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Jesus and the Jews.

THE *Church Times*, in a leaderette, speaks of the *Freethinker* in such a way that it would seem ungracious not to notice its reference. The High Church organ is, apparently, disposed to champion the cause of the vicar of St. Matthew's, Southsea, whose action was recently commented upon in these columns.

It appears, as the *Church Times* rightly says, that "down Portsmouth way" it is accounted a sign of disrespect to the Mayor not to ask him to take the leading part in the various local functions, religious or otherwise. But it happens that the present Mayor, Mr. Leon Emanuel, is a Jew, a highly-respected and respectable citizen, though of course, as the *Church Times* says, a non-Christian. A Church bazaar was lately held in St. Matthew's parish, and it was represented in certain quarters that the proper person to open it was his Worship the Mayor. As far as appears, the Mayor had expressed no desire to open this bazaar. We don't suppose for a moment that the performance of that function was necessary to his happiness, personal or civic. Neither is it likely that the non-invitation by the Rev. Bruce Cornford, the vicar of the parish, disturbed his equanimity in the slightest degree. It was not the question of whether the Mayor was invited or not that formed the basis of the remarks in the *Freethinker*. It was made perfectly clear that the objections were confined to the intolerant and inexcusable language of the vicar, in his parish magazine, on Jews generally.

The *Church Times* says the refusal of the vicar "has raised a storm of local criticism, which the *Freethinker* has reproduced in its columns." That is hardly accurate, because the *Freethinker* simply gave a few sentences, with comments, from a letter which appeared in the *Portsmouth Evening News*.

But why should the *Church Times* say: "This last fact ought to convince Portsmouth Christians, at any rate, of the soundness of the vicar of St. Matthew's argument"? Why should the fact of the *Freethinker* reproducing a portion of the correspondence be considered as supporting the logic, or the want of it, in the vicar's parish magazine? "God forbid" that we should say a word that could be supposed to support such intolerance and racial prejudice and absurd bigotry as that in which the Rev. Bruce Cornford indulges.

Perhaps the *Church Times* is offended by a reference to Ritualism in the following paragraph, which we extracted from the letter to the *Portsmouth Evening News*: "Some of the exponents of Christianity draw fat salaries and lie low, others fight to the death over a candle or a wafer—all are abjuring, shouting, quarrelling, and blaspheming. Let the mayor take heart of grace. Not to be a Christian is a distinction of some importance. Christians are a shabby, hypocritical lot, not to be compared with the Jew, Turk, or Infidel."

This may seem to some rather strong language over a mere question about a bazaar; but the Rev. Bruce Cornford invited it by his own remarks. "The Church Liturgy," he said, "commands us to pray for 'all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics' as being amongst those utterly outside the pale of Christendom." That the Church does command it is true; two or three years ago the present writer heard a Good Friday sermon in Westminster Abbey on the Collect containing these words, and the sermon was just as bigotedly intolerant and offensive—in drift if not in words—as the parish magazine observations of the Rev. Bruce Cornford.

This self-righteous praying for other people who are as good if not better than yourself is simply sanctimonious humbug and conceit.

"The Jews," says the Rev. Bruce Cornford, "crucified Jesus Christ," which reminds us of the old cry of one's childhood:—

The Jews, they crucified him,  
And nailed him to a tree.

And he suggests that the Mayor of Portsmouth very likely "still thinks they did rightly." There is a great deal of assumption about this. This cleric, or any other, would find first of all a great deal of difficulty in establishing beyond doubt that the "Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God"—as he calls him—had an identifiable existence, looking at the nature of the Gospel descriptions and the absence of satisfactory independent historical testimony. Till this is done it is hardly worth while discussing whether the Jews crucified this "Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God." There may have been a man named Jesus who was crucified—because of false representations that he was the king of the Jews—the expected Messiah. That is easily conceivable. There were other pretended Messiahs, and crucifixion was the ordinary form of execution. There were two other persons crucified with Jesus, according to the Gospel accounts, and there is no reason to suppose that their sufferings were less than his. The repentant thief was, it is true, cheered with a prospect of paradise, and, in a somewhat inconsistent way, Jesus is represented as giving himself up to despair with the cry: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This cry has some semblance of reality about it. Its counterpart is to be found in the occasional exclamation when a person is apprehended by the police: "My God! Well, the game is up!"

The vicar says that the Mayor must "regard Jesus as a dead Jew." But, if he ever lived, what was he, from a racial point of view, when he died? He may have talked of a new dispensation, and Paul may have instituted it; but his claims to the Messiahship necessitated an alleged Davidical descent, or, at least, so the people thought who made it up for him. That he is dead is a statement to which there is no denial except by his reappearance. The story of his resurrection has been repeatedly shown to be incredible. His Second Coming has been confidently predicted time after time; but it seems to be an event which belongs to the dim and distant future, as his original advent is ascribed to the dim and distant past.

The singular fact to which the attention may be drawn of this narrow-minded and quite too self-righteous vicar down Portsmouth way is this: According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus made his appearance amongst his own countrymen, the Jews; but they have steadfastly denied his claims up to the present day.

The Rev. Bruce Cornford talks in his parish magazine, and the *Church Times* reproduces it, of "the society that spends thousands of pounds annually in attempting to convert the Jews to Christianity." He does not say with what result. But everybody knows; and is not this very fact mentioned by the Rev. Bruce Cornford in his attack on the Jewish Mayor one of the most convincing arguments against his own belief in Christ? It is true that someone has attributed to Jesus the saying: "A prophet is without honor in his own country." But such a personage as the Lord Jesus Christ, working the miracles attributed to him, ought to have been honored even in his own country, unless the people amongst whom he appeared, and who were best able to judge of

his pretensions—especially in regard to these wonderful performances—decided at the time, and on the spot, that he was no better than any other of the wandering anatics, of whom they had seen not a few.

FRANCIS NEALE.

## Can Ethics Supplant Religion?

A WRITER in the *Daily News* of the other day quotes a "French thinker" as remarking that "the problem now before us in France is this: How far can ethical teaching be made to supplant religion?" The issue would seem to many remarkably well put, and it does doubtless raise a number of important questions in connection with the eternal conflict of reason and religion. Nevertheless, this way of putting the problem seems to me to be singularly inapt. The real way of raising the essential issue would be rather that of "How far does religious belief nowadays minister to what we are all agreed are the common needs of society?" Put in the manner first stated, it is a tacit admission of the social value of current religious beliefs, and is therefore a needless concession to religious pretensions. It is as though one were to say to the various Churches: "Come, you have done, and are doing, a very good and useful work; but, nevertheless, we imagine that we can do the same work in a much better, or a more expeditious, manner." So far, the question is distinctly objectionable. But, if we vary the form of the question, and ask: "Is there anything being done by a Church in the shape of ethical teaching, social instruction, or political counsel that could not be as well done by a purely secular organisation, or is there any good done by a minister of religion in any of these directions that he could not do as well in his capacity as an ordinary citizen?"—if we put the question in this way we have it fairly raised, and quite free from all ambiguities.

Still, it must be admitted that the Frenchman's way of putting the matter does represent a tolerably popular form, and it is therefore important to try and determine what is the real problem facing, not the people of France alone, but the people of every civilised country. Two things may be admitted at the outset. It may be admitted that the Churches do exercise considerable influence—whether for good or evil is another question—and that many people believe in some vague manner that religious beliefs exercise a regulative influence over the conduct of men and women.

Now, even if the influence exerted by the Churches was due to a conviction that the doctrines taught were true, it might still be that the social good done by them had its source in matters that were not essentially connected with religion. All religions—the lower as well as the higher—are bound up with a number of purely secular elements, and it is not always easy to differentiate between the influence of the two factors. Many a man, said Ingersoll, thinks that he has got religion when he is simply suffering from indigestion; and many a one imputes to the influence of religion actions that have their origin in a wholly non-religious source.

But in such cases as the one under discussion a very little examination is enough to make plain the fact that the influence exerted by the Churches is due far more to the power of organisation than to the simple influence of religious conviction. We need not emphasize interested motives, which so often lead to a uniformity of conduct or profession in religious circles; it is sufficient to point out that every Church—every organisation, in fact—is a society in miniature, and that the mere presence of a *social* opinion is adequate to account for all the influence any Church may exert.

But organisation is not a religious characteristic; it is a social quality. Social pressure creates organisation, although it is utilised in the interest of religious doctrine. Religion does not, and cannot, create and preserve a trustworthy social type, although the pressure of an organisation may ensure a certain air of uniformity. Those who have watched closely the "conversions" narrated by the Salvation Army and similar bodies must have observed that it was not the belief in Jesus that kept a rickety character straight for a time, but the constant presence of others, whose approval or disapproval formed the real sustaining and inspiring

power. Withdraw from any Church this power, and its influence sinks to zero. Leave an individual to the unsupported influence of his religious beliefs, and we get an anti-social asceticism on the one side and an unstable, unsocial type on the other. In brief, the good usually attributed to a Church as the teacher of a set of doctrines is really due to the Church as a simple organisation; and one need not look very far afield to see that any organisation will produce a somewhat similar result. Trades unions, political clubs, sporting clubs, public schools, all have the effect of producing and enforcing a certain standard of conduct. It is the simple pressure of the herd upon its individual members.

Combination, therefore, is not dependent upon *religious* belief, but upon the presence of *a* belief. The kind of belief held is of subsidiary importance. The essential thing is that the belief shall be shared by more than one or two; and, wherever this is the case, we have the desire for, and ultimately the fact of, organisation. The disappearance of a religious belief cannot, therefore, destroy, or even weaken, the capacity or the desire for organisation. This remains as the necessary result of men living in groups. True, it may still be argued that the disappearance of religious beliefs will be likely to vitally affect our view of life—affect it, that is, in the sense of lowering our standard or degrading our ideals; and on this point something further must be said.

This fear, which is boldly expressed by avowed religionists, and which is felt rather than uttered by many others, may be easily removed by one or two simple observations. The history of religion, like the history of all else in nature, is the history of an evolution. We no more hold the religious beliefs that our ancestors held than we wear the same kind of clothing or dwell in the same kind of houses. We retain the same expressions, make use of the same formulas; but our interpretation of them is vitally different. In a world of incessant change it is impossible for even religion to remain stationary, and both consciously and unconsciously it undergoes gradual modifications. The *fact* of change is obvious to all, and the cause of the change is by no means difficult to discover. This lies not in any inherent quality latent in religious beliefs, and developed by a more complete understanding of them, but in the pressure of social, ethical, and economic forces that exist quite apart from all religion. One has only to look at the current doctrinal teaching, when compared with that of thirty or forty years ago, to see the truth of this. The doctrine of eternal damnation, for example, has not been dropped out of Christian theology because it was found to be inharmonious with religious beliefs, but because it was more or less of an outrage upon social feelings developed by more humanitarian conditions. The growing emphasis laid by preachers upon matters of purely social or secular interest is another evidence of the same truth. It is the development of opinion *outside* the Churches that determines the form taken by the teaching within. The problem of a church is always of a two-fold character: first, to try and keep the age in line with its teachings, and next, when this can no longer be easily accomplished, to bring its teachings into line with the age.

The same evidence of external forces determining the *form* of religion is seen if, instead of taking specific doctrines, we take religions as a whole. The Christianity of many of the Eastern races, who were among the first converts to that religion, remains substantially as it was originally. Continuing in the environment in which it was born, their religion preserves as intact as can be, after the lapse of so many generations, the same superstitious habits that characterised the primitive Christians. The same religion carried among the Western races, and subject to profoundly different influences, becomes completely transformed. The quietistic elements are suppressed or glossed over, direct illumination from God is dismissed as an idle dream, and Jesus, the thaumaturgist, gradually becomes the preacher of a new social gospel working for social regeneration rather than for purely "spiritual" purposes. The same result might be traced in the history of Mohammedanism or of any other religion. Gibbon has, in a famous passage, pointed out that on the result of the battle of Tours in the eighth century hung the

determination of the religion of the Western world. Probably. Doubtless, if Charles Martel had been beaten, the Koran might have been taught in Oxford and Cambridge in place of the Bible; but it is tolerably certain that the genius of the Western races would have transformed the religion of Mohammed as it has already transformed that of Jesus.

A close study of the history of religions shows, therefore, that, while these may serve as a strongly retarding force to the introduction of a higher social or ethical teaching, *what* religion teaches in these directions is determined by the ethical and social sentiments that obtain currency. In recent times the growth of commerce, the spread of knowledge, the development of better methods of communication between people living in different countries, and even among people living in the same geographical area, have all combined to place the secular interests of life in the forefront, and it is in obedience to these circumstances that the "restatements" of Christianity arise.

The problem, then, is not quite "How far can ethical teaching be made to supplant religion?" but "By what means can the people be brought to realise that the credit given to religion is due to other elements or forces, and that all that is really valuable in life would remain untouched by its disappearance?" The rejection of religion cannot affect the capacity for organisation, since the Churches themselves are an effect of this tendency. And it is equally certain that ethics and sociology will not lose from its rejection, since all progress in these departments has been in the teeth of religious opposition. It is a significant fact that the greatest impetus towards ethical and sociological study has come almost invariably from Freethinkers. Necessarily so. For if the putting on one side of religious beliefs does naught else, it at least leaves one free to face life and its problems untrammelled by groundless fears or unrealisable hopes.

C. COHEN.

### Man's True Empire.

We have heard much of late of what is termed the British Empire, and considerable solicitude has been displayed on its behalf. Generally, the term has been used in a political sense as meaning territorial supremacy; but it does not come within the scope of the *Freethinker* to deal with party politics. To me, the true empire of man consists in his power to share in the comforts of life; in his being surrounded by just laws; in his having a fair opportunity for physical, intellectual, and moral culture; and in his enjoyment of that liberty which is the right of all. In my opinion, the glories of an empire are secured by the possession, promotion, and consolidation of the happiness of the people who comprise the nation. So far, my sentiments are in accord with those uttered on a recent occasion by Mr. Asquith when he said that it is our duty "to make the Empire worth living in as well as worth dying for..... What is the use of talking about Empire if here, at its very centre, there is always to be found a mass of people stunted in education, a prey to intemperance, and huddled and congested beyond the possibility of realising, in any true sense, either social or domestic life?" These are noble and suggestive words, which should commend themselves to the earnest consideration of all Secularists, whose chief aim it is to secure for one and all the highest conditions that are attainable on earth.

Now, it is evident that we are far from possessing man's true empire in Great Britain. Talking about Christian civilisation is sheer nonsense, for Christianity does not contain the elements of a real civilisation. The present condition of our country, with its poverty-stricken population, its oppressive land laws, its monopoly of wealth, and its cruelty by missionary interference with other nations, all show the utter impotency of Christianity as a civilising force. Take the conduct of the Christian allies in China. Mr. George Lynch, the well-known war correspondent, has recently been interviewed in reference to his visit to China. In answer to

the remark, "You don't seem to think that war is a very good moral agency?" Mr. Lynch replied:—

"No I don't; I think it is bad to loose the tiger and the ape in man: very bad; but you can judge for yourself. There, on that wall, is a true picture of what we call outrages, and don't like to write about. It is a picture painted, not by me, but by the Japanese artist, Otake Kokkan, exhibited by him this winter in the Yanaka Bijitsuin Gallery in Tokio. He entitled it 'Humanity.' War is not so bad when it is played according to the rules, but certain sections of the Allies did not appear to think it necessary to observe rules in dealing with the Chinese. The soldiers of our newly-made and rather shoddy civilisation regarded these people of the oldest and most refined civilisation in the world as savages. The day may some time come for reaping the harvest of hate from the seeds they have sown: What do you think of the picture? I turned, and peered short-sightedly at the wall. The scene represented the soldiers of the peace-loving Czar: one held a child up by the legs, while another thrust his bayonet into it. Another held back a woman, probably the mother, by the hair; three more had thrown a girl down, and—Christian soldiers: Christians!!!"

Man's true empire will never be realised while the present social inequalities obtain. The greatness of a nation will not be maintained while those who are its real support are neglected, and their aristocratic supervisors are extravagantly paid for what services they render. Take, for instance, our army. The very men who do the principal work, and endure the severest trials, are those who are neglected, and often left to die in want and misery, while their "superiors" have more wealth thrust upon them than is necessary for the most luxurious living. Here we have Lord Roberts, who, for what he did in Afghanistan, received, besides a pension, £12,500, and now for his services in South Africa he is granted £100,000, and still his salary as Commander-in-Chief is going on. It is not that I depreciate what Lord Roberts has done; but, if he is paid, others should also be properly rewarded for fighting for their country. I write not from a political standpoint, but from that of justice and humanity. In a true empire wealth should not be amassed in the midst of abject poverty.

Now, no doubt, for the fact of this ill-conditioned state of affairs, the people themselves are not free from blame. They are too apathetic, and are destitute of independent thought. Some of them are as easily "led by the nose as asses are." Still, those who have falsely trained them are not without responsibility. The masses have been taught to depend upon others instead of relying upon themselves. They have been assured that faith in Christ, and belief in the New Testament, would furnish them with the only sure means of successfully fighting life's battle; but the more thoughtful of them now find out how misled they have been, and what a wretched condition such inculcations have brought them to. And no marvel, for both Christ and the New Testament are silent as to the essentials for building up the real empire of man. Even "J. B.," the principal leader-writer on the *Christian World*, admits, in its issue for July 25, "that Christ's Gospel has no word for culture or for progress." Quoting Dr. Horton, "J. B." says: "Science, art, industry, the marvellous developments along these lines which have transformed the world, have, apparently, no place in Christ's ideas or sympathies." He points out that in the Primitive Church there was no propaganda of political, social, and economical questions. Although slavery then existed in the most cruel form, no anti-slavery crusade was set on foot. Practical questions of secular import were entirely ignored by Christ and his early Apostles. Such are the admissions of one of the ablest Christian writers of the present day. It is, however, only fair to note that "J. B." holds that the object of Christianity "was of infinitely more value to life than all these, and its propagandism accordingly of far more importance." But if this were so, it would show how incomplete Christianity is as a reforming agency. No system that ignores the secular duties of life is adequate to meet modern requirements. The boasted influence of the so-called spiritual feature of the Christian faith will not compensate for its lack of providing for the daily comforts of mankind. Hence the desire for the necessary provisions for the gratification of mundane needs has been sought for, and, in some measure, found, apart

from Christianity, in man's true empire. This accords with the Freethought contention that Christ's mission was to urge people to prepare for mansions in the skies rather than to strive to better their conditions on earth independently of faith in Jesus. Of course, those who think they believe in the Gospel of the Cross derive consolation from their belief just as the devotees of all superstitions do from *their* objects of worship, but that does not prove either one of them to be necessary to true civilisation. The present writer firmly believes that the practical adoption of Secular principles would secure a marked improvement in the body-politic, but professed Christians will not admit the validity of this belief. If the numerical strength of adherents to any faith, or their sincerity of profession, were made the test of truth, the victory would not be given to Christianity, inasmuch as those who accept non-Christian faiths, and who excel in self-sacrifice and devotion, far outnumber the supposed followers of Christ.

It is my decided opinion that the only true course to adopt to secure man's true empire is to work to rid society of the shams, delusions, and other obstacles to progress which at present pervade it. What is really required to effect this object is the adoption of principles that would so improve our electoral system that the verdict of the many should not be counteracted, as it now is in many instances, by the will of the few; that would place the land in the hands of its rightful owners, thus securing to the half-starved peasantry adequate means of support, and lifting them out of their debased and almost helpless condition; that would readjust the taxation, so that the heaviest burdens should no longer fall upon those least able to bear them; that would abolish all legal connection between State and religion, allowing the latter to be a question of individual opinion, and not of national preference; that would provide a really national system of thorough secular education, leaving theology to be taught out of the schools, where and when those who desire it may think necessary, apart altogether from the patronage and control of the State; that would remove from the House of Lords the bishops and archbishops, who have always been the greatest obstacles to all political and social reforms; and, finally, that would secure an economical national expenditure, reducing the enormous salaries and pensions now given to the aristocracy, whose members already possess much more than is required to maintain them even in their luxurious position.

If such an empire is established in Great Britain, let us hope that virtue will array itself more resolutely than ever against vice, and rid the world of its malignant power; that brother shall cease slaying brother, and thereby assist to crown the world with the laurels of peace; that priestcraft shall lose its power over humanity, and mental liberty shall have a new birth; that the barriers of social caste shall be broken down, and the brotherhood of man consolidated; that woman shall no longer be a slave, but free in her own right; that capital and labor shall cease to be antagonistic, and shall be harmoniously employed to enrich the comforts and to augment the happiness of the race; that education shall supplant ignorance, and justice take the place of oppression. When these transformations become a fact, then the world will be nearer than ever to man's true empire.

CHARLES WATTS.

## The Poets and Nature.

"Wherever men are noble, they love bright color; and, wherever they can live healthily, bright color is given them—in sky, sea, flowers, and living creatures."—RUSKIN.

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

THE Poets of Antiquity always felt the beauty of nature as a spectacle. They were moved by its varied outlines, and its ever-changing shades and colors. They felt to the full the sublimity of it as a vast, immeasurable force, revealing itself indiscriminately now in this way, now in that—in the earthquake, in the thunderstorm, or the power of turbulent waters. This feeling, however, we must remember,

is very different from that which prompted such lines as—

There are two voices—one is of the sea,  
And one is of the mountains;  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty.

The ancient poets, as a rule, not only felt less for nature than we do, but they also said less about it; and, therefore, the contrast between them and us is less striking. Only dimly, and in the quickening of the spirits brought about in the spring-time, or in the sensuous pleasure of lying on green grass and feeling the cool shelter of trees, do the ancient poets seem to have realised what joy a man may have in the world's outer beauty. One poet of antiquity alone possessed this rare gift. It is this quality which seems to us to make Lucretius not so much a classic as a contemporary. Of all ancient poets, indeed, this old-world Secularist is perhaps the most picturesque. The early aspect of morning, the low sunlight striking along the dewy grass, the grey mist going up from the lakes and rivers—these, and things like these, he describes almost as Tennyson might have described them. There are other pictures, too, equally vivid, such as that of the square towers of a town, which, as we approach them, look rounded in the haze of distance. Or that of the colored awnings flapping above the crowded theatre, with the bright-colored sunlight pouring down through them. Then, again, there are descriptions of storms and storm-clouds, their shapes, movements, slow, weird changes, which are not unlike the verse of Shelley or the pictures of Turner, and to which no counterpart can be found in old-world literature. Lucretius, indeed, seems to bring back to us the very atmosphere of the past.

Although he was the poet of sensations rather than of pictures, Wordsworth comes among the poet-painters, and very notably. Not by his long descriptions. These, as a rule, though deep in feeling, impress no vivid image on the mind. But scattered up and down his works are passages, of a few lines in length, which fill the eye with an abiding picture. Such, for example, is this little sketch, taken on a bright and sunny morning, after a night of rain and roaring wind:—

On the moors  
The hare is running races in her mirth,  
And with her feet she, from the plashy earth,  
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,  
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

In scenes in which very little color is required Wordsworth often has effects of faultless beauty. As a characteristic example, we may take the little study in the last book of *The Excursion*:—

In a deep pool we saw  
A two-fold image: on a grassy bank  
A snow-white ram; and, in the crystal flood,  
Another and the same! Most beautiful—  
On the green turf, with his imperial front  
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,  
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful  
Beneath him showed his shadowy counterpart—  
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,  
And each seemed centre of his own fair world.

Shelley's style is the reverse of Wordsworth's. It is a style of glowing color, often boldly graphic. Shelley not only colors, but draws also, like a Master, as in the noble picture of the Hours in the *Prometheus Unbound*—the wild-eyed charioteers, with bright hair streaming, leaning forward in their cars to lash their rainbow-winged and flying steeds. As a landscape-painter Shelley is decidedly Turner-esque. He cares less for definite imagery than for general effects of light and color. His pictures vary through all the scale, from scenes of vast dim tracts,

Robed in the lustrous gloom of leaden-colored even,  
from wild waves lighted awfully

By the last glare of day's red agony,  
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,  
Burns far along the tempest-wrecked deep,

down to the light-dissolving star-showers of soft-breaking seas, or the green and golden fire of glow-worms gleaming at twilight from the bells of lilies.

But what chiefly separates Shelley's pictures from those of other poets is his amazing fine sense of tenderness of color. There is nothing equal to his

work in this respect; nothing that glows like it, yet is so delicate. Some of his effects stand quite apart. Take the description of a sunrise:—

The point of one white star is quivering still  
Deep in the orange light of widening morn  
Beyond the purple mountains; through a chasm  
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake  
Reflects it. Now it wanes; it gleams again  
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads  
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air;  
'Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow  
The roseate sunlight quivers.

The secret of this sort of coloring belongs to Shelley only among poet painters. We will take another of Shelley's pictures, this time a scene of sunset:—

Half the sky  
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,  
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew  
Down the steep west into a wondrous hue  
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent  
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent  
Among the many-folded hills—  
And then, as if the earth and sea had been  
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen  
Those mountains towering, as from waves of flame,  
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came  
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made  
Their very peaks transparent.

And again:—

The broad star  
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill;  
And the black bell became invisible;  
And the red tower looked grey; and all between  
The churches, ships, and palaces were seen,  
Huddled in gloom, into the purple sea  
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.

Browning has some wonderful descriptions of nature. There are very few poets who could challenge comparison with the splendid study of a sunrise in *Pippa Passes*:—

Day!  
Faster and more fast,  
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;  
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cap's brim  
Where spurting and supprest it lay—  
For not a froth-flake touched the rim  
Of yonder gap in the solid gray  
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;  
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,  
Till the whole sunrise, not to be supprest,  
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast  
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed  
The world.

Keats is the other great colorist. There is nothing even in the best of Chaucer and Spenser which can rival for a moment the gorgeous coloring in *Lamia*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and *Hyperion*.

The surest mark of a born painter is the tendency to think in imageries. It is not enough to tell us, for example, that a night is "bitter chill." Chilliness is an abstract notion; it must have form and substance. Keats sets before us a series of vivid frosty scenes:—

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass;  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.

Poetry is, indeed, the flower of literature. It may be said to be the only thing which is at once universal and immortal. Time devours every other monument of human thought. History becomes obsolete, doubtful, and forgotten. Sciences are changed. Religions die, and sculptures crumble, and paintings perish. But poetry, never fading, never dies. Homer's birthplace and the events of his life are unknown. Yet he and his characters live, breathe and act as freshly in his poetry at this hour as they did two thousand years ago.

Lucretius, the noblest Roman poet, went down to the dreamless dust twenty long centuries ago. The hearts that have leapt at his tale of Iphigenia would have marched ten thousand armies to her rescue. The matchless marbles of Phidias and his contemporaries are now but priceless fragments, but Catullus's lament for his dead brother sounds across the gulf of twenty stormy centuries, like a linnet's song in the pauses of the wind.

Across more than half a millennium of time and thousands of miles of space, across the far deeper abyss of thought and faith, of inheritance and aim, of art and language, the golden-mouthed Omar Khayyam, the Voltaire of Persia, still sings to our ears. Dante has been the supreme glory of Italy for some six hundred years. Shakespeare, the uncrowned king of literature, counts more subjects than all the Pharaohs, and commands a

more lasting allegiance than the Guelphs. The poets enhance prosperity, alleviate adversity, people solitude, and, like sweet flowers, adorn the humblest cottage and the proudest palace. To quote old Samuel Daniel:—

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

MIMNERMUS.

## Jehovah-Worship: Its Origin and Destiny.

THE religion of the heathen was from the first a general worship of the mind back of nature. They did not know that heat, light, magnetism, and gravitation are the cosmic forces, but they did have the conception of cosmic forces; and to these cosmic forces they attributed, as do many believers in the single cosmic force to-day, consciousness, intelligence, and will-power. They supposed—and in the then state of knowledge the supposition was most natural—that the sun, the earth, the ocean, the storm-wind, the thunder-cloud, and the forest-fire were the cosmic forces. Between personal being and intelligent force the distinction is inappreciable; and, since these were conceived as conscious forces, they were conceived as personal beings too. What if some of them wore visible forms? Their energy was known by their effects, and their conscious life was, to the men of that age, an obvious implication. Such beings were dreaded, wondered at, venerated, but not loved. Nor were they conceived to love. They were propitiated. Their favor was sought by prayer and praise and sacrifice. But between them and the puny tribes who concurred in worshipping them there was no personal bond. That was reserved for the tribal god—the superhuman chieftain who undertook to rule and guard and guide some special nation after he and they had chosen one another from among all the nations, and all the supposed superhuman spirits, inhabiting the earth. And such a spirit was Jehovah, the covenanted head of his people Israel.

That Jehovah was, as first conceived, merely as the superhuman chief of Israel, and afterwards came to be regarded as the greatest of the gods, and next as a god possessing power over all nations, and was, last of all, though still early in Jewish history, identified with the mind back of nature, is commonplace among the newer school of theologians. He was then called "Jehovah Elohim," and the creation story was tacked on to his name. This word, "Elohim," is generally translated "gods," or "God," but it is admittedly plural; and, though its meaning is reckoned uncertain, it is generally understood to mean "powers" or "powerful ones," and I think might very fittingly be translated "forces," so that "Jehovah Elohim" will mean "Jehovah, the cosmic forces," thus admirably expressing the new conception. But none have been able to determine who Jehovah originally was.

It has been sought to identify him with the sun; as if the sun could have its habitation on Mount Horeb, or even seem to be rising or setting on that Mount, which is situated to the south of Palestine. And it has been proposed, from his name "Yah," to identify him with Bacchus, the patron of the vine, which, "with all that cometh of it, from the kernel even to the husk," was abhorred by the devotees of Jehovah. The awkwardness of these guesses shows that the professors, notwithstanding their great erudition, are lacking in the imaginative faculty, for I think it can be rendered very probable that Jehovah was the Genius of Mount Horeb.

It is fortunate for us that the candor of the compiler of Genesis has preserved to us a very remarkable story, from which, in combination with other parts of his history, we can derive much information about the origin of Jehovah. But let us turn, for a moment, to Abraham.

Some modern theologians have discredited the existence of Abraham. Legends, no doubt, have gathered round his name, as they have round those of many other famous men; but that is no reason for doubting his existence, or the truth of the main incidents recounted of his career. Many a folk-lore tale clustered

round the memory of Charlemagne; many such tale has clustered round the memory of Boone, the pioneer of Kentucky; but no one questions their existence, and I see no reason for doubting the existence of Abraham, but for whom Jehovah would, probably, never have been known to us.

Abraham, we are told, was a wealthy pastoralist, who used to wander, as was the custom of his country, with his flocks and herds in search of fresh pastures. He was a wealthy man, and had shepherds and herdsmen, and three hundred trained warriors born of his own people, to guard his possessions from robber bands. He had a wife, long childless, and slave-women by whom he had families; for such families are not, in the ethic of those countries, deemed unbecoming in a righteous man. His residence, when we are first told of him, was in Chaldea; but he wandered thence, crossed the Euphrates, and migrated into southern Palestine. There he became acquainted with the local belief that a spirit of superhuman power and dignity dwelt on Horeb, a mountain in the peninsula which borders the north of the Red Sea, not far from Suez.

The spirit's name was "Yahveh," or, as we now pronounce it, "Jehovah." He seems to have been regarded as exercising authority over the neighboring district, if we may judge from his punishing the cities of the plain; and his worship was probably well-established, for we read that Jethro, in Moses' time, and the Rechabites, in that of Jehu, were worshippers of his, although neither of them came of the seed of Abraham. It would, therefore, be natural that Abraham should desire to secure the protection of this powerful being. But, whatever his motive, Abraham tendered his allegiance to Jehovah in return for his protection, and a solemn covenant was made between them in the form then usual in that country, by dividing the carcasses of animals in twain and passing between the pieces—Abraham actually passing, and a light also passing, which was supposed to represent the God.

But now let us turn back to the story to which I referred a short time ago.

The scene is laid in Mamre. It lies a little to the east of Hebron; and, though not in a direct line from Horeb to the Dead Sea, may have been a route generally taken, as a defile leads from it to En-Gedi, near the centre of the western shore. The sun glows with almost tropic heat, but the air is dry and clear. Sheep and cattle lie ruminating under the shadow of the rocks; the hillside is covered with tents; most of the inhabitants are within, but some lie dozing beneath the shade of a giant tree. Under the same tree is pitched the tent of the Master. There he reclines, musing on the land and gods he has left behind, and on his happy fortune in finding a friend as well as a sovereign in the superhuman governor of South Palestine; and wondering if, even at that sultry hour, some hard-pressed traveller may draw near to claim his hospitality. Suddenly he lifts up his eyes, and lo! three men are approaching.

Clad, we may well believe, in the garb worn by the anchorites of En-Gedi—a mantle of camel's hair thrown over the shoulders, a goatskin tied around the loins—they direct their course towards his tent. The foremost, of majestic mien, towers above his companions; his skin, as we may infer from the visions of the later prophets, gleams to the light like burnished bronze; his raven locks, whose growth no razor has ever checked, cluster down his back; his beard, long and luxuriant, waves in the wind; his mighty thews stand like bands of steel; his forehead, large with thought, shrouds those eyes which glow even as the sun when it shineth in its strength. The Patriarch runs to meet him. It is Jehovah, his Lord and friend, the personification of the desert solitudes. Bowing himself to the earth after the ceremonious manner of his countrymen, he exclaims: "My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let now a little water be fetched, and wash ye your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your heart; and after that ye shall pass on, for therefore are ye come unto your servant." And Jehovah and his attendants answer: "So do as thou hast said." And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said: "Make ready quickly three measures of meal, knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran unto the herd, and

fetched a calf, tender and good, and gave it unto the man-servant, and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them, and they did eat. And then Jehovah told Abraham the object of his journey. His messengers (for his attendants are frequently called messengers, the word being translated angels, from the Greek *angelos*, a messenger) had reported to him that the men of Sodom were sinners of exceeding depravity, but he was unwilling to rely on the report, and was going down to make a personal inquiry. And then Jehovah and his attendants continued their journey toward the cities of the plain, and Abraham accompanied them a part of the way, and afterwards engaged Jehovah in conversation while the attendants went on together. Jehovah ultimately "went his way," but it appears from the sequel that he relinquished his intention of personally visiting Sodom, and entrusted the decision of its fate to his messengers.

It is a wonderful story—wonderful not in its incidents, which were no more than probably often occurred in that country, but wonderful when we reflect that the chief actor was the God whom Jews and Christians and Mohammedans worship.

H. W. BOYD MACKAY.

—*Freethought Magazine.*

(To be continued.)

### Why Lightning Destroys Churches.

"WILL some philosopher explain why lightning so often destroys churches and so seldom hits saloons!" asks the *World-Herald*, of Lincoln, Neb.

In the first place, it appears to be an unwritten law that the more a building is exposed the greater the danger from the elements. Perhaps the church builders, in their anxiety to excel each other in the height of their steeples, have overshot the mark and rendered themselves liable to greater danger from the bolt of lightning than their more humble neighbors, the saloon keepers, who keep closer to the earth. Church steeples are probably as good marks for erratic and playful lightning bolts as any objects in the landscape, and from the standpoint of practical value to human-kind probably the most useless ever devised. Millions of dollars are piled up in these sky-scraping structures which might be profitably spent in homes for the homeless who are to be found in any large city. The money so thoughtlessly and uselessly employed is drawn largely from the pockets of hard-working people who are never able to purchase a home for themselves, but must ever pay a heavy tribute to landlordism for the privilege of living in poorly-constructed and ill-ventilated tenement houses. What are church steeples for? We are told they point to a higher life—to heaven. But Jesus taught, "The kingdom of God is within you." So the steeple is useless because it points the wrong way. If a steeple in Omaha points to heaven at midnight by noon of next day, it must point to a hotter climate, because the revolution of the earth has changed its position. If it points to heaven only half the time and hell the other half, better do without any steeple.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

### Euthanasia.

LET me not die in a room, shut out from the glories of Nature,  
Prone on a feverish couch and girt with horrible curtains!  
But when I go, may I die in the depths of shadowy wood-lands,  
Far away under the leaves that whisper a threnody o'er me!  
Looking my last on the Sun, setting blood-red far o'er the mountains,  
Flushing the sea with his flame as he sinks to sleep in the distance!  
Then, as the winds of the night uprising from mystical slumber,  
Singing a song of the old days, ringing me rest in the twilight,  
Oh! in a dream may I pass to the shore where spirits await me,  
Carrying there from the earth a picture never to vanish!  
This is the death that I crave, to pass on the wings of the night wind,  
Far away over the stars to the land of Infinite Silence.

—*F. B. Dovelton, in the "Academy."*

Grandmother (to Johnny, who is saying his prayers)—  
"And do you say your prayers in the morning, too, Johnny?"  
Johnny—"Of course I don't. Anybody can take care of him-  
self in the daytime."—*Sunday Herald.*

## Acid Drops.

DEAN FARRAR has selected the *Sunday Chronicle* of all papers in the world as the medium of publicity for a number of poor platitudes about Heaven and Hell. Or perhaps the *Sunday Chronicle* selected *him*, for we suppose the said platitudes were paid for at "high rates," as Deans don't write even soul-saving articles for nothing.

After the usual quotations—for Dean Farrar without quotations is like a fish without water—this painfully good man (with a good eye to the main chance) says that "no wealth, no splendor, no success, can bestow happiness on man. Nothing but holiness can make him happy." Of course, there is a certain element of truth in this, but the rest is sheer cant and humbug. Without wishing to depreciate the value of morality—which we daresay we prize as highly as any clergyman does—we venture to say that other things are also necessary to happiness, and that some of them must come first. Good food, good clothes, good shelter, good employment, good wages, good friends, and good society—these are some of the things essential to happiness; and, in a sense, they have nothing to do with morality or with immorality. They are material and social elements of happiness; or conditions of happiness, if that word is preferable. And this laudation of "holiness" as the cause of happiness is just one of the little pulpit tricks of the white-chokered gentry, who naturally represent their panacea as the only effective one for all the ills that flesh (or spirit) is heir to. "Don't value the good things of this life too highly," they say to the people, "but hand them over to us, in the name of the Lord."

The rest of Dean Farrar's article is a twaddly sermonette on the truth that happiness is heaven and misery is hell. But this truth is so obvious that no man in his senses would ever propose to pay anyone a salary for preaching it. Nor has it anything whatever to do with the doctrines of the Christian Churches. If it be true, as Dean Farrar alleges, that "to go to hell is not to go somewhere, but to be something," then hell is *nowhere*, and heaven must be in the very same locality. In other words, heaven and hell are simply happiness and misery in this world. And if that is *all* they are, Dean Farrar and the rest of his clerical brethren should close their shops and stop their business; for, in that case, it is nothing but rank imposture.

Bull-fights in France seem a trifle worse than those in Spain. One is reminded of the "ape and tiger" in Voltaire's bitter epigram on the mob of Paris. At Roubaix on Sunday there were lady—we beg pardon, female—bull-fighters in the arena, and lots of women and children amongst the spectators. The worst of it is that these disgusting spectacles are permitted by the authorities. And this in places where the Catholic Church is predominant. In Spain, of course, the priests attend bull-fights almost as regularly as they attend public worship; and when the women see the men of God there they conclude that the function is quite right and proper, and perhaps even religious. For, after all, Christianity is a religion of blood.

"Merlin," of the *Referee*, with the assistance of three other gentlemen, has been supervising a test *séance*, at which a lady Spiritist undertook to produce abnormal phenomena in conditions that made fraud well-nigh impossible. The result was that the conditions proved to be *too* strict. The lady could produce nothing but trivialities; and, finally, when her hands were in kamptulicon tubes, she could produce nothing at all. Accordingly the committee reported "That the medium has completely failed to substantiate her claim to the power to produce supernormal phenomena, and that the few trivial occurrences recorded, which were represented by her as being of spirit origin, were deliberately produced by her and by her only." This verdict might as well have been found without all the trouble of a *séance*. No medium was ever able to do anything wonderful under really strict test conditions. Mystery always lives in the borderland between fancy and credulity.

This *Referee* experiment was a waste of time in another way. It was given out at first that the lady medium was not professionally interested in Spiritism, but it transpired that she was really "a lady who had been intimately and professionally associated" with it for many years. Surely a falsehood like that was quite enough for any person of common sense. One who begins with a lie, and *such* a lie, is not worth a moment's further consideration. Mr. Maskelyne, the well-known (straightforward) conjurer, was wiser than the children of "scientific investigation." When he discovered the initial fraud he declined to have anything to do with the so-called experiment.

We have just been reading the greatest joke, so far, of the twentieth century. It will be remembered that the German Minister was murdered in Pekin, and that, by way of balancing that little account, thousands of Chinese men,

women, and children have been done to death, and thousands of Chinese girls subjected to outrage worse than death. It appears, however, that the balance was not struck accurately; and a Chinese Mission under Prince Chun is proceeding to Germany to offer an apology, which will make the odds all even. Really these Christians are the greatest jokers in the world, and we daresay Prince Chun appreciates the subtlety of their humor.

If Providence felt the least interest in the health of the Anglican Church in Victoria, poor old Bishop Goe would have been moved by the Holy Spirit to throw up his billet long ago. There never was such a long, unbroken failure in Melbourne's Episcopal gaiters.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The *British Weekly* is still disconsolate on the subject of modern criticism of the Scriptures. It says: "Certain conclusions about the Gospel have been judged by all who maintain them to be fatal to the historic creed. Someone some day may accept them, and be able to show that his predecessors and their antagonists were illogical; that certain critical views may be held in perfect consistency with a loyal faith in the great revealing Acts of God. But he must be prepared to show how this is so, especially at a time when Schmiedel, Cheyne, and others, frankly declare that the Incarnation and Resurrection of the Son of God are no longer credible. Every part of the Church Catholic must define its position, and defend it. The issue is old, and must constantly recur."

Now, is not this a very equivocal position for the Lord to leave his Holy Word in? He might have made better provision for his so-called "revelation," as, indeed, he might have made some different and better arrangements in regard to the world itself. But the pious idea seems to be to continue the acceptance of a book though admittedly discredited, as the idea is to pretend that this is the best of all possible worlds, when there are obvious evils from which humanity might have been spared.

"Priestley possessed that quality of mind which greatly helps the scientific thinker; he had the knack of doubting." So says the *Daily Telegraph*, which might also have said that the "knack of doubting" is equally necessary in theology as in science. It adds: "In the end Priestley's theological and political heterodoxy made the England that now boasts of him no place for him to live in. He found peace in America and honor in France. The great Cuvier pronounced his eulge before the National Institute. And so the world gets wiser."

The Free Churches, says the *Star*, have made an indignant protest against the indecent attempt to raise the wind for an Anglican Cathedral at Cape Town, under the pretence that it is a national memorial to the soldiers who have fallen in the war. The membership of the Free Churches in South Africa is overwhelmingly greater than that of the Anglican Church, and it is monstrous to get money for an Anglican Cathedral in this misleading fashion. As Principal Story puts it in his letter to the *Times*, the promoters of this "religious" edifice are trying to make gain out of our profound sorrow for our irreparable losses.

A gossip-writer in the *Hull Daily News* gives the following letter from a correspondent: "A few days ago I was chatting with my eleven-year-old boy, when he suddenly sprang upon me the question, 'Are there any animals in heaven, father?' I felt myself in a corner, but replied diplomatically: 'Well, sonny, I can't say for certain. Some people say there are, and others hold the opposite view. I think most people lean to the opinion that there are not, so perhaps it will be safest to vote with the majority, and say heaven is strictly limited to humans. But why do you ask such a question, laddie?' And then he answered innocently enough: 'Oh, I was only thinking of the hymn we sometimes sing—

Jerusalem the golden,  
With milk and honey blest;

and I was wondering where they got the milk and honey from if there are no cows and no bees.'"

The story reminds me, says the gossip, of a half-humorous, half-pathetic confession which I once heard George Macdonald make—that he was almost afraid to go to heaven, because he would certainly meet there an old and decrepit donkey, to which he had behaved not over gently in the days of his boyhood.

The Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, in his recent charge at Oban, makes some admissions which are worth reproducing. Speaking of Sunday-schools, he says: "But judged by the results, in the after lives of too many Sunday scholars, can we say that they have been permanently successful in anything like proportion to their prominence in our Church system? I fear not. I fear that some who have recently asserted that our Sunday-school system has proved a failure

have too much to say in support of their sad verdict. If it were not so, we should not see so many Sunday scholars, when grown up to be men and women, not only without any real interest in religion, but even ignorant of the main articles of the Christian creed."

The Bishop thinks that amongst other causes which have brought about these results is "the dangerous defect of giving to other things of secondary importance, such as *Old Testament history*, precious time and labor which should be given to the Gospel."

Here we may give as *apropos* the following from the *Sunday Companion*, which is in no way written with reference to Dr. Chinnery-Haldane's remarks, but happens to be a perfect reply: "Do you know that in the four Gospels of the New Testament there are no fewer than a hundred quotations from the Old Testament, and out of the hundred there are thirty-eight from the Pentateuch alone? The majority of the quotations are also made by Christ himself. If you take such a chapter as Matthew xii., you will find that our Lord quotes from Samuel, Leviticus, Numbers, Kings, and Jonah. So, if you are going to do away with the Old Testament, where are you going to put it? The two must stand or fall together."

The Bishop of Argyll, following up his observations on Sunday-schools, comments on unbelief, the extent and importance of which he does not hesitate to recognise. He says: "We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there are not only many, especially among the less educated, who do not know the articles of the Christian creed, but that there are many also among the better educated who, knowing them to a great extent, at any rate, deliberately set aside as incredible much that we hold to be essential to true faith in the Savior of the world. Such unbelief constitutes, in the opinion of some, the chief characteristic of the age in which we live. This is, perhaps, a pessimistic exaggeration. Nevertheless, we must confess that, side by side with much increased earnestness of faith and holiness of life, there is, at the present day, a vast amount of definite unbelief. There are, in fact, many who, in other respects, differ little from ordinary Christians, and yet who could not be spoken of, in any true sense, as Christians by conviction."

Dr. Chinnery-Haldane observes, a little further on in his charge, that "after all such unbelief is as old as the Christian faith itself." But then still later he says: "Yet, after all, the only new thing about modern unbelief is that now, under new circumstances, it presents itself to men's minds in new forms and with new results."

There seems to be a sufficient amount of "newness" about this. One does not see how the Bishop could reasonably expect more.

Mr. Joseph Hatton has two paragraphs in his "Cigarette Papers" relating to the author of the *Age of Reason*, whom he calls Tom Paine. Perhaps Joe Hatton doesn't mean anything by this familiar, and not quite too respectful, style, for he is usually very liberal-minded and gentle in his description of men and things, and perhaps has only followed the vulgar and common fashion of describing the great writer of whom the Church is afraid to this day.

Mr. Hatton has been wandering about Sussex, and he says: "I had no idea that Tom Paine (whose works were 'terribly taboo' in the more orthodox days of forty years ago) ever lived at Lewes until I came upon a curious old house in a passage-way off the main street, signalled by a grotesque carved figure, and on the front a record of the fact that Tom Paine had lived there as 'exciseman and tobacconist.' Just now, when a French invasion of England is discussed in Parisian papers, and the French Revolution is notably once more in evidence in our own literature and on the stage, Tom Paine may well serve for a passing text. It is curious that flying from England, welcomed by France, and promoted to citizenship, he should have become an object of persecution at the hands of Robespierre. Paine at the trial of Louis XVI. proposed what Madame de Stael declared 'would have done honor to France if it had been accepted'—namely, the offer to the King of an asylum in America. This offended the Mountain party, and in 1793 Robespierre caused Tom Paine to be ejected from the Convention (on the ground of his being a foreigner) and thrown into prison."

After referring to the fact that the *Age of Reason*, or at least the first part, was written in prison, Mr. Hatton says: "My friend, Mr. Moncure Conway, who is almost as well known in London as in New York, was engaged for many years in writing a life of Paine. These are not the days when large and serious works receive much attention from the reading public. It is possible that Mr. Conway's book has been published in London, though I have not yet seen it."

If Mr. Hatton wishes to know more about Thomas Paine, we may mention that Mr. Moncure D. Conway's work, *The Life of Thomas Paine*, consisting of two handsome volumes,

has been published in America, and could be obtained through the Freethought Publishing Company, 1 Stationer's Hall Court, E.C.

A preacher, named Charles E. Hayden, intimates that the recent severe drought in the West was due to the anger of the Lord, because farmers last year ran threshers on the Lord's day. We have no intimate acquaintance with the Lord, and, for all that we know, the Rev. Mr. Hayden may be right. If the accounts given of God in the Bible be true, it does not take much to make him angry. It may possibly be that he is indignant because some preachers disturb his peace in these hot days.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

A man was arrested in New York for wrapping up a package on Sunday. Another man was arrested on the same day for sharpening a razor. They were both discharged by Magistrate Flammer.

The Rev. George E. Hancock, of Asbury Park, N. J., was stricken with paralysis while preaching, and died soon afterwards.

"What Convicts Read" is the heading of an article by "A Prison Visitor" in a religious contemporary. The literature provided, according to this visitor, does not seem to be marked by much variety. Certainly there is nothing to indicate that judgment is exercised in its selection. Devotional books predominate—for which "blessing" the convicts no doubt are indebted to the prison chaplain.

The "Visitor" mentions a man who was under a life sentence, and who deeply resented the tone of Richard Baxter's *Saint's Everlasting Rest*, which had been handed to him to read. "The passage which he showed me," says the writer of the article, "certainly deserved his censure, if judged by the milder views of more modern theologians.....Standard works of biography and devotion are to be found in prisoners' cells. Amongst the latter I found a High Church manual, which informed the criminal that to have attended any service but that of the Church of England was a sin to be repented of. How this narrow sectarian volume gained admission to the prison library I have not discovered. Perhaps the chaplain might be able to solve the problem. But, though he can get biography, devotion, and ethics of a sort, the convict, like his free brother on the right side of a prison, generally prefers fiction."

As illustrating the selfishness amongst fashionable church-goers, a recent writer mentions that an incumbent of a proprietary chapel in Mayfair ventured to ask a single woman, who was the richest member of his congregation, whether she could not manage with fewer than three footmen under her butler, and give the cost of the discarded John to a fund for the sick and poor. Disdaining to submit to priestcraft in any form, the good woman "removed her hassock" and discontinued her subscriptions. The incumbent, no longer able to meet the expenses of the chapel, was forced to resign, and is now meditating on the dangerous consequences of allowing religion to invade the sphere of private life.

The abandonment of grace before meals in smart society, and the cessation of family prayers, are also commented on by this writer, who repeats a good story which Bishop Wilberforce used to tell of a greedy clergyman, who, when asked to say grace, looked anxiously to see if there were champagne glasses on the table. If there were, he began: "Bountiful Jehovah!" But if he saw only claret glasses, he said: "We are not worthy of the least of Thy mercies."

There is still some dissatisfaction expressed by the King's chaplains that they are expected in future to wear the royal cipher on their scarves, and a special button on their waistcoats and dress-coats. We do not see why they should object to this partial form of livery. They are servants of the State as long as there is an Established Church, and, in addition, most of them are sinecurists with a lofty notion of their own importance not at all justified by their abilities. They are Court flunkeys, and should properly be labelled as such.

Even in countries said to be free it is in vain to look for that freedom which violates none of the natural rights of man, and which secures indefeasible possession and uncontrolled exercise. On the contrary, the liberty existing there, founded upon a positive right unqually shared, confers upon an individual prerogatives greater or less, according to the town which he inhabits, the class in which he is born, the fortune he possesses, or the trade he may exercise. In these countries, however, civil and personal liberty are guaranteed by the law. If man be not all that he ought to be, still the dignity of his nature is not totally degraded; some of his rights are at least acknowledged; it can no longer be said of him that he is a slave, but only that he does not yet know how to become truly free.—*Condorcet*.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 1, 8, 15, Athenæum Hall, London.

September 22, Manchester.

September 29, Glasgow.

### To Correspondents.

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts in reference to lecturing engagements, etc., 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.

C. W. JEKILL.—Pleased to hear from one who has for years been "delighted," as you are good enough to say, with our writings and lectures.

H. THOMSON.—See acknowledgment elsewhere. We are glad to number many good friends in Scotland.

D. CURRIE.—We believe it is a Protestant calumny that Cobbett was paid by the Catholics to write his *History of the Reformation*. His fault was on the side of egotism, not on the side of dishonesty. He was, in our opinion, quite incorruptible. Besides, the calumny is no answer to the book. It is one-sided, no doubt; but it puts that side, and it is an important one, with much power and lucidity. Cobbett was really a great writer, though with very decided limitations.

THREE OXFORD FRIENDS.—Thanks for the kind letter accompanying your donation to the Fund for Mrs. Foote.

G. L. and J. BRADSHAW.—May all your good wishes be fulfilled.

M. CHRISTOPHER, the Wolverhampton veteran, sends a donation to the Fund for Mrs. Foote "with best wishes for you and your family and your brave husband."

GREEVES FISHER writes: "I agree with you that full publicity is the best course of killing those half-truths which are whole lies. I am very sorry, however, that Mr. Anderson has gone wrong so terribly."

A. JOHNSON (Dewsbury) says the London Freethinkers don't seem to have done their duty by Mr. Foote in this crisis. "They get the full benefit of his presence," he adds, "and we rarely see him about here." Perhaps the latter fact may be altered.

EMMA BRADLAUGH, the late Charles Bradlaugh's sister, is grieved to hear of our trouble, and "cannot think what has caused so cruel a mistake on Mr. Anderson's part," but feels that we must "gain in the end."

H. L.—See acknowledgment elsewhere. It is pleasant to find friends in what the Bible calls the ends of the earth.

DR. E. B. FOOTE, junior, of New York City, sends a donation to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, and writes: "Here's my personal expression of sympathy for you, and evidence in testimonial to Mrs. Foote's benefit. I hope you will be sustained, not 'held up,' in your continuous performance for Liberal propaganda." *Liberal*, we may add, is a common synonym for Freethought in America.

F. GOODWIN.—Glad to hear you found our reply to J. G. Bartram last week such "pleasant reading." We note your trust that this will be a financial turning point with us, the dispersal of false friends, and the commencement of a new era of happiness—which you say should be ours.

WILLIAM PLATT, subscribing to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, writes: "I await, and every honorable man will expect, Mr. Anderson's full explanation; failing which, the moral condemnation of him will be a very severe one."

W. C. WADE, honorary secretary of the Metropolitan Radical Federation, writes: "Allow me to say that I am very sorry that such a splendid champion of Freethought as Mr. Foote has proved himself to be should be brought to the humiliation he is undergoing. I hope that the people whom he has the right to regard as his friends will rally round him."

A. C. BROWN says that the Freethinkers who cannot give much at a time should send a weekly subscription, however small, as long as the Fund remains open; as this correspondent intends to do.

ARTHUR BROOKE.—Glad to hear you have "received benefit" from our writings.

H. LEIGH.—Yes, every little *docs* make a muckle, but lots of Freethinkers, as well as other people, forget it when it might usefully be remembered.

W. W.—It is pleasant to find one's writing appreciated. After all, one writes to be read, and not simply for money or amusement.

V. PAGE hopes something will be done to remove the possibility of the present trouble occurring again. He would gladly subscribe his mite towards a regular yearly salary for the N. S. S. President.

J. G. BARTRAM.—See this week's list. We regret the omission in last week's, and are quite unable to account for it.

E. TREHARNE-JONES says: "I regret to think that Mr. Foote has been subjected to persecution by one who might have been expected to be his friend." He insists on contributing to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, although we are sure that his own position must be one of considerable difficulty, if not of positive hardship. To refuse his subscription would be an intolerable insult. It must therefore be accepted. When we are clear of the present trouble we will see what we can do to promote Mr. Treharne-Jones's work in South Wales. He has something of the heroic in his composition to face the world as he is doing.

R. C. says: "It is a great pleasure to be able to do something to show my appreciation of your good and noble fight for the cause of Freethought. My only regret is that I am unable to send pounds instead of shillings."

J. BEAZER.—You say it would be a bad day for you if the *Freethinker* went down. But it isn't going down. Never fear.

C. A. W.—Your third donation is duly acknowledged. You have done your part, anyhow. Some have not sent once.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Sydney Bulletin—Truthseeker (New York)—Boston Investigator—Torch of Reason—La Raison—Public Opinion (New York)—Two Worlds—Freidenker—Discontent (Washington)—Progressive Thinker—El Libre Pensamiento—Liberator (Melbourne)—Hull Daily News—Secular Thought—Times of India.

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.

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

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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

## How It Goes Now.

### And the Death of Robert Forder.

RETURNING home from my holiday at the seaside, with my wife and children, I had to take a cab from Holborn Viaduct Station. For the first time in my life I allowed my own bag to be placed outside the cab, and that very time it was stolen. The top of the cab was protected by a deep railing, so that the bag, which was not a light one, could not have fallen off in the street. Some thief must have stepped up behind and "lifted" it; a thing which is easily done, as I satisfied myself by actual demonstration before the cab left my door.

Whoever the thief was, his profit was very much less than my loss. He must have felt that he never had such a nondescript haul before. The bag contained all the letters I had received for three weeks, with a number of memoranda of no importance to anyone but myself. There were also some books that I had been reading—not much in the thief's line, I suspect; including Mr. Dadson's book on *Religion and Evolution* and Mr. Gould's on *The Early Christians*, which I had marked for reviewing in the *Freethinker*. Postal orders and stamps to the value of about £2 were in an envelope, with one crossed cheque for £1; but these, with the exception of the stamps, will probably be of little use to the "lifter." The bag was filled up with an odd collection of things, such as are stowed away at the last minute before travelling; combs, brushes, soap, etc., and a hand-mirror of no value at all as metal, but beautifully chased by my wife's father, who is well known in the trade as an artist in that kind of work. All this, however, is by the way. The point for my readers is that my letters and papers have disappeared. Most of them were dealt with, but I wished to preserve them all, and I am sorry to lose those friendly and sympathetic communications. A few letters were unanswered. I had reserved them until my return to London. And as I cannot answer them now, I have to ask the writers' indulgence. Those who desire replies will perhaps communicate with me again.

Amongst these letters was a very friendly one from the assistant editor, during the present summer, of the *Boston Investigator*. I do not recollect his name, but he said that he met me when I visited Boston nearly five years ago, and that he and the editor (Mr. Washburn) deeply sympathised with me in my present trouble. He said it was very hard that I should be persecuted by a wealthy Freethinker, but the life of Freethought leaders was never an easy one, and I appeared to have had

more than my share of bitter experience. It was saddening, he added, how little support wealthy Freethinkers gave to their own cause, when one reflected how the shekels rolled in to all the fakirs and charlatans of the various superstitions. As for Mr. Anderson—well, I do not remember this gentleman's exact words, but they were distinctly uncomplimentary.

I promised last week that when I returned home, and had access to my books, I would reproduce in the *Freethinker* a fine passage which I recollected in Emerson—a passage which, I thought, expressed the essence of such a quarrel (if I may call it so) between myself and Mr. Anderson. Here it is:—

"One man's justice is another man's injustice; one man's beauty, another's ugliness; one man's wisdom, another's folly; as one beholds the same objects from a higher point. One man thinks justice consists in paying debts, and has no measure in his abhorrence of another who is very remiss in this duty, and makes the creditor wait tediously. But that second man has his own way of looking at things: asks himself which debt must I pay first, the debt to the rich, or the debt to the poor? the debt of money, or the debt of thought to mankind, of genius to nature? For you, O broker! there is no other principle but arithmetic. For me, commerce is of trivial import; love, faith, truth of character, the aspiration of man, these are sacred; nor can I detach one duty, like you, from all other duties, and concentrate my forces mechanically on the payment of moneys. Let me live onward; you shall find that, though slower, the progress of my character will liquidate all these debts without injustice to higher claims. If a man should dedicate himself to the payment of notes, would not this be injustice? Does he owe no debt but money? And are all claims on him to be postponed to a landlord's or a banker's?"

To the merely commercial mind this will sound unintelligible, or like rank and damnable heresy. But the merely commercial mind is not the be-all and the end-all of human intellect. Shall I cry aloud to the universe because a man owes me five shillings, when I have not paid to him, and to a hundred others, the debt of consideration and humanity which I owe them? Mr. Anderson has fixed his attention on the five shillings, to the exclusion of everything else; whereas, by a more generous calculation, he might have reckoned that I was paying him over and over by my constant service to Freethought. Technically, I was in business; but virtually I was never so. I was always an apostle, and the publication of the *Freethinker*, and of various books and pamphlets, was a material accident in my career. Money was necessary, and I had to find it. But I made no false pretences. I stated the object, the nature of the investment, and the character of the security. Whoever helped me was really helping the cause. I was merely the agent of its promotion. And if I have "sacrificed" anyone, I can plead that I have never hesitated to sacrifice myself. What, I may ask, is Mr. Anderson's £200 to my one year's imprisonment? To a wealthy man the loss of £200 is nothing that he can feel. He only knows it as figures in a book. But the loss of my year was a very different matter. It was not a mere figure in the book of my life. It was not simply an announcement that I had one year less to live. It was a positive deprivation. It was also a positive infliction. I had to feel every month, every week, every day, every hour of it. And although I have not been to prison since, I have "deserved" it, as the Christians might say; in other words, I have not allowed bigots and persecutors to deflect me a hair's-breadth from what I considered the line of my duty.

Let me tell Mr. Anderson, too, and all whom it may concern—since this publicity is *forced* upon me—that the struggle to live in our party is not quite so hard as it was when I was a young advocate; and that the change is, to some extent (at least), due to my own action. I have made it somewhat easier for others to follow the road I trod, by encouraging and helping them as well as I could; putting work and what remuneration was possible in their way. The memory of my own struggle did not embitter me; it only made me more sympathetic towards other strugglers. But in my younger days there was little of such assistance going. I resolved that I would devote my life to the Freethought movement and make my mark in it. I counted the cost and I paid it. And I do not complain now,

any more than I complained then. But the way was very hard—sometimes nearly *too* hard. I knew what it was to wonder where my next meal was coming from. Occasionally I had to say to my beloved books, "Some of you must go: which shall it be?" And I said "Not you, and not you," until a last I seized a few at blind hazard, and hurried them off to a bookseller's to obtain the wherewithal to purchase food. What is Mr. Anderson's bit of money to this? Merely the penny in the tamborine to the life of the soldier facing the enemy's rifles at the front.

General surprise is expressed at the comparative insignificance of my indebtedness to Mr. Anderson, and one person has generously surmised that Mr. Anderson "let me down easily"—meaning, I suppose, that he could have sued me for a much larger sum if he had chosen. But this is very great nonsense. I have challenged Mr. Anderson to say, if he could, that he ever advanced me, or gave me, any other money than he is seeking to recover. I repeat the challenge. Without using unparliamentary language, I desire to put the question in the most provocative way. I say it would be a *lie* to assert that there were *any* monetary transactions, of any *kind*, between Mr. Anderson and myself, except those which he made the subject of litigation. Surely that is plain enough. And if I am not contradicted, it is simply because no contradiction is possible. Letting me down lightly, forsooth! What an odd idea in the case of a man who claims £167 interest on a principal balance of £200! For it must be remembered that this claim is still pending.

Mr. Anderson certainly did advance me £10 to register the Secular Society, Limited, when I was at the end of my own resources. But I stated this in the *Freethinker* at the time. And I subsequently paid the money back. Mr. Anderson instructed me to pay his first year's subscription for him. This I did. Afterwards I paid him the balance of £9 10s. Fortunately I kept a legal record of the fact, for his solicitors actually applied for the amount again when he let them loose upon me. That is all Mr. Anderson has ever done for the Secular Society, Limited. He praised it as a scheme, he complimented and congratulated me, and he did—nothing. Had he *donated* only one of the *fifteen* thousands he has lately been *offering*, he would have helped me and my colleagues to revolutionise the organisation and propaganda of Freethought in this country.

Nothing (by the way) has been heard from Mr. Anderson with respect to the call made upon him by the Board of Directors of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, to take up the Shares he publicly promised to take in that enterprise. He has had plenty of time to reply. His solicitors have been furnished with the information they requested as to the Shares subscribed by the original allottees. But not a word has been heard from them since. Was their application, then, only a trick? I know not, and I care not. Their *client* is my concern. I ask *him* whether he has any reply to the call made by the Board upon his sense of honor. If he has not, I will leave it to the Board to address him in another fashion. But, for my own part, as the person whom he authorised to announce his promise, I intend to clear myself of all moral responsibility by telling him in the plainest language what I think of his broken pledge and his calculated silence. And if he thinks that what I say is libellous, I may have a chance of bringing the whole question before the attention of a jury in a court of justice.

I give Mr. Anderson another week to answer the Board's call. If he does not speak by then, I will; and I will see if I cannot make him speak too.

In the meanwhile I have to say that negotiations are still going on for the redemption of my home. By the time I next address my readers I hope the matter will be settled—at least, as far as the Official Receiver is concerned. Whether it will be entirely settled in other respects, depends upon the continued response to my appeal on behalf of the Fund for Mrs. Foote. I do not wish this Fund to be kept open indefinitely; therefore I beg all who have not yet subscribed, but mean to do so, to lose as little time as possible in forwarding their contributions.

The fuller statement of my affairs can very well wait for another week, or until a settlement has been concluded with the Official Receiver. I want a little space

this week for another subject, in connection with which I have had to interrupt my ordinary business.

The old-time Secretary of the National Secular Society, Mr. Robert Forder, is dead. For a long while he had been ailing, and his death was not unexpected. In the end it came as a happy release. He was buried at Finchley Cemetery on Tuesday afternoon. There had been but a slender opportunity of advertisement, yet a goodly number of London Freethinkers assembled round the grave. Amongst them were Miss Vance, Mr. Cohen, Mr. C. Watts, Mr. Fagan, Mr. Baker, Mr. Davey, Mrs. Henderson, Mr. Caisey, Mr. Quay, Mrs. Standing, and old personal friends like Mr. W. H. Reynolds and Mr. R. O. Smith. I am sorry I cannot give a longer list of names, but I am writing in a great hurry on returning from the funeral. At the request of the family, I delivered a brief address at the graveside. A wish was expressed that it would appear in the *Freethinker*, but I spoke quite extemporaneously, and had no one at hand to take down what I said. None of us can afford to be judged by our last hours of decrepitude and decay. It is just to speak of a man as he was in the days of his strength and activity. Mr. Forder had the honor of being associated, in his degree, with the hardest struggles of one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century—the late Charles Bradlaugh. That was in its way a proud distinction. He never was Charles Bradlaugh's private secretary, as I see it reported; but his services were at the hero's command during the long Northampton struggle. It was only fitting that the N. S. S. Secretary should work without stint for the leader of English Freethought when he was vindictively opposed in the political world on grounds of religious prejudice. Mr. Forder retired from the N. S. S. Secretaryship soon after my accession to the presidency. I had the pleasure of raising a testimonial for him, and it was in aid of that testimonial that Charles Bradlaugh delivered his last lecture. I was in the chair, and I suppose I shall remember the event as long as I live. It was a bitter, foggy, winter night, and Charles Bradlaugh looked desperately ill. He ought to have been in bed, but he regarded the call as imperative. So the giants stand up fighting to the end. Mr. Forder became honorary secretary to the N. S. S., and held that office until it was abolished some two years ago. He published (or rather sold) the *Freethinker* for me for many years, and would probably have continued to serve the Freethought Publishing Company in the same way, but his health broke down, and he became a wreck and a ruin. Never strong, though always surprising his friends by his tenacity of life, he seemed to go all to pieces after the death of his wife—over whose grave I spoke at his request. I could see that the hand of fate was heavy upon him then. The two boys who stood weeping by their dear mother's coffin were at the graveside on Tuesday. They are now fatherless and motherless, but they have loving relatives and a good old grandmother (on the mother's side), who has been their guardian angel. They are nice, bright lads now, and I hope they will always recollect that in the former days of his vigorous manhood their father was a brave soldier in the war of human liberation. G. W. FOOTE.

#### The Fund for Mrs. Foote.

C. W. Jekill, 2s.; H. Thomson, £1; D. Kerr, 5s.; Three Oxford Friends, 10s.; W. Robinson, 5s.; G. L. and J. Bradshaw, 4s.; A. Johnson, 2s. 6d.; E. Treharne-Jones, 10s.; Greeves Fisher, 10s.; M. Christopher, £1; F. Goodwin, 7s. 6d.; Dr. E. B. Foote, Jun. (New York), £4; R. Trenaman, 5s.; H. L., £2 2s.; Stamps, 1s.; Emma Bradlaugh, 2s. 6d.; H. W. E., 13s.; An Irishman in London, 10s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Tom Shore, 10s.; William Platt, 10s.; T. Bradshaw, 5s.; Hyde Park, 5s.; W. Wade, 5s.; Mrs. Henderson, 5s.; C. J. Blackburn, 5s.; F. Schaller, 5s.; J. Strachan, 3s.; W. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Seneca, 6d.; East London Branch, 10s.; H. Barrett, 10s.; H. S. Ashford, 5s.; F. Stevens, 1s.; Dr. W. A. Savage, 5s.; W. Cromach, 5s.; V. Page, 2s. 6d.; E. Thursby, 2s. 6d.; W. Lancaster, 2s. 6d.; Varley, 1s.; Newcastle Branch, 10s.; Arthur Brooke, 5s.; Govan Friends, per H. Leigh, 5s.; W. W., 1s. 6d.; R. Goodwin, £1; R. C., 10s.; C. A. W., 2s. 6d.; J. Beazer, 2s.; H. Garthwaite, £1 1s.; A. N., 2s. 6d.; A. B. Moss, 10s.

#### Sugar Plums.

LONDON Freethinkers are requested to note that Mr. Foote will reopen the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, September 1, at 7.30, when he will deliver an address which will probably be of considerable interest to all the members and friends of the National Secular Society.

Owing to the pressure of circumstances, one subscriber to the Fund for Mrs. Foote was rather unceremoniously treated in our last issue. "Mrs. Baker, £5," should have been "Mrs. Daniel Baker, £5." This lady is the widow of that universally honored veteran, the late Daniel Baker, of Birmingham. On her own account, likewise, we have always held her in the highest esteem; and we prize her sympathy, quite independently of her support. Mrs. Baker is now very aged, and unable to get out of doors, but her mind is still bright, and her interest in Freethought is undiminished.

Iakoff Neumann Wolfe has published in pamphlet form an open letter to the editor of the Birmingham *Daily Post*. The first portion is correspondence in that paper on "A Vindication of De Wet." In the latter portion there is a reference to Birmingham institutions, including the Central Free Libraries and News Rooms. The writer says: "There is one religious paper which I could not find there—the *Freethinker*—a paper which I came across by chance some time ago. With me and the *Freethinker* it was a case of love at first sight. It is a very good paper, and I have great pleasure in recommending it to everybody. The only way, however, to procure it is to shove your hand into your pocket and disburse twopence. They have a so-called Suggestion Book at the Library. I intended to suggest that the *Freethinker* be taken in, but concluded it would be a waste of labor and ink on my part. It is no use suggesting such ungodly things; they will not have the *Freethinker* for love or money." The pamphlet may be obtained at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

*Secular Thought* (Toronto) reproduces Mr. Foote's article on "Measuring Ingersoll," after the conclusion of Mr. Gould's article on "Ingersoll: Agnostic, Critic, and Prophet."

Mr. H. Percy Ward holds a public discussion on Sunday and Monday evenings, August 25 and 26, in the Market Square, Northampton, with Mr. T. Burton, who represents the Birkenhead Christadelphians. The question for debate is, "Is the Bible a Divine Revelation?" Ex-Councillor F. O. Adams is to take the chair both evenings. Should the weather be unfavorable, the meetings will be held in the Lodge Room of the Temperance Hall.

Mr. A. B. Moss has been enjoying a trip to Belgium in company with Mr. W. Heaford. On Sunday he resumed his Freethought work in London, lecturing in Finsbury Park in the afternoon to an excellent audience, and in the evening to another good audience at Edmonton. Mr. Moss reports that the outdoor propaganda has been more than ordinarily successful this summer.

Our American brethren are at loggerheads over the "finances" of their Secular Union. We never thought these were large enough to quarrel about, but it is always hard to prophesy the ground of the next difference. Our sympathy, however, goes with those who stand by the ship. Resigning is a lofty sort of a word, but generally it simply means running away. The men who stay to face the music may have their faults, but they are the only ones to be depended upon. We suggest to our American brethren that they should combine to fight the common enemy.

#### Nobility.

It is not that the mountains make the men,  
In solitary grandeur, but apart—  
The towering hilltops can but serve to start  
A sleeping nobleness to life again.  
The great-souled natures find their province when  
They join the toilers in the street, the mart,  
Their honest, rugged sturdiness of heart  
Kindling responsiveness unstirred till then.  
For such is not the narrow, binding creed,  
Nor struggle to excel at others' cost—  
The bickering selfish strife to win who can.  
On them the Pharisaic cult is lost:  
Theirs is to seek and help the crying need,  
To stir in all the majesty of man.

—Frederick William Memmott.

Men will be more moral when they learn that morality does not rest for its authority upon arbitrary edicts thundered from the skies, but that its foundation is the experience of mankind as to what is best for man.—Robert C. Adams.

## Parallel Bible and Heathen Myths.

MANY a myth of surrounding nations was revamped and made to do service as a Jewish production; while Christian writers tell us these ancient tales were borrowed by heathen from the Jews. Reverse this statement, and investigate in that direction, and the reader is startled to find the warp and woof of all the great Bible stories are found in Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and frequently in Babylonian mythology. Sometimes several incidents widely separated by space and time are woven into a single legend.

The Church tells of a Golden Age which preceded the Fall, and which it is going to restore when Jesus returns to earth to reign a thousand years.

Hesiod, the Grecian poet, contemporary with Homer, some B.C. 900, wrote of the Golden Age in these words:—

“Men lived like gods, without vices or passions, vexation or toil. In happy companionship with divine beings, they passed their days in tranquillity and joy, living together in perfect equality, united by mutual confidence and love. The earth was more beautiful than now, and spontaneously yielded an abundant variety of fruits. Human beings and animals spoke the same language, and conversed with each other. Men were considered mere boys at a hundred years old. They had none of the infirmities of age to trouble them, and when they passed to regions of superior life it was in a gentle slumber.”

This happy condition of mortality was, unfortunately, terminated by the unwise action of the first woman, and because of her inquisitiveness, not because of her seduction by a serpent. Zeus gave to Ephimethus a beautiful woman to be his companion, and with her a vase, which he was commanded to keep closed. In that vase were stored all the blessings reserved for humanity. Curious to know the contents, Pandora raised the lid, and away flew the treasures; but she clapped it down just in time to prevent the escape of Hope. This has remained to the race ever since in place of real happiness, and will continue, without reference to a crucified God, to redeem the race from its fallen condition.

As the thief disfigures his stolen goods, hoping thereby to escape detection and punishment, so the Bible-makers, who plundered heathen myths, reconstructed, altered, and adapted them to suit their own purposes, stripping them of all their original simplicity and beauty, at the same time ascribing their paternity to God, instead of to the persons to whom the credit of their production belongs.

Take, next, the inscription in cuneiform characters on an earthen slab found at Nineveh, now in the British Museum:—

“I am Sargon, the mighty king of Accad. My mother was a princess; my father I knew not; the brother of my father dwells in the mountains. My mother conceived me in the city of Azupiranu, which is on the bank of the Euphrates. She brought me forth in a secret place, and placed me in a basket of reeds. She closed my exit gate with bitumin, and gave me to the river, which did not drown me. The river carried me along to Akki, the irrigator. In the goodness of his heart he lifted me up, reared me as his own son, and made me his gardener. Istar loved me. For forty-five years I ruled the kingdom. I governed the black-headed race. Over rugged mountains in chariots of bronze I rode. I governed the upper and the lower mountains. Three times I advanced to the sea; Dilmun submitted; the fortress of the goddess Hades bowed.”

The quotation is found in Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures*, English edition, pp. 26, 27.

Now turn to Exodus ii., and read the story of Moses and the bulrushes. The last verse in chapter i. has the usual direction, to cast the son in the river, but save alive the girl babies.

He who reads this Bible account without prejudice cannot fail to see that the author of this Exodus story, with access to the Alexandrian Library, where the literature of all surrounding nations was stored, adapted the account which King Sargon told of himself, changing the location from the Euphrates to the Nile, and thus laid the foundation for the adventures of Moses.

Then follows the story of Minos receiving the law through a cloud, he standing on Mount Ida, from the

hand of Zeus, the auxiliaries added to increase the interest.

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the adventures of Lot and wife, as told in Genesis xviii. 20 to verse 30 in chapter xix., has its parallel in Grecian mythology. We quote:—

“Zeus and Hermes came one time in the form of men to a town in Phrygia. It was evening. They sought hospitality, but every door was closed against them. Finally they reached a humble cottage where dwelt Philemon and Baukis, his wife, both far advanced in years, by whom the travellers were received. Their best was set before their celestial guests, whose quality was revealed by the miracle of the wine-bowl being spontaneously replenished as often as it was drained. They told their hosts it was their intention to destroy the godless town, and desired them to leave their house and ascend the adjacent hill. The pair obeyed; but ere they reached the summit they looked back, and beheld a lake where the city had stood.”

Here was the original story as found in the Alexandrian Library; but the Bible-makers, they who compiled the Septuagint, located the event around the Dead Sea in Palestine, and “The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.”

Poseidon, the Grecian Noah, had communion with Iphimedia, the wife of Aloeus. Two sons resulted. When nine years of age they were nine ells in height and nine cubits in breadth. They menaced the heavens and prepared to pile Ossa on Olympus, and Pelion on Ossa, with the purpose of scaling heaven. Apollo killed them before the down had grown on their cheeks.

Was the story of Babel, the confusion of tongues, and the scattering of the people to prevent their scaling heaven, as told in Genesis ix. 4 to 10, based on this fable?

There are numerous accounts of rivers dividing on the approach of armies, that advancing warriors could pass on dry land. As he who relates the last story usually excels in piling Pelion on Ossa, so the dividing of the Red Sea and overwhelming Pharaoh and his pursuing army beat the world in miracle. But the idea was an old one when the Pentateuch was compiled.

Joshua bidding the sun to stand still, and it obeying him, has its parallel in one of the plays of Euripides, wherein Electra says:—

Indignant Zeus  
Bade the bright sun backward move.

This play was written 450 years before our era, and unquestionably was on file in the Alexandrian Library 170 years later, when the Septuagint was compiled.

And, strange as it may seem, the episode of Potiphar and Joseph has its exact counterpart in the case of Bellerophen, who was accused by the wife of Proteus.

The adventures of Samson are only adaptations from those of an Assyrian god credited with great strength. He was known to the Phœnicians as Melkarth, whom the Greeks identified with their Hercules.

Jephthah's daughter, as told in Judges, sacrificed to God on a vow, has an almost exact parallel in the sacrifice of Idomenus, a king of Crete.

Jonah is only an adapted Grecian story, the hero in the latter case being an Atheist, in consequence of which he angered heaven, and brought on himself direful results.

—Progressive Thinker.

## To a Sunday-school Teacher.

DEAR MISS X.,—It gives me great pleasure to hear from you, and to be assured that you are quite well. But it deeply grieves me to hear that a portion of your Sunday is devoted to minding infants in what is termed a Sunday-school. You will observe that I say *minding* infants, for I defy anyone to truthfully assert that anything calculated to be of lasting value is *taught* in Sunday-school. Do you know why the children are sent to these places? Let me tell you. Because the parents are glad to avail themselves of an opportunity to be rid of the children for an hour. They know the youngsters will return when school closes, and that is all they care. But the parents overlook the fact that their children are learning nothing useful or improving. Evidently, Miss X., you were not aware of this, or your leisure would not be given to taking care of other people's children while the parents are very likely enjoying a quiet nap. Of course, the clergy are

pleased to have you every week; it makes the work they are paid to do so much easier for them. Perhaps you think it nice to be referred to as "teacher"; yet, if you reflect a moment, you will agree with me when I assert that a "teacher"—who, by the way, is essentially an instructor—must have a stock of prepared and peremptory knowledge that must be synonymous with the welfare of those to whom it is imparted. And yet, in common with yourself, many young ladies who are engaged at various occupations six days out of seven rise on Sunday to the eminence of "teachers" (save the mark!). May I impress upon you that the authority exercised by such pseudo-teachers is fraught with great danger to the children upon whom it is exercised? Positive knowledge and useful information do not flow from the sources of superstition. While I hope this letter will dispel any delusion existing in your mind, I hope you will review the matter calmly and logically. Do not be an instrument in the grasp of Error, but endeavor to prevent the priests and other vultures, who batten upon ignorance and credulity, from preying upon the innocent little children. The priest knows full well that in the child lies his only hope of capturing the man, and his plans are made accordingly. All knowledge that will tend to make the child develop into a useful member of society, that will teach discretion, and, above all, truth, is the knowledge that is sound and requisite. It is not to be obtained at church or chapel, nor from the usually non-intelligent species of female, most anomalously termed a Sunday-school teacher. Your emotions have led you to think that your endeavors are of benefit to the children, whereas you are in danger of doing childhood an irreparable injury, for which nothing but your own delusions, and the unsatisfactory nature of the stuff you are instrumental in imparting to them, can ever be made responsible.—I am, my dear Miss X., yours very truly,

FRANK HALL.

## Correspondence.

### MONISM OR DUALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The answer to Mr. Jones's first paragraph follows as the necessary corollary of the answer to his second. Thus—the postulation of morality involves the admission of the *subserviency* of natural conditions to mental activities. Such a power of selection over nature must necessarily be postulated as an *original* "gift" in the sense of its concomitance with man's whole existence as a morally responsible being; while—consistently with the theory—the act of prayer would itself be a moral act in the sense that it would involve the due appreciation of this power of initiative in the recognition of its nature or source.

This hypothesis Mr. Jones himself well illustrates in his sixth paragraph. He would hardly think of attempting to "induce, by advice and example, a fellow-creature to 'amend his ways,'" unless he were convinced of his fellow-creature's power to determine his own conditions. Indeed, he asks: "Do not my advice and example, and the knowledge of the benefits accruing to me through the *plan of life I adopt* [mine own italics], influence the will of my fellow?" No one would give advice unless he thought that his fellow-man had full power to use it; nor could any man follow another's example in the adoption of a plan of life except it were that in both of them there existed—superior to natural differentiations—a fixed and definite criterion. A man's "advice, example, and well-doing" cannot constitute the environment of another man and be "a part of nature's forces." Mr. Jones goes so far as to state "He is morally bound to adapt himself to 'play' of these forces [that is, the "*inevitable laws and blind forces of nature*,"..... *Together with the forces that are not 'blind'—viz., mental activity*"], and when he runs counter to them he acts immorally, and suffers the inevitable consequences of so doing"; and yet sees fit to ask also "where, or how, would moral responsibility come in but for the existence of these laws and forces [*the "inevitable laws and blind forces of nature"*] (mine own italics)?" Exactly! Where, or how, would the grinning Cheshire cat come in but for the operation of natural forces as summed up in certain *purely natural* phases of human development; or, for the matter of that, where, or how, would "immorality" come in? How could we apply this theory of a power to bring ourselves into harmony with, or run counter to, favorable external forces, or to act in opposition to inimical external forces, to our activities as due to a series of mechanical motions of the molecules of environment? Do such cosmical processes as the attractions and repulsions of atoms and the oscillations of molecules account for human activities? If so, there is certainly no moral responsibility in *their* existence. Mr. Jones is quite right; I do object to Mr. Ball's assertion "that the inevitable laws and blind forces of nature *produce and maintain* moral responsibility."

Mr. Jones proceeds: "'Volition,' Mr. Kingham says, 'can only exist as causal.' Can he cause a ditch by 'willing' to leap over one?" Now, it may be as well to remind Mr. Jones—for he seems to have forgotten the meaning of his own preceding paragraphs—that, seeing that the term "volition"

is only applied to human activities in regard to *resulting conditions*, the question is not as to whether I can "cause a ditch by 'willing' to leap over one"—whatever that may mean—but as to whether the leaping over, etc., is the effect of my "willing." Is my "resolve" to overleap the ditch the factor in my getting over, or is it the conditioning of my past experience as applied according to the dimensions and condition of the ditch, and other opportunities of the prevailing circumstances, that determines the nature of the results? Does not Mr. Jones think that, *so far as he would be concerned*, his own convenience would, in such an instance, be the factor which would go to contribute to the building of a bridge? Does not he think that the size and state of the ditch, as applied to his locomotor capabilities, together with other circumstances, such as his ability or inability to obtain materials to make a rude bridge *to get himself over*, would be *rather* important factors in determining as to whether another man should either wade through the mire, jump, or have a bridge to take him over? Would it be likely to strike Mr. Jones that a bridge was necessary if the ditch happened to be from six to eighteen inches wide, or if he could get round it with ease? And if the ditch were very large, the mud deep, and the means to make a bridge not within reach, would he think it right that he should be called "immoral" for not doing so? Indeed, as to "*the fact of the ditch being there*" causing my "*resolve to overleap it*," or causing me "*to perform a moral act—viz., to throw a rude bridge across the ditch so as to enable another man, who cannot perform the feat of leaping it, to cross without wading through the mire*" [mine own italics]—if Mr. Jones's illustration applies all round, there is no such condition as human *action*, but it is all *reaction*, and it would be just as logical to postulate the initial in the ditch, or in any other part of the cosmos, as to attempt to prove "will" by showing that a certain individual produces an effect *through* his correlation with certain external factors. I ask, where does the will or the morality come in in doing only what circumstances will allow me to do? How is it possible to prove the existence of volitional agencies in a system of mechanical causation? If "there is no such thing or force as 'free-will,'" there is no such thing as any man adopting a "plan of life" or selecting a line of action. How can a man "amend his ways" if he is not free to *cause* his own actions, or carry out a "resolve" if he simply reflects his environment's?

T. W. KINGHAM.

### THE "FREETHINKER" AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have been a subscriber to the *Freethinker* for some considerable time, and have derived much instruction and pleasure from the reading of its philosophical dissertations; and, while I appreciate the prominence given in it to abstract truth, I venture to offer one or two observations, with all due deference to the editor, on its attitude to religion, which certainly, from the standpoint of policy, is an attitude that militates against the popularity of the periodical considerably. I am aware, of course, in matters of truth and fact, principle should supersede policy; but this attitude to religion, I have reason to believe, also has a tendency to cause the non-acceptance of the periodical by many advanced thinkers.

To offer opposition to religion *per se* is, in my opinion, a very questionable proceeding. Life is principally composed of the impressions of facts and ideas. Music, art, poetry, and religion do not set forth facts, and, consequently, are not fit subjects of examination on strict logical grounds. They express abstract ideas, such as harmony, beauty, grandeur, simplicity, repose, rest, peace, hope, and so on. These ideas, of course, are subjective, and belong to the world of fancy. But life would be intolerable without the images and sensations this world of fancy supplies. Personally, I do not believe in God—in the concrete; God in the abstract I do believe in; and I am of opinion that the God-idea is a very serviceable and necessary one. Crude in expression undoubtedly in the early stages of man's development; but, like all other ideas, destined to become more and more ideal as knowledge increases. Philosophy is the attainment of abstract truth by way of the reason. Religion is the presentation of truth in the concrete more or less ideal, employing the accessories of art, music, symbolism, and other means of stimulating the imaginative faculty—a faculty which has its place and power in life as essential as that of reason, and with which it can be contrasted, but not compared. Religion has been, when wisely used, of much real service to the young, who cannot be expected to grasp abstract truth. And since there are inevitable experiences of life common to many of us—*viz., in seriatim*, the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive—some respect should be shown to those who conscientiously follow their intentions, some of whom are progressive, others unprogressive, through no apparent fault of theirs, and to whom such words as the following, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee," bring comfort, rest, and peace where other means fail. Words such as these, of course, only refer to an idea or thought held subjectively in the mind. But Spinoza has affirmed that extension is but visible thought, and thought is but invisible extension—in other words, ideas or thoughts are things, and things constitute the stamina of life.

M. STARK.

## 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.): Re-opened September 1.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11, S. Lorsignol, "Modern France: Ethical Forces at Work."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible as a Guide."

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, J. W. Cox; 6.30, E. Pack.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, J. W. Cox.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, E. Pack.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, E. White, "Conflict between Religion and Science."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "The Soul."

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY: 7.30, R. P. Edwards, "Blasphemy."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Can Religion Live?" 3.30, R. P. Edwards, "A New Religion."

REGENT'S PARK (near the Fountain): 6.30, E. White, "Conflict between Religion and Science."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Holy Bible"; 7.15, W. J. Ramsey, "God's Holy Word."

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, S. E. Easton, "The Plague."

VICTORIA PARK: W. Heaford—3.15, "God and his Saints"; 6.15, "Belief and Blasphemy."

KINGSLAND (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Thomas Paine."

### COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Capt. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, "Federation Schemes: Old and New."

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