

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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ENGLAND'S DANGER.

THE London working-man is too easily caught with chaff. He has an inherited belief in the sacred right of demonstration, and a procession to Hyde Park is not a thing to be lightly missed. All he seems to stipulate for is that the object shall somehow or other relate to "the masses"—who, by the way, when taken in mobs, are too apt to be "the asses." And the London working-man was caught very green last Sunday, when he went to the Reformers' Tree and cheered the pious balderdash of speakers like Dr. Clifford and Mr. Price Hughes. It never occurred to the London working-man to wonder how it was that these gentlemen were never heard denouncing the murderous deeds of their own country. He just took them at their own price, and asked no questions. His mood was too simple for an inquiry into their motives. So they played the game for all it was worth. Of course they affected not to speak as religionists, but as humanitarians; but the man who believes they would ever orate in Hyde Park if Christians were butchering Mohammedans is on the high road to the lunatic asylum.

On that very same Sunday afternoon thousands of Irishmen went in procession to the grave of Parnell. He was the leader of the Irish people, and he was hounded to his death by English Nonconformists, who all the while professed to be over head and ears in love with Home Rule. Well, where is Home Rule now? One might almost say it is buried with Parnell. Certainly the Nonconformists have pretty well forgotten it. And the Irish people are back in the hands of their priests, whence Parnell rescued them.

Civilisation means the secularisation of life, and the irruption of religious sentiment into politics and social affairs is always dangerous. At this moment the danger is great and serious. Pulpiteers are working the Christian population into that ecstasy which, as Lord Rosebery says, leads on to war. Dr. Clifford and Mr. Price Hughes have both called upon this nation to fight for the Armenians single-handed, if necessary, against all Europe. They added the pious promise that God would defend the right. But if he will do that, he can do it now. Why should we rob God of a fine opportunity? Let him have the first chance. If he does not help the Armenians, why should it be expected that he will help us? God was never on the side of a little fellow in any fight. If some other Power, or a combination of Powers, were to give us a thrashing, how should we obtain damages for the broken promises of these sanguinary apostles of the Prince of Peace?

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But the mischief has gone beyond the Cliffords and Hugheses of Nonconformity. It has attacked the rather cooler head of Dr. Parker. Before his sermon at the City Temple on Sunday morning this gentleman expressed his view of the situation as follows:—"For my own part, I do not see how a European war is to be avoided. A day of judgment is due. The civilised world is sinking into irreligiousness, materialism, and self-indulgence, and is finding its mean pleasure in competitive and debilitating frivolities. It may be—God forbid—that the only way of return to a healthy, religious, and moral condition lies through horrors infinitely greater than those which have made Armenia a field of blood."

This is the way the men of God talk when they fall into the prophetic vein. They worship a God who never knows how to prevent, but is always bent on curing. His policy is to allow evil to grow to a head, so that he can lance it savagely. What wonder that they talk such monstrous nonsense themselves? They invite us, but half sadly, to fling society into the caldron to give it fresh youth and beauty. They forget that there may only remain at the end a heap of ashes. It is really the language of lunacy to talk about the renovation of Europe through infinite horrors? Besides, if that is God's method of improving his subjects, why should it be denied to the Sultan? Two blacks do not make a white, but neither is qualified to call the other smutty.

Lord Rosebery's resignation, and his speech at Edinburgh, are both an appeal to common sense. We say this without desiring to take sides in a squabble of party politics. England can only put effective pressure upon the Sultan by acting in concert with other Powers. Let her act alone, and she will provoke a general war, in the first fortnight of which every Armenian will disappear from the Turkish dominions. After so many have been killed, we may as well have patience enough to save the rest.

Muzzle the men of God! We said that before, and we repeat it. They are stirring up the fire of Christian fanaticism. They are ready, at any risk (to others), to reform anybody's house but their own. Freethinkers, at any rate, should set themselves sternly against religious madness. Mere denunciation of wrong is a very cheap performance unless you suggest some sort of remedy. Freethinkers hate wrong and bloodshed and cruelty quite as much as Christians, but the fight against these things, like the fight against other evils, has to be waged warily. One man is not better than another because he is ready to act in a hurry. Time, as Bacon says, is a necessary ingredient in every prescription. In any case, the present situation is a frightful impeachment of Christianity in the light of its own pretensions. It is only the mutual hatred of Christians that makes it possible.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH.

In the history of a vast organisation like the Church a momentary rebuff or individual loss does not count for very much, or the sitting of the Church Congress at Shrewsbury would have a very melancholy appearance. It began smarting from a straight blow on the face from the hand of the greatest leader of Christendom, the self-styled vicegerent of Christ on earth, and it has ended with the sudden death of the Primate of its own Church.

The Papal Bull on Anglican orders has rudely dashed to the ground all those roseate visions of Christian reunion with which the leading section of the Church of England, the Ritualists, have been beguiling themselves. The head of Christendom has declared that they are no priests at all, and have no more been called to the ministry by the Holy Ghost than has any ranting Methodist preacher or drum-beating Salvationist. All they can say in reply is "Ditto to you, your Holiness," and accordingly the Church papers are elaborately showing that, if Anglican orders are invalid, the Roman orders are invalid also. As Voltaire said of two old women who were abusing each other, "I believe both of them."

The Archbishop of York, in his sermon prepared for the occasion at the Congress, devoted himself to an allocution against the Roman Bull, of which he remarked that the voice spoke from Rome, but from England came the source of its inspiration, as well as of some part of its actual expression. To this statement the *Weekly Register* gives something very like the lie direct. The Bishop of Lichfield took up the tale against Rome in a stronger tone than was relished by the members of the English Church Union, whose schemes of reunion have so utterly collapsed.

The sudden death last Sunday of the Primate, who has so often prayed in public against that form of departure, is a real loss to the Church. No doubt there are plenty of the humble followers of the carpenter of Nazareth ready to step into his palaces and £15,000 a year. Yet Dr. Benson was an able scholar, a skilful tactician, and a good organiser. In the person of Dr. Westcott his superior may be found in mere scholarship, while Dr. Temple might outrival him in Churchcraft. But neither of these well-paid bishops will probably succeed him in the Primacy. The Marquis of Salisbury is almost certain to choose a High Church Tory bishop of good birth, and not one who has forced himself to the front by dint of ability. The princely income of the Primate, for which there was some little excuse when he had to keep up an immense retinue of attendants as he travelled about in the days when there were neither police nor railways, will fall to some lucky father-in-God whose family has well served the Conservative cause, and who may be trusted to offend nobody respectable.

The Church Congress altogether does not appear to have been a brilliant success. There was no one of any importance, or even notoriety, present; not even an actor or ballet-girl to speak on the relation of the Church to the Stage. Its relation to literature was, however, well exemplified by the Bishop of Wakefield, who boasted that Smith and Son have removed a book from their stalls at the instigation of his son, Mr. Walsham How, Junr. I have long desired to know who the censor for monopolist Smith was, and now, as Charles Lamb said, "I should like to feel his bumps." As the *Daily News* remarked: "The appetite for literary censorship grows with what it feeds on." The Bishop, pleased at his son's success, tried a repetition of his son's complaint, applied of course to a different work. Here, however, according to the Bishop's own tale, Messrs. Smith and Son declined to withdraw the offending novel—was it *Tribly*, or *The Sorrows of Satan*?—on the ground that it was too popular. Here is an episcopal sidelight on the real morality of our magnate railway-bookstall monopolists. It is lucky that Smith and Co.'s censorship is not supplemented by Dr. Walsham How as well as his son, as the bishop is now devoting his attention to the scheme of a censorship of a high-class library.

Taking place at the native city of Darwin, it was very appropriate that that Liberal Broad Churchman, Archdeacon Wilson, of Rochdale, should urge the adoption of evolutionary views. But the Archdeacon contended that the theory of evolution must be applied to theology by theologians, and not by biologists. It will then be like the so-called science of theology—a science without facts.

Christian Evidences do not seem to have got any show at the Congress, and even that terrible subject, "Why the Working-man does not Come to Church," was relegated to the background. Canon Moore Ede, the rector of Gateshead, spoke a lot of platitudes on the subject of the superiority of arbitration to strikes in labor disputes, which is only saying that peace is better than war. But the function of the Church as the spiritual police to protect the haves from the have-nots is beginning to be too well understood by the laborers for them to call in the parsons to arbitrate their disputes.

The most amusing item of the parsons' palaver was the diatribe of Canon John Watson against the luxury of society. He singled out for his most severe remarks the extravagance of women of fashion. Every year these women sought, he said, to make their garments more inconvenient—(laughter)—and to distort their forms into the most fantastic shapes—(more laughter). The sums they spent on dress were truly enormous; personal adornment was indeed the great absorbing interest of their lives, and the claims of the Church and foreign missions got next to no show. There was also a discussion on the relation of the Church to marriage and divorce, in which many voices were lifted up against divorce. But that is a subject on which I hope to have my own say shortly.

Altogether the Congress shows that the Church, despite its rebuff from Rome, is becoming not only more partisanly conservative, but more sacerdotal. This is natural. A priest will always lean to that scheme of things which promises the most personal power.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE RELIGION OF GREAT MEN.

WITH many persons the attachment of the names of men who are intellectually great to any particular theory is supposed to be of considerable value, inasmuch as it is thought to be a tower of strength in favor of the truth of the thesis propounded. Most orthodox professors of Christianity take this position, and pride themselves upon citing great names in favor of their faith, thinking that thereby its accuracy is, if not established, at least made probable. To us this appears exceedingly false reasoning, so far as Christianity is concerned. Of course, the belief expressed by great men upon some questions would carry greater weight than that of ordinary individuals. For instance, take scientific subjects. Upon these the testimony of Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley would be of more importance than that of any three theologians who could be mentioned. But why? Simply because these men not only studied, apart from prejudice, the sciences with which their names are associated, but they dealt with matters the truth of which was capable of being, to a large extent, demonstrated. This is not so with the claims of Christianity, which are of a speculative nature, and many of them are such that a verification of their truth is impossible.

Besides, when great men in the realms of science, politics, and literature are quoted in favor of Christianity, two things should be remembered. First, that the Christianity to which many of them profess to give their adherence is not the teaching of orthodoxy; neither is it the logical outcome of the system said to have been taught by Christ. In the second place, what these men have said about Christianity has been only their *opinions*, and not facts based upon demonstration. Now, we allege that the opinion of an ordinary person, who has carefully studied the alleged evidences urged upon behalf of the pretensions of Christianity, is quite as valuable as the opinion of a great man who has had neither time nor inclination to examine the basis of Christian claims. The worth of all opinions depends upon what grounds they are formed. For our part we prefer facts to opinions, and we esteem reasonable evidence as being of more importance than those of any man. Mr. Gladstone was long regarded, and we think justly, as an authority upon political questions; but who will regard him as such upon orthodox Christianity? Locke and Sir Isaac Newton are claimed as Christians, although the whole tenor of Locke's philosophy is based on knowledge, while theological teachings are founded on faith. Newton contended that the universe was guided by

natural law, and not, as the Christian system alleges, by the alleged supernatural. Lord Macaulay and Ralph Waldo Emerson were two great religious men, the latter undoubtedly not an orthodox Christian, and yet in the writings of both the philosophy of Secularism is clearly enunciated, as we hope to prove in this and subsequent articles.

We are not aware that Macaulay ever made a confession of faith, but his many allusions to religion in discussing various questions are worthy of consideration as showing his respect for the right of personal thought, and his utter dislike of the imposition of theological restrictions upon individual opinions. In his love of mental freedom he was far in advance of the majority of Christians at the present time. We are not unmindful of the fact that, notwithstanding his condemnation of many teachings of the Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenting Churches, he no doubt deemed himself, like one of those persons of whom he writes, as having "really obtained an insight into the divine philosophy of the New Testament, and who considered Christianity as a noble scheme of government, tending to promote the happiness and to elevate the moral nature of man" (*Essays*, vol. i., p. 184). This, however, was but an opinion of a great man, for Macaulay does not attempt to prove the truth of what is here stated. He instances the inconsistency of Dr. Johnson, who felt a contempt for the horror of the Puritans at those who indulge in card-playing and dancing at Christmas; yet he considered it a sin to drink coffee on Good Friday. When in Scotland Johnson abstained from public worship because the ministers had not been ordained by bishops. But his mode of estimating other people's piety may be seen in his account of Campbell, who was said to be "a good man, a pious man." "I am afraid," observed Johnson, "he has not been inside of a church for many years; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat; this shows he has good principles." In commenting upon this Macaulay says: "Spain and Sicily must surely contain many pious robbers and well-principled assassins."

In the same way, we may point out the inconsistency existing between the theoretical "divine philosophy," which Macaulay thought he found in the New Testament, and its practical bearing on human life. He admits, in his *Essay on the Disabilities of the Jews*, that "it is altogether impossible to reason from the opinions which a man professes to his feelings and actions" (p. 144). If this be so, Christianity cannot be depended upon to produce the good government and moral elevation that Macaulay claims it has done, for most Christian "reasoning" is based upon "feeling," and the actions professed are seldom performed. In fact, Macaulay practically grants this in the *Essay* just referred to. He says: "A Christian is commanded, under the strongest sanctions, to be just in all his dealings. Yet to how many of the twenty-four millions of professing Christians in these islands would any man in his senses lend a thousand pounds without security? A man who would act, for one day, on the supposition that all the people about him were influenced by the religion which they professed would find himself ruined before night; and no man ever does act upon that supposition in any of the ordinary concerns of life, in borrowing, in lending, in buying, or in selling" (p. 144). Thus it is clear that this "divine philosophy" was considered by a great religious man to be as impracticable as we have frequently proved it to be. How such testimony can in any way support the claims of Christianity we fail to discover.

Macaulay's mode of meeting the objections to granting the Jews political power was based upon the principle of secular justice, which condemns all deprivation of social or political rights on account of heresy. He says: "Any man would rather have his shoes mended by a heretical cobbler than by a person who had subscribed all the Thirty-nine Articles, but had never handled an awl. . . . Yet religion has as much to do with the mending of shoes as with the budget and the army estimates. We have surely had several signal proofs within the last twenty years that a very good Christian may be a very bad Chancellor of the Exchequer. . . . The principle that Christians ought to monopolise it [the whole power of the State] has no meaning at all. For no question connected with the ecclesiastical institutions of the country can possibly come before Parliament, with respect to which there will not be as wide a difference between Christians as there can be between any Christian and any Jew" (p. 141). That

Macaulay understood and approved of the true spirit of toleration, or, as we prefer to say, justice, is clear from his review of Sir James Mackintosh's *History of the Revolution in England*. "Every sect," states Macaulay, "clamors for toleration when it is down. . . . The doctrine, which, from the very first origin of religious dissensions, has been held by all bigots of all sects, when condensed into a few words, and stripped of rhetorical disguise, is simply this: I am in the right and you are in the wrong. When you are the stronger you ought to tolerate me; for it is your duty to tolerate truth. But when I am the stronger I shall persecute you; for it is my duty to persecute error" (p. 333). He then gives some striking instances where these two policies have been enforced, and adds: "In both cases they [those who enforced the policies] were alike insincere. In both cases the fool who had trusted them would have found himself miserably duped" (p. 335). This is an accurate and a bold indictment of the conduct of professing Christians, and it shows how powerful theological machinations have been in the attempt to crush liberty; and it also makes manifest that, whatever religious views the writer of the indictment might have held, they were not those of orthodox Christianity, which we allege has fostered the very evils here exposed. His mind was impregnated with a sincere love of mental freedom for all, irrespective of the nature of the opinions entertained upon religious questions. This is the essence of Freethought, whoever teaches it.

In his review of Hallam's *Constitutional History*, Macaulay deals with Protestant persecution, and, referring to Queen Elizabeth, observes: "Even the imperial Lioness was compelled to abandon her prey, and slowly and fiercely to recede before the assailants. The spirit of liberty grew with the growing wealth and intelligence of the people. . . . A community which has heard the voice of truth and experienced the pleasures of liberty, in which the merits of statesmen and of systems are freely canvassed, in which obedience is paid not to persons, but to laws—such a community is not easily reduced to servitude" (pp. 60, 80, 81). His description of the progress of the English mind as resembling the rising tide we consider historically accurate, as bearing upon the development of our freedom. He writes: "A person who looked on the waters only for a moment might fancy that they were retiring. A person who looked upon them only for five minutes might fancy that they were rushing capriciously to and fro. But when he keeps his eye upon them for a quarter of an hour, and sees one sea-mark disappear after another, it is impossible for him to doubt of the general direction in which the ocean is moved. Just such has been the course of events in England" (*Essays*, vol. i., p. 323). Those who are familiar with the history of the political and Freethought struggles in this country will readily recognize the aptness of the above illustration. Political reformers have been defeated again and again, but through brave and persistent fighting many victories have been won. The waves of bigotry have often been beaten back by the rising tide of Freethought, which sometimes has been overcome by the stronger current of religious prejudice. At last, however, the sea-wall of the orthodox Church has given way, and the country is now flooded with dissent and outspoken unbelief.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

THE CASE OF DENNIS HIRD.

THE resignation of the rector of Eastnor is a sign of the times, but still more significant are the multitudinous expressions of approval which the ex-Rev. Dennis Hird has received. When, two months ago, the present writer supplied the press with the first intimation of the rector's contemplated retirement, and the reasons for it, there ensued something of a flutter in clerical dove-cotes. To the priestly view heresy is always more hateful than moral misconduct. Some influential journals* elected not to publish the information, probably out of consideration for the feelings of their orthodox readers. Many others, however, particularly in the provinces, gave it prominent space;

* The highly respectable, but extremely dull, *Standard* inserted the first sentence, and then, as if alarmed at its own temerity, suddenly dried up.

and since then even certain of the newspapers that adopted a policy of silence have found it necessary to notice what they saw it was useless to attempt to conceal. The fact, therefore, is now on record that a clergyman—and one of high scholastic attainments and exceptional ability—has resigned his living, and resigned it because he can no longer accept the Bible as the Church requires it to be received.

The gravamen of the charge against Mr. Hird is not that he has attacked the authenticity and credibility of various portions of Scripture—because that has been done with impunity by many clerical commentators of modern times—but that he has focussed Biblical errors and absurdities, has drawn the general conclusions to which they point, and has presented them in language intelligible to Hodge. There is nothing new in Mr. Hird's Advent Lectures—he mentions that fact himself—but he has printed them because he regards it as “wilfully to defraud the poor if we only treat these subjects in books of great price and in terms of long-tailed ologies.”

Evidently the Church of England is no place for Mr. Dennis Hird. He is far better outside its stifling atmosphere, and in the bracing air of Freethought. He is not the man to be “cribbed, cabin'd, and confined” within ecclesiastical walls. If there were any honesty in the Establishment, there should now be a remarkable exodus. Mr. Hird should be followed out by the men who have written, and by those who privately think, that which he has so clearly set forth in his “Sundial Series.” But, of course, it is a question of loaves and fishes. That is shown by the arguments of his friends in the Church who endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose. They said to him, he tells us: “You will blast your professional career,” “Do not quarrel with your bread and butter,” “Think of your family being boycotted,” “If you take away inspiration, what have you to give us in the place of it?” “It is a serious responsibility to destroy the faith of the working man,” etc. To all this he replies: “Now, I put it in plain English, is there anything more swinish and more silly than this kind of argument, if you grant that either truth or honor exists?”

To Freethinkers Mr. Hird's lectures on “Mistakes about the Bible and in the Bible,” “How Man was Made,” “How the Devil was Made,” etc., possess only the interest which may be excited by a knowledge of the source whence this fearless criticism and exposition proceed. We are familiar enough with the Higher Criticism by learned dignitaries of the Church. Mr. Hird has the distinction of being one of the few clerics who have dared to say outright and unequivocally exactly what they mean. It is a pity he has had to suffer for it, while so many who hold identical views, but who have been more guarded in their utterances, are allowed to remain undisturbed. But it is difficult to know what the poor Church could have done in the circumstances other than to sorrowfully request him to resign.

One could hardly have expected the Primate and the Bishop of Hereford to pass over such a declaration as the following, truthful though it be: “As for the Bible, it never was so little read in this country since the glorious Reformation. It is worshipped as a fetish, put on the shelf like an idol, dusted sometimes, read seldom, believed never. The force of numberless preachers for generations has been devoted to exalting the Bible and making claims for it which it nowhere makes. So people regard the Bible as they regard witches, ghosts, or a god that loses his temper. It is a slumbering superstition, and they are occasionally frightened in the presence of a sudden death. Every age and nation has had its fetish; but for sheltering murder and fostering falsehood I know of no fetish which has brought so great a curse on mankind as this blind Bible worship. I do not intend to devote my time to the thankless task of slaying superstitions or reforming religions; but, if I sought such a mission, I would undoubtedly spend my life in exposing the Bible fetish.”

Mr. Hird has now made so great a sacrifice in the cause of free Biblical criticism that we can hardly expect him to immediately do more. He is entitled to devote himself to work in that sphere where a livelihood is possible. It is, as he says, in one sense a “thankless task” to devote oneself to slaying superstitions and reforming religions. The leaders of Freethought whom I have known could, with their abilities, have done infinitely better for themselves from a selfish point of view in other spheres of labor. That is why we owe them a debt of gratitude which

should, at any rate, lead us to protect them, as far as possible, from gratuitous outrage and insult. But it is one of the urgent necessities of the day that the work of enlightenment should go on, and that the “blind Bible worship,” which Mr. Hird justly says has been a “curse on mankind” in sheltering murder and fostering falsehood, should be universally and continually assailed. No one who really lives in the world can complacently assure himself that the battle is won. Superstition may slumber, but it has an awkward habit of waking up. The Bible may not be read, but it is a useful volume to throw at reformers' heads. To one who is thoroughly equipped for the task, I could recommend no more immediately useful life-mission than that of administering finishing strokes to hydra-headed Bible superstition. Mr. Hird, as a Theist, is forced to the conclusion that “the superstitions about God in the minds of average Christians are enough to unhinge the reason and blight the world.”

One of the mistakes which the late rector of Eastnor enlarges upon is the supposition that none of the Bible is already obsolete. “As a matter of fact,” he says, “if anyone would take the trouble to make a list of all the chapters and verses which have either no meaning to us, or no bearing on our practical life, he would be astounded at the mass of scripture which has become a dead letter, even to ardent believers. . . . If Leviticus, Ruth, Esther, the Song of Solomon, most of Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, the Second and Third Epistles of St. John, and the ‘Revelation’ were blotted out of the Bible to-morrow morning, it is no exaggeration to say that the majority of the best Christian people in this country would miss none of them. . . . While for centuries Bible-worshippers kneel around this book in a blind reverence, their idol is slowly but surely crumbling to dust.”

In a footnote to an examination of the “amazing contradictions” in the Bible, Mr. Hird quotes a remark by “the clever and much-maligned Tom Paine, to whom the Church owes both an apology and a monument.”

Towards the close of his lecture on the Bible, Mr. Hird says: “I have quoted you statements from some eminent Churchmen and others, to show you how widely they differ, with regard to the Bible, from the majority of Christian people in this country. Yet, though they have shaken off a fetter or two, they still cling to some form of special revelation, some direct supernatural power not seen elsewhere to the same extent in the rest of God's works. I am unable to find that they have a scrap of evidence for this belief.”

Having now vacated the living of Eastnor, Mr. Hird has returned to the neighborhood of Oxford, where for several years he was tutor to non-collegiate students, and it may interest his friends to know that at the present time he is engaged on a new book, which will be published very shortly.

FRANCIS NEALE.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

II.

THE apologists who uphold and maintain the authenticity and credibility of the four Gospels, and who with the most perfect assurance tell us that two were written by apostles, and the other two by companions of apostles, refer us, when pressed for evidence in proof of their assertions, to the following three classes of “testimonies”:

(1) The existence of ancient manuscripts of the Gospels; (2) the internal evidence of authenticity contained in the Gospels themselves; (3) the testimony of those ancient Christian writers called “Fathers.” When, however, we come to examine these boasted “testimonies,” we find that they furnish no proofs whatever. And here it may be well to consider these oft-made assertions.

First, as to the evidence derived from ancient manuscripts. This, it may be stated at once, is *nil*. Of the original MSS. of the Gospels (supposing such to have ever existed) nothing whatever is known. These mythical documents would seem to belong to the same category as the mysterious plates from which Joe Smith claimed to have composed the Book of Mormon; no mortal ever appears to have set eyes on them. They would seem to have existed only just long enough to have had copies taken from them, and to have then disappeared for ever. No Christian “Father,” nor anyone else, appears either to

have seen one of the original manuscripts himself, or to have known, or even heard of, anyone who had seen one of them. This fact is of the deepest significance, more especially when we bear in mind the durable nature of the materials of which MSS. were composed in the early times in question, and also the number of centuries through which some of the New Testament MSS., which we now possess, have already passed. There were Christian churches, we are told, existing in the early part of the second century at Antioch, Ephesus, Smyrna, Hierapolis, Corinth, Rome, and other places. It is but reasonable to suppose that, if originals of the Gospels had ever existed, they would have been carefully preserved (wrapped up in lavender) as priceless treasures of the Christian Church, furnishing inexpugnable evidence of the origin of the Christian religion, and would be handed down to a later generation as authentic relics, beyond all dispute, of apostolic times. We might expect to find them preserved in some of the before-mentioned churches, and exhibited with holy reverence on special occasions, with a view either to confirm the faith of the faithful, or to confound all wicked sceptics who, like Celsus or Porphyry, denied the divine origin of the new religion. But, unfortunately for the Church, no such originals appear ever to have been seen by anyone.

Irenæus tells us that the Apostle John resided for many years, towards the close of the first century, in the bosom of the church at Ephesus. It must have been in charge of the elders of that church, we may suppose, that that Evangelist left the MS of his Gospel. We hear from other sources of the names of the bishops who are said to have presided in succession over the Ephesian Church, but we hear nothing of the original of the Fourth Gospel. Irenæus further tells us that Polycarp, who afterwards became Bishop of Smyrna, was one of the disciples of John when that apostle was living at Ephesus. Polycarp might, then, be expected to know something of John's manuscript, and also to have his mind full of the sayings ascribed to Jesus in that Gospel. But in a long epistle which he left behind him, addressed to the Christians of Philippi, this alleged disciple of John never so much as once refers either to John or his Gospel, nor does he in his exhortations to the Philippians quote a single saying from that Gospel. The presumption is that Polycarp never saw a copy, much less the original manuscript, of the Fourth Gospel.

As regards copies of the supposed original MSS. of the Gospels, we have abundant evidence that manuscripts which professed to be copies made from copies of apostolic originals were in circulation among Christians during the last two decades of the second century. But this fact does not affect the question of the authenticity—that is, the apostolic authorship—of the Gospels, or of the credibility of the narratives therein recorded.

The oldest MSS. of the Gospels now in existence are said to be of the fourth and fifth centuries; but, assuming the age assigned to these manuscripts to be correct, the fact adds nothing to the question under consideration. Again, no name of author or writer was attached to the earliest copies of the Gospels. Those books were simply ascribed to the persons whose names they bear—probably, in the first instance, to distinguish one Gospel from another. They were said to be “according to” Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; but this portion of the title seems rather to indicate that the Gospels were *not* written by those to whom they were ascribed. The Gospel “according to” Matthew evidently means the gospel as preached by Matthew, or the Gospel that contained the sayings and events which Matthew was said to have regarded as true; not the Gospel written by Matthew.

It is obvious that a pious Christian teacher, who, some years after the death of the last apostle, had compiled a book of anecdotes recording the stories he had heard related concerning Christ, could only get his narrative received among Christians by representing his compilation, not as an original work of his own, but as a written collection of authentic sayings and doings of the Savior, as narrated and handed down by one of the apostles. As a matter of fact, many such Gospels were written and ascribed to apostles, and, so far as we know, in only one instance have the pious forgers been detected. Among these lying “histories” are: the Gospel of James, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Acts of Thomas, the Acts of Philip, the Acts of Peter, etc. The one exception that proves the rule in the case of the

undetected forgers is that mentioned by Tertullian—a presbyter who piously fabricated the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* “from love of Paul.” It is admitted by all authorities that a number of stories relating to the alleged sayings and doings of Christ were in circulation for more than a quarter of a century before any collected narrative of them came to be written. This they call the oral Gospel. Orthodox critics are reduced, in a measure, to this admission by the account of the early Church in the “Acts.” In that veracious history the apostles are represented as going about preaching of Jesus for nearly thirty years without having any written record of the events that comprise the life of that personage. The fact of the non-existence of any written Gospels in so-called apostolic times is further known to us from other and more reliable sources. In any case, no evidence of the authenticity of the Gospels is derived from ancient manuscripts.

Next, as to the internal evidence of the authorship of the Gospels contained in the books themselves. With regard to the “testimonies” under this head, it need only be said that there is not a single word in any of the Gospels (except the statement in John xxi. 24) which in any way indicates the name of the writer. There is some evidence, indeed, to show that the Third Gospel and the “Acts” were composed by the same writer; but there is nothing to tell us who that writer was. It is oft-times asserted by apologists and Bible commentators that the book of the Acts, at least, contains internal evidence which proves that the writer was Luke, the companion of Paul, and that in this way we get at the authorship of the Third Gospel. This statement is, however, baseless. The Acts contains no such internal evidence; while, on the other hand, the Preface to the Third Gospel (which will be dealt with later on) plainly implies that that Gospel was not written in apostolic times.

Coming to the exceptional passage (John xxi. 24), we have in that verse the following remarkable statement: “This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.”

Now, so far from this passage establishing the apostle John as the writer, it shows conclusively that he was not. The apostle would certainly not have said: “We know that his witness is true.” The “we”—whoever that pronoun may refer to—was undoubtedly the writer of verse 24, and, for aught we are aware, may have written the whole book. For anything known to the contrary, this “we” may represent some of the presbyters of one of the Christian churches in the middle of the second century who had compiled the Gospel themselves from documents or traditions which they accepted as the teaching of the apostle John. And in this supposition we are reminded of the presbyter John, who was contemporary with Papias. The statement, “and we know that his witness is true,” was evidently meant to influence the readers, some of whom were probably disposed to deny the apostolic authorship of the book. Now, the apostle John, if he really published a Gospel, would have no need to make such a statement. He would be known to the whole body of Christians then living as an apostle and an eye-witness of the events recorded in the Gospels, and this fact would alone suffice to cause his book to be everywhere received as history. He is said, too, to have had the spiritual care of the seven churches in Asia Minor which are mentioned in the Apocalypse (Rev. i. 4—iii. 22). We know that in post-apostolic times any alleged fact or event received credence if believed to have been certified by an apostle. Thus Irenæus says in confirmation of one of his statements (Heresies iv. xxvii. 1): “As I have heard from a certain presbyter, who had heard it from those who had seen the apostles, and from those who had been their disciples,” etc. If, then, such secondhand hearsay evidence was considered convincing, what must have been the effect of a biography of Jesus written by the hand of the last surviving apostle and eye-witness [Irenæus says that John resided at Ephesus “permanently until the time of Trajan”], and given to the members of his own church to be copied and circulated among the other churches under his charge? The apostle John would have no need to say: “This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true.” Such an assertion could come only from a forger.

But, according to the accounts in the first three Gospels, the apostle John was an ignorant fisherman, whom it would

be ridiculous to credit with a knowledge of Greek letters and composition. Matthew, who is said to have been "sitting at the place of toll" when called to the apostleship, is the only one of the twelve who, it is reasonable to suppose, might have had some slight acquaintance with such matters. This may have been the reason why Matthew's name was connected with the writing of a Gospel. At any rate, the internal evidence derived from the Gospels tells us nothing by which we can identify the writers, and certainly nothing bearing out the unscrupulous assertions of Christian apologists.

ABRACADABRA.

THE DEGRADED STATUS OF WOMAN IN THE BIBLE.

THE Pentateuch makes woman a mere afterthought in creation; the author of sin; cursed in her maternity; a subject in marriage; and claims divine authority for this fourfold bondage, this wholesale desecration of the mothers of the race. While some admit that this invidious language of the Old Testament is disparaging to woman, they claim that the New Testament honors her. But the letters of the apostles to the Churches, giving directions for the discipline of women, are equally invidious, as the following texts prove:—

"Wives, obey your husbands. If you would know anything, ask your husbands at home. Let your women keep silence in the churches, with their heads covered. Let not your women usurp authority over the man, for as Christ is the head of the Church, so is the man the head of the woman. Man was prior in creation, the woman was of the man, therefore shall she be in subjection to him."

No symbols or metaphors can twist honor or dignity out of such sentiments. Here, in plain English, woman's position is as degraded as in the Old Testament.

As the Bible is in every woman's hands, and she is trained to believe it "the word of God," it is impossible to describe her feelings of doubt and distrust as she awakes to her status in the scale of being; the helpless, hopeless position assigned her by the Creator, according to the Scriptures.

Men can never understand the fear of everlasting punishment that fills the souls of women and children. The orthodox religion, as drawn from the Bible and expounded by the Church, is enough to drive the most imaginative and sensitive natures to despair and death. Having conversed with many young women in sanatoriums, insane asylums, and in the ordinary walks of life, suffering with religious melancholia; having witnessed the agony of young mothers in childbirth, believing they were cursed of God in their maternity; and with painful memories of my own fears and bewilderment in girlhood, I have endeavored to dissipate these religious superstitions from the minds of women, and base their faith on science and reason, where I found for myself at last that peace and comfort I could never find in the Bible and the Church. I saw the first step to this end was to convince them that the Bible was neither written nor inspired by the Creator of the Universe, the Infinite Intelligence, the soul and centre of Life, Love, and Light; but that the Bible emanated, in common with all Church literature, from the brain of man. Seeing that, just in proportion as women are devout believers in the dogmas of the Church, their lives are shadowed with fears of the unknown, the less they believe, the better for their own happiness and development. It was the religious devotee that threw her child under the car of Juggernaut, that gave her body a living sacrifice on the funeral pyre of her husband, to please God and save souls; for the same reason the devotees of our day build churches and parsonages, educate young men for the ministry, endow theological seminaries, make surplices, and embroider slippers for the priesthood.

It may not be amiss for man to accept the Bible, as it honors and exalts him. It is a title-deed for him to inherit the earth. According to the Pentateuch, he communes with the gods; in performing miracles he is equal in power and glory with his Creator: can command the sun and moon to stand still, to lengthen the day and lighten the night—if need be, to finish his battles. He can stand in the most holy places in the temples, where woman may

never enter; he can eat the consecrated bread and meat denied her; in fact, there is a suspicion of unworthiness and uncleanness seductively infused into the books of Moses against the whole female sex, in animal as well as human life. *The first born male* kid is the only fit burnt-offering to the Lord; if preceded by a female, it is unfit.

As the Bible gives us two opposite accounts of the creation of woman and her true position, so the Church gives two opposite interpretations of the will of God concerning her true sphere of action. When ecclesiastics wish to rouse woman's enthusiasm to lift a church debt or raise a pastor's salary, then they try to show her that she owes all she is and all the liberty she enjoys to the Bible and Christian religion; they dwell on the great honor God conferred on the sex in choosing a woman to be the mother of his only begotten son.

But, when woman asks for equal rights and privileges in the church, to fill the office of pastor, elder, deacon, or trustee, to be admitted as a delegate to the synods, general assemblies, or conferences, then the bishops quote texts to show that all these positions are forbidden by the Bible. And so completely have these clerical tergiversations perverted the religious element in woman's nature, and blinded her to her individual interests, that she does not see that her religious bondage is the source of her degradation.

The honor and worship accorded the ideal mother of the ideal man has done naught to elevate the real mother of the real man. So far from woman owing what liberty she does enjoy to the Bible and the Church, they have been the greatest block in the way of her development. The vantage-ground woman holds to-day is due to all the forces of civilization—to science, discovery, invention, rationalism, the religion of humanity chanted in the golden rule round the globe centuries before the Christian religion was known. It is not to Bibles, Prayer Books, Catechisms, Liturgies, the Canon Law, and Church creeds and organizations that woman owes one step in her progress, for all these alike have been hostile, and still are, to her freedom and development.

Canon Charles Kingsley well said long ago: "This will never be a good world for woman until the last remnant of the Canon Law is swept from the face of the earth." It is the insidious influence of this law that degrades woman to-day in social life and the State as well as in the Church; giving us one moral code for man, another for woman; endowing him with political freedom, with all the rights that belong to a citizen of a Republic, while she is a slave, a subject, a mere pariah in the State.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON.

—*Freethought Magazine.*

(To be concluded.)

How to Help Us.

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It is good to waken the eyes of men to the beautiful, but still better to lead them to the enduring truth! So soon as my own eyes were opened wide enough to take in the immense imposture that has been based upon mythology, I gave up my chance of a seat on the Mount of the Muses, and turned aside from the proffered crown of poetry as a seeker after verifiable certitude. And, after all, how can the picture of a divinized fool at the head of affairs, with so certain a breakdown in the beginning, be beautiful, when such a representation reduces the drama of the whole universe into a most pitiful one-act farce? Any god who demands the worship of fear is unworthy the service of love.

—*Gerald Massey.*

ACID DROPS.

ARCHDEACON WILSON, at the Church Congress, said that the clergy might welcome the theory of evolution. But what does it matter to evolution whether the clergy welcome it or not? Archdeacon Wilson further said that the theory of evolution must be applied to theology by theologians, and not by biologists. He might as well say that the law must be applied to robbery by thieves, and not by magistrates. We quite understand that the Church wants to cook its accounts before the final audit.

Mrs. Creighton, wife of the Bishop of Peterborough, addressed a ladies' meeting in connection with the Church Congress. She warned the wives of country parsons against trying to claim any official position, and advised them never to try to manage the husband's curate. This lady does not understand her sex. At another meeting a letter was read from Mr. Gladstone in opposition to divorce, and Lord Halifax advised the clergy, whatever the consequence, to boldly and unitedly refuse to marry divorced persons. It remains to be seen whether they have courage enough to quarrel with their bread by defying the law of the land. We guess they'll give in.

Was it not rich of his Grace of York to declare at Shrewsbury that "The net result of the Papal letter has been to emphasize the isolation of Rome from the rest of Christendom"? How about the isolation of Anglicanism and the bursting of all the bubbles about Christian Reunion?

Archdeacon Taylor, of Liverpool, says of the Pope's bull: "I am glad that so high an authority has shown the untenable position of those in our Church who profess to be 'sacrificing priests.'"

The Baptist Union has been holding its Annual Congress at Bristol. The Rev. T. V. Tymms, the President, in his opening address, rejoiced that "Puritans were not Secularists," and added that "he would rather entrust the destinies of England to illiterate men," so long as they were Christians, than to "a Parliament of philosophers who forgot God." Mr. Tymms need not be alarmed. Philosophers don't often get into parliament. There are too many of the other sort to suggest the dreaded catastrophe.

The Baptists had a rare wrangle over the Armenian business. They finally agreed to say nothing about Cyprus and Egypt, but to make it devilish hot for the Turk. Of course there was no mention of South Africa. It was a paradise of hypocrisy.

The Rev. J. Wilson, of the London School Board, spoke out on the Education Question at the Baptist Union meeting. He remarked that the conscience clause was an insult and a sham, and, as for the training colleges, forty-three out of thirty-five required a rigid test that those entering them should conform to the Church of England. Another speaker mentioned that all the elementary schools were open to Church of England teachers, but only one-third of the schools were open to Nonconformist teachers.

The Rev. Dr. C. A. Berry, speaking at the Bristol Baptist Union, congratulated himself on Christian triumph over infidelity. He said it was to him a matter of profound gratification that in the discussion that had been going on for years they had—and he meant the Church Catholic of all the denominations—now the victory over infidelity and over denial. It is amusing to see the Church, which has retreated step by step, and surrendered point by point, shouting out "victory." What they really mean is that they still contrive to preserve their baggage.

The breath was hardly out of Archbishop Benson's body when the papers began to talk of who would be the successor to such good things, with so many other fat livings at his disposal. Dr. Randall Davidson, of Winchester, seems to be first favorite, and after him comes Creighton, of Peterborough, and Boyd Carpenter, of Ripon. It is, however, quite possible that one of the lower clergy may be called to the top, though Dean Farrar, the most eminent of them, will not stand any chance with the Marquis of Salisbury.

It having been stated that the appointment of the Rev. Evan Jenkin, the deposed rector of Monafon, to the curacy of Wingerforth occasioned grave scandal, *Truth* says the fact that they were conscious of the gravity of the scandal only makes it the more astounding that the man's engagement in the parish should have been tolerated so long.

The Church benefits greatly by the will of Mr. Alfred Marriott, of Hopton Grange, near Dewsbury, whose estate, worth about half a million, is entirely devoted to furthering Church purposes. Mr. Marriott's money was made as a

worsted spinner at Wakefield. With a tithe of the income left by Mr. Marriott, the cause of Secularism could be boomed into a place that would make the dignitaries of the Church begin to tremble.

The followers of the meek and lowly at Memphis, Tennessee, are putting up a cathedral at a cost of \$100,000. In America it is well understood that the church is an insurance of protection to the plutocracy.

The *New York Tribune* says: The habit of going to church awheel has not yet come in, though it is an undoubted fact that the wheel takes many persons away from church. The churches are wisely endeavoring to draw the wheelmen within their doors, and those situated near roads much frequented by cyclists may have some success in their efforts. At any rate, it is a pleasant thing to note them, as evidenced, for instance, by the notice posted in front of one in a country village to this effect: "Wheelmen will find a convenient place for their bicycles in the basement of the church."

In *re* a curious judicial decision on a divorce application recently, a correspondent asks: "Ought a Judge who is supposed to be, and who sets himself up as, a devout R.C., or who is a member of the Anglican Diocesan Synod, to be allowed to adjudicate on divorce matters, seeing the decided views held by both the Churches named against divorce; it being assumed that Judges are sincere adherents of the creeds they profess to bolster?" The weakness of the question lies chiefly in the assumption in its tail. The ermine is supposed to blot out religion, always excepting the traditional little *souppçon* in "May the Lord have mercy on your soul!" when a gory sacrifice is being ordered.

Puritanism dies slowly, and one of its last strongholds is a Baptist chapel in the East-end. At the anniversary meeting the worthy pastor had occasion to lament the degeneracy of the times. In dolorous tones he explained that as he walked through the East-end he saw chapel after chapel bearing notices to the effect that the reverend gentleman would conduct a "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon." This made his heart sad. It showed a concession to the spirit of worldliness; it proved, as a late-lamented brother had said, that Nonconformity was on the down-grade. For forty years, added he proudly, he had been minister of that chapel, and during the whole of that forty years no one could ever say that they had had a "pleasant Sunday afternoon." Need it be added that there was fervent response? It may be readily imagined that the Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings were equally unpleasant with such a narrow-minded pastor!

The Glasgow Free Presbytery have been deploring the "terrible inroads" which have been made on "the institution of the Sabbath." Sunday tramcars and railways have long been denounced, and bicycles recognized as instruments of Satan; but the climax of Presbyterian woe has been reached by the opening of public baths for certain restricted hours of the Sabbath morn. If anything could be worse than this, it is the fact that post offices are open, with the shocking result that "people went in with Bibles in their hands to purchase stamps on the way to church, in order that they may get small change and the customary copper for the plate." The real inwardness of the ministerial monopoly of the Lord's Day is seen in this complaint.

Dr. John Watson, "Jan Maclaren," is lecturing in the States, but he seems a little too broad for the Puritanic Presbyterians. Quoting his statement of his creed, the *Christian Observer* says: "As soon as we have a statement of doctrine which is acceptable to the Unitarian as well as the Christian, that very fact proves its worthlessness as a creed in the honor of Christ."

A Russian baptism under the ritual of the Greek Church is a curious ceremony. A large wooden bowl is filled with water, and the priest takes the child in his arms, stuffs wadding into its ears and nostrils, and then plunges the little head under the water three times, during which period he repeats prayers for the Imperial family.

The Rev. Dr. Jasper's distinguished brother-in-arms in rebellion against modern astronomy, William Carpenter, who also wrote as "Parallax," has passed away at Baltimore. He insisted to the last that the world was flat, and cited the Bible references to its ends and corners as proof.

Dr. Buckley, anent the visit of Li Hung Chang to America, recalls that he first gained his fame by suppressing the Taiping Rebellion with General Gordon. This rebellion, as the Chinese statesman has not forgotten, was the outcome of Christian teaching. Its leader, Tien Wang, had fallen in with Christian missionaries, under whose influence he came to have visions of God the Father and Jesus Christ, who exhorted him to take up arms against

the Manchu rulers, a fanatical faith which led to a deal of bloodshed.

The *Christian Advocate*, of New York, says: "It should never be forgotten that slavery would probably have existed to this day if civil war had not arisen." True, indeed, and what a reflection this is on Christian America.

The Rev. Watson J. Young strongly denounces those sanitary Christians who wish a communion-cup for themselves, not caring to partake of their blessed Savior after he has been touched by the possibly-diseased lips of their fellow-worshippers. Mr. Young says: "This may do for the Rev. Microbus Bacillicidus and the Church of the Holy Dish-washers, but it is not in accordance with the simple ceremony established by the Lord Jesus Christ and transmitted to us by his apostles, and I will none of it."

The Rev. Mr. Logan, with whom Mr. Foote debated at Bristol, appears to have developed into a very militant Christian. Speaking at the Baptist Union meeting on the Armenian question, he is reported as saying: "It was time to have done with this damned diplomacy." He wanted God to strike down the Sultan, and England to be the instrument. Mr. Logan might reflect that if God meant to strike down the Sultan he does not need English help, and he might have done so in time to have saved the Armenians from the atrocities under which they have suffered.

The *Daily News* (October 8), in a leading article on proverbial ideas, mentions that the saying taken from the Gospels, "Many are called, but few are chosen," may have been a proverbial expression before used by Jesus Christ. The Greek has: "Many are the bearers of Bacchic symbols, few are the initiated." In Esdras we read: "Many are called, but few saved"; and it is quite possible Barnabas's supposed testimony to the Gospels, by citing this phrase, is taken from Esdras, and not from the Gospels.

"By the Waters of Babylon is to be the new play designed by Wilson Barrett as an aid to faith like *The Sign of the Cross*. It is also intended to let pious people attend theatre with a sense of thereby supporting the cause of religion. It is said that this play will be followed by another on *Noah and the Ark*, in which Mr. Barrett will take the character of Japhet, and a subdued low comedian that of Ham. A scenic representation of the Deluge is expected to "bring down the house."

From the Labour Church, Croydon, or from Brotherhood House, Waddon, we receive a very curious pamphlet entitled *Why I Resigned*. It professes to be a "copy of a letter to the directors of a well-known London bank." We hope it was read at length to the Board, for it must have astonished, though it probably also amused, them. The writer gave up his situation, against which he had no personal grievance, because he discovered the incompatibility of the religion of Jesus with the banking business, which he calls "an unhealthy, useless, and degrading calling." This discovery he made by reading Tolstoi, to whom, by the way, it is far easier to adopt "the Christian life" than to an unknown person without any estate who has been only brought up in an unhealthy, useless, and degrading calling.

It is not usual, so far as our information extends, for a man to attend his own funeral service. But, according to the *Two Worlds*, Mr. A. M. Rodger, a well-known Islington Spiritist, who expired suddenly in Unity Church, attended and spoke at the service held in his honor in Wellington Hall. Mr. Rodger did not appear *in propria persona*, but, like the Lord of old, spoke through the mouth of another, a Mrs. Jones being the medium of his utterances. Mr. Jones, who was present, seems to have been satisfied.

Many a poor sojourner in this vale of tears wishes that in Self-denial Week the Boothites would deny themselves the pleasure of rattling their collection boxes under the noses of non-sympathisers. The "General" imposes no such self-denying ordinance as that, but tells his sturdy beggars instead to make a house-to-house visitation.

The *Tablet* (October 10) has an article on "The Report of the Anti-Masonic Congress," which, it says, has been drawn up irrespective of the controverted writings of Leo Taxil and the disputed personality of Diana Vaughan. To the question, "What are the religious doctrines by which Freemasonry has been inspired?" the reply is that they are those of "nature worship, the cult practised in ancient times in the mysteries of the Indians, Persians, Egyptians, Phœnicians, Romans, Greeks, and Druids [what a mixture!], while forming in Christian ages the kernel of the creed professed by the Gnostics, Manichæans, Albigenses, Catarini, and kindred sects, as well as of the Templars, Philosophers of Fire, Alchemists, or Rosicrucians, who, on June 24, 1717, founded Freemasonry with its actual symbolism in order to perpetuate their creed."

The aim of Masonry was defined as "destruction in the moral, intellectual, and physical order." Its destructive nature in the first field, says the *Tablet*, consists "in the deliberate substitution of evil for good, in the deification of the evil principle, and, with it, of all the vices, under the name of virtues." After this we should have thought that our Catholic contemporary would have identified Masonry with downright devil-worship. On this point it says: "The Scotch verdict of 'Not proven' is the most favorable that can be registered, and the benefit of the doubt the utmost grace that can be claimed, on behalf of the accused."

At the Birmingham County Court the Rev. W. H. Curriss, of St. Gabriel's Church, Birmingham, was committed to prison for contempt of court in failing to repay trust money in accordance with an order made upon him. He was committed for a year, unless before that time he purges his contempt.

The Rev. Joseph S. Van Dyke, Presbyterian, of Cranbury, New Jersey, created a sensation three months ago by taking a wife thirty years his junior, and now that she has left him his congregation has compelled him to resign.

Unable to face charges of serious misconduct which had been brought against him, the Rev. J. B. Morrison, of Laconia, New Hampshire, fled the town and committed suicide in a Boston hotel by inhaling gas. He was thirty years of age and an eloquent preacher.

A charge of gross immorality, slander, and profanity having been proved against the Rev. Thomas Cooper, of St. Joseph, Mo., the committee appointed to try him recommended that he be expelled from the church.

The *Echo*, in a quote on the Armenian question, says: "It is as well to ask that vivisectioners should consent to be vivisectioned as clamorers for coercion, and advocates for war should themselves go to kill and be killed. It is an extraordinary and humiliating fact that many of these men are not only preachers, but in piping times of peace are either members of the Peace Society or advocates of Peace Society principles. Not one of them would risk his whole skin if England commenced a war, which might entail indescribable injury to mankind."

The Czar is reported as having said one true thing when shown the room in Paris where the corpse of the assassinated Henry IV. lay. "The fruits of fanaticism," observed the Czar, "are the same in every age."

The fruits of persecution, also, are the same in all ages. When the persecuted sect is not annihilated, it spreads by being trodden on. When the famous M. Pobiedonostzeff assumed the Procuratorship of the Holy Synod, "it was confidently predicted," says a *Daily News* telegram, "that the days of Russian sectarianism were numbered." According to the latest official returns, however, the number of the sectarians appear to show a steady increase, in spite of all the severe measures devised for their suppression. Official returns show that there are at present 70,000 sectarians in the Government of Nijni-Novgorod, 51,000 in Saratoff, and 81,000 in Samara. In the eparchiate of Viatka there are 70,000, in Tcheningoff 50,000, and in Blatzk 182,000. In Siberia, also, sectarianism appears to be rapidly spreading among the mixed population. In the eparchiate of Irkutsk there are now 30,000 sectarians, in Tomsk 82,000, and in the Don eparchiate 106,000.

The *Westminster Gazette* (October 13) has an interesting account of the self-torture of the Penitentes of New Mexico, who, both males and females, gash themselves with flint knives and then whip themselves, winding up the ceremonies with the crucifixion of a victim. They thus hope to pay for their sins, and, according to all accounts, they need it. As Mr. Wheeler points out in his *Footsteps of the Past*, the annual crucifixion of a youth in the Abruzzi shows that these New World Penitentes retain customs once more common in Europe, and which throw a deal of light on the ideas which underlie Christianity.

The bubonic plague at Bombay, the rinderpest in South Africa, and storms and shipwrecks nearer home are among recent displays of our heavenly father's care.

Jesus believed not only that the Jewish nation would within a few years be overwhelmed and scattered, but that "then" would his kingdom be set up, and "with power and great glory." The temple, Jerusalem, and Judea did all meet their fate before the generation to which Jesus spoke had passed away; but his kingdom has not yet been set up, nor have the signs appeared which were to precede it.—*Gerrit Smith.*

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE National Secular Society's new office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

J. NEIL.—Not without merit, but the workmanship is imperfect. "Hope" does not rhyme with "drop," for instance.

DR. MORTIMER.—Always pleased to hear from you in the far north. Thanks. We will do our utmost to bring Colonel Ingersoll over, and will give your best regards to Mr. Putnam.

ANTI-HUMBUG.—It seems rather a private and personal matter, though your friend has our sympathy. Men of God are rarely as charitable as they advise others to be.

ALERT.—Certainly the Buddhists, who have corrupted the pure teaching of their founder, have heavens and hells in their system; but these heavens and hells are not eternal. The ultimate hope of Buddhists is to reach Nirvana, the extinction of individual being, and its absorption into the universal whole. It is curious that you never saw or heard Mr. Foote before. Your compliments are too flattering for reproduction.

G. F. DOWNS.—You are quite welcome to have the *Freethinker* article on "Bells" reprinted in *Campanology*, only it should be done with acknowledgment.

E. P. SCHOFIELD.—The poem has distinct merit. We think it would be better if "did" and "didst" were eliminated, or at least less frequent. Occasionally, too, the rhythm is a little harsh—a fault easily removed by careful filing. An extract would hardly do justice to your effort; besides, the poem is more useful where it appears than it would be in our columns.

JOHN SANDERSON.—We hope your friend will have the pleasure of hearing Colonel Ingersoll in England.

H. MORTON.—The tongues of malicious Christians cannot be bridled. One might ask them, however, to read the epistle of St. James. It is absolutely false that Charles Bradlaugh died "a terrible death." His daughter took the precaution of securing the signed witness of the nurses that he never spoke on the subject of religion. No one but his daughter, the nurses, and the doctor saw him during his last illness.

X. Y. Z.—Thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

J. WESTCOAT.—Dr. Robert L. Watkins holds that the color of the skin depends on the size of the sweat-glands. Of course it has nothing to do with the curse on Canaan and Ham.

H. MCALISTER.—Mr. Guest, 19 Alwyne-road, London, N., wishes to know something about your application for tracts. He has not received any communication from you yet.

C. H. SHELDON.—*Humanity* is published at 39 Great Queen-street, price 1d. monthly, and should not be confounded with *The Humanitarian*.

ALERT, to whom we return thanks for *Tongues of Fire*, points out that that periodical is not the organ of Christian Endeavorers, but of "The Pentecostal League," which is run by Reader Harris and Co. in the interests of the Holy Ghost. On the appearance of Mr. Harris's letter asking that prayer should be applied to the settlement of the Armenian question, Alert sent Mr. Harris a letter asking why this remedy was not put in operation twelve months ago. He further pointed out that the beautiful scheme of Atonement would shut John Morley out of heaven and let the unspeakable Sultan in.

A. TRIPP.—Thanks for the cheque. It is always difficult to decide what is the right moment to "clear the air." We acted on the best of our judgment.

A. C. DAVIE.—The "safe side" argument is a ridiculous fallacy. It may be used by the advocates of all religions in turn. The only "safe" course, on such lines, is to believe every religion on earth—which is an impossibility, unless a man is like Gerard de Nerval, the oriental scholar and novelist, who, on being twitted with having no religion, replied, "Why, I have seventeen." Mr. Forder will supply you with Dr. Aveling's *Darwin Made Easy* for one shilling. That will settle "special creation" for you, and of course the fall of man is settled too.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad to have the unanimous expression of good will from the annual meeting of the Birmingham Branch. We hope Messrs. Foote and Watts will enjoy the "welfare and success" you desire for them in America, and that they will be able to induce Ingersoll to visit England.

THOMAS MACLEISH (Glasgow).—It arrived safely. Many thanks. We hope some one at Carlisle will communicate with the Glasgow Branch with a view to having a meeting there, addressed by Mr. Cohen perhaps, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. The subscription you refer to came per Mr. Forder; write to him for the donor's address.

A. R. ANDREWS.—Messrs. Foote and Watts are glad to have your good wishes.

GUSTAVE SMITH.—We have spoken to Mr. Cohen on the subject. He will write you with a view to arranging a date.

T. BIRTLEY.—Our thanks to the Chester-le-Street friends.

R. JOHNSON.—Obliged to the lady for her thoughtfulness.

EDWARD BROOKS.—We will bring Colonel Ingersoll over unless he is as obstinate as fifty thousand mules. It cannot be in "Bob" to resist the appeal of his British admirers and lovers.

H. KENNEDY (Greenock).—Thanks for subscription and encouraging letter.

R. J. MURRAY.—We are responsible for our words as they stand, and we see nothing to add or retract, nor indeed anything to explain.

H. LYON.—We trust the delegates to America will have as good a time as you wish them.

J. POTTER.—All right. Mishaps will occur.

F. W. SWAIN.—Good! The form is handed over to Miss Vance. John Dean, of Derby, at eighty-four years of age, must be very zealous to collect subscriptions.

SHILLING MONTH.—A. R. Andrews, 1s.; M. L. B., 1s.; E. H. Jones, 1s.; J. A. K., 1s.; W. Atkinson, 1s.; S. Hudson, 5s. *Per C. Cohen*:—Mrs. Jackson, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Whitehead, 1s.; J. Sumner, Junr., 5s. *Per Miss Vance*:—Miss Smith, 1s.; R. Taylor, 1s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. J. Samson, £1; C. North, 1s.; Selwood, 2s.; R. Miller, 5s.; A. Fincken, 5s.; H. Fincken, 1s.; W. Fincken, 1s.; F. Wright, 1s.; Harry Snell, 2s. 6d.; Thomas Cresfield, 5s.; L. N. Hewitt, 2s. 6d.; Joseph Bevins, 2s. 6d.; Motherwell Branch, 5s.; A. W. Marks, 10s.; William Morris, 2s.; G. E. Lupton, £1; A. E. Lupton, £1; L. Ketteridge, 1s.; W. Caisey, 2s.; R. M., 1s.; George Smith, 2s.; R. A. R., 1s.; J. Herington, 1s. *Per R. Forder*:—A. F. Benson, 1s.; A. C. Scopes, 2s. 6d.; F. F. H., 2s. 6d.; Scotius, 1s.; J. E. B., 2s. 6d.

LECTURE SCHEME.—A. Tripp, £1. *Per Miss Vance*:—Motherwell Branch, 10s. 6d.; F. Thornett, 2s.; T. E. and G. Field, 3s.; R. A. R., 1s.; A. J. Guest (Brum), 1s.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—*Per Miss Vance*:—Blackburn Branch, 8s.; A. Lupton, £1.

MISS VANCE acknowledges:—A. Lupton, N.S.S. sub. for self and wife, 10s.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND.—A. Lupton, 10s.

A. ISZATT.—The winding-up is in the hands of the Official Receiver. There is no secretary now.

N.S.S. GENERAL FUND.—*Per Miss Vance*:—Blackburn Branch, 8s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The Monthly Messenger—Daily News—Two Worlds—Vegetarian Messenger—Progressive Thinker—Monist—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—People's Newspaper—Fur Unserer Jugend—Chatham Observer—Crescent—Liberty—North British Daily Mail—Twentieth Century—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Dunoon Observer—Chatham and Rochester News—Sydney Bulletin—Brann's Iconoclast—Boston Investigator—Animals' Friend—Zoophilist.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL.

JUST as I am preparing to leave for America I receive a warning that I want rest and change badly. I am in the doctor's hands, but as I have no lung or throat trouble this time I shall not miss my trip to America. Only I must be careful. My work is hard enough, and worries on the top of it are too much.

Before going I tender final thanks to the subscribers to Shilling Month and the American Fund. I have about £87 available for my journey with Mr. Watts. About half that sum is in the other list—making about £130 in all. I have advanced money to the N.S.S. to pay rent and help meet the Secretary's salary. My Lecture Scheme is clear up to date; this is to say, I owe no one anything. I was considerably out of pocket during the summer, but I have kept my contract with Mr. Cohen and all other lecturers. During my absence I have arranged for a continuance of lectures under the Scheme. London friends will note that the Athenæum Hall platform, in Tottenham Court-road, will be maintained while I am away. The arrangements are in Miss Vance's hands, and the Sunday evenings are all fixed up till my return.

Letters addressed to me will be kept unopened until I return. Communications intended for the *Freethinker* should therefore be addressed to Mr. Wheeler or "The Editor." Communications on N.S.S. business to Miss Vance.

I write this with a feeling of weariness. I am longing—not to be with the Lord—but for that quiet week on the *Germanic*. No letters, no telegrams, no visitors, no work

no worries. Only the blessed sky and the great round of waters.

Is it necessary for me to repeat the announcement that I shall send a weekly letter from America to the *Freethinker*?
G. W. FOOTE.

FOR MESSRS. FOOTE AND WATTS'S AMERICAN TOUR.

A. R. Andrews, 5s.; R. Wallis, 2s.; P. Shapter, 2s. 6d.; Chester-le-Street Branch, 7s.; Lizzy Carden, 5s.; H. Lyon, 2s.; T. W. Gore, 2s.; M. Bywater, 1s.; J. Potter, 2s.; T. Hull, 2s.; W. Brentnall, 2s.; H. Smith, 1s.; John Dean, 1s.; T. H. 1s.; M. L. B., 1s.; A. Tripp, £1; H. Kennedy, £1; Edward Brooks, £1; A. Firth, 5s.; D. Key, 5s.; Dr. W. Mortimer, £1; W. Blenkinsopp, 5s.; G. R., 10s.; E. Truelove, 10s.; J. Shipp, 1s.; J. Hume, 2s. *Edinburgh Branch.*—Mr. Falds, 1s.; Mr. Crohn, 1s.; Mr. Robertson, 1s.; Mr. Scott, 2s.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.; J. F. Dewar, 2s. 6d.

Per Charles Watts: W. Bailey (Manchester), £2; R. Bulman, 5s.

Per Miss Vance: Mrs. Caisey, 2s.; W. Davey, 2s.; F. Wood, 2s. 6d.; T. Dunbar, 2s.; C. Wilson, 5s.; J. Ives, 1s.; Robert Stone, 5s.; Robert Green, 5s.; R. A. R., 2s.; J. Herington, 1s.; C. W., 5s.; J. M., 2s.; Miss Smith, 1s.; R. Taylor, 1s. 6d.; J. Bawdon, 2s.; J. S., 5s.; F. G., 2s.; E. T. Hanley, 1s.; T. B., 5s.; F. Thornett, 2s.; J. Moffat, 7s.; E. O. Withers, 2s.; C. S., 2s.; J. S., 2s.; G. E. Lupton, 10s.

Per R. Forder: F. F. H., 5s.; Scotius, 1s.; J. Bear, 3s.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a crowded audience at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening. The lecture was partly upon the Pope's reply to the High Church party as to the validity of Anglican orders, and the defiance of Rome which was uttered at the Church Congress. But as it was his last address before leaving for America, Mr. Foote ventured to deal briefly with some other topics—the Church Congress debate on Evolution, the deaths of William Morris and George Du Maurier, Lord Rosebery's resignation, the Hyde Park demonstration, and the dangerous irruption of Christian passion in the field of politics. The audience applauded enthusiastically the declaration that it would be criminal madness to break the peace of Europe, and the further declaration that if the Powers could not unite for once to stop massacre and outrage it would be a demonstration of the utter futility of Christianity as a practical system. Mr. W. Heaford, who occupied the chair, made a warm appeal for fresh members; and Mr. Foote, in saying farewell till Christmas, asked them all to remember that the platform would be sustained during his absence by Messrs. Forder, Cohen, Moss, Heaford, and others.

Mr. Heaford lectures at the Athenæum Hall this evening (October 18) on Religion and Insanity." It is a promising subject, and the lecturer has given it much attention. Mr. Heaford should have a good audience.

The debate at Foresters' Hall between Messrs. Foote and Lee on "Is there a Future Life?" was another demonstration of the Christian Evidence Society's mistrust of such meetings. On the first night there did not seem two dozen Christians in the whole assembly, and there were few, if any more, on the second night. Mr. Lee was suffering from a cold on Wednesday, and was not in his usual form; but he spoke capitally on Thursday. Of course the debate would have been more interesting, as the audiences would have been larger, if the Christians had been as numerous as the Freethinkers. The chair was taken on the first night by Alderman Cory, of Cardiff, and on the second night by Mr. Charles Watts.

The two nights' debate between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. A. J. Waldron, upon "Secularism and Christianity," took place last week at New Brompton. Both meetings were well attended, and the audiences were orderly and enthusiastic. The *Chatham and Rochester News* gave a fair report of a column and half.

Mr. Watts had a capital audience at Camberwell last Sunday. This was his farewell lecture before starting for America. Mr. Hartmann presided. The audience was very enthusiastic, and at the conclusion of Mr. Watts's lecture he received quite an ovation.

Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the English National Secular Society, and Mr. Charles Watts, whom the Freethinkers of this country know about as well as they do any of our American lecturers, will arrive in New York about October 22. On Sunday evening, the 25th, their arrival will be celebrated in Chickering Hall. Colonel Ingersoll will make them feel at home in a little address of welcome, and all the other local speakers will chip in their words of encouragement, so that

at the close of the meeting they will undoubtedly know that they have some friends on this side of the water as well as on the other. They will each have to produce a speech in response, and altogether the Liberals around here will have such a gala occasion that they will be glad they lived in the nineteenth century and within railroad distance of New York. The details of the matter will be further set forth in these columns when completed. In the meantime everyone should make preparations to visit this city on October 25 and go to Chickering Hall.—*Truthseeker.*

The Rev. W. T. Lee is to hold a debate at Bradford with Mr. J. M. Robertson. It is to take place in the Central Hall, Manchester-road, next Wednesday and Thursday, October 21 and 22. Doors are open at 7, and the chair is taken at 7.30—on the first night by Mr. C. Cohen, and on the second by Rev. G. P. Clarke. The subject is "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better for Man?" We have already expressed our opinion of Mr. Lee's power as a debater. We never had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Robertson in debate; but, from what we know of him otherwise, we fancy that he will give his opponent a stomachful of trouble. We hope the meetings will be largely attended. There is nothing like a debate for stirring up enthusiasm, and giving Freethought a chance with outsiders.

We are pleased to notice in the *Vegetarian Messenger* a first-rate portrait of Mr. H. S. Salt, author of *The Life of James Thomson (B.V.)*, *The Life of D. Thoreau*, *Shelley the Pioneer*, etc.

The "Types of Religionists" that appeared in our columns were really from the pen of Mr. Wheeler. They are now collected in pamphlet form (2d.), and published by Mr. Forder. The types included are, the Jesuit, the High Churchman, the Low Churchman, the Broad Churchman, the Methodist, the Salvationist, and the Christian Evidence Man. All are sketched with a light but firm hand, and the interest never flags. Several persons have expressed a desire to have these "Types" in a handy form for circulation, and their wish can now be gratified. We should say that Mr. Wheeler's new pamphlet will make its way where more formal efforts might be barred.

The *Literary World*, after all these months, prints a review of Mr. Foote's pamphlet on Mr. Wilson Barrett's play, *The Sign of the Cross*. Of course the reviewer sides with Mr. Barrett, and approves the "glorification of Christianity," even when it is done at the expense of truth and justice. However, he thinks it well to end in a somewhat different vein. "His [Mr. Foote's] pamphlet," the reviewer says, "though spoiled by a too evident animus, is smartly written, and offers, from his copious stores, an abundance of information which it will be profitable for both Christians and non-Christians to study."

The Federation of Sunday Societies has held a successful congress, its third annual one, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, under the presidency of Dr. Spence Watson. A resolution was passed declaring that the report of the Committee of the House of Lords, that the existing law corresponds substantially with the wishes of the people, is erroneous, and that the Judges have more correctly interpreted those wishes when, in reluctantly giving judgment for the Lord's Day Societies, they declared that the prosecutions under the Lord's Day Act ought never to have been entered upon.

A cursory inspection of an advance copy of *The Agnostic Annual* for 1897, edited by Charles A. Watts (London: 17 Johnson's-court; 6d.), shows that it maintains its accustomed high standard. The opening paper is by the ex-Father Joseph McCabe, who describes his progress "From Rome to Rationalism." Mr. J. Allanson Picton, a most competent authority, writes an incisive and valuable article on "Theology in State Schools," to which we may find occasion to again refer. Amos Waters gives a sketch which he entitles "Agnosticism in Allegory"; Mr. C. Watts "An Address to Orthodox Christians"; and R. Bithell deals with "Hindrances to Rationalist Propaganda," in which he rebukes those who are "always speaking of clergymen as 'beetles.'" Julian writes well on "The Progress of Religious Thought"; Mr. F. J. Gould tells a tale of the times of the early Christian Church; and last, not least, Mr. C. T. Gorham writes with clearness and decision on "Immortality as the Object of Life."

The Humanitarian League has issued from its offices, 39, Great Queen-street, a manifesto on the subject of Humane Diet, for the advocacy of which a special department of the League has been established. The manifesto says: "The attitude of the Humanitarian League towards the food question is practically this. Unlike the older school of zoophilists, who were inclined to evade the grave ethical problems raised by the practice of flesh-eating, the League has from the first looked that problem in the face. It has recognised in its publications, which contain essays (by

vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike) on the evils of cattle-ships, slaughter-houses, and the whole system of butchery, that vegetarianism is undoubtedly a 'counsel of perfection,' by which alone a full and final solution of the problem will be forthcoming. On the other hand, it is equally recognised that, as many earnest humanitarian workers do not see their way to the adoption of a fleshless diet, the League does not attempt to saddle them with vegetarian principles, but leaves them individually free to think and act as they please." As this makes it clear that the League is open to those who do not adopt the "counsel of perfection," we hope the publication of the manifesto will be followed by an increase of the membership of the Humanitarian League which has done and is doing most excellent work.

The *Monist* for October opens with an important paper on "Animal Automatism and Consciousness," by Professor C. Lloyd Morgan, who finds in animal life conscious selection and choice. The editor, Dr. Paul Carus, writes on "Panlogism," and Professor Halsted on "Subconscious Pangeometry." The Literary Correspondence from France, contributed by Lucien Arréat, is always a notable feature of the *Monist*. M. Arréat shows the German, English, and American philosophers how philosophy can be made interesting and attractive.

The *Animals' Friend* for the current month is a much better number than usual. It is now printed in a new and improved form, and is noticeable, among other things, for some interesting reminiscences of Carlyle in regard to vivisection, and an interview with Captain Pirkis, R.N., the well-known opponent of Pasteurism, and advocate of the Buisson treatment for hydrophobia.

The *Secular Almanack* is now well in hand, and all who intend to avail themselves of the opportunity to keep their goods before the eyes of the Secular public should send in their advertisements at once. Secretaries are also reminded to send in their intimations without further delay.

The Progressive party have scored a victory on the Brighton School Board, where of the fifteen seats eight are non-sectarian, and two independent.

The *Methodist Times*, in its Literary Gossip, says that the death of William Morris is the greatest loss to English literature since the death of Tennyson. It admits, however, that "he was not a Christian." It also says that "England is left with only one great poet, Swinburne"—who, by the way, is not a Christian either.

The plan of having a public memorial meeting in honor of the dead, such as was held at the death of Charles Bradlaugh, seems to be a method of commemoration which is coming in vogue. On Tuesday there was a large gathering at the Holborn Town Hall in memory of William Morris. Mr. Hill Hyndman presided, and Messrs. Walter Crane, P. Kropotkin, Cunningham Graham, Scheu, and other personal friends of the dead poet and Socialist, gave their testimony to the nobility of his aims and the many excellencies of his character.

WE SEND MISSIONARIES TO CHINA.

Our steeples throw shadows o'er dungeon and cell—
And we send missionaries to China;
And the clank of the chain drowns the soft Eastern bell—
As we send missionaries to China;
We hear the dull fall of the tramps' million feet,
At midnight we find in the great city's street
Lost souls, to whom even hell would seem sweet—
But we send missionaries to China.

Thousands of dollars each year we subscribe
To send missionaries to China,
That the Pagan religion's pure stream may imbibe;
So we send missionaries to China;
But beggars ask alms at the millionaire's door,
And our Dives can't shut out the cry of the poor—
The low cry that some day will rise to a roar—
As we send missionaries to China.

There's a satisfied few who like things as they are—
They help send missionaries to China;
But we know that their prayers do not mount very far,
Though they send missionaries to China;
For they always proclaim that divine is the plan
That will give them a chance to grab all that they can,
And that poverty's really of value to man—
So they send missionaries to China.

W. E. HICKS.

DINNER TO MESSRS. FOOTE AND WATTS.

By invitation of Mr. George Anderson, a select party of friends assembled at Simpson's Divan on Saturday, October 10, at a "send-off" banquet in honor of the visit of Messrs. Foote and Watts to America. The chair was occupied by Mr. Anderson, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake acting as vice-chairman. After a most excellent repast, and a little music from Mrs. Wheeler, the chairman made an innovation on ordinary practice by giving, instead of the toast of the Queen, that of "The Ladies," alluding in feeling terms to Mrs. Foote's sacrifice of her husband on the altar of public duty. The toast was ably responded to by Miss Vance, who declared her conviction that the real new woman was the woman who adopted Freethought. After this toast, the ladies graciously permitted the bringing in of the representative of Sir Walter Raleigh. The toast of "The Speakers and Writers of Freethought," proposed by Mr. Forder, was responded to by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who declared that, though interested in many movements, there was none in which he took more interest than in the Freethought movement. It was his first love, and would be his last. He wittily described his own first visit to America, his troubles with interviewers, and the invitations he received to preach in churches, and paid a high tribute to the character and attainments of Colonel Ingersoll. If he came over now, he was sure the press would report him, which he did not think when he met him for the first time in the United States.

Mr. Anderson, in proposing the toast of the evening, "Health and Success to the Delegates to America," mentioned that there were three in that room who had "done time" in the cause of freedom of speech—Mr. Holyoake, Mr. Truelove, and Mr. Foote. He did not think the cause could be better represented in America than by the delegates chosen; and he trusted they would bring over that grand champion of Freethought, Colonel Ingersoll. The toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

Mr. Watts, in responding, alluded to his eight previous visits to the States, and promised to bring Mr. Foote back safe and sound, and with increased experience. They had two things to do—to expound English Secularism to the American people, and to obtain the promise of a visit from that splendid man, Colonel Ingersoll. He felt sure of success in both points, and his friend Mr. Putnam had written him that an immense gathering was expected at the Chicago Convention.

Mr. Foote, in responding, hoped that their visit might be the means of strengthening the bonds of international Freethought amity. He looked forward with particular pleasure to meeting the man who, of all living men, he most admired, and it would go hard if he did not succeed in extorting his promise to visit his many admirers in England. The Colonel and himself shared one sentiment in common—their admiration for the genius of Shakespeare.

A number of songs, and music by the Misses Macnamara, were interspersed between and after the speeches, and Miss Vance appeared in a new character, by well rendering the song of "The Bugler." Before the proceedings closed, Mr. Wheeler proposed, and Mr. Heaford seconded, the toast of "The Health of the Chairman," and Mr. Anderson, in responding, gave an interesting sketch of his early inclination to Freethought. In the course of the evening he sang two songs; the last—an Irish song, with actions—will long remain in the memories of all who were present at this enjoyable banquet.

The partisans of certain sects have indeed told us that they do not condemn the adherents of other sects; that they harbor no hatred against them. But in saying this they say what is not true. For never, since the time of Arius, has there been a single dogma which has not resulted from a wish to contradict an opposed dogma. To maintain that a particular dogma is a divine revelation, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the highest degree of presumption and folly. There is nothing more presumptuous than to affirm that that which I say is that which God himself says through my mouth; and there is nothing more false than to say to a man who says that God speaks through his mouth: "No, it is not through your mouth that God speaks, but through mine, and He says precisely the contrary from what you pretend He says." Now, this is the way all the councils, all the churches, all the sects reason; and thence has arisen, and still arises, all the evil which has been produced in the world, and is now being produced, in the name of religion.—Count Tolstoi.

The savage, far from possessing that freedom which sentimental speculators about society used to imagine, has his beliefs dictated by custom, in common with those usages which peremptorily regulate his life. When we read that in Guinea a man who does not fulfil the prophecy of the fetish by getting well is strangled because he has made the fetish lie, we may readily understand that the expression of scepticism is practically unknown.—Herbert Spencer, "Principles of Ethics," sec. 319.

CRINGE TO CHRIST.

THE Lord a lovely land aloft, in auld lang-syne, prepared
For everybody who will cringe to Christ;
Yes, all will go there whose account with Jahveh has been
squared—

That is to say, all those who've cringed to Christ.
He also made another place—its temperature is quite
Beyond the highest figure in the scale of Fahrenheit;
There's hardly room to move there, for 'tis packed so deuced
tight

With people who have failed to cringe to Christ!

Then, if you would escape that place of brimstone and of fire,
Go down upon your knees and cringe to Christ;
The only way to pacify good God Almighty's ire
And get salvation is to cringe to Christ.

As sure as eggs are eggs, when you the mortal bucket kick,
The Lord will say: "Depart from me, you cursed heretic."
And there and then consign you to the clutches of "Old
Nick,"

If you have failed to bow and cringe to Christ!

Your sins will all be blotted out of God's recording book
If, ere you die, you'll only cringe to Christ;
And in his mansion he will find for you a pleasant nook,
If you will only bow and cringe to Christ.

You may have been a murderer—it matters not a hang,
For in your face the golden gate old Peter will not bang;
He'll let you in most joyfully to join the godly gang,
If he discovers you have cringed to Christ.

Just think what rogues and vagabonds you'll have to go to
meet

If, while you're alive, you cringe to Christ;

The scum of all the earth, who've only gone to God's retreat
Because, before they died, they cringed to Christ.

Now, I would rather be committed to those torrid zones
Where folks for ever gnash their teeth, and rend the air
with groans,

Than join the craven crew who went down on their marrow-
bones

To bow and scrape, and fawn and cringe to Christ!
ESS JAY BEE.

WHO IS AN ATHEIST?

MEN tremble at the very name of an Atheist. But who is
an Atheist? The man who brings mankind back to reason
and experience, by destroying prejudices inimical to their
happiness; who has no need of resorting to supernatural
powers in explaining the phenomena of nature.

It is madness, says the theologian, to suppose incompre-
hensible motives in Nature. Is it madness to prefer the
known to the unknown? to consult experience and the
evidence of our senses? to address ourselves to Reason, and
prefer her oracles to the decision of sophists, who even con-
fess themselves ignorant of the God they announce?

When we see priests so angry with Atheistical opinions,
should we not suspect the justice of their cause? Spiritual
tyrants! 'tis ye who have defamed the divinity by besmea-
ring him with the blood of the wretched! You are the truly
impious! Impiety consists in insulting the God in whom it
believes. He who does not believe in a God cannot injure
him, and cannot of course be impious.

On the other hand, if piety consists in serving our country,
in being useful to our fellow-creatures, and in observing the
laws of nature, an Atheist is pious, honest, and virtuous
when his conduct is regulated by the laws which reason and
virtue prescribe to him.

It is true the number of Atheists is inconsiderable, because
enthusiasm has dazzled the human mind, and the progress
of error has been so great that few men have courage to
search for truth. If by Atheists are meant those who, guided
by experience and the evidences of their senses, see nothing
in nature but what really exists; if by Atheists are meant
natural philosophers, who think everything may be accounted
for by the laws of motion, without having recourse to a
chimerical power; if by Atheists are meant those who know
not what a spirit is, and who reject a phantom, whose
opposite qualities only disturb mankind—doubtless there
are many Atheists; and their number would be greater
were the knowledge of physics and sound reason more
generally disseminated.

An Atheist does not believe in the existence of a God. No
man can be certain of the existence of an inconceivable
being, in whom inconsistent qualities are said to be united.
In this sense many theologians would be Atheists, as well as
those credulous beings who prostrate themselves before a
being of whom they have no other idea than that given
them by men, avowedly comprehending nothing of him
themselves.

—Horace Seaver, "Occasional Thoughts."

CORRESPONDENCE.

PIOUS COMMEMORATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your number for October 4 there is a notice of
the celebration of the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh by a
festival of the "Old Guard," and others, at Stoke Newington;
and the announcement that it is proposed to commemorate
the natal days of Voltaire and Carlile in the same manner.
I venture, with great deference to the "Old Guard," to point
out that this celebration of birthdays is but the inaugura-
tion of another version of the old religion of anthropomor-
phism we are fighting against. Apart from the great
objection that it is setting up the veneration of men instead
of the principles they fought for, it is invidious; for the
great warfare of the emancipation of thought from super-
stition has been carried on by millions of obscure men and
women who have been done silently to death by great
members who have been publicly martyred, but whose
names have been ignored or lost, as well as the great repre-
sentative men. If we are to keep holidays in commemora-
tion of the heroes of Freethought, we shall be in a perpetual
festival; for it is impossible to celebrate the births of
Bradlaugh, Voltaire, and Carlile, and ignore Bruno, Paine,
Hone, and a thousand others. For my own part, I cannot
see the consistency, much less the wisdom, nor even the
policy, of carrying on the warfare against superstition with
the machinery of superstition. The Service Book of the
N.S.S. is a bugbear to me. But, if the emancipation of
men's minds is to be produced by the construction of new
chains after the old patterns, and we are to have a calendar
of holidays, will it not be better to celebrate the great events
which have aided to bring forward liberty, both of mind
and body? Should we not rather celebrate the inauguration
of the epochs of progress which have been the work of
myriads of sufferers, rather than the natal days of the men
who have been their representatives before the world? I
suggest, therefore, it would be well, if we are to have "Saints'
days" or "Holy days," that we keep such days as the anni-
versaries of the defiance of the Papacy by Martin Luther,
the separation of England from the See of Rome, the estab-
lishment of the Commonwealth in England and of the
Republic in France, and the emancipation of the slaves by
President Lincoln. Moreover, the publication of such books
as *The Age of Reason* and *The Descent of Man* might have
their commemoration days.

I do not suggest that festivals should be made in honor of
these events. To my mind, that is to inaugurate the ritual
of a new religion in the name of opposition to all religion.
I think unity of sentiment quite sufficient reason to bring
Freethinkers together to rejoice that they are emancipated
from the horror of superstition, without the dubious pretext
of commemorating the natiivities of the great dead.

G. P.

Obituary.

DIED on October 2, aged 73, at 58 Avenue de Wagram,
Paris, Pierre Amiable Victor Le Lubez, Vice-President and
formerly Treasurer of the National Secular Society. I first
knew Le Lubez in 1862 at New Cross, and in those far-off
days experienced many acts of kindness from him. His
house was the rendezvous of some illustrious French exiles
during the second Empire, where many a scheme was planned
and carried out for sending Republican manifestoes into
France. In 1863 the Deptford Secular Society was formed,
of which Le Lubez was Chairman, and I was Secretary. He
subsequently became Treasurer of the N.S.S., and only
resigned when he retired from business and removed to
Paris. Twenty years ago he was a frequent speaker on our
London platforms, and remained a supporter of the East
London Branch to the time of his death. I met him last on
the day of Carnot's funeral at Paris, and then saw that he
had changed considerably for the worse. To his widow I
tender the fullest sympathy of his numerous English friends,
and in her great sorrow she can find comfort in knowing
that we all mourn the loss of an earnest, able, honest worker
for humanity.—ROBERT FORDER.

THE late George du Maurier, the gifted artist on *London
Society* and *Punch*, and the author of *Trilby* and *The
Martian*, upon which he was engaged up to his final illness,
was, as is evident from his most famous work, an unbeliever
in orthodoxy. He was cremated at Woking, in a strictly
private manner, on October 10.

LAST Sunday, at Harton Cemetery, South Shields, were
interred the remains of Ralph Chapman, senr., father of
the secretary of the local Branch of the National Secular
Society. Deceased had been a Freethinker all his life, and,
during a painful illness, never swerved from his convictions.
In spite of the wretched weather there was a good attendance
of relatives and friends, before whom Mr. S. M. Peacock,
president, impressively read the Secular Burial Service of
Austin Holyoake.—R. C.

BOOK CHAT.

NEW YORK *Public Opinion*, noticing Mr. Leslie Stephen's volume on *Social Rights and Duties*, says: "He possesses an eminently well-balanced mind; and his polished literary style, combined with his calm judicial attitude towards all questions, renders everything he says most agreeable, not to say fascinating. The lecture on Heredity is a critique of Kidd's *Social Evolution*, and of the hundreds of similar criticisms that have appeared none has more completely laid bare the weak points of that somewhat remarkable book. His answer to the Galtonian claim to the great intellectual superiority of the ancients is complete—viz., that it compares the few dozen best Greeks with the average Englishman. Mr. Stephen manifests a far clearer idea of the true causes of civilization than most writers of his class. Finally, the lecture on the Vanity of Philosophizing is launched exclusively against Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, a book that has enjoyed an undeserved popularity. The dissection of its fallacies by our author is incisive. He sets out with the characteristic remark, that 'the foundations of his edifice are ingeniously supported by the superstructure; and that is a kind of architecture which, to my mind, lacks stability,' and then proceeds to demolish his 'edifice,' foundations, superstructure, and all."

Reviewing a book entitled *Stephen, a Soldier of the Cross*, the *Christian Advocate* says: "We must again utter a grave protest against the fictionizing of biblical incidents and personages." Well, now, that is rich.

It is said that the world is in one sense indebted to Mrs. Hardy for her husband's novels, in that she urged him to forsake architecture for literature as a profession. When he had written his first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, she copied out the entire work from his MS. and sent it to the publisher. As part of her work she keeps herself posted in the literature of the day, and her husband constantly draws from her knowledge.

A privately-printed pamphlet has been issued by Canon Jenkins, Lyminge, who corresponded for many years with Cardinal Manning. The Canon, in conversation with Manning, after the latter's elevation to the cardinalate, referred to the iniquity of the Papacy of the Renaissance period, such as the doings of the Borgia, the Ghisleri, and the Pamphli Papacies. The Cardinal seemed in complete ignorance of these chapters of history, and heard of them not only with horror, but terror. He said to his Anglican friend: "My only comfort is that I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." To which his friend replied: "But what if it is not holy?"

Messrs. Luzac & Co. issue a translation from the German of W. Boussett, entitled *The Anti-Christ Legend: A Chapter in Christianity and Jewish Folk-Lore*.

Messrs. Watts & Co. have issued, in the form of a twopenny pamphlet, a paper written by the late Samuel Sharpe in 1879, entitled *An Inquiry into the Age of the Moabite Stone*. Mr. Sharpe, in opposition to the general consensus of opinion of archaeologists, held that the stone was a forgery—not a modern, but an ancient, one. The similarity of the language of the stone to that of the Bible, which many consider a proof of the genuineness of the stone, he held to be the reverse. His chief argument is that the stone, if genuine, should show acquaintance with the sources of the Books of Kings, but not with the Books of Kings themselves, which were written three or four hundred years later. Mr. Sharpe considers that the forgery is very ancient, dating from about A.D. 260, when Odenathus was ruler of Syria, and that its purpose was to argue that the province of Moab included the land of Moab. On so debatable a matter the general public will follow the opinion of the bulk of the authorities, and these are opposed to Mr. Sharpe. Chilperic Edwards, in his admirable book, *The Witness of Assyria*, does not challenge the genuineness of the stone, but shows that as it stands it is a testimony, not for, but against, the truth of the Bible.

An American, Dr. Shinn, rector of Grace Church, Newton, Mass., has put out a little volume, entitled *Some Modern Substitutes for Christianity*. They are ticketed by him with the names of Theosophy, Christian Science, Spiritualism, Socialism, and Agnosticism. Of course, Dr. Shinn discusses these systems not scientifically, but from the point of view of the pulpit.

The Cambridge University Press issue an Ethiopic version of *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*. The Ethiopic Christian writer took the most amazing liberties with Greek history, religion, and mythology. He identified one Greek god with Elijah, and another with Enoch. Philip

of Macedon became a Christian martyr, of a kind; Alexander a sort of Rabbi, deeply versed in the Old Testament. "Never," says Dr. Budge, the translator, "was heathen king or profane history so thoroughly transformed."

Everybody's Medical Guide (Saxon & Co.; 6d.) is the last of the series of Everybody's Books of which the sixpenny *Pocket Cyclopaedia* is so popular. We have looked over the work, which is by a London M.D., and certainly it seems to give a most excellent compendium of the treatment of ordinary complaints, which are arranged alphabetically. It is a handy and exceedingly cheap guide, for which a large sale can be confidently predicted.

If rumour may be believed, the newest author to place his impress on men and things before the public will be no less distinguished an individual than our recent Celestial guest, Li Hung Chang. If the viceroy really does carry out his intention, his book (says the *Chronicle*) ought to be one of the most considerable contributions to the literature of the period ever produced. Not only is he a remarkably shrewd and observant man, but he brought to the consideration of the subject a mind practically untrammelled by considerations of preconceived ideas of the nations, which are always pitfalls for the descriptive writer who endeavors to force his observations into the channels marked out by others.

PROFANE JOKES.

MRS. TARTAR—"Do you think my mother went to heaven, John?" Mr. Tartar—"I suppose so: she always went contrary to my wishes."

"You look very thoughtful, my friend," said Saint Paul, who happened to be strolling near the gate, and stopped for a short chat with Saint Peter. "Well, I have been thinking," replied the latter. "About what?" "Well, you know I've kept the gate all these many hundred years, and no one has ever presumed to aspire to my place, but—but—" "But what?" "That man Talmage is due up here almost any day now."

Deacon Black—"How did you like it down at Boomtown?" Rev. White—"I tell you, they're wideawake down there!" "Oh, then, you didn't preach for them?"

"I'm afraid I preached rather a long sermon, deacon," said the minister, who was anxious for a word of commendation. "Oh, no, parson," replied the honest man; "it averaged up well." "How so?" "It may have been a trifle long, but then it was neither very broad nor very deep."

One Sunday, as a certain Scottish minister was returning homewards, he was accosted by an old woman, who said: "Oh, sir, well do I like the day when you preach." The minister was aware that he was not very popular, and answered: "My good woman, I am glad to hear it. There are too few like you. And why do you like it when I preach?" "Oh, sir," she replied, "when you preach I always get a good seat!"

Parish clerks are proverbially illiterate. One who had to announce that the Revs. Boanerges and Armageddon would preach alternately gave out that they would preach to all eternity. Another was in the habit of announcing that they would sing the Dog's Holiday; and yet a third, when requested to notify that there would be no afternoon service, as the parson was officiating at Peover, announced that the parson would be fishing at Peover.

What Willie Said.

The minister, it was expected, would spend the evening with the family, and Mrs. Williams was most anxious that her little boy should appear at his best.

"Now, Willie," she said, "Dr. Shultz will ask you your name, and you must tell him it is 'Willie.' And he will ask you how old you are, and then you must say, 'Five.' And he will want to know where bad little boys go, and you must tell him, 'They go to hell.' Do you understand?"

Not content with a repetition once or twice, Mrs. Williams drilled him again and again in the answers.

Dr. Shultz came as expected, and, after a short conversation with the hostess, lifted the child on his knee, and said: "Well, my little fellow, can you tell me your name?"

Imagine the surprise of the reverend doctor when, like a flash, came the answer: "Willie. Five years old. Go to hell!"

I will spiritualize that wonderful tale
Of Jonah, the Hebrew, that vagabond lout—
Three days and three nights he got drunk at the
"Whale";
When his money was done they kicked him out.

Shebago.

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.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, W. Heaford, "Religion and Insanity."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, R. Forder, "Some Blasphemous Poetry." October 14, at 8.30, Discussion on Secularism.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 4 Members' annual meeting; 6, Tea and Conversazione.
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Plato, the Typical Author."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Litany of the Church."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward, "The Greatest Lie in the World."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, A lecture.
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon's-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsay, "What Must it Be to be There?"
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack, "Heaven and Hell"; 6.30, H. P. Ward, "God or the Sultan: Which is Worse?" October 21, at 8, H. P. Ward, "Why Do Right?"
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why Lead a Moral Life?"
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, Mr. Ward will lecture.
KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at Bradlaugh Club and Institute—report and balance-sheet.

COUNTRY.

BOLTON (Borough Chambers, Rushton-street): 7, T. Holstead, "Socialism not Workable."
BRADFORD (Unity Lodge Rooms, Sunbridge-road): October 23, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?"
BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherds' Hall): 7, J. J. Carne, "Some Triumphs of Modern Science."
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, J. G. Briggs, "The Limits of the Artificial."
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class; 6.30, P. McNair, "The Story of a Scottish Mountain, as told by Modern Science"—with illustrations.
HECKMONDWIKE (Mr. Wood's Office): 2.30, Business meeting.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): Touzeau Parriss—11, "How to Become Wise;" 6.30, "Life, Death, and Immortality."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Woollet, "The Samson Myth."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, "Volcanoes and Earthquakes." Illustrated with lantern views.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "Individual Liberty v. State Interference"; 3, "The Case against Christianity"; 7, "Foreign Missions: What they Do, and How they Do It." Tea at 5. Members' Social Dance on Wednesday evenings at 8.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Lantern lecture, "English Lake-land."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 18, Sheffield; 19 and 20, Heckmondwike; 21, Huddersfield; 23, Bradford; 25, Liverpool; 26, 27, 28, 29, Derby. November 1, Athenæum, London; 3, Camberwell; 8, Athenæum, London; 15, Glasgow.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—October 18, New Brompton.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

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Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

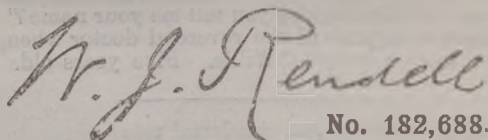
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