

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

The Use of Missionaries.

It is naturally denied by the more zealous Christians that the missionaries are at the bottom of the trouble in China. The secretary of the Chinese Legation in London says that they are; indeed, he declares that there will be no peace, and no prospect of peace, until the missionaries are recalled. But the friends of the missionaries say that this is all nonsense. The Protestants admit, however, that the Catholic missionaries are an obtrusive and intriguing lot, and that the Chinese have at least *some* reason for hating them and trying to clear them out of the Celestial Empire. On the other hand, the Catholics broadly hint that all would go well if the Protestant missionaries would go back to Europe and take with them their absurd and narrow dogmatism. For our part, we believe both sides; that is, we believe what the Protestants say of the Catholics, and what the Catholics say of the Protestants. Probably they know each other if they do not know themselves; and, as lookers-on often see most of the game, it is quite possible that we see through both parties in this interesting dispute.

The Chinese do not appear to draw a distinction in favor of either set of Christian soul-savers. They love them so that they dote upon their very absence. Nevertheless, it must be allowed that there was no particular opposition to the missionaries when they first visited China. The Jesuits were almost welcomed, and they seem to have taken care that their welcome was not worn out too rapidly. They taught the Chinese a good deal of useful knowledge, translated Euclid into their language, gave them lessons in astronomy, and put them up to many wrinkles in the mechanical arts. Christianity was insinuated as they went along. But the Dominicans appeared upon the scene and quarrelled with the Jesuits; and then the Protestants came and quarrelled with both—and with each other; and the Chinese began to wish them all to the devil. But unfortunately they stayed there and played the devil with the Chinese.

What is the object of these missionaries? In the first place, they are getting a living, and some of them a good one. It is a mistake to suppose that they are all burning with disinterested zeal. For the most part the missionary societies are well-organised agencies for diminishing the pressure of the unemployed in the clerical labor market at home. Millions of souls still need saving here, but there are too many gentlemen engaged already in the business, and it is found advisable to send off a number of them every year to save souls in heathen countries. Ostensibly, of course, their object is to save the souls of the said heathen. To save them from *what*? The only possible answer is that the heathen are going in streams to hell, and that it is an act of infinite charity to arrest their headlong flight to everlasting perdition. Well, if the missionaries really believe that, and are actuated by such a tender motive, they are worthy of

our admiration from a moral point of view, whatever we may think of their intelligence. But they betray at least the mixture of their motives when they clamor for protection. They proclaim themselves as a species of traders. Missionaries should go on their own responsibilities, take their own risks, and accept martyrdom, if they meet it, as the crown of their enterprise. But when they claim to be protected as citizens of the countries they have left, and call for naval and military assistance in the extremities they have deliberately encountered, they range themselves with the other commercial classes who seek openings in foreign lands. Moreover, they exhibit an additional hypocrisy; for Jesus Christ told his apostles that they should be delighted when they were persecuted for his sake, and that a great reward was awaiting them in heaven. It is, therefore, a gross insincerity on their part to fly from persecution, often with indecent haste, and seek shelter under the Union Jack. They say that Christ is their captain, but when their persons are in danger they trust to Admiral This and General That.

Even if the missionaries were perfectly sincere and absolutely disinterested, we might still ask them whether their game is worth the candle. China contains more than four hundred millions of inhabitants. Some fifteen millions of these die every year. Now, it is doubtful if the missionaries succeed in converting one thousand per annum. Would it not be just as well to let such a few die in their national faith, and make themselves as comfortable as possible in the other world with their own countrymen? It seems to be overlooked that converted Chinamen are expected to live in the other world with Europeans, and that a great many Celestials do not regard the prospect as alluring.

We see that the Rev. Dr. Clifford, the famous, energetic Baptist, has been delivering a fiery speech on the subject of Missions to China. He more than admits the "greed" of the Catholic missionaries for "political power," but he denies that "our Protestant messengers have created troubles." Anyhow, he says, they mean to continue their work. Their object is to "carry to men redemption and renewal, and peace and joy, the new life that is in Christ," and "nothing will hold them back." This, however, is untrue. Something *does* hold them back. Protestant missionaries have been flying for safety to places guarded by British and other European troops. They are holding back until they feel they can preach Christ again with the prospect of regular meals and sound sleep.

Dr. Clifford affirms that "the undecaying strength of missions is the perpetual miracle of conversion." Miracle, indeed! Why, if conversion were a matter of miracle the whole world ought to have been converted long ago. Omnipotence should not be as slow as a missionary society. There are really no degrees in the miraculous; to God one act must be as simple as another, and the conversion of millions as easy as the conversion of units. The

very paucity of converts is a proof of the absence of supernatural agency. Indeed, the phenomenon is rather surprising even on purely natural grounds. Considering the number of missionaries, their advantages of education, the money spent upon them, and the *prestige* they enjoy of belonging to the conquering races of Europe; considering also the curious worldly temptations so frequently offered to the lower classes of heathen; it is quite astonishing that so few are "brought to Christ." How many *real* converts there are it is hard to calculate, but the *nominal* converts can be counted, and the total is a satire on Christian pretensions.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Church Congress.

THE Church Congress just concluded at Newcastle-on-Tyne can hardly be said to have been an inspiring affair. It mapped out an extensive program, grew very fervent over the nature of the "Reformation Settlement," indignant over the want of support of Voluntary schools, tearful on behalf of the underpaid clergy, vaguely charitable as regards social problems, talked for nearly a week, and then dissolved, pleased with itself and everything in general. It was a glorious opportunity for self-adulation, and it was not allowed to slip by unutilised. Speaker after speaker claimed reform after reform as having been achieved by the Church, until one began to wonder if anything had ever been done apart from the Church by law established, and whether the names of Paine and Bentham and Mill and Owen and Darwin and Spencer, with scores of others, were not mere myths that we had mistaken for realities, much as the Catholic Church had, in its eagerness for martyrs, placed on its roll of saints people who had never existed.

At this game of quietly annexing all the reforms of the century as being due to the activity of the Christian Churches the Bishop of Ripon achieves an easy first. The abolition of slavery, the improved position of labor, the development of municipal activity—these, with numerous other improvements, were all dragged in under the general heading of "The Church's Progress during the Nineteenth Century." And all with the quiet assumption that the working-out of such movements was part of the ordinary work of the Church, and a work in which she was always engaged. Not a word of recognition for the labors of men who lived outside all the Churches, and who sowed in tears of blood and misery the reforms that a Christian prelate, with cool impertinence, now claims as his own. The Bishop must have known full well that, as a speaker at the Carlisle Church Congress in 1884 said, "During this century the influence of the Church of England, in so far as it had publicly manifested itself, had for the most part been nearly always on the wrong side—on the side of privilege against right, on the side of ignorance against knowledge, on the side of restriction against freedom, on the side of the few against the many." The Church fought its hardest against the progress of education, against the entrance of Jews and Catholics into Parliament, against the abolition of payment of wages in public-houses; against the abolition of slavery, for the expressed reason that it was a blow at the rights of property;* against the amelioration of the criminal code; against Parliamentary reform, when, as one of their own number records (Canon Molesworth), "they were almost unanimous in their hatred of the proposed innovation"; against the abolition of the Corn Laws, because, to quote Cobden, "having an interest in the high price of bread," they were almost to a man guilty of causing the distress. In brief, it is hard to find what they were not against. I might, however, recommend to the Bishop a statement made at his own Church Congress at its last Newcastle gathering. It was made by the Rev. T. J. Laurence, and was to the effect that "No one can read the history of the last two hundred years without coming mournfully and sadly to the conclusion that the clergy of the Established Church, as a body, have resisted most of the political and social reforms that have made the country a fit place to live in."

* Sir G. Stephen, *Anti-Slavery Recollections*, p. 179.

The Bishop, I see from the papers, spoke without notes, and this may account for the above-quoted statements, as well as for the one that "under the shadow of Christianity humane institutions have always flourished"—a declaration tolerably accurate if it is meant that *some* humane institutions have existed side by side with the Christian religion, but not so if it is meant that Christianity was responsible for their existence. As a matter of fact, some of the most diabolical institutions the world has seen have been created "under the shadow of Christianity," and have been protected by its influence. Persecution for difference of opinion—one of the vilest of offences, because of its far-reaching effects on the whole life of society—was practised far more energetically by Christians than by any other people the world has seen. Mohammedanism spared the heretic on payment of a tribute; the persecutions of pre-Christian religions were spasmodic, and usually of a mild character. It was reserved for the Christian religion to give the whole world a lesson in this art, to call in every device that human ingenuity could invent for lengthening the agony of its victims, and to allow no consideration of age, sex, or social standing to come between it and those who dared to differ from its teachings.

The African slave trade was, too, a thing of Christian origin, created primarily to work the mines of South America. It was Christian in origin, fostered by Christians, was unknown in North America until introduced by Christians, and far outrivalled in horror all that we read of concerning ancient slavery. The slave of antiquity was often a poet, a philosopher, a teacher. The slave of modern American Christians, the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, was prohibited by law from learning the rudiments of his owner's language. The slave system of antiquity might urge on its defence that it was an improvement on what had gone before. The slave system of modern times was deliberately fostered for the satisfaction of the most sordid of motives.

Infanticide is a crime of which modern Christians are never tired of charging pre-Christian nations. But less than a hundred years ago there was going on in this country, "under the shadow of Christianity," a species of child murder such as no other nation has ever been guilty of. It was under the shadow of English Christianity that, during the early factory system, children of seven and eight years of age were deliberately murdered for the benefit of their employers. It was in Christian England that, as late as 1816, an Act had to be passed prohibiting children under *nine years of age* from working in cotton mills, and fixing the hours of work at not more than *twelve hours* daily. Think of the infamous condition of things that required legislation of this character, and contrast it with the statement, "Under the shadow of Christianity humane institutions have always flourished." The Bishop of Ripon must be either a great satirist or —.

The Bishop found further proof of the Church's progress in the fact that Christian nations now govern 800,000,000 people and control four times as much of the earth's area as is governed by non-Christian nations. This, I suppose, is an illustration of the text, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"; and still more evidence from the fact that "organisations which were started for a definitely spiritual object have been drawn into social channels." Really, the speaker *must* have been trying to infuse humor into the meeting. That social forces capture organisations that were started for a "definitely spiritual object" we should have thought to have been a sign of the Church's loss, not its gain. It is true that all religious organisations are compelled nowadays to take some interest in social matters; but this is precisely because the secularisation of life has gone on so rapidly and so thoroughly that even the Churches find themselves powerless to resist its influences. Probably, however, the Bishop was only poking fun.

Turning to other speakers and subjects, Professor Ryle, in the course of a paper on "Old Testament Criticism," pointed out that criticism had compelled them to abandon a great deal of the orthodox position concerning the Bible. They could "claim no supernatural anticipation of knowledge. They were unable to say whether some difficult recorded event was an actual fact or only founded on fact, or a popular story, or an early picture

based on early narrative." In fact, they seemed to know very little about it. Even a Church Congress has to make some concessions to truth. Professor Bernard raised a lament concerning "the ignorance which candidates for Holy Orders display of the books of the Old Testament"—perhaps that is why they declare that they "unfeignedly believe all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments"—and administered a piece of advice to the effect that they should beware of using "methods of exposition which we should brand as puerile or dishonest in any other branch of inquiry"—an exordium that discloses the inner nature of the clerical mind far more effectively than a direct attack would do. And, finally, Canon Watson concluded that "the materials of the historical books [of the Bible] have the general character of ancient records. They are meagre; they are unequal in their treatment of things; they are incomplete from a literary or historical point of view; the editors were probably separated by centuries from the events which they describe; their knowledge of the facts was imperfect; they were one-sided in their interests."

As usual, the discussion of social reforms was left until the fag end of the Congress. This took the shape of a paper read by the Rev. J. Horsley on "The Housing of the Poor." I take the following sentences therefrom as a commentary upon the text that "under the shadow of Christianity humane institutions have always flourished":—

"Sarcastic seems the phrase 'the housing of the poor' when the facts recur to one's mind of the 124,000 people in our civil parish living on less than a mile square; of nearly half a million in London whose home consists of one room; of 4,575 one-roomed homes in Spitalfields, of which 1,400 are occupied by numbers rising from four to eleven persons; of nearly a quarter of all babes born near me dying before they are a year old; of seventeen persons found to be inhabiting a single room in my neighbouring parish, Camberwell; of 3,000 persons to the acre, through the agency of industrial dwellings, in one part of Whitechapel."

A pretty picture, this, of a large portion of our population, after all the "Church's progress"! And the unfortunate part of it is its truth. It is conditions such as these that are creating problems that, unless promptly attended to, threaten to ruin our civilisation—far more so than the question of the efficiency of the Army and Navy, or the loss of a campaign. Mr. Horsley was showing that even the Church cannot kill the common sense of some people in stating the *secular* conclusion that "criminals and drunkards are made by overcrowded insanitary areas, not attracted to them from elsewhere. It is the sty that fouls the pig before the pig further fouls the sty, and.....therefore bad landlords, whether of village hovels or city slums, are chiefly responsible for crime." Long ago Owen and the early Freethought reformers taught the same lesson, and were branded as dangerous and immoral for so doing. Once more the Christian has to come back to the despised Secular standpoint to understand the real nature of the problems confronting him.

And what are the Churches, as organisations, doing? Positively nothing. The Rev. James Adderley "feared it was true that Agnostics and unbelievers took more practical interest in this question than Church people." Father Adderley might further have satisfied himself, by a little examination, that a great deal of this slum property is actually owned by the very Church at whose Congress he was assisting. And, even were it not so, neither Church nor Chapel would dare to make a direct onslaught on those who are directly responsible for the half million whose home is made up of one room. They can preach, and they can advocate charity: two excellent preventives of any drastic reform—the one deluding people into the belief that they are helping to improve things; the other, at most, representing but a fraction of the amount that would have to be spent were wages paid and rents regulated so as to render a decent living possible in its absence.

Can anyone doubt that, had the Churches devoted half the energy they manifest in constructing new places of worship to the creation of a strong public opinion on the subject, the matter might be well within sight of settlement? They can build elaborate "joss-houses" in squalid districts, and thus place before the people a

visible emblem of their own degradation; they can raise, and spend, nearly a million and a-half sterling on foreign missions; the country can be roused on the question of Church ceremonials, or the rival claims of Church and Chapel; but on this far more vital question of the mental, moral, and physical well-being of hundreds of thousands of people it can do little but offer up vague hopes that the conscience of the nation may be enlightened—a hope that offends no one, inspires no one, and leaves things exactly as they were.

C. COHEN.

Did Christ Really Live?

IN my article last week I dealt with the nature of myths, and pointed out how belief in them was perpetuated. I propose now to give some reasons for regarding the story of Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, as unhistorical. It is not my intention to dispute that a man by the name of Jesus lived two thousand years ago. Josephus refers to more than one person of the same name who lived about that time. My contention is that there is no historical evidence that the Christ (which really means the anointed) who is professed to be believed in by Christians ever existed. Remembering the period in which he *is said* to have lived, the many remarkable deeds it is alleged he performed, and the numerous historians who wrote about that time, it is certainly extraordinary, upon the supposition that he existed, that no secular writer of the first century even alludes to the Jesus called Christ. One of the principal Christian contributors to the recently-published volume, *The Ancient Faith in Modern Light*, in deploring the lack of evidence as to the inception of the Christian faith, thus writes:—

"It is a singular fact that secular history, which relates the advance of the Christian faith, gives the very scantiest account of its origin—gives, indeed, no account at all.....It seems as though the men who might have rendered this inestimable service were smitten with mental blindness; the whole Christian movement was to them so small, so weak, so entirely unimportant, that it never occurred to them to trace it to its source. They held it to be a local folly, a provincial fanaticism, which might well be left alone with good-natured contempt" (p. 87).

Now, it appears incredible that this historical silence should have obtained if such a person as the Christ of the Gospels actually lived. And yet, apart from the New Testament, there is not the slightest trustworthy evidence that he existed. This is the more strange upon the supposition that Jesus was equal with God. For if he were an omnipotent being it is legitimate to conclude that he would have exercised his power, and have given to the world a faithful history of his life.

It has been repeatedly urged that Josephus (A.D. 40) and Tacitus (A.D. 110) mentioned the name of Christ. As regards the former, it is now generally admitted, even by Christian scholars, that the principal passage in Josephus's writings where the name of Jesus occurs is a forgery. Its internal evidence goes to prove it to be an interpolation. Dr. Lardner gives up its authenticity, and points out that it was never quoted by Christian writers before Eusebius; that the name of Christ is nowhere else mentioned in any of Josephus's works; that the language is purely Christian; that the introduction of Christ's name entirely interrupts the narrative; and that, although Chrysostom and Photius both refer to Josephus, they never allude to the disputed passage. Dean Milman says: "It is interpolated with many additional clauses" (Milman's *Gibbon*, vol. ii., p. 285). Bishop Warburton calls the passage "a rank forgery" (*Divine Legation of Moses*, book ii., sec. 6). Rev. Dr. Giles also condemns it as a forgery (*Hebrew and Christian Records*, vol. ii., p. 62). Dean Farrar says: "The single passage in which he [Josephus] alludes to him [Christ] is interpolated, if not wholly spurious" (*Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 46). Dr. Edersheim says: "The expressions attributed to Josephus must have been altered, and in some parts interpolated, by later writers" (*Dictionary of Ecclesiastical History and Biography*, article "Josephus"). Gibbon says that this passage "was inserted into the text of Josephus

between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius," and "may furnish an example of no vulgar forgery" (chap. xvi., footnote). And De Quincey, in his essay on the Essenes, emphatically says that "this passage has long been given up as a forgery by all the men not lunatic" (*Works*, vol. ix.).

The passage in Tacitus in which Christ is mentioned is to be found in the *Annals*, not in the *History*. There is no proof that the passage was ever referred to until the fifteenth century. Doane, in his *Bible Myths*, gives seventeen reasons for believing the passage to be an interpolation. But something even more important than this should be remembered. In 1878 a valuable work was published in London under the title of *Tacitus and Bracciolini: The Annals Forged in the Fifteenth Century*. The object of the writer was to show that the *Annals* in which the passage referring to Christ appears were not written by Tacitus, but were forged in the fifteenth century by the famous Poggio Bracciolini. The author says: "I give a detailed history of the forgery, from its conception to its completion, the sum that was paid for it, the abbey where it was transcribed, and other convincing minutiae taken from a correspondence that Poggio carried on with a familiar friend who resided in Florence." It thus appears that there is no historical evidence that the earliest secular writers of the Christian era knew anything of the existence of Jesus, "the anointed one."

Another most important fact which should not be overlooked when dealing with the story of Christ is that the main features of Christianity have almost an exact parallel in the records of previous religions. Take, for instance, the stories of Krishna and Buddha. Incidents and wonders are associated with the legends of their lives similar to those ascribed to the career of Christ. There is a striking allusion in Justin's *Apology* bearing on the similarity of Christian and Pagan beliefs. Justin, writing in the middle of the second century, says:—

"When we say that the Logos, who is the first birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that Jesus Christ, our teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you [the Pagans] believe regarding those whom you esteem as sons of Jupiter."

If this be true, there can be no doubt as to the unhistorical character of the story of Christ. When we read in the New Testament of a virgin birth—that is, a child being born without a human father; of the devil taking Jesus up to a high mountain and showing him all the kingdoms of the world; of his having a meal of fish and honeycomb, and then being carried up into heaven; of his being "born of a woman," and yet, like Melchisedec, "without mother"; of people being possessed of devils; of the dead being restored to life after the body had become decomposed—I say, when we read stories like these, we know that we are in the region of fable and romance, and not upon the solid ground of historical facts. True, Jesus is represented as being of real flesh and blood; but the idea of his rising from the grave, after being deprived of all natural power, and appearing in a room while the doors were shut, is utterly opposed to all ideas of reality.

The perpetual repetition of the Gospel stories in modern times shows that the mythical still rules the Christian mind. This is specially manifest in the present revival of the old tradition about the fall of Jerusalem being the signal for the Messiah descending from heaven and the final triumph of the Jews. The latest form which this story has taken is that we are upon the eve of the reign of Christ and the triumph of his saints. The growth of the Christian faith, built on ancient myths, affords a striking illustration of orthodox inconsistency and credulity. At first, poor fishermen, weavers, and tanners, we are told, met for worship in private houses; but now their successors assemble in costly structures, while they repeat the same old stories that deluded their superstitious predecessors. Fortunately, however, there is a rapidly increasing section of the community who will not be misled by the fables of the past. Many of the greatest thinkers of to-day recognise that the Christianity of the New Testament has no historical foundation, and that its teachings are only valuable in sustaining the creeds and dogmas of an expiring faith.

CHARLES WATTS.

William Morris.

"What good is like to this—
To do worthy the writing, and to write
Worthy the reading and the world's delight?"
—SAMUEL DANIEL.

WILLIAM MORRIS died in 1896. Even yet the great body of readers have but a slight acquaintance with his work, and lie under the delusion that he was an able but monotonous poet and a graceless iconoclast, with a weakness for fine printing and artistic wall-papers. Such is the impression still prevalent regarding a writer whose ability is hardly less noteworthy than his versatility in the world of art, and respecting a man who had so greatly moulded the finer minds of his generation. Much of his work may prove of transient interest; but when time has done what criticism can but feebly attempt, and severed the gold from the dross, there will still remain a precious legacy to his country. Concerning his artistic work there need only be a passing remark here. Its influence has been, and probably will continue to be, one of profound value.

Morris's literary works fill many volumes, his verse alone occupying ten. A poet who comes before the world with so vast a body of verse must have no insignificant claims in order to justify his pretensions. Morris's merits lie, for the most part, upon the surface. In the art of story-telling in verse he is without a modern rival. He is also eminently lucid. Like Macaulay, in prose, the reader is never for a moment in doubt of the writer's meaning. His verse demands no intellectual effort. His ideas are never crushed and smothered beneath the jewelled panoply of the diction. He never sacrifices the spirit to the letter; alliterating not wisely, but too well. Morris, of all modern writers, is the one whose poetry approaches most closely to the "sweet-souled master," Chaucer, although the modern poet wanted the humor of the old bard. *The Earthly Paradise*, like *The Canterbury Tales*, contains a number of stories linked together by a thread, and is singularly adapted to Morris's genius. It affords him the amplest scope to his craft as a story-teller. Happily, Morris understood the limitations of his muse. He rarely attempts to do what he cannot do well, and, while the reader is never carried off his feet as

One who drinks from a charmed cup
Of foaming and sparkling and murmuring wine,

he is never allowed to sink to the lower slopes of Parnassus, where browseth the minor poet. Morris's perfect mastery of English, the splendid ease with which he tells a story, and his fidelity to nature, leave no doubt with whom his place must be in the appreciation of all those who love real literature.

The Life and Death of Jason is a poem of more than ten thousand lines. Another goodly volume contains *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*. *The Defence of Guenevere*, *Poems by the Way*, and *Love is Enough* make two thick books. His translations of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Odyssey* increase the bulk and add largely to the value of Morris's poetical works.

Perhaps William Morris will be none the less regretted that he had accomplished so much of the task he had set himself. He left the stamp of a vigorous individuality on English art and English literature. His sustained energy, his fearlessness, united to his genius, were sure to assert, sooner or later, the influence he had fully resolved on exciting. He never shrank from advocating his views. He saw there were wrongs to redress, and he came forward as the champion of the sufferers impotently struggling under the artificial conditions of a corrupt civilisation.

William Morris loved nature in all her moods. His affection comes out in his descriptions, fresh as with dews of dawn, and remembered with quickened pulse. And while the landscape outlines are dashed in broadly with unmistakeable truth and force, there are as many of those telling touches of detail. So vivid and so truthful are his verbal pictures that the reader is more often under the impression of reviving familiar recollection than of being startled by new and unlooked-for beauties. Morris won a high reputation for his ballads. The modern ballad, written in the old style, suggested the joke that Morris wrote "Wardour Street" English. The sham antique is seldom a success. The simplest

form of poetry is hardly fitted to inspire nineteenth-century poets; there is generally a literary tone which mars their affected simplicity. The attempt is usually but idle weaving of sand, fit only, to use his own apt phrase, for "an idle singer of an empty day."

Christianity was not likely to fascinate an intellect that admired the more vigorous qualities of the older mythologies. The influence of Paganism permeated his thought. The gods of the north had vanished; but, contrasted with the raw religiosity of a "nation of shopkeepers," they seemed to the poet's eyes to shine low, bright, and beautiful upon the mental horizon, distance touching them with a strange glamor that all but made him forget their horrors.

Morris's Freethought comes out clearly in his treatment of the subject of death. He is as materialistic as Swinburne in regarding death as "the popped sleep, the end of all." To him there is no life beyond the grave. This thought is expressed constantly in his verse. The wanderers, who, having vainly sought an earthly paradise, found instead that their wasted lives ended

Where all things end in death at last,

are still eager to gain some pleasure out of the dregs of life; for,

Since a little life at least was left,
They were not yet of every joy bereft.

In *The Doom of King Acrisius* there is a very beautiful picture of two lovers thrilled with a finer tenderness by the idea of the final parting. "O love, to think that love can pass away" is the sad thought of Andromeda, still flushed with joy; and Perseus, in reply, says if she needs must think of the dull night that is creeping on, then for that thought let her hold closer to her bliss.

The same thought is the burden of a song in *Ogier the Dane* :—

Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

The apathy of old age lulled to rest the seekers after the Earthly Paradise. Their life had been a failure :—

Lo!

A long life gone, and nothing more they know—
Why they should live to have desire and foil,
And toil that overcome brings yet more toil
Than that day of their vanished youth, when first
They saw Death clear, and deemed all life accurst
By that cold overshadowing threat—the end.

Such was Morris's view of death—the view of a man whose mind dwelt among noble memories and imperishable ideals; whose sole business in life was to bring culture to those of his fellow-men who were contented with lesser recollections and ignoble desires. Was he too confident, too presumptuous? We hope not. It is the element of truth in the grand Republican ideal of men as being equal, brotherly, and free which gives to it and to its like their strength. But between us and the land in which all this shall be realized a wide and raging flood rolls. A bridge must be built, slowly and patiently, to the further mist-hidden shore. William Morris was a master-craftsman who helped to build this bridge. Future travellers will turn and look up, and see what this brave poet's hands could rear.

MIMNERMUS.

Bishops and Hairpins.

"Girls' hairpins frequently lacerate Bishops' fingers during the 'laying-on of hands.'"—*Christian World*.

FOR those who care for science not a rap—
The folk in whom "The Faith" still fondly lingers—
The Bishops keep the Holy Ghost "on tap,"
And switch Him on with grace-exuding fingers.

By "laying-on of hands" the Bishops pose
As specialists in Holy Ghost conduction,
Through whom, to dupes, divine afflatus flows,
In spite of thickest cranial obstruction.

A bishop's fingers force the ghost of God
To penetrate the skull whereon he sticks them;
And nought on earth can foil the prelate's prod,
Except, perhaps, a hairpin, when it pricks them.

We're told 'tis true that Christians all are proof
'Gainst "deadly things"; but, clearly, it is truer
That ghost-blown priests, inspired from head to hoof,
Are never proof against a top-knot skewer.

As "wand'ring leads" of God's electric grace,
Their Lordships leak when pointed hairpins tap them;
And—sadder still—are forced to un-embrace
The lasses' heads; and feel inclined to slap them.

MORAL.

O men of God whom hairpins prod!
Your palmy days have fled;
Your tricks are known; leave girls alone,
And try to earn your bread!
Give up your job, nor longer rob
The living and the dead!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

God's Goodness.

THE race exposes itself to peril because it cannot do otherwise. In all the world there is no city of refuge—no temple in which to take sanctuary, clinging to the horns of the altar—no "place apart" where, like hunted deer, we can hope to elude the baying pack of nature's tireless malevolences. The dead-line is drawn at the gate of life: man crosses it at birth. His advent is a challenge to the entire gang—earthquake, storm, fire, flood, drought, heat, cold, wild beasts, venomous reptiles, noxious insects, spectacular plague and velvet-footed household disease—all are loud and fierce in pursuit. Dodge, turn, and double how he can, there's no eluding them; soon or late some of them have him by the throat, and "his spirit returns to the God who gave it"—and gave them.

We are told that this earth was made for our inhabiting. Our dearly-beloved brethren in the faith, our spiritual guides, philosophers, and friends of the pulpit, never tire of pointing out the goodness of God in giving us so excellent a place to live in, and commending the admirable adaptation of all things to our needs. Why, three-fourths of this delectable field of human activity are covered with an element in which we cannot breathe, and which swallows us by myriads :—

With mouldering bones the deep is white,
From the frozen poles to the tropics bright.

Of the other one-fourth more than one-half is uninhabitable by reason of climate. On the remaining one-eighth we pass a comfortless and precarious existence in disputed occupancy with all these and countless other ministers of death and pain—pass it in fighting for it, tooth and nail, a hopeless battle in which we are foredoomed to defeat. And the prize for which we strive "to have and to hold"—what is it? A thing that is neither enjoyed while had, nor missed when lost. So worthless it is, so unsatisfying, so inadequate to purpose, so false to hope, and at its best so brief, that for consolation and compensation we set up fantastic faiths of an aftertime in a better world, from which no confirming whisper has ever reached us out of the void. Heaven is a prophecy uttered by the lips of despair, but hell is an inference from history.

—*Ambrose Bierce*.

Church and Society.

A REASON why the Church is one of the most important society factors known is that it is a regular thing. Receptions are intermittent, calls may be delayed, dinners restricted, but the Church is regular and gregarious enough to cover a multitude of sins.

A woman in church has an opportunity to observe her social superior, which that individual would never otherwise bestow on her. The church also offers cover for quiet reflection and observation, which are invaluable to the society woman.

The ideal church consists of a mixed element. Spencer's law that we develop from homogeneity to heterogeneity is quite proper here. Simplicity characterised the church at first; but this was too primitive to last. A few millionaires, and a greater number of semi-millionaires, are indispensable to the working of the Church that aims to preserve the highest social traditions.

There should also be a sprinkling of the poor. They give an air of respectability to the whole affair.

Church is held one day in the week, and is a place where women assemble to think over their neighbors' sins and what they wear.

Men once went to church, but they have been driven away by the clergy. Now they stay away and play golf.

Church-going is one of the most delightful social functions, when properly indulged in. It serves also as a soothing amelioration for certain inconsistencies, while in its revised and modern form it is not irritating enough to be disagreeable. It is a medium of intercourse between those who have got there and those who want to.

Social aspirants cannot always expect to get admitted at once to the best churches. But money helps; and, once in, the clergyman may introduce you to some of the leaders, if you are good and practise the best form.

Without church-going many people to-day would not be in society.—*Puck*.

Acid Drops.

We hope it is true that the new young King of Italy is a Freethinker. In that case he may be trusted to better his father's example in dealing with the arrogant Papacy. We read that another Catholic priest has been condemned to a heavy fine and six months' imprisonment for saying in his pulpit that the assassination of King Humbert was no sin. This is the eighth man of God who has been punished for the same offence. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Catholic Church is quite opposed to assassination. It all depends on who is assassinated, and what he is assassinated for. If he is an enemy of the Church, his assassin is only an agent of the divine anger. Students of history are well aware that the Church has instigated, or approved, a considerable number of such crimes during the last four or five hundred years. Previously, when the Church excommunicated refractory monarchs, it used to treat the assassination of such rulers as a virtuous and laudable act on the part of any rebellious subject or private enemy. So long as its foes were got out of the way, the Church was never particular as to the method adopted.

The holy influence of the Vatican seems not to have preserved its Treasury from theft. Three hundred and fifty-seven thousand francs have been purloined from its coffers. Certain inmates of the Vatican are suspected of being concerned in the theft.

Pilgrimages, or rather religious trips, to Rome are being organised by the Catholic Association. The price for the tour is £6 15s., travelling, board, and lodging included; and the route is *via* Paris, to give the pilgrims (or trippers) an opportunity of seeing the Exhibition. The dear old Pope receives them at the Vatican and eases them of their Peter's Pence, which we suppose he wants rather badly after being robbed of some £20,000 by burglars.

Catholic writers of fiction are fairly numerous in England. A list of them has been compiled by the *Tablet*. It includes the following names:—F. Marion Crawford, Bernard Capes, Dorothea Gerard, Ella D'Arcy, Mrs. Parr, Adeline Sergeant, Katharine Tynan, Conan Doyle, F. C. Burnand, Lady Gilbert, Clara Mulholland, John Oliver Hobbes, Fitzgerald Molloy, George Egerton, George Moore, Max Pemberton, Mrs. Clement Shorter, Clement Scott, A. A. Becket, Sir Hubert Jerningham, Miss Forbes Robertson, Florence Maryatt, Mrs. Wilfrid Ward, Justin McCarthy, and Father William Barry.

We never heard before that Conan Doyle was a Catholic. Judging from some of his writings, he is more of a Freethinker. Anyhow, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy are Freethinkers, and their names outweigh by a vast deal the whole *Tablet* collection.

The Unionists gained a seat in the Blackfriars division of Glasgow. We hope Mr. A. D. Provand, who lost the seat, did not do so altogether in consequence of his refusal to support the state-establishment of a Catholic University in Ireland. On this subject, according to the *Glasgow Herald*, Mr. Provand "spoke with an emphasis which is rare in a parliamentary candidate." He objected to give money for sectarian purposes, and said he would be in favor of taking money from any university where religion was taught. This gave great umbrage to the Irish party in the division, who called upon their "fellow countrymen" to vote solidly against him.

Soul-savers have generally a good eye for the meat which perisheth. They make the best of the next world for us, and the best of this world for themselves. Take the Rev. H. R. Hawsis, for instance. This gentleman, having two months' leave of absence from his own church in London, where we believe he is tolerably well paid, went down to Birchington-on-Sea for a good holiday. But he resolved to combine business with pleasure. Accordingly he held some highly successful Sunday meetings in a big Variety Hall at Margate. They were so successful, indeed, that he decided to extend his profitable enterprise to Ramsgate, and announced a series of Sunday meetings in St. George's Hall. The Archbishop of Canterbury, however, objected to these gatherings as likely to draw worshippers away from their regular churches and chapels; and Mr. Hawsis thought it advisable to cancel the engagement. It appears that the seats were to have been a shilling in front and sixpence at the back; and, lest these prices should be considered excessive in the case of a professional soul-saver, who was already blessed with a good and regular income, it was notified that "at New York Mr. Hawsis received one pound a minute." Whether he earned it or not is another matter. Certainly no such payment as one pound a minute was received by Jesus Christ, not even for the time he spent upon the cross. Evidently, therefore, the Rev. Mr. Hawsis is a great deal luckier than his Savior.

Twenty-five lady missionaries, bound for India, had a "send off" the other evening at the Queen's Hall. Chancellor P. Vernon Smith, who presided, made the curious observation that the famine in India had shown the necessity for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ. This is the first time we ever heard that Christianity had an influence on the weather. Chancellor Smith, however, seems to think so, although in a rather circuitous fashion. "Although Christianity," he said, "would not prevent famine, yet the spread of the Kingdom of Christ tended to reduce to the least possible amount the natural evils of pestilence and famine, and other things which occurred in the providence of God." The speaker's meaning is not very clear, but he seems to convey the idea that God, in his providence, deals out less pestilence, famine, and other things, to the people who profess and call themselves Christians, and reserves all his surplus stock of such afflictions for the poor heathen. We suspect, however, that the Christians receive less of these providential attentions because they chiefly inhabit the more temperate regions of the earth.

The *Examiner* exposes a flagrant piece of clerical bigotry in connection with a Board school appointment. An excellent elementary schoolmaster was recommended strongly to a country School Board by the Government Inspector. When interviewed by the Board, he was told that he would be expected to teach the Catechism. Having resigned his position as a national school teacher because he could not conscientiously inculcate baptismal regeneration, he explained his views to the members. The vicar of the parish was present as one of the Board, and, needless to say, the candidate's claims were passed over, though the other members of the Board had previously been quite prepared to give him the appointment, his credentials being in every respect most satisfactory. He was afterwards informed by the Inspector that if he had telegraphed instead of waiting on the Board, he would have been appointed. This is one of many instances where a premium is placed on insincerity.

Well might Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman inquire in a recent speech: "What in the world have schools to do with either Church or parson?" The ecclesiastics, he added, must not be allowed to stint and corrupt and twist and divert and occupy our educational system so as to prejudice its development. What we want, he said, is a great national, democratically governed, unsectarian, comprehensive system of education. Exactly; that is the national requirement, and sooner or later it will have to be met.

Quoting this declaration of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the *Church Times* says: "If the Church and the parsons had never had to do with schools, Sir Henry would at this day have been adorning his person with woad, after the manner of his heathen ancestors."

Did anyone ever read such an idiotic observation? What does the *Church Times* mean by it? Not only is it unintelligible, it is grossly offensive; though one could hardly take offence at anything that this dull and obfuscated Ritualistic print chooses to say. Still, it would be interesting to know, as a pathological study of imbecility, what could have been floating in its mind when it gave to its readers the above-quoted nonsense.

In the diocese of Lichfield a Million Shillings' Fund has been started, with the object of extending the work of the Established Church in parishes "which are not able to keep pace with the times." The Million Shillings' Fund might have some sort of claim to support amongst Churchmen if the Church itself kept "pace with the times." But that, apparently, is quite too much to expect. The Bishop of Lichfield, at a public meeting, said that the scheme had been first suggested to him in a letter from a clergyman, who pointed out what the Nonconformist bodies were doing. The Bishop, of course, could not be expected to know, until thus informed, what sort of schemes low-class Dissenting folks had on foot. Hitherto, we had thought that this absurd affectation of ignorance of what is known to every body else was confined to Her Majesty's judges.

Leo XIII. is reported to be busy at the composition of his new Encyclical. Its subject is "Christian Democracy," and it may be regarded as a continuation of the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which dealt with Christian Socialism. In a marvelously tolerant fashion, for which we ought to be inexpressibly grateful, he proposes to accord his approbation to certain demands of democracy. He intends, however, to condemn "abuses" of democracy, notably of the Atheistic Revolutionaries. Poor old man, his political power is practically gone, but it pleases him to think that the nations are still at his feet.

A missionary asked a pundit to put into the Hindoo vernacular the hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee." Shortly afterwards he heard his converts singing with pious fervor, "Very old stone, split for my benefit, let me get under one of your fragments."

Mr. Tim Healy is reported to have asked an elector for his vote, and to have received the answer: "I would rather vote for Satan." Whereupon, as the report goes, Tim sweetly said: "I am very thankful to you for your candor; but, in case your friend should be unable to put in an appearance at the poll, may I count on your vote?"

We don't want to call the reporter of this "incident" a liar. But the story is a very old one, and we are astonished to see so many newspapers printing it as a novelty. It is at least as old as John Wilkes's candidature at Westminster, and perhaps a good deal older. As we read the story a good many years ago, one of the electors said to Wilkes: "I would sooner vote for the Devil." "Yes," replied Wilkes, "but in case your friend doesn't stand?" This is neater than the new version, and wittier too, if brevity is the soul of wit.

Whitewashing the Bible men of God is a pretty stiff undertaking. Such a quantity of whitewash is needed, and it has to be laid on so thick. Even then great black splotches will show through. The Rev. Dr. C. F. Richardson recently undertook the task in a sermon which is printed in the *Methodist Times*. He makes a very poor job of it. There are spots, he says, on the sun. No doubt; and there are some tremendous big spots on the characters of the patriarchs and prophets. The blemishes are natural enough if we regard these men as mere ordinary human beings. The point is that the Bible saints are not presented to us in that light at all. They are supposed to be the special servants, favorites, and associates of the Lord; and, except in regard to one or two cases of glaring iniquity, the Scriptural scribes do not appear to recognise that there is anything wrong about them.

Dr. Richardson takes occasion to allude to the writings of Bradlaugh and Ingersoll. Both men, he says, are dead, and "both will soon be forgotten." Will they, indeed? It doesn't look like it just at present. But if they are in time forgotten—which we do not for a moment believe—their work will live. This preacher himself tacitly admits their influence, and the influence of other Freethinkers, by the trouble he wastes on his weak apologetics, and the admissions he is forced to make.

The Lord might at least take care of his "faithful." It doesn't say much for his watchfulness when he allows the students of his Holy Word to go raving mad, and in one of his own cathedrals too. During service the other Sunday, in Rochester Cathedral, a young man, known as a local preacher and Christian Endeavorer, suddenly rose from his seat, and began to wave his hands and make incoherent remarks about having been chosen by the Lord as the instrument by which certain things were to be accomplished. One lady fainted, and others were so upset that they left the cathedral. The young man was sent to the infirmary by the police, pending his removal to an asylum.

Apparently in order to give the Gospel-shops and the beer-shops undisturbed play on the blessed Sabbath, the Leyton Library Committee have for the fifth time rejected a proposal to open that institution on Sunday.

At Colwyn Bay there has been a great outcry against Sunday golf. At the annual meeting of the Golf Club a strong protest was received. It is satisfactory to note that the Rev. Venables Williams defended Sunday golf, though one would like to know whether he would be equally favorable to a less fashionable pastime on the Lord's Day. Anyhow, it was decided to disregard the protest.

Still another religious sect! This time it is a religious community, established at Kieff, with idleness for its chief tenet. Its members are known as the Malevanchina, and they reject all work except that of the household. The sect might find many votaries in our own West-end. Taking the whole of our happy Christian land, we might find not a few parsons who come as near as possible to this new form of holiness.

The incumbent of St. Mark's, Battersea Rise, seems to be a charitable sort of cleric. Recently he published in his *Church and Home Magazine* the following astounding paragraph: "—, who has obtained such an unenviable notoriety on account of his pro-Boer sympathies, lived not long ago close by St. Mark's, but he no longer resides in Battersea. Our own member is quite enough of that persuasion for any one parish. —'s son at one time attended Emanuel School, from which he was expelled for gross misconduct. He is now, we understand, fighting as a C.I.V. in the Transvaal, against his father's friends; the Boers, thus, we hope, making up for his father's lack of patriotism and his own early misdeeds." The malicious reference to the youthful misdeeds of one who has since been fighting under his country's flag is worthy of a Church of England clergyman.

It says something for the progress of Secular principles when the Bishop of Ripon is led to make such admissions as are contained in his paper on "The Home Work of the Century," read at the Church Congress. "Within the last thirty years," he said, "an enlargement of the scope of the Christian aim has taken place. The religious impulse no longer confines itself to what was once called religious work; pious people do not now frown upon philanthropic work as being of secondary value and only humanitarian. Almost irresistibly the organisations which were started for a definitely spiritual object have been drawn into social channels." This surely is a step in the right direction, though it has taken the Church a long time to venture upon it.

Says the *Church Gazette*: "What we consider one of the least lovely features of modern Church policy is its determined effort to force upon populations its own special type of primary education, wherever the circumstances permit a monopoly. The idea is in itself simply hateful, and makes an honest Churchman blush for his Churchmanship. But Church leaders and organisers never blush at all."

Still more testimony on the worse than futility of Christian missions to China. Mr. F. Thorold Dickson, in the October number of *Macmillan's*, writes: "It is not difficult to imagine the infinite mischief that has been wrought in China Proper by telling not only men of an intellectual class, but the fanatical, narrow-minded officials at the top of the social ladder, and the seething millions, the ignorant superstitious masses who believe anything and everything that those above them wish them to believe, that their religion is all wrong, and that they must adopt ours. No wonder that at the present moment all China is ablaze from one end to another."

The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse has had a funny, though not a very flattering, experience in a Cornish village. He happened to stroll into a chapel tea-meeting, where he hoped to escape recognition. But one of the "brethren" knew him, and, coming to him, whispered cautiously: "Be you the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse?" "I be." "I thought so. Now, would 'ee do us a favor?" Mr. Pearse signified that he would if he could. "Well, 'ee see, we be wanting to raise some money, and a thought have come on us. We seed 'ee, and thought that if 'ee 'ud come out quiet like, without saying nothing, we can put 'ee in the vestry. Then we goes into chapel and says: 'Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, author of *Daniel Quorm*, is in the vestry, and can be seen for threepence; collection to go to the cause.'"

A well-known bishop recently gave an address to a large gathering of Sunday-school teachers. This is one of the things he said: "Take my advice, teachers, and never have more than thirty scholars at a time in your class." And he does not know now why his hearers smiled. The *Sunday Companion* suggests that, when there is so much difficulty in securing the attention of even twelve, the bishop might well have spared his advice.

The Rev. Price Hughes told the new Wesleyan ministers in London that they should not preach longer than half-an-hour, for Londoners could not stand long sermons. True, quite true, most noble Hughes; and there are countless Londoners who can't stand sermons at all, either long or short.

Apropos of this there is related the following story of Lord Rosebery and Dr. Creighton:—The peer said that there were times when, overworked, he could not sleep at all, and envied those who could do so. The Bishop replied: "Well, my lord, I never suffer from sleeplessness, I can assure you." "Indeed!" said Lord Rosebery. "Perhaps, then, you will tell me how you do this. I shall be glad to try your cure." "Yes, I will tell you," said Dr. Creighton, smiling blandly. "Whenever I feel weary I sit down and commence to write a sermon—then I'm 'off' in a few minutes. If, however, I commence to read a sermon, I am 'off' in a very few seconds." "Ah, my lord," replied Lord Rosebery, "of two evils I think I will choose the least! Much rather would I go without sleep than read a sermon!"

On the ever-recurring question, Why won't people go to church? the *Church Gazette* says: "What we have observed is the general prevalence of such an amount of twaddlesomeness as will fairly excuse any sane man from going to church or chapel, on the score of its meaning a great waste of valuable time."

"Twaddlesomeness" is a good word applied to Gospel-shop performances. We thank the *Church Gazette* for it.

Mrs. Mary Alicia La Bau, one of Commodore Vanderbilt's daughters, is sued in the Supreme Court by one Dodge to recover 20,000 dollars as a balance due on a contract to purchase a quarter interest in patents right from him for 1,000 dollars. In her answer Mrs. La Bau alleges fraud,

She 'says' that, knowing her to be a Spiritualist, Dodge employed mediums to deliver her messages from the spirit world advising her to invest in his concern. She has already given him 40,000 dollars.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Rev. George C. Lorimer, pastor of Tremont Temple, Boston, has refused the offer of an increase of one thousand dollars in his salary, and his extraordinary self-denial is being duly celebrated by the American press. It appears, however, that his salary is already seven thousand dollars a year, which is supplemented by his earnings as an author. When an apostle of the poor Nazarene is in receipt of something like £2,000 a year, it is perhaps about time that he stopped burdening himself with what is calculated to keep him from entering the kingdom of heaven.

Dr. Lorimer says that his present income is sufficient to fully answer his wants. We should think it was. Jesus Christ would probably say ditto with much emphasis. The founder of Christianity never saw so much money as £2,000 in his life—not even when he upset the tables of the money-changers.

Ellen Clements, of the Salvation Army, died while praying at Bacup. She was holding a public conversation with the Lord in the Drill Hall when she suddenly collapsed. Some might think that the Lord could stand it no longer, but the doctors say it was a case of heart disease.

Had a Secular lecturer fallen dead in the middle of his address, the Christians would have looked upon it as a "judgment." When such an accident happens to a Christian speaker they do not see that it has any meaning.

Bismarck's last words, according to Dr. Oncken, Professor of History in the University of Gieszen, were as follows: "Dear Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief, and receive me into thy heavenly kingdom." The professor does not state whether Bismarck was "received," or whether he had to apply elsewhere. The most interesting point is so often omitted.

Dr. Variot, of Paris, according to a Lisbon paper, has discovered a process for embalming bodies which, it is thought, will prove a great success. He not only embalms, but mentalises the bodies by the Ruolt process, just as is done with a fork or spoon. In this manner they can be preserved indefinitely, and to such perfection that the most imperceptible wrinkles and lines are reproduced, and the embalmed body has the appearance of a metal statue. The process is as follows: After a bath in pure carbolic acid and being strongly rubbed with nitrate of silver, the body is submerged in a galvanic-plastic bath, after which a slight layer of nitrate is applied to it. Nickel-plated saints arising at the sound of Gabriel's trump will, it is conceived, lend glitter, if not impressiveness, to the resurrection.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

A Wakefield local preacher is in trouble. His name is Henry Hillaby, and he was a burning and shining light amongst the Primitive Methodists. He took a trip to America; but the police went after him, and have brought him back—for embezzlement. He is now in free lodgings. It is uncertain when he will preach again.

William Barrett murdered his wife at Plaistow in August. The details of his crime were so shocking that women were ordered out of court during the trial. He was hung at Chelmsford after the regulation interval of spiritual refreshment. He took the sacrament an hour or so before his execution, so that he may be said to have died with the body and blood of Christ inside him. His last words were, "O Lord, help me!" He does not appear to have been troubled as to whether the Lord had helped his wife.

"England," says the Rev. G. S. Reaney, "will never be saved by parsons and priests." Of course not. We have often said so. And we are glad to see it confirmed by a good authority.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach has let the cat out of the bag with regard to the dole of £600,000 per annum to the denominational schools. Speaking at Bristol the other day, he said that without it these schools would have ceased. In other words, the "voluntary" contributions were so declining that the Government had to hurry up to the parsons' relief; and now, instead of uncertain charity, they have regular State grants, without the addition of public control.

"My dear brethren," said a Baptist preacher, "I can only give you now what God will send me; but to-night I will come better prepared." This story floated about at the recent Baptist Conference.

Baptist preachers, in Conference assembled, have been

troubling their poor heads—some of them are *very* poor—over the question of cigarette smoking. Indeed, they passed a strong resolution on the subject, especially in relation to juvenile whiffers. It did not occur to these solemn gentlemen that what *they* have to save us from is not the smoke of tobacco, but the smoke of hell. Perhaps the lads who affect cigarettes are only training for their future habitat.

At the Church Congress discussion on "The Housing of the People," the Hon. and Rev. J. Adderley, of Victoria Park, London, said that "His own experience was that agnostics, unbelievers, and freethinkers were much more active in these matters than churchmen." Well, there is nothing wonderful in that. Those who have no belief in a future world may be expected to make the best they can of this world. It is their only chance.

The Freethought Twentieth Century Fund.

SHILLING WEEK.

A GOOD many Freethinkers have remembered "Shilling Week." A good many more have not. Perhaps the general elections have had something to do with this. Anyhow, the door is still open for laggards and repentants. "Shilling Week" has generally run into "Shilling Month," and I suppose it will do so again. While thanking those who have subscribed, and whose letters I have read, often with much pleasure, I beg to remind all the rest that I am waiting to hear from them. Seventeen years ago I was waiting patiently for a door to open—in Holloway Jail. I hope I shall not have to wait as long for some Freethinkers on this occasion. Perhaps the thought of how I waited then will hasten some of them now. Not that I stand to gain anything personally, whether they are quick or slow; I am pressing them to give to the cause I love, and they give to me indirectly when they do that.

G. W. FOOTE.

Subscriptions received by Tuesday, October 9.

Four Hampsons, 4s.; S. W. Baynards, 1s.; T. Roberts, 2s.; H. M., 2s. 6d.; Collection at Mr. Foote's Evening Lecture at Manchester, £4 6s. 6d.; Mrs. G. Dickinson, 1s.; C. Heaton, 2s. 6d.; T. Heaton, 2s. 6d.; R. Davison, 5s.; J. Herrington, 1s.; W. Banks, 2s. 6d.; W. M. Constant, 4s.; F. E. Willis, 2s.; J. Unsworth, 2s.; E. Simpson, 1s.; J. Tomkins, 2s.; T. Rainbow, 1s.; E. Jones, 5s.; A Friend, 1s.; No Name, 1s.; J. R. Webley, 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, 2s.; A Scotch Freethinker, 10s.; G. Hunter, 3s.; T. Dunbar, 1s.; R. Jacobs, 5s.; Freethinker, 2s.; Two Plymouth Chums, 2s.; O. Newell, 1s. 6d.; R. W., 2s.; G. Wilson, 5s.; W. Mitchell, 1s.; J. Little, 2s.; W. Davidson, 1s.; J. D. M., 2s. 6d.; W. McLelland, 3s.; C. Burgess, 5s.; C. L. Wright, 3s.; W. Wilson, 2s.; H. Thorp, 2s.; D. J. Williams, 1s.; W. Pugh, 3s.; J. Stanway, 2s. 6d.; J. Sanderson, 1s.; W. Sanderson, 1s.; B. Eglantine, 1s.; S. M. Peacock, 1s.; G. White, 1s.; P. Fitzpatrick, 1s.; E. Chapman, 1s.; J. Chapman, 1s.; J. T. Horsman, 1s.; J. Menzies, 1s.; J. Fothergill, 1s.; Eva Fothergill, 1s.; S. Fellows, 5s.; L. Simpson, 2s. 6d.; H. C. Long, 1s.; W. B. Thompson, 1s.; A. Walker, 2s. 6d.; T. H. Duke, 1s.; R. Brooks, 1s.; A. Hamilton, 2s.; G. Kirtley, 2s.; T. Armstrong, 1s.; W. A. Stewart, 2s. 6d.; E. Kirtley, 2s. 6d.; H. Organ, 1s.; G. Bintlan, 2s.; Walham Green, 1s.; W. H. Morrish, 5s.; L. Firth, 5s.; J. R. Evans, 2s.; W. Morris, 1s.; R. Ralston, 3s.; Blackburn Branch Members, 15s. 6d.; H. F. Sesemann, 10s.; S. W. Baynards, 1s.; D. Frankel, 2s.; J. Baker, 1s.; J. B. Skeoch, 10s. 6d.; J. Cheale, 1s.; J. Barclay, 3s.; J. G., 2s. 6d.; J. Ralston, 5s.; A. Ralston, 5s.; J. Stewart, 5s.; W. Muir, 5s.; J. Walker, 5s.; W. Patterson, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Patterson, 2s. 6d.; W. Bell, 2s.; W. Waddell, 2s.; J. Boyd, 2s.; R. S., 1s.; T. H., 1s.; J. W., 1s.; T. Hibbott, 1s.; Policeman, 2s.; W. H. S., 1s.; T. Whitely, 1s.; T. L. Hughes, 5s.; G. Brainbridge, 1s.; J. S. Jordan, 3s.; G. Cruddas, 1s.; T. M. M., 2s.; Joseph Bevins, 5s.; R. Robinson, 3s.; W. Cody, £1; M. Christopher, 10s.; H. J. Savory, 2s.; W. Robertson, 1s.; E. Jones, 2s. 6d.; S. Holman, 2s.; H. Porter, 1s.; W. Cromach, 5s.; W. Pike, 1s.; J. Kelsey, 1s.; J. O. Bates, 1s.; Someone Else, 1s.; A. Window, 2s.; A. E. Window, 2s.; J. Beale, 5s.; J. Oran, 2s. 6d.; G. Kersley, 2s.; F. Purland, 1s.; Speedwell, 6s.; R. Stirton, 2s.; E. G. H., 5s.; T. R. H., 5s.; Pauline Hull, £1; H. Good, 4s.; Andrew Millar, 2s. 6d.; Another Policeman, 2s. 6d.; C. Mascal, 2s. 6d.; James Thompson, 10s.; T. Thurlow, 4s.; A. Hull, 1s. 6d.; Young, 5s.; R. E. Mann, 5s.; Scotius, 2s.; Anarchist, 6s.; G. May, 2s.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 14, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road; 7.30, "South Africa and China: A Secularist's Outlook."

October 21, Birmingham; 28, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

Mr. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—October 14, Bolton; 21, Birmingham; 23, 24, 25, and 28 (Sunday), Glasgow and districts. November 4, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

S. L. J.—Mr. Foote hopes and intends to visit Plymouth this winter. We suppose the Co-operative Hall is still available. The articles on "God's Mother," with additions, will be published in pamphlet form very shortly. The editor is in first-rate health.

J. F. HAMPSON sends his promised £4 to the Freethought Twentieth Century Fund, and a further subscription to Shilling Week. "I hope," he says, "the party will provide a substantial sum with which to carry on the good work."

T. ROBERTS.—We wish all would translate their "admiration," as you do, into a Postal Order.

A. H. TABRUM.—(1) Any repudiation that Dr. Horton chooses to send us shall be inserted. We decline to insert anything second-hand and semi-oracular. (2) If you have read Darwin's *Life and Letters*, you were something less than honest yourself in trying to work off that old wheeze about Darwin's "belief in a Creator." We cannot find room for any more communications from you on this matter. We gave you space when you appeared to be straightforward.

H. M.—We do not quite understand your postscript.

G. DICKINSON (Mrs.).—We are specially pleased to hear from lady members of the party.

C. HEATON.—Glad to hear you will try to send the same amount again. We note your hope that Shilling Week will be "a grand success."

R. DAVISON sends cheque for his promised £2 to the Twentieth Century Fund, and a further contribution to Shilling Week.

J. HERRINGTON writes: "With regard to John Burns being a Freethinker, I heard him say, two years ago, that it was better to give children a good technical education than to force a lot of religious balderdash down their throats. It was on Clapham Common."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. BARKS.—Duly credited. Thanks for your good wishes on behalf of the Twentieth Century Fund generally, and Shilling Week in particular.

F. E. WILLIS.—Shall be seen to. Of course we understand that you must support your own Branch. Thanks for cuttings.

E. SIMPSON.—Pleased to hear you "hope to do better next Shilling Week," and that you trust the new Fund will be a "great success." Your newsagent is misinformed. The new edition of the *Bible Handbook* is going off well, but it is not sold out. We wish it were. Renew your order, and insist on having the book. If you are disappointed again, order it direct by post from our publishing office. We note your opinion that the articles on Shakespeare were "splendid." The article on Marie Corelli's *Master-Christian* had to stand over for a little in consequence of the pressure of other work.

G. FREEMAN.—Glad to know you hope to send another subscription in a week or two.

W. MUMBY sends £5 in redemption of his promise towards the Freethought Twentieth Century Fund. He says he is not satisfied with the party's response to this appeal, and that £1,000 ought to have been given or promised before this. It seems to him that too many Freethinkers want their Gospel of Reason "without money and without price," whereas they would be expected to "shell out" with some liberality if they were Christians. This correspondent wonders why the late Marquis of Queensberry didn't leave one of his many thousands to the cause of Freethought. What is wanted, in the circumstances, is a realisation by the rank and file of the party that our propaganda is crippled by want of funds. "Let them make up their minds to give freely now, in order to commence the new century with more hopeful prospects."

G. J. WARREN.—Thanks. See paragraph.

S. HOLMES.—We appreciate your good wishes.

E. A. CHARLTON.—Your letter is interesting, and your sentiments do you honor.

W. W. PEARCE sends 10s. for "ten rounds of ammunition against the Black Army."

HORACE DAWSON.—We have posted you a copy of the late Charles Bradlaugh's instructions to persons wishing to affirm. It is a pity that magistrates, and even their clerks, are so ignorant of the Oaths Act. When a witness, or other person, claiming to affirm, states that he has no religious belief, or that the taking of an oath is against his religious belief, the court is bound to administer the affirmation forthwith.

A. G. LYE.—Your suggestion shall be considered if the exigency arises.

C. L. W.—Sorry to hear of your trouble. Jesus was correct in saying he came to divide households; and his own household of faith is pretty well divided, too. We do not know of any small book such as you seek. You must try to open the poor victim's eyes yourself. But be patient.

A. WALKER.—We hope you will always maintain the same brave spirit.

H. B. DODDS.—It was intended to resume "Book Chat," but we have not yet been able to complete arrangements for relieving us from a lot of clerical work that should be done by other hands.

R. BROOKS.—No doubt the circulation of the *Freethinker* would increase if the price were reduced to a penny. But we don't think, as you do, that it would more than treble in a very short time. This journal is a speciality, and only appeals to an exceptional class of readers. The man in the street, with a penny to spend, prefers something a lot flabbier.

E. WOODWARD.—See paragraph.

W. WILSON.—Glad to hear from an old Freethinker who used to listen to Charles Southwell, and to know that you are so highly pleased with this journal.

H. THORP.—You point to a real difficulty. Perhaps we shall be able to overcome it in time.

DR. ROBERT T. NICHOLS (Ilford) sends cheque for his promised £2 2s. towards the Twentieth Century Fund.

W. PUGH.—Shall appear.

J. STANWAY.—Glad to hear you will "add a bit more before the year is out."

R. CHAPMAN.—See acknowledgment. Our compliments to the South Shields twelve.

J. W. O'LEARY.—The fact that the human race is no more immortal than any of its individual members is no reason for not promoting the work of progress. Just as a man may make the best of his sixty or seventy years, so the race may make the best of its myriads.

FREETHOUGHT TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND.—G. Freeman, 10s.; S. Holmes, 10s.; E. A. Charlton, 10s.; W. W. Pearce, 10s.; H. B. Dodds, 10s.; George Brady, £2; Mrs. Daniel Baker, £1; James Carroll Jordan, 10s.

W. H. MORRISH, a veteran Freethinker, of Bristol, calls his subscription to Shilling Week "a slight appreciation of your unflinching efforts in the cause of progress."

L. FIRTH.—We fear the elections have caused a good many to forget Shilling Week. Perhaps they will recollect it yet. Better late than never.

H. ORGAN.—By all means bring your wife along when Mr. Foote is next lecturing in your neighborhood, and introduce her with yourself.

G. BRADY.—Very pleased to hear from you again. We note your hope that the Twentieth Century Fund will "total to four figures—preferably all nines."

J. E. HARLEY.—See acknowledgment. You sent names, but did not put amounts against them.

JAMES NEATE.—Glad to hear your brother-in-law will subscribe £1.

D. FRANKEL.—Under the new scheme it is intended to have Sunday evening lectures in East London.

R. JOHNSON sends his promised £2 2s. to the Twentieth Century Fund. He wishes he could have sent more, and is perfectly satisfied that the Fund will be well administered.

J. BAKER.—There is room for a good monthly, like the old *Progress* you so much enjoyed; but it would need another editor. Mr. Foote is overworked already.

J. RALSTON, sending a good list of subscriptions from Motherwell, says: "You have done yeoman's service to the cause, and I earnestly hope there will be a hearty response to your present appeal."

T. P. STEWART sends his promised guinea to the Twentieth Century Fund, with some subscriptions to Shilling Week from friends. He asks when Mr. Foote is coming North again. Perhaps before Christmas.

F. P. STERRY, 2 Briar-road, Twickenham, has mislaid the letter of the Freethinker who wrote to him about forming a local N.S.S. Branch. Will the correspondent forward Mr. Sterry his address again?

JAMES THOMSON.—Yes, if "thousands" sent as much as you do, all would be well.

POLICEMAN.—Very pleased to receive your interesting letter, and hope to deserve all the good things you say of us.

T. L. HUGHES.—Thanks for the suggestion.

G. CRUDDAS says: "Your scheme *re* continuity of effort is splendid." We hope it will prove so.

W. CROMACH.—Illegalities in the Church are of more concern to Churchmen than to us. Thanks all the same.

G. KERSLEY.—Quite amusing. Kiss the little maiden for us.

ANDREW MILLAR.—There was no wincing, anyhow.

J. B.—Acknowledged as "Another Policeman." There was one in front of you. Yes, the question of Headquarters in London will have to come; but we have patience, and bide our time.

RECEIVED.—Glasgow Herald—Truthseeker (New York)—Boston Investigator—Public Opinion (New York)—La Raison—The Crescent—Marylebone Advertiser—Leeds Mercury—Ethical World—Secular Thought—Literary Guide—Bacup Times—Reynolds' Newspaper—The Liberator—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Freidenker.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

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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.

Sugar Plums.

WHAT with the fine weather and the lassitude following the parliamentary elections, it was not surprising that Mr. Foote had a smallish morning audience at Manchester on Sunday. Happily there was a marked improvement in the afternoon, and the Secular Hall was crowded in the evening; all the standing room being occupied at the back, and a good many people having to be turned away from the doors. Everybody was in a good humor, and the lecturer was in his best form. Mr. Pegg, the chairman, made a reference to the Freethought Twentieth Century Fund, and some words on the subject were added by Mr. Foote. Unfortunately it was not possible to get through the meeting with collection boxes; but the respectable sum of £4 6s. 6d. was collected as the audience passed out.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (October 14) at the Athenæum, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W. His subject will be "South Africa and China: A Secularist's Outlook." Freethinkers should give publicity to this lecture among their more orthodox friends, and the hall should be crowded. Discussion will be allowed as usual.

Mr. Charles Watts had another good gathering last Sunday evening at the Athenæum Hall. His criticism of the pretensions of Spiritualism met with a hearty approval from the audience, many of whom were strangers, including a good sprinkling of ladies. Mr. C. H. Cattell presided, and, in a neat little speech, urged the claims of the Freethought Twentieth Century Fund.

During the past week Mr. Watts has been debating in Bolton upon Spiritualism. We hope to give next week a brief account of the two nights' encounter. This evening (Sunday, October 14) Mr. Watts lectures in Bolton, when no doubt the Lancashire friends will muster in good numbers.

Arrangements are completed for the Freethought Demonstration in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday, October 21. The Demonstration itself will take place in the evening. Mr. Foote will take the chair at 7 o'clock, and will be supported by Messrs. C. Watts, C. Cohen, and H. P. Ward. Speeches will be delivered by all four. Local "saints" who desire to have particulars as to the tea and the reserved seat tickets will please apply to the secretary, Mr. J. Partridge, 65 Cato-street, Birmingham.

As the use of the Birmingham Town Hall is granted by the Corporation for the whole day, it has been decided to hold an afternoon meeting as well as the evening Demonstration. Mr. Watts will occupy the chair on this occasion, and Mr. Foote will, by special request, lecture on "Marie Corelli and Jesus Christ." Of course the admission is to be free, but there will be a collection towards the expenses.

Mr. C. Cohen delivers three lectures to-day (Oct. 14) at Pontypridd, particulars of which will be found under the head of "Lecture Notices." We hope the South Wales friends will give him bumping audiences.

We have received a copy of the Manifesto of the "Secular Education" party at Birmingham. It is an admirable and a statesman-like document, which should produce a strong impression on the more intelligent and thoughtful electors. We hope the candidate, Mr. H. Percy Ward, will find a

sufficient number of supporters to give him fifteen votes each, and put him somewhere near the top of the poll. Anyway, he ought to secure a seat. Mr. Ward is, of course, in favor of Trade Union hours and wages for the Board's employees. He would also maintain the equal right of all parties to the use of the Schools for public meetings.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie and "Mimnermus" will perhaps be pleased to learn that productions of theirs are reproduced in the *Liberator* (Melbourne) from our columns—namely, "Dis-honest Critics" and "The Betrayal of Burton."

The last number of *Secular Thought* (Toronto) to hand contains the third and last of Mr. Foote's articles on Shakespeare, reproduced from the *Freethinker*.

Public Opinion (New York) is a high-class weekly. The last number to hand, under the heading of "Religious," contains a brief article by Dr. Joseph Parker (with a portrait) on "How are the Masses to be Attracted?" "I question," he says, "whether they are to be attracted by mere shows, tricks, and shallow novelties." Can it be that he speaks from experience? Dr. Parker's article is followed by a brief article from the *Freethinker*, or rather some "Acid Drops" in the form of an article, on the same subject. We congratulate our American contemporary on its open-mindedness and impartiality.

The Camberwell Branch has closed its outdoor lecture stations for the season, with the exception of Station-road, which will be continued as long as weather permits. Mr. Cohen has kindly promised to conduct a series of Science Classes on Sunday mornings throughout the winter months. These gatherings—of which further particulars will be announced—will, no doubt, be well attended, especially as there are no restrictions, all comers being cordially welcome. To-night, at the Hall, Mr. B. Hyatt will give his able elocutionary recital.

Mr. A. B. Moss had a very large audience on Sunday last at Victoria Park, when he wound up his outdoor season by a lecture on "Religion and Rationalism." He had two opponents, both of whom he answered to the entire satisfaction of the audience.

The Passing of the Creeds.

DOGMA DISAPPEARING BEFORE THE ADVANCING SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT.

A CREED is an authoritative statement of something that nobody knows anything about. Creeds are holy hypotheses, sanctimonious guesses, pious presumptions that threaten and damn. Their field is the unknown; they journey into the eternities past, or into endless ages still to come, and relate how the Infinite felt, what he thought, planned, purposed, and designed, and how he will feel, think, accomplish, and consummate.

Creeds lay down the lines for the orthodox believer and for the orthodox God. They leave to man no freedom of thought, and to God no freedom of action. They put both God and man under probation. If man does not believe as they say he shall, they consign him to hell; if God shall not act as the creeds have dictated, we do not know what they will do with him. Perhaps, when the time arrives, an ecumenical council will be called to settle that.

CREEDS AND CREED-MAKING.

Creeds are based upon authority; they do not pretend to be founded upon evidence, proof, knowledge, discovery, reason, science, or sense—they are above such trivialities, they represent authority. The more they offend reason, transcend knowledge, and confound common sense, the greater is their authority; the more unbelievable they are; the greater is the merit of believing them. If it is possible to win salvation by intellectual penance, mental mortification, the distrust of knowledge, the crucifixion of reason, and at all times resisting common sense like the Devil, then to believe any one of the creeds ought to assure one of the halo, harp, and crown.

Creed-making culminated about 250 years ago. Not far from the middle of the seventeenth century the three most conspicuous creeds were adopted. Up till that time the Greek Church had been using a creed that the Churches themselves had chosen—a creed prepared by a bishop; but it was about the year 1650 that the

Greek Church formally recognised and authorised this creed. Not far from the same time the Reformed Church of Germany authorised its creed. They used as a basis the creed of Luther, that of Calvin, and the Heidelberg Confession. It was about the same time that the English Parliament appointed an assembly consisting theoretically of more than one hundred and fifty clergymen and laymen, but which had, as a matter of fact, an average attendance of about seventy-five. This assembly was appointed to take up matters concerning the Church, its doctrine, practice, and faith. Having been duly convened, this assembly continued its session for the space of six and one-half years, finishing in February, 1649. The result of that assembly was the "Westminster Confession of Faith," which has remained until this day the great symbol of Calvinistic dogmas.

DOGMAS ADAPTED TO MONARCHIES.

In order to understand the evolution of the creeds, we must have in mind the prevalent spirit of the ages that produced them. It would be altogether out of line to say that any great symbol, any great doctrine, any historic formula, came into being without any reference to the mental habits and conditions of the age that produced it. The dogmatic creeds were a natural and, we may say, an inevitable outgrowth of the mental attitude of that century. The prevalent idea of organisation, of government, was that which involved a great central power having authority. The only widely-known idea of government among men was that of the monarchy. The only conception those people were able to make of an infinite being was that of a king. They knew many men; the highest was the king, and they called God the king. Our dogmas and fundamental principles, upon which the modern Church is founded, all imply that conception of the monarchical God. That being true, he could only be efficient in the world as he had representatives, accredited ambassadors armed with delegated power. That power could not inhere in the individual alone; it must be a blend between the individual and the truth which he had to proclaim. The king idea of God required an accredited man and an accredited dogma. It required the priest and the theology; it required the Church with authority, and a confession of faith with equal authority.

The rise of those two classes, those that should rule and those who should be ruled, made the rise and supremacy of the creeds possible. We have seen in the stories about the Nazarene those two tendencies. The disciples, unable to stand alone, wished to bow down to some authority, and they said to him, "Be thou our master." They called him again and again "Lord," but he declined the term. He said: "Call no man Lord." We are beginning to accept this statement. The mental immaturity that makes multitudes of people feel the necessity of being ruled brings upon them an infatuation in turn to rule over somebody else. It is like a series of small forms of life. Plain, common, ordinary "fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em, the little ones have smaller ones, and so *ad infinitum*." When the disciples appealed to Jesus to be their Lord, consciously or unconsciously they were laying the lines to make themselves lords over someone else.

EVOLUTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

Since the creeds were formulated 250 years ago there has been a marked and most radical change in the spirit of man, and in the intellectual condition of the world. People in those times could bow down to authority; now they are asking authority to give a reason why it should be bowed down to. The scientific spirit has, in a measure, supplanted the dogmatic spirit; and, instead of that mental attitude that made men subservient, and caused them to wish to be ruled, there has emerged a democratic spirit that persuades every man that he himself, in his own right, is the lawful ruler of himself. The scientific spirit, together with the spirit of criticism, which has always been a reverend and truth-seeking spirit, has made possible the evolution of the individual. This is in exact harmony with the usual method, and what appears to be the obvious end of nature—namely, the completion of the individual; the raising him out of the mass; the drawing around

each one the lines that mark the sacred enclosure across which none may dare to pass, to subjugate or to enslave. The effect of this spirit upon the creeds is most fatal.

There are no new creeds. There has been no distinct doctrinal symbol issued since that of 250 years ago. This is not because new Churches have not been formed; it is not because men are any less moral or any less earnest about spiritual things. It is because of the steady advance of mankind. Men have outgrown the creed-making spirit. Since that time Churches have been formed, and each new Church unconsciously confessed the fact that the creed spirit was a thing of the past. The Baptist denomination have gone this far: they claim that they have no creed, while they have one; that is to say, they feel the impulse of the modern spirit, and would yield to it, but do not quite know how; so they have a confession of faith with definite articles, elaborate and inclusive. While they say they have no authority to compel conformity to their confession of faith, they do practically accept it as a creed, and refuse to have any denominational fellowship with anyone called Baptist who departs from the symbol. This is the way they get around it, and it is a beautiful peace of expediency. If a Baptist Church departs from the traditional method of faith of the Baptist denomination, the great denomination says: "We have no right to say what that Church shall believe. We cannot, believing in the freedom of interpretation, exclude that Church from our denomination"; so they withdraw the denomination from that Church. It is just exactly as if a man had a tree with a limb which was out of line, or out of harmony with the rest of it, and he should say to himself: "Now, I won't cut that limb off from that tree, because I have no jurisdiction over the limb; but the tree is mine, and I can do with it as I choose, so I will cut the tree off from the limb."

A CHURCH WITHOUT A CREED.

Then there is yet a newer Church that says it has no creed, and it comes as near telling the truth as we have any reason to expect, and that is the Christian (or Campbellite) Church. They affirm positively that they have no creed. That Church is not as old by two hundred years as the Westminster Confession of Faith. The reason they have no creed is because they are responding that far to the spirit of the age; they belong to the present century, while they accept the Bible as the great body of faith and as a guide to practice, and do insist upon one test sentence—"To believe on Christ and be baptised"; yet they go no further. It is encouraging to reflect that there is at least one in the great family of Christian organisations that so far responds to the modern spirit of enlightenment and progress as to leave to each man and woman the dignity and responsibility of doing his or her own thinking.

Then there is yet another one of the Church family that presents the strangest and the most inexplicable condition that may be found in all the variegated history of the Christian Church, and that is the body that has a creed which its influential members must sign, but from which the lay members are exempt. This is carrying the doctrine of vicariousness to the last possible extreme. They have in this great Church vicarious orthodoxy. The preachers, the elders, and the men holding official positions in the Church must swear that they believe all those things in the creed, and will defend them; but the man or woman that joins the Church is given a diluted, modified, somewhat modernised form of statement which they are required to sign. I do not know how credal infatuation can go beyond that.

HOPELESS VICTIMS OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

Still another influence affecting the creeds is the general unrest among those supposed to be subscribers to the creeds. Of course, the Westminster Confession of Faith does not send infants to perdition; and a distinguished New York preacher, who is himself a Presbyterian, and who ought to know but does not, is mistaken about that, and no man or woman could possibly conclude that the Infinite did damn babies; but there is a feeling in the minds of many that God Almighty is worthy of having a creed about him that will not give anyone even a chance to suspect that he damns infants. I doubt very much if a single one

of the old standards of faith will be altered, changed, amended, or improved. I believe in the possibility of reformation and progress for everything in this world except the old Church creeds, and I think they are hopelessly the victims of total depravity.

At a recent missionary meeting in New York City one of the clergymen roused the meeting to the highest pitch of enthusiasm and excitement by the declaration that the Churches ought to make a universal bonfire of their creeds, and get together on the simple platform of love to God and service to man. He said in that connection that he was willing to sign blindfolded every one of the creeds, provided only that he might sign them all. That, I suppose, was on the supposition that if a man takes two poisons, or three, they will counteract each other, and there will be no bad results from any of them.

J. E. ROBERTS.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

(To be concluded.)

Echoes from Olympus.

I.—CONCERNING CELESTIAL CLUBS.

THE Junior Angelic is generally admitted to be one of the cosiest of celestial clubs. It has been established only about thirteen centuries, so that it has all the pristine vigor of youth, and its original charm of novelty has not yet worn off. As an offshoot of the old Angelic, founded somewhere about the Flood, it affords a home for sprightly young saints who feel it a relief at times to retire from the society of their elders. The members make it a little joke that, if they cannot lop anything from the eternal future, they can take the rise out of the old fogies at the other end. So they constitute themselves the "young party" in Olympus, and, according to the Angel Gabriel, often behave as such.

The old Angelic goes on as of yore—ever so many thousand years of yore—and sometimes looks askance at its offspring. But it is usually with a benevolent regard. After all, "boys will be boys," as Methuselah observed *apropos* of some pranks of a giddy apostle who had been trying to paint heaven red. The old Angelic was established simply as a little symposium for a few Ancients of Days who had made their way to heaven, and found time hanging rather heavily on their hands. Adam was the first president. But he wasn't very successful in his office. He lacked "grit." There was a suspicion that he was hen-pecked. Eve was always calling to fetch him home. He grew disconsolate and unsociable, and ran up a score.

After two or three thousand years, he was voted primitive. He couldn't talk for nuts about anything but gardening. When, in his cups, he would occasionally vary the theme by railing about the Serpent. Joseph of Egypt called him an old cuckold. Venerable members shook their heads, and said there might be something in it. Joseph ought to know; it was in his line. Joseph, by the way, was often the butt of a great deal of sly wit and humor. He always declared, though none believed him, that, in the little adventure with which we are familiar, he emerged from temptation scatheless. David, remembering Bathsheba, always listened in cold, cynical silence, while Solomon sagely winked the other eye.

Anyhow, after three thousand years—or was it three thousand five hundred?—prominent members said, in a determined sort of way, that, as regarded the management of the club, they *must* have arrangements more up to date. Adam, who so far had practically bossed the show, admitted that it was a reasonable desire. As to any shortcomings of his own, he pleaded that this was the first club established in heaven, and he hadn't known of anything of the sort on earth, having been made a little too previous. Necessarily he was without experience. At the end of the very next hundred years Adam sent in his resignation. The committee regretted that he had taken this hasty step, and appointed Jacob in his place.

"Poor old Adam," said one of the members some time afterwards. "Wonder what's gone with him?" Gabriel was able to afford some information. Adam, he said, was doing a bit of gardening—odd jobs here and there. Eve was taking in washing—the white robes of the lady-angels—2s. the dozen. They lived a cat-and-dog life by all accounts. Adam would often tell her to go to hell to her "fancy man." Eve would retort that the "fancy man" was far better than a poor fool whom she only took on because there were no others to choose from.

When, at length, it was fully decided to reconstitute the Angelic, it was thought that it would be well to give forth that the club was established to "promote science, literature, and art."

"Let us keep that well to the front," said Noah, "and we can have as many jollifications as we please amongst ourselves."

"Listen to the old reptile," said Moses, "I thought I had sufficiently exposed him in Genesis."

Noah withdrew from the discussion in a huff, and privately gave members to understand that there was much still to be learnt about Moses' treatment of his poor wife, Zipporah.

Eventually the object of the club was agreed upon—namely, "the promotion of science, literature, and art." Jacob inquired if a quiet little game at baccarat or faro would come within the scope, and was satisfied when assured that it came under the head of art.

Then it was asked did their *personnel* justify the pretensions they were making. Moses said he would take upon himself to represent science, and, if need be, literature as well. This gave rise to some discord. It was agreed that Moses should represent science, but there were other claims in regard to literature. King David wanted to know where he came in with his Psalms. Aaron declared that Moses never wrote a line in his life. Whereupon Moses retorted that David never composed half the Psalms that were popularly credited to him.

Solomon, feeling the judicial spirit strong upon him, gave orders that literature should be brought before him and cut in twain. The mild Isaiah explained to him that literature was not a baby. And Samuel led the bewildered monarch away, explaining to the company that the old fool was gone doty over the one success of his life. Left by himself in a corner, Solomon had a fit of the Ecclesiastes blues. All, he said, was vanity and vexation of spirit, and Moses, so far from being the meekest of men, was the most conceited old ass he had ever struck.

Eventually Moses was accepted as the representative of science; David stood for literature; and Noah, as the architect of the ark, represented art. Having thus justified themselves in regard to objects, and their possible achievements, the old Angelic took in members and elected committees. Noah was made chairman of the Wine Committee in consideration of his recorded experience of the juice of the grape. David, chairman of the Entertainment Committee, having regard to his harp solos before Saul and his dancing *in nubibus* before the Lord. The other offices were filled, and the club was re-established for a few more thousand years. None but approved patriarchs and saints were admitted. For though it was, and is, easy enough to get into heaven, it never was easy to get into the select and exclusive Angelic. Ezekiel was black-balled for his objectionable language, and several minor prophets had a narrow squeak. Jonah was accounted small fry in spite of his big fish, but was admitted to membership at the entreaty of Moses, who said he had often wished to meet someone who was a bigger "crammer" than himself.

So much for the old Angelic. The Junior Angelic was mainly established by the exertions of Peter. He it was who secured for it its present palatial home in the golden street which answers to our stately Pall Mall. Once the idea was mooted, he threw himself into the enterprise with all the fiery enthusiasm of his nature. It was whispered that he was moved to this piece of rivalry by personal spite and chagrin. Certain it is that, on one occasion, he flung out of the old Club in a towering rage because some member had imitated, in his hearing, the crowing of a cock. His own account was that he was sick of hearing the infernal lies of old Moses and the croakings of that old raven, Jeremiah.

Anyhow, he went round and canvassed for members, mostly among the representatives of the New Dispensation. Matthew and John, as old personal friends, readily promised support. Paul was won over when it was hinted that possibly he might be made President. Another John—he of Patmos—voluntarily interested himself in the project to quite a surprising extent. But, on a private intimation that that personage was not exactly *compos mentis*, Peter decided to shunt him as quickly and as politely as possible. This was more easily decided upon than done. A fierce squabble ensued, and ended in Peter flooring the author of "Revelation." He would have cut off his ear with a flaming sword, but the waiter who was sent out for the weapon failed to return in time.

The club eventually was fairly established, and drew some of the members from the parent institution. It went on very well at first, as most clubs do. In the course of a few centuries, however, causes of dissatisfaction arose. Curiously enough, the loudest complaints came from Peter, who, in this matter as in others, exhibited his fickle and unstable character.

The other day he stalked into the reading-room and glared around. Obviously he was in a cantankerous mood. Members knew from experience that it was best at such times to leave him alone. Matthew, who had been dozing over the *Celestial Intelligencer*, looked up, and shuffled uneasily in his chair. Mark hid himself behind the *New Jerusalem Rock*. James alone had the temerity to speak.

"Well, Peter," he said, with an attempt at cheeriness, "how goes it?"

"What the blazes has that to do with you?" returned Peter angrily. "Go and look after your poor Peculiars, and leave me alone."

"Well, you might be civil," returned James, wincing a little at the allusion.

"How can anyone be civil after the day I've had at the gate? I should think half the population of that miserable

little planet, the Earth, have been clamoring there to-day. But I soon sent the best part of them packing. Worse luck, I've gone and kicked my toe out of joint."

"Never mind, Peter; sit down and make yourself comfortable," said James, in a conciliatory tone.

But no; Peter must go fuming and foraging round the room.

"Where the devil is that *Celestial Intelligencer*? I never saw such a club. You never can find a paper when you want one. I believe the members must carry them off in their pockets—the mean cusses—and perhaps sell them in the streets on the way home. Of course, they'd swear they didn't. They'd deny anything——"

"Even their own Master," said Mark, very much under his breath.

"What's that?" exclaimed Peter, who did not quite catch the observation.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," said Mark, soothingly.

Matthew now handed over the sought-for paper, and Peter, only partially mollified, threw himself into a chair. "A fine club this," he growled, "with only one copy of the chief paper. And where's the tape? What's the good of a club, even in heaven, without the tape? How can you tell what's won, or how the betting's going? Hanged if I don't go back to the old originals. There'd be a bit of fun to be got there from chaffing Moses about Darwin. Here, waiter, bring me a cigar—bring the archangels' box—no twopenny-ha'penny weeds for me, mind you. And be quick about it, or there'll be murder in this club, if murder is possible. Hang it all, let's have a look at the news."

FRANCIS NEALE.

(To be concluded.)

The Paris International Congress.

(Concluded from page 637.)

THE reporter on the second question (that of "the bases of morality") was Madame Gillain, a Belgian delegate, and Professor of Law at Brussels. This lady is a clear, bright speaker, and, as we found at a later stage, made an excellent president. The Belgian Freethinkers are, indeed, fortunate in possessing an advocate so learned and persuasive.

On the recommendation of the Report presented by Madame Gillain, the Congress declared that education should be entirely evacuated of all religious notions, and that the bases of morality are outside the limits of all systems of supernaturalism. Social morality can only be established on purely secular lines, built on the certitudes of science. Morality must be made independent of all theological conceptions, for too long have the principles of ethics been diluted with the poison of religious precept and sanction. The social ideal stands superior to the religious ideal, for, whilst both aim towards human perfection, the one pursues this end actuated with the sordid hope of divine reward, the other rests satisfied with the natural reward which the accomplishment of social duty brings to us on the plane of this present life.

The third question, that of "complete education," etc., was considered and reported upon in sections. The section relating to education itself was committed for report to M. Courtois, Receveur Municipal of Le Mans, an important town in France. Here, again, was a notable man, and a speaker of remarkable precision and power. It was a rich treat to listen to his lucid French, spoken with classical elegance. M. Courtois is one of the stalwarts of the movement, and delivers lectures on Freethought not only at Le Mans, but in the townships and villages around. On the recommendation of his Report, the Congress voted in favor of continuing the education of all children until they shall have attained their eighteenth year, in order that the rising generation might be able to reach the complete development of their physical, moral, and intellectual powers; the State to accept the obligation, if needs be, to make proper provision not only for the education, but also for the material wants, of the children. The declaration was made that, whatever may be the social position of their parents, the children have the right to the instruction indispensable to the due formation of their intelligence as well as to the moral education which shall train their hearts aright. In the light of these principles, the Congress resolved that, in its opinion, all the three degrees of knowledge—the primary, secondary, and superior—should be accessible to the children of the poor as well, as now, to those of the rich.

On the question of the co-education of the sexes, the Congress adopted the Report of Ida Altmann in favor of the principle of equality of treatment.

The right to teach gave rise to a very important discussion. The Commission recommended that education should become a purely public service, withdrawn entirely from the hands of clerical obscurantists. A large section, however, objected to the proposal to disenable the priests to teach the children of the "faithful," and, the vote having been demanded by nationality, the principle of all-round liberty was carried. I felt it my duty to protest and vote against a principle which I conceived to be a departure from good sense and fair play.

On the fourth question ("woman's rights") divorce by mutual-consent, subject to all existing obligations, moral and legal, as regards the maintenance and care of the offspring, was voted by the Congress.

The fifth question, that relating to Socialism and Freethought, gave rise to a long and animated discussion. A number of delegates maintained the identity of Socialism and Freethought, but the resolution actually passed was rather too vague to commit either side to anything specific. After affirming the inseparability of Freethought and Socialism, the resolution adds that Freethought is to be understood as "the complete emancipation of humanity, from the political, economic, and moral point of view." This, certainly, Freethought is *in posse*; but, as I pointed out to the Congress, it was quite possible to-day to be a Freethinker and yet repudiate the systems and schemes of the various Socialist schools. That this "inseparability" was of a non-committal character was shown by the fact that, after having voted the necessity of propagating Freethought amongst the Socialist and Co-operative groups, the Congress refused to accord to the Socialists the right of spreading their propaganda amongst the Freethought Societies. It was felt that, being Freethinkers already, the Socialists (at any rate, the continental section) were bound, as the resolution put it, "to vigorously combat the various Churches, and particularly those amongst them whose organisation and general action are the principal obstacles to the development of human progress, and to the establishment of a society based on Socialist principles." Again, it was by the vote according to nationality that the point was gained, and, I may add, that I spoke and voted against requiring what would practically be a Socialist confession of faith from that large section of Freethinkers whose social creed excludes Socialism.

And now considerations of space will only allow me a few additional notes: (1) The Congress decided to transfer to Brussels the central offices of the International Federation of Freethought. My colleague, Mr. Roger, and myself were appointed corresponding members for England. (2) It was voted by acclamation that a weekly journal, specially devoted to the propagation of Rationalism, and serving to unify and record the efforts of Freethought throughout the world, should be started as from January 1, 1901. It will be called *La Raison*, and will be under the direction of M. Leon Fournémont, for Belgium, and M. Victor Charbonnel, for France. A thousand shares of ten francs each will float the journal, and of these 452 were subscribed amongst the delegates before the Congress concluded its labors. I sincerely hope that some help may be given in this country to so important an enterprise. (3) The next International Congress was fixed for 1902 at Geneva.

The inevitable banquet took place! But what a banquet!—a menu for gourmets, washed by a rich flow of generous wine—wine in the plural, and in ample streams of all the four kinds! But the speeches capped all. M. Leon Fournémont, in the chair, excelled himself; Antide Boyer, the Marseilles Deputy, was divine; but Sebastian Faure sent us all into ecstasies of thrilled delight. Never shall I forget the man, the speech, or the occasion. Five English Secularists attended the banquet—viz., Mr. and Mrs. Roger, Mr. and Mrs. Wood (all of the Camberwell Branch), and myself. Mr. Roger's speech was well received.

Throughout the Congress the speeches and deliberations were in French. Babel was thereby abolished. But the Congress was something more than French, or English, or German, or anything else insular and parochial. It was intensely human. Nationality was merged in the larger feeling of humanity, and Freethought at least showed its wide catholicity in uniting men, whom priests had formerly made enemies, in the bonds of a love wider than the bounds of country and deeper than the shallows of a frothy patriotism. Freethought is not English or French; it is International; and it is International because the memories of a Bruno, a Dolet, a Paine, and an Ingersoll consecrate no stupid prejudices of racial animosity, but inspire us with a hope that the Black Army, against which these worthies warred, may finally be rooted out from the affections of the foolish by the united efforts all over the world of the men and women who are too busy with the problems here to waste time upon the chimera of the hereafter.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Errata in last article:—For Fournémont read Fournémont; for Fuepius read Fulpius; for Nasivo read Namur; for Nance read France (Masonic lodges of France).

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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, G. W. Foote, "South Africa and China: A Secularist's Outlook."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY Masonic Hall, Camberwell-road: 7, Professor Earl Barnes, "The New English-American Friendship."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, An Evening with Mr. B. Hyatt.

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Victory," Newnham-street, Queen's-street; Edgware-road): October 16, at 9, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, E. Pack.
BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.
VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, E. Leggatt, "Bible Teaching in our Board Schools."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.
HAMMERSMITH (outside the Lyric Opera House): 7.15, F. A. Davies.
WEST HAM BRANCH (Stratford Grove): 7.30, F. A. Davies.
KINGSLAND (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Pack.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall, 69 York-street): J. H. Gilliland, "Mr. Gladstone's Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH: W. F. Barnard—11 (Bull Ring), "Some Bible Flaws"; 7 (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms), "No Religion in Board Schools." October 17, at 8 (Bull Ring), H. Percy Ward, "Education: Religious and Secular."

BOLTON (Spinners' Hall, St. George's-road): 6.30, Charles Watts, "Secularism: Its Necessity and Superiority."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Heaford, "War, Religion, and Human Nature."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—J. F. Turnbull, "Why I am a Secularist"; 6.30, Social Meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Vocal and Instrumental Concert.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Dr. Nicholson, "Justice to the Past."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, Annual meeting of members; 6.30, G. Mason, "The Social Economy of Emile Zola."

PORTH BRANCH (The Empire, Pontypridd): C. Cohen—11, "The Folly of Faith"; 2.30, "Christianity and Women"; 7.30, "Foreign Missions: What They Do, and How They Do It."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, "Christianity and Slavery."

SUNDERLAND (Miners' Hall, Roher-avenue): H. Percy Ward—11, "Hell, and How to Get There"; 3, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform"; 7, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—October 14, Pontypridd. 21, Birmingham. 28, Athenæum Hall. November 4, Glasgow. 11, Aberdeen.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall-Heath, Birmingham.—October 14, Sunderland; 21, Birmingham; 28, Birmingham. November 4, Manchester. 18, Birmingham. 25, Sheffield. 25 and 27, Debate at Sheffield. December 9, Glasgow.

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