the truth of his gospel, the gospel of Humanity. What a noble life was his!

Mort pour l'avenir,
Ouvrier de l'humanité.

He died in his thirty-seventh year. His ambition was to serve his fellow men; to make us wiser and better. His sole reward while he lived—bitter hatred from those who preach the gospel of love. From his tomb has arisen a sacred light that will guide mankind to a higher state. "*Populo eripuit errores.*" He has given us all his best energies, his life's blood. He martyred himself to make others happy—happier than he could be. Fortune never smiled upon him. This good man will live in the memory of all who revere the truth. For her sake he dared all, suffered and died. I bless his memory. "*Integer vitæ scelerisque purus.*"

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

Scene, Strand; crowd round a man rolling in agony, and foaming at the mouth. Freethinker (pushing through)—"What's the matter with him?" Spiritualist (solemnly)—"He is possessed of evil spirits." Freethinker (catching the odor of forty-rod whiskey)—"For once we are agreed."

BOOK CHAT.

The Better World, by E. B. Southwick, M.D., is published by the *Truthseeker* Company, New York. The title suggests heaven, but the writer is only concerned with the heaven he has dreamed on earth. His work is a Utopian romance, narrating his fancied experiences amongst an ideal community, in which wisdom, virtue, and happiness prevail, and women take the lead in most things. One point is rather odd: the women, in consequence of suckling their young artificially, have no more bosom than the men; and, as both sexes dress alike, it is only by the broader hips and smaller feet that you know you are talking to a female. Dr. Southwick's romance is in some respects interesting, but in other respects rather tiresome. It is a form of composition to which only great art and high literary form can reconcile us. We think Dr. Southwick would be better advised to deliver his message to the world in a straightforward exposition.

* * *

Religion and the Bible, by F. D. Cummings, reaches us from the same publishing house. It contains much shrewd criticism of the orthodox faith from the standpoint of a Spiritualist. Being written with great simplicity and lucidity, and with unmistakable candor and earnestness, it should be useful in introducing Freethought to orthodox readers. That the writer still believes in immortality, not as an article of faith, but as the disclosure of reason, perhaps adds to its utility in this respect.

* * *

The Poetical Works of James Thomson (B.V.), complete in two volumes, is announced for this Christmas by Mr. Dobell, Charing Cross-road. This will be the first collected edition of the poet's works, and will contain some unpublished poems and a portrait. The edition will be limited to a thousand copies.

* * *

Is there a Devil? or, Why Sin is Permitted, by E. Huslier (London: Millington Bros.), throws no new light, nor, indeed, as far as we have been able to discern, any light at all, on the problems with which it pretends to deal. Mr. Huslier sets out by the old question, "If God could prevent evil and did not, where is His benevolence? If He wished to prevent evil and could not, where is His power? Here the Infidel is baffled, and his proud reason staid" [*sic*]. Mr. Huslier solves the problem by saying, "The Bible is truth." He finds it teaches a personal devil, who is, according to Christ, "the prince of this world," and who carries out his design by the agency of evil spirits. It is a comfortable belief. What the type of Christians represented by this book would do without their Scapegoat is, indeed, a problem. The only value we find in the volume is that of displaying what stupid credulity remains in the nineteenth century as a foundation for its Christianity.

DAMP! OR BE DAMNED!

A CHRISTIAN RONDEAU.

"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."—*Jesus Christ*

UNLESS you're damped you'll go to hell,
Howe'er your trustful faith may swell!
As Jews perforce were circumcised,
Believers must be all baptised;
Or else, as scriptures plainly tell,
In endless fires be made to yell
By him that "doeth all things well."
O yes! you'll all be carbonised
Unless you're damped.

Belief alone will ne'er repel
Old Nick, nor break his wicked spell;
But faith and damp, we're all advised,
Will render Satan exorcised.
Now, don't forget! you'll go to hell
Unless you're damped.
G. L. MACKENZIE.

MR. FOOTE'S FIGHTING FUND.

Subscriptions Received—Sixth List.

Miss Paulina Hull, 10s.; H. E. M., 6d.; H. Hayman, 6d.; E. M., 6d.; T. Shedd, 6d.; H. J. L., 6d.; G. Stevens, 6d.; J. K., 6d.; Belsten, 6d.; C. Brown, 6d.; A. Watts, 6d.; C. M. Jacob, £2; T. Evans, 2s. 6d.

Voltaire.

On the whole, Englishmen are generally not at all aware how completely Voltaire succeeded in the great controversial object of his life, and that on the continent there is certainly not above one educated man in ten who has not very great doubts of the reality of any of the miracles in the Bible; and this I believe true even of Germany.—*John Sterling*.

More than a century ago Catholicism, wrapped in robes red with the innocent blood of millions, holding in her frantic clutch crowns and sceptres, honors and gold, the keys of heaven and hell—trampling beneath her feet the liberties of nations, in the proud moment of almost universal dominion, felt within her heartless breast the deadly dagger of Voltaire.—*Ingersoll*.

In the presence of this society, frivolous and dismal, Voltaire alone, having before his eyes those united forces, the court, the nobility, capital; that unconscious power, the blind multitude; that terrible magistracy, so severe to subjects, so docile to the master, crushing and flattering, kneeling upon the people before the king; that clergy, vile *mélange* of hypocrisy and fanaticism; Voltaire alone, I repeat it, declared war against that coalition of all the social iniquities, against that enormous and terrible world, and he accepted battle with it. And what was his weapon? That which has the lightness of the wind and the power of the thunderbolt—a pen!—*Victor Hugo*.

Voltaire's task, however, was never directly political, but spiritual, to shake the foundations of that religious system which professed to be founded on the revelation of Christ. Was he not right? If we find ourselves walking amid a generation of cruel and unjust and darkened spirits, we may be assured that it is their beliefs on what they deem highest that have made them so. There is no counting with certainty on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshipping an unjust divinity, nor on their humanity so long as they incorporate inhuman motives in their most sacred dogma, nor on their reasonableness while they rigorously decline to accept reason as a test of truth.—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P.*

Zadig and the Griffins.

In course of conversation a warm dispute arose upon the law of Zoroaster, which prohibits the eating of griffins. Why forbid griffins, said some, if the animal does not exist? [As Wesley said, the Bible would not have prohibited witchcraft were there no witches.] Certainly they must exist, said others, since Zoroaster forbids them to be eaten. Zadig, wishing to reconcile them, said: "If there really are griffins, let us not eat them; and if there are none, there will be less danger of our doing so. Thus we shall be sure of obeying Zoroaster." A learned scholar, who had written thirteen volumes displaying the properties of griffins, took the matter seriously, and threatened to accuse Zadig before the archimage Yebor,* who would fain have impaled Zadig to do honor to the Sun, and then would have recited the breviary with greater satisfaction. His friend, Cador (a friend is worth more than a hundred priests), went to old Yebor, crying, "Long live the Sun and the Griffins! Beware of punishing Zadig, for he is a saint; he has griffins in his inner court, and he eats them not; and his accuser is an heretic who dares to maintain that rabbits divide the hoof [see Lev. xi. 5, 6], and are not unclean." In that case, said Yebor, shaking his tonsured pate, we must impale Zadig for having thought wrongly concerning griffins, and the other for having spoken badly of rabbits. Cador, however, put a stop to the affair by means of a maid of honor, who had great credit in the college of the Magi. So that nobody was impaled, upon which many doctors murmured and presaged the downfall of Babylon.—*Voltaire*.

Monuments to Error.

The lovers of miracles say they must be true. There are so many monuments in proof. And we say they must be false, since the vulgar have believed them. A fable is current in one generation, it is established in the second, becomes respectable in the third, and the fourth elevates temples thereto.—*Voltaire*.

Strange that as soon as a woman arrives at self-consciousness her first thought is of a new dress.—*Heine on "Eve's Desire for a Fig-leaf."*

* An anagram of Boyer, a bishop by whom Voltaire had been subject to repeated persecution.

A TRUE PROPHET.

PROPHECY, as such, seems to have been a very common method in the remote past for recording history. Those unacquainted with ancient customs, when looking back upon what purports to be prophetic revelation, are confounded at its accuracy, real names sometimes appearing, though such persons or places did not really exist until centuries after the alleged prophecy. Glance through what passes for history, labelled New Testament, and we are frank to admit, if there was such a character as Jesus, and he is correctly reported in the gospels, then there is one genuine prophet reflected on our times, and that person was Jesus. Our Christian friends, we are sure, will thank us for this admission. A prophet, if you please, reader, not a God. What are the proofs?

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."—Matthew x. 34.

"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death."—Matthew x. 21.

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."—Matthew x. 35.

"For, from henceforth, there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and the two against three."—Luke xii. 52.

Go, read the bloody history of Christianity from the time these terrible words are claimed to have been uttered, and what a literal fulfilment! Discord, violence, wars, and death mark every page of history from that time to this.

But That Fly Got Away.

A clergyman, remarkable for the simplicity and force of his style, was one day discoursing on the text, "Unless ye repent, ye shall all perish." Anxious to impress upon his hearers the importance of the solemn truth conveyed in the passage, he made use of a very striking figure.

"Yes, my friends," he emphatically urged; "unless ye repent, ye shall as sure perish" (placing one of his fingers on the wing of a large fly which alighted on his Bible, and having his right hand uplifted) "just as sure, my friends, as I'll kill this blue-fly."

Before the blow was struck the fly got off, upon which the minister, at the top of his voice, exclaimed:—

"There's a chance for ye yet, my friends!"

One of His Lambs.

The Rev. Dr. Meredith, a well-known Brooklyn clergyman, tries to cultivate friendly relations with the younger members of his flock. In a recent talk to his Sunday school he urged the children to speak to him whenever they met. The next day a dirty-faced urchin, smoking a cigarette, and having a generally disreputable appearance, accosted him in the street with "How do, Doc?"

The clergyman stopped, and cordially inquired, "And who are you, sir?"

"I'm one of your little lambs," replied the boy, affably; "fine day, ain't it?" And tilting his hat back on his head he swaggered off, leaving the worthy divine speechless with amazement.

Another Recruit for Heaven.

What is the use of a hell, anyway? The murderers all go to heaven. Only a few days ago James Dooley was hanged at Fort Madison, Wis. He had murdered his aunt and girl cousin. It was a remarkable event in criminal history. The clergy virtually deserted him in his terrible extremity; not one stood by to cheer him on his way to glory; and yet the youthful culprit concluded a brief speech to those who attended the exhibition with, "I have placed my trust in God." This entitles him to a seat in paradise, according to popular belief, so now he is clearly one of the redeemed. It seems rough on the victims that they must be slaughtered and go to hell, to enable their assassins to bask in a Savior's love.—*Progressive Thinker.*

"He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and the presence of the Lamb" (Revelation xiv. 10). Hell is conceived so horrible as to make heaven an impossibility; for what must be the temper of the elect few who could taste an hour's felicity while the immeasurable myriads of their dearest fellow-beings—their husbands and wives, their mothers, their children—were writhing in eternal torments within sight and hearing of their paradise?—*W. R. Greg, "The Creed of Christendom."*

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES AND MIRACLES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There are about 600,000 people in Liverpool, mostly Christians. Instead of which the Christian Evidence Society (London) some years ago sent down "one of their best men" to convert the people with up-to-date Christian evidences. And Baxter has visited us with his wonderful menagerie (on canvas), but still we have no Christian evidences. Instead of which we have plenty of people in our midst who, according to the Scriptures—I mean the newspapers—have been to Holywell and got cured. But we are still in want of evidence. And some persons are alleged to have been converted from Secularism to Christianity, and been duly gazetted; yet the great bulk of the said 600,000 persons, mostly Christians, take no notice of either miracles or conversions. This is a sad, sad world! On Sunday mornings the church bells send forth unmelodious sounds in fifty different sharps and flats; and as many different kinds of sharps and flats assemble in reply to the summons. Wherefore, I say, this is a sad, sad world! Miracles are "off," conversions are "off." The tall hat of respectability is THE ONLY WEAR.

DECLINED WITH THANKS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the last issue of his paper the Rev. Mr. Woffendale prints a so-called criticism on a paragraph in my leaflet, *Theism Criticised*, referring to the original form of Jewish worship, and invites me to reply to it in his columns. However willing I might be to give to the readers of his paper some much-needed enlightenment on such an important subject, the conduct and the peculiar controversial methods of the rev. gentleman prevent me from taking up the gauntlet thrown down to me. Kindly grant me space to state, once for all, that until he has replied to the charges of untruthfulness, vulgarity, and dishonesty brought by me against him in my article, "A Black Badger Drawn," and in a letter published in the Christian Evidence paper of September 29, he is not an opponent I care to have anything to do with. Let him clear himself, if he can, from the charge of having grossly and intentionally misrepresented what I had written in my leaflet, and then, but not till then, it will be time to invite me to discuss fresh questions with him.—Yours truly,
F. S. PAUL.

PROFANE JOKES.

Visiting Parson—"Now, children, what do you think the shepherds were doing out all night on the Plains of Bethlehem?" Bright Boy of the School—"They was possum shooting."

Teacher (to a boy in the school)—"God can see you everywhere, my boy." Boy—"Can he see me now?" Teacher—"Yes." Boy—"Can he see me in our backyard?" Teacher—"Yes." Boy—"Well, we haven't got one."

"Freddie, when you said your prayers last night didn't you ask God to make you a good boy?" "Yes, mamma." "Well, you've been as bad as ever to-day." "But, mamma, you can't blame me if God doesn't do just what I ask him."

Scene, coasting steamer; choppy sea. Sea-sick Harmy Captain agonising in the lee-scuppers—"O Lord, sink this ship and put me out of my misery!" Miner, standing by (wrathfully)—"What the devil d'yer mean by praying God to sink the ship and take everybody to hell with yer? If yer wants to die, cut yer throat, or, if yer like, I'll hoist yer overboard!"

When the late Lord Coleridge was at Oxford he was one day reading the lessons in church, and by mistake read the second in place of the first. To conclude in the orthodox manner was hardly correct, as it was not the *second* lesson, but the *first*; so after a moment's hesitation he found the appropriate word, and said, "Here endeth the *wrong* lesson."

By some chance the tourist stayed to Sunday-school. A young lady with a sweet face, and, unless the tourist's aging eyes deceived him, a stylish bonnet, was explaining the meaning of the word "missionary." "Missionary," she said, "is from the Latin *missionarius*—which means, one sent." She looked heavenly enough to inspire a whole cargo of missionaries, and seemed to possess enough learning for an entire lexicon, and the tourist did not doubt her. "Now, Charley," she said to a little urchin, with shining morning face, "what is a missionary?" "One penny."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Independent Labor Party." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Touzeau Parris, "Hypatia; or, Philosophy Better than Theology." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, Free-thinkers' Annual Concert and Ball. (Tickets, 1s.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 11.30, discussion; 7.45, musical and dramatic entertainment. (Free.) Tuesday and Saturday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Some Evidences of Evolution" (with lantern illustrations). Thursdays, at 7.30, free science classes.

HAMMERSMITH CLUB (1 The Grove, Broadway): Thursday, at 8.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt." (Free.)

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, E. J. Sellicks, "Trade Unions and London Reform."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Spiritual Isolation and the Ethical Fellowship."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH: 8, social meeting at Mr. Stace's, 42 Vincent-street.

WALTHAMSTOW (Working Men's Hall, High-street): 6.30, T. Fisher, "Electricity: How Telegraph Messages are Sent."

WIMBLEDON (Liberty Hall, Broadway): 7, Mr. Hewitt, "A Peep into Nature with the Microscope" (lantern illustrations).

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 7, C. James will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Mr. Norris will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST (Crown Chambers' Hall, 64 Royal-avenue): 3.30, J. E. Griffiths, "The Story of a Great Delusion."

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

BRADFORD (3 Ivegate; above Dunn's hat shop): 11, ethical class—A. W. Oxley, inaugural address.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 3, Readings from favorite authors.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, W. Heaford, "The Lord's Prayer"; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Heaford, "God and the Ten Commandments."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11.15, discussion class; 1 to 2, Sunday-school; 2.30, W. Dewar, "Superstitions of the Bible"; 6.30, concert, vocal and instrumental.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—D. G. Lindsay, "Is Inconsistency a Virtue?" 6.30, social meeting (tickets 6d.).

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Porter, "Elihu Palmer, the Deist."

IPSWICH (Co-operative Hall, Carr-street): 11, G. W. Foote, "Secularism and Social Progress"; 3, "Heaven and Hell: Where and What?" 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture. (Free.)

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Berkeley"; 7, the Secretary, "The Good Samaritan Up to Date." Members' general meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Robert Forder, "Should the Bible be Taught in Board Schools?" 3, "The Exodus from Egypt: Is the Story True?" 6.30, "The Pagan Origin of Christianity."

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 3, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Medical Science"; 7, George Selkirk, "The Triumph of Rationalism." (Free.)

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 3, class on "Origin of Species"; 7, meeting. Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at 8, dancing.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street), 6.45, F. W. Widger, "Genesis and Science Compared: A Remarkable Agreement." (Free.)

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, Ackers-street): 6.30, Sam Standing, "The Druids of Gaul and Britain" (illustrated).

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "The Population Question: Is Malthusianism a Delusion?" Wednesday, at 8, members' and friends' dance.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Spinoza"; 7, "Christianity and Woman."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, R. Mitchell, "The Utility of Debate."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, Sam Standing, "The Vicar's New Confidence Trick"; 3, "Balaam's Ass."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Dec. 16, Chatham.

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