

THE Freethinker

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I have concluded to pursue my own course, to tell my honest thoughts, and to have my freedom in this world, whatever may be my fate in the next.—INGERSOLL.

The Paris Congress.—II.

THE "banquet" on the Eiffel Tower was part of a reception given to the Congressists by the French Freemasons. We all paid three francs, however, as I have said, for our tickets; and the "banquet" consisted of what an Englishman would call "cold meat and pickles," with a bit of cheese thrown in, and wine. Some paying guests got a superfluity of cold meat in front of them, some got a superfluity of wine; so that things required a good deal of adjusting, and the crush did not make it easy—for there seems to have been more tickets sold than there were places for the banqueters. Altogether, it was rather a chaotic function; and the worst feature of all was that the company were scattered over several "halls" instead of being under one roof, as they might have been if the function had taken place on the ground-floor of the world somewhere in Paris. Of course the oratory had to be split up as well as the company, and this did not improve matters. Now and then, indeed, I half fancied I was on the first floor of the Tower of Babel.

Some of my correspondents have expressed surprise at Freethought Congressists being entertained by Freemasons. They evidently do not know that Freemasonry in France is different from Freemasonry in England. Charles Bradlaugh, in becoming a Freemason, had to join the Grand Orient of France. In England he would have had to declare his belief in the Architect of the Universe—whose plans, by the way, never had to pass the supervision of representatives of the persons concerned. Freemasonry is under the ban of the Catholic Church in Europe. It is no wonder, therefore, that the printed address to the Congressists on the back of the *menu* welcomed them as fellow workers in the cause of liberty and humanity. A special address by Brother J. B. Morin, vice-president of the Order of the Grand Orient of France, contained a paragraph declaring that Freemasonry and Freethought both had for ancestors in antiquity, and for protagonists in modern times, all the philosophers, all the thinkers, and all the scholars, who refused to bow their intelligence under the yoke of authority, and always boldly affirmed that, in order to guide men along the often arduous roads of civilisation and progress, it is only necessary to illuminate their path with the light of reason.

Coming out from the hot places where the "banquet" had been spread it was pleasant to breathe the cool fresh air, and to look out over the lights of Paris. A veritable fairy scene was spread out below us. After enjoying it for a while, we

were glad to escape from the crowd and descend to *terra firma*. Two or three of our party, who did not admire the "banquet," and the struggle to get to it, had descended earlier, and regaled themselves with what they called "a decent meal." I suppose the real truth was that the function was too big for the Committee's power of organisation. No doubt they did their best, but the circumstances were against them. The Eiffel Tower was one of the most inappropriate places that could have been selected.

Amongst the orators on the Eiffel Tower there was none to represent Great Britain. We heard that one gentleman had spoken as having "a mandate" from British Freethinkers, but he certainly had no such mandate, and the Congress Committee must have been misled.

IV.

The next morning (Monday) the Congress opened at the Trocadero, which had been specially engaged, no doubt at a very considerable cost. But the resources of the Congress Committee could not have been despicable. We paid five shillings for each of our N. S. S. contingent of thirty-five members, and if all the Congressists paid the same amount a good deal of money was handled—for the number was said to be about three thousand. A charge of from five francs to half a franc was made for the tickets of admission to the boxes and the big gallery. These, of course, were taken by the general public—or rather by the general body of Freethinkers in Paris.

We understood that there was to be a real scrutiny of delegates' credentials, but there was nothing of the kind. As we presented our delegates' tickets, a man perched behind a raised desk glanced at them and said "Porte K." That was all. Nobody shook hands. Nobody said, "How are you?" All the "brotherhood" we met with was in the speeches from the platform. Not that our French comrades did not mean well. We are quite sure that they did. Only they did not think the thing out, and the business arrangements were deplorable.

The morning sitting of the Congress was chiefly an entertainment. Capital in its way, and very enjoyable, but hardly what Freethinkers had come from east, west, north, and south for. There was music, and a recitation, and a dramatic selection. The big Trocadero organ poured forth a majestic volume of sound in accompaniment to the spirited singing of two choirs—one from the Opera, and one from the Maison du Peuple at Brussels. Mlle. Roch, of the Comédie-Française, who was billed to recite a poem by Leconte de Lisle, chose instead a telling piece of Victor Hugo's, which gave full scope to her fine powers of pathos and declamation. Another important piece was some "fragments" from Molière's *Tartuffe*, rendered by Mlle. Delvain and M. Jacques Fenoux, both of the Comédie-Française. M. Fenoux's noble voice and histrionic faculty did

justice to the immortal scene in which Tartuffe discloses the carnal nature of his passion for the lady of whom he is the spiritual director. How I afterwards wished that some of the orators had taken lessons from him in voice management. Never for a moment did he rave; passion thrilled in his voice, but did not disorder it; and every word, even the gentlest and subtlest, was distinctly audible in the farthest corners of that vast building. I enjoyed the treat immensely. But was it what I expected at an International Freethought Congress?

V.

The list of "orators" for the opening ceremonies contained a rather cryptic reference to M. Anatole France—one of the greatest names in present-day French literature. I should have been delighted to see and hear him, but he did not appear, and I suppose he never engaged to. Another "orator" was Mr. Mangasarian, of Chicago. I expected to meet him again at Paris, but the pleasure was denied me. I could not discover that Mr. Mangasarian was at the Congress at all. Nobody I asked had seen him. Perhaps he had to return to America sooner than he expected when I met him in London in June.

Haeckel was on the printed list of "orators" but he was not well enough to attend; which was a cause of universal regret. Mr. William Heaford, publicist, was down to speak for "Angleterre." We saw his name in print again and again as the representative of England. Yet the Paris committee, if they had taken the trouble to look through the lists of delegates representing Freethought societies in England, could easily have seen that Mr. Heaford was not one of them. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner was also down for "Angleterre." She spoke for two or three minutes in a small voice which we had difficulty in hearing. I gathered that she congratulated the Congress on the presence of so many women in its midst. Mr. J. M. Robertson, who was not on the printed list, also spoke for "Angleterre." His speech was brief, audible, and to the point; but he was far from being in his happiest vein. Both he and Mrs. Bonner spoke in English, which only a few Congressists understood, and perhaps the conditions were not inspiring. The best speech, for matter, was that of Manuel Ugarte, the delegate from Argentina; the best speech, for style, was that of a full-blooded negro, who spoke excellent pure French and was a real master of platform expression.

How those who spoke for "Angleterre" were appointed we could not ascertain. But the responsibility must rest with the Paris committee, and to a certain extent with M. Furnémont, the secretary of the International Freethought Federation, who knows something of British Freethought, and who had been told by Mr. Roger what was the actual state of things. The "brilliant delegation" (as the Paris secretary had called it) of the National Secular Society was entirely ignored; and we were too proud to join in a scuffle for any kind of "honor." We thought, however, that we were entitled to recognition, and we resolved to do something that might put an end to such an unsatisfactory state of things, without causing a public scandal. Accordingly we drew up and signed the following formal protest:—

"The delegates of the National Secular Society of Great Britain, which assisted at the birth of the International Freethought Federation, and has been associated with it ever since, beg to express their profound dissatisfaction with the unbusiness-like methods of the Inter-

national Freethought Congress generally, and in particular with the absolute inattention paid to its delegation at Paris as before at Rome; moreover, the delegates are astonished at the way in which persons are put forward by the Congress Committee as representing British Freethought, some of whom have no representative capacity whatever; they consider, therefore, that the question has arisen whether the representatives of English Freethought are to be appointed at London or at a foreign capital; and, as they cannot connive at an undemocratic policy, they feel that they must, with all due respect and good wishes, refrain from taking any active part in the present Conference proceedings; hoping, however, that something will be done to organise future Congresses on a sounder and more useful basis."

This formal protest, signed by the N. S. S. delegates, was placed on Tuesday morning into the hands of M. Furnémont. Mr. Roger, who took it in and presented it, found M. Furnémont surrounded by a crowd of Belgians, who were loudly protesting against the way in which the business of the Congress was conducted. But it had not occurred to them, as it had to the Britishers, to draw up a dignified protest, and stand by it.

Soon afterwards M. Furnémont came up to us and said that he had arranged, early in the morning, for Mr. Foote to be the "President of Honor" at the afternoon sitting. He hoped this would smooth matters over, and made quite a personal appeal to me to accept the arrangement. But it had to be explained to him that the question involved was not a personal one; it was a question as to the proper conduct of business, and I could not think of dissociating myself from my colleagues. The protest had been delivered, we meant it, and it would have to stand. By adhering to it we should help to clear the ground for better business at future Congresses. M. Furnémont was sorry, but he admitted that our attitude was dignified; and we, on our part, admitted that both at Rome and at Paris he had been a much-tried man, suffering for the faults of others. We assured him of our personal respect and good will, and wished he had more, rather than less, power over the Congress proceedings. And, although we did not intend to take any active part in the Congress, we wished it success, and should continue to "assist" in the passive sense of the word.

Mr. Joseph McCabe, on behalf of the Rationalists, and two gentlemen on behalf of the Ethicists, had approached us with a view to electing two British representatives on a kind of Agenda Committee. We told them of our protest and declined to participate. Then they brought in their friends and began proposing and seconding. If we had stayed we could have swamped them with our superior number; we preferred to do something better, we walked away; and they were too well-advised to elect two representatives themselves.

Mr. McCabe said that he and his Rationalist friends would join in terminating what they considered the "scandal" of Mr. Heaford's standing forward as "the representative of Great Britain." We replied that the Rationalists had themselves created the "scandal." They used Mr. Heaford for their own ends the previous year, and stood behind him as "the English representative." The N. S. S. was quite strong enough to terminate the "scandal" without help from those who now wanted to throw him aside like a sucked orange.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

God and Man.

It has been often pointed out that, while the Bible says much of the duties of children to parents, it says little or nothing of the duties of parents to children. Yet the former is small in comparison to the latter. No child asks to be born. It is brought into the world by no act or wish of its own, and all the duties and all the responsibilities are primarily on the side of the parents. It is not necessary to my present purpose to ask why this prominence is given to the duties of children to parents and the reverse ignored; it is enough to note that it is a general feature of primitive societies. And as the form of religion follows closely the condition of the social State, so it is that there is the same prominence given to the duties of man to the gods, and no attention to the duties of God to man. And this is *not* limited to primitive societies; it is common to all. Indeed, the very suggestion that God—if there be one—owes duties to man, at the side of which man's responsibilities to God must be insignificant, would even to-day be treated as blasphemous; while a lecture entitled "What God Owes to Man" would certainly be regarded as a wanton outrage on religious susceptibilities.

There is no very great difficulty in explaining the persistence of this one-sided emphasis. The causes are both anthropological and economic. All the religions in the world have been born in ignorance and fashioned by fear. Man obeys his gods, primarily, because he is afraid of them. The gods represent, in the main, adverse forces that have to be placated by some means or other, and the first care is to see that everything is done that may keep them in good humor. In other words, the feeling of responsibility to the gods is born of the belief in the power of the gods to punish, and is not derived from purely ethical considerations. The rise of a priesthood gives us the economic aspect of the phenomenon. The priest is the representative of the god; he is the spiritual tax-collector, and it is to his obvious advantage to maintain a lively sense of man's responsibilities and duties towards the deity. The economic interest of the priesthood leads its members—sometimes consciously, but more often, perhaps, unconsciously—to insist upon all that strengthens their position or furthers their interest; and this can be accomplished in no better way than by keeping alive a sense of man's duties to his assumed Creator.

The fact that these motives operate, very often, unconsciously prevents most people recognising their existence; but now and again one comes across a piece of religious writing or a sermon that, quite unintentionally, makes all plain. At this sort of thing there are few prominent clergymen more proficient than our present Bishop of London. A more cultured man or a more profound thinker might have the same thoughts occur to him; but he would be struck by their weakness or by their crudity, and they would never find expression. The Bishop is, however, burdened by few encumbrances in the shape of either genuine culture or real ability, and it is seldom that a religious plea is too crude for him to give it voice. For this we, as Freethinkers, ought to be truly thankful, and treasure him accordingly. Whether Christians have equal cause for gratitude is an open question.

Is there, for instance, another dignitary of the Church who would emphasize God's generosity to man and man's duty to God in this manner?

"Think of God's wonderful generosity. He makes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust. You hear a man.....deny the existence of God, or, granting his existence, denounce the character of God; and yet God says nothing, and does nothing. He goes on feeding that man, and blessing him, allows him to enjoy the glorious air and sunshine, not willing that any should perish. Think over the patience and generosity of God. Why are we alive at all? Why are we here enjoying the glories of this summer morning? Just

because of the generosity of God. He was perfect in himself, quite complete, but He wanted to have so many millions of people sun themselves in the happiness He enjoyed. And, therefore, He said, 'Let there be light!'"

Well, now, one wonders what on earth the Bishop thought might have happened or ought to have happened to the man who denied the existence of God, or who admitted his existence but denounced his character? Did he think such a person ought to be struck by lightning, or otherwise "providentially" punished? And if so, why? Is it so very generous of God not to strike a man dead because the man is unable to recognise his existence? If Jones told Robinson he didn't believe Brown existed, would Brown be considered generous because he did not straightway break Jones's head with a brickbat? Why, a man who did this would only escape imprisonment as a criminal to be confined as a lunatic. Yet the Bishop is surprised that his Deity does not act in either capacity. Of course, we can all agree that God does nothing and says nothing; this is the one plain fact, the one piece of common sense, amid a mass of nonsense—and that is there quite by accident. But, as God is equally silent in other directions, there is no reasonable cause for surprise at his silence in this particular instance.

God does nothing to the Atheist for his Atheism! There is almost a regret in the Bishop's words. It would be so much more convenient, for parsons, if some signal and unmistakable instance of divine displeasure occurred to those who have common sense and courage enough to protest against this imposture of religion. But how times have changed! The literature of Christianity simply teems with stories of those unbelievers who have been blinded, paralysed, or killed for their unbelief. While I write there lies (in a double sense) before me a little book containing *three hundred* "veracious" instances of people being struck blind, paralysed, struck dead, etc., for just these offences. But this was published several generations ago. To day a God who went around dealing out blindness and death in this manner would arouse disgust instead of reverence. And so Bishop Ingram discovers that God does nothing and says nothing—not but what, if occasion demanded, he would not be equally ready to discover instances of "divine" action in this very direction.

Why should man be thankful for God's generosity? Or to put the question in another form, Is God generous to man? On the Bishop's own showing the mere fact of man being brought into existence can call for no gratitude. It was for God's pleasure that man was created. The quite perfect and complete deity felt that he needed something—to make him more than complete, apparently—and for this reason he created human beings. Very well, then; man was created to satisfy God; and having been created, man has a distinct and legitimate claim upon the Being who brought him into existence. And this claim is, in a sentence, that having been created by a Being of infinite wisdom and power, matters should have been so arranged that to each individual there should be guaranteed the same happiness that each parent would guarantee his child had he the power.

But what are the facts? Large numbers of people, having been brought into the world to share in the happiness of God, pass their lives in greater or less misery. They are so ill-made mentally—according to the Bishop—that they cannot even recognise that there is a God, or if they do, cannot see the proof of his goodness. They are born blind, and cannot hear the music of nature; crippled, and cannot wander about in those fields for which the Bishop is so thankful; dumb, and cannot raise their voices to join in the praise that we are told is so imperative. Men and women are born cursed with hereditary diseases, or to suffer under social ills they have had no hand in creating. Their nature is so ill adapted to an ideal society that in all our arrangements, social, economic, and legal, allowance has to be made for the moral and physical faults of the human organism. And these faults are not accidental, but are part and parcel of the whole "plan of creation." If there is

any "plan" at all these are part of that plan; and the originator must stand responsible for the whole.

In strict and sober truth it is not God's generosity to man that need excite wonder. Our surprise ought to be at man's generosity to God—at the way in which man has overlooked the blundering of Deity, and the extent to which he has lavished gifts upon him. From the earliest times man has showered wealth, praise, and service upon his deities. He has given them his best and dearest. And in return they have, as Bishop Ingram with unconscious perspicacity admits, done nothing and said nothing—nothing, that is, of service; but they have done much to injure and retard. Whenever man has moved a step forward some god or other has been found blocking the path. If God really exists, then man's history has been largely a series of attempts to correct his bungling or to remedy his injustice. And if there ever comes a judgment day, it is certainly not man that has any reason to fear the ordeal. For his proper function will be, not that of a suppliant, but that of an accuser charging his Creator with either deliberate cruelty or criminal neglect.

C. COHEN.

"Doctrine and Theory."

THE above is the title of the tenth in the current series of "Essays for the Times." Its author, William Barrett Frankland, M.A., Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, is a young man of considerable intellectual acumen, and his essay is an exceedingly spirited plea for Faith as against Reason, for God and his Providence as against Law and its inexorable Reign. Philosophically Mr. Frankland is a thorough-going Idealist, while theologically he figures as a brave champion of Revelation and Belief. Indeed he seems to have quite a voracious appetite for such fare as the Bible supplies. And this must of necessity hamper him in the "search for the highest and deepest and broadest truths." Mr. Frankland comes to the fray as a partisan of the Church, not as an independent, unbiased inquirer. He declares that, whatever happens, Doctrine must not suffer loss. Theory may appear true to the human mind; but if it contradicts Doctrine it must be rebuked and suppressed.

By Theory Mr. Frankland means Science, and by Doctrine Christianity in its supernatural aspects. He admits that the two are bound to be in collision at several points, and speaks of "the rivalry that can never fail to exist, in this life, between Reason and Faith." He contends that Faith is higher and nobler and more authoritative than Reason, and consequently, in every case of conflict, ought to prevail. Such a contention is in the highest degree illogical and absurd. Not a single fact known to us can be cited in justification of it. Nor does Mr. Frankland even seek to justify it except in the name of Faith.

As an Idealist Mr. Frankland does not believe in the reality of the physical Universe. Visible matter is only a phenomenon, a sort of shadow cast by the invisible and immaterial Reality. Scientists, therefore, deal with appearances merely. "At best, atoms (or ions, as the units of matter are coming to be) and ether are both completely unreal. They have as much claim to reality as an algebraic equation; that is to say, mental and not physical, subjective and not objective. Indeed, 'the interpretation' of phenomena in terms of matter and motion, that is to say, atoms and ether, energy and stress, is carried out in terms of entities as unreal and unexperienced as the square root of minus one. All physical theory, with its mechanical view of Nature, is a scheme, and nothing but a scheme, as truly as a Government Blue-Book of Trade Statistics." Mr. Frankland declares that it is impossible "rightly to know the world of 'matter,' if it is interpreted as the nest of impossible, unexperienced 'ether' and 'atoms.'" Hence he condemns the mechanical view of the world as wholly false and

fundamentally misleading. He quotes Hermann Lotze as exposing the "hollowness of scientific theory," and as showing "the mechanical view of the world for the unreal thing that it is."

Idealism, however, is as purely theoretical as physical science; but it differs from physical science in that it has no facts to support it. Science treats the Universe as if it were real. What things are in themselves apart from what they appear to us to be, we have absolutely no means of knowing. We cannot distinguish between "objects-for-themselves and objects-for-us." There are positively no data upon which any distinction of the kind can be established. Matter and force may be but attributes of Eternal Substance; but it is not unreasonable to suppose that as attributes they possess reality. Even common sense assures us that the world is objectively real; and what common sense assumes Science confirms. It is Metaphysical Philosophy, not Science, that subsists on dreams and fancies and speculations.

Mr. Frankland tells us that "the essential features of a theory are that it shall agree with known facts, that it shall continue to agree with fresh facts coming under observation, and that it shall agree with the body of accepted theories, so as to contribute to a constant whole." Well, let us take the theory of Evolution, and it will be seen that it answers to that description. In his Address as President of the British Association, Professor Darwin declares that the most recent experiments show conclusively that Evolution is a thoroughly successful working hypothesis. Science, then, knows the Universe only as existing and working, as a machine governed by mechanical laws. Suns and planets come and go; life-forms are subject to endless variations; and of the Universe, in this state of constant flux, man forms a part, being himself the product of the process of evolution. This is the mechanical view of the world which Science offers for our acceptance, but which Hermann Lotze and Mr. Frankland reject with scorn.

Let us look at it more carefully. What is wrong with it? Does it not agree with known facts? Are there any facts that contradict it? Mr. Frankland condemns it simply because it is out of harmony with the teaching of the Church. He admits that it is the best account of the Universe that the human mind can give, but contends that since it undermines the Doctrines of Grace it must be denounced. It is only a theory, he observes, and a mere theory "has no right to usurp a throne which belongs to a Doctrine, the Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God." Science proclaims the theory of the Universality of Law, and as a theory Mr. Frankland has nothing against it; but "it must not be allowed to traverse the doctrines of the Providence of God and the Efficacy of Prayer and the Gift of Grace. Whatever man's outlook on the world, whether cosmos or chaos confront his vision, these Doctrines must remain the guides of life. Whether he seem to see uniformity or variability in Nature, the Christian is to consider himself the object of the tenderest care ready to enwrap his daily life in protecting folds of Mercy and Grace." And yet Mr. Frankland prides himself upon being a logician! The theory may be perfectly true; but we must bear in mind that "the Doctrine cannot brook contradiction or interference from any theory." The Uniformity of Nature may not be a false theory, but "the Providence of God is a true Doctrine." Surely this reasoning would do credit to the best University training conceivable! And it improves as it progresses: "The theory belongs to the best understanding of the world that man's mind can reach. The Doctrine belongs to a Revelation, once beyond the grasp of the intellect, now placed within the reach of mind and heart."

Mr. Frankland does not even attempt to prove a single one of his extravagant assertions. He is an unadulterated dogmatist, whose air of infallibility would be highly amusing were it not so fraught with mischief. Supported by Hermann Lotze and Father Waggett, he indulges in the most outrageous observations. In Science nothing is beyond question. "The theories of the Conservation of Matter and

the Conservation of Energy appeal to the mind very forcibly"; but they are not undeniable. They are postulates assumed, not axioms. The Uniformity of Nature and the Universality of Law are not absolute. There are exceptions to them, such as "Miracles." Mr. Frankland finds no difficulty in believing in miracles. "A man may, in fact, be as perverse as he pleases in his pre-judgments! But logic is an open court. And by no legitimate logic, or logic that would be generally admitted to be valid," can Mr. Frankland prove that miracles have ever happened. To the Atheist belief in miracles is impossible, and he would be justified in saying, "Miracles cannot happen." This may be an unscientific phrase; but it is not "a wilful and futile postulate of the practical materialist," as Mr. Frankland and Father Waggett describe it. It is well known that Professor Huxley repudiated the phrase. Mr. Frankland proceeds: "Still more amazing and pitiful is that wanton and fallacious appeal made by the author of *Literature and Dogma*: 'Miracles do not happen.' The assertion is unfounded, and therefore in its basis untrue." Do miracles happen? The essayist must be aware that the *onus probandi* rests on those who say they do. All we aver is that the evidence for the miraculous as yet adduced is by no means convincing. Mr. Frankland offers no proof whatever.

The essayist treats Reason with but scant courtesy. He admits that it is "infinitely precious, if it holds its due place"; but the place he assigns to it is pretty low down:—

"Being based on reason alone, and upon the less assured part of experience, the mechanical view cannot claim to satisfy men's needs. The Uniformity of Nature and the Universality of Law are theories, the work of the unaided reason. Only reason can, therefore, be satisfied with them. And reason is only one factor or phase of personality. Will and Love, for instance, are independent of Reason, and higher in rank. The will and the affections may follow reason's dictates, or they may not. They contribute more than reason to the perfection of personality. So reason must meet with rebuffs in striving to have the dominion over them, whilst ignoring them in her work."

Again:—

"The old philosophers divided man into mind and matter, and then insisted upon the entire superiority of mind. Despite their aspirations and exhortations, the purely intellectual view of life is not the highest and truest and best. First and foremost, man is a *person*; and reason is not the most precious of the endowments of personality. So the old-time intellectual despotism tholes us a view of life which is partially true and altogether unsatisfying. Theory selfishly cares only for the mind's ambitions, and reckons nothing of the soul's yearnings. But Doctrine aims at the nourishment of every part of man's nature."

This is an old argument freshly stated; but it is as fallacious and misleading now as ever. Reason is the queen among the faculties of the mind. Her rightful place is on the throne. Unguarded by her all the other faculties are apt to lead a man astray. Love is blind and often proves fatal when unchastened by the intellect. Unreasoning affection has been the utter downfall of many a man and woman. So, likewise, when Faith overrides reason, all sorts of superstition abound. Mr. Frankland's superstitions are exceedingly numerous. He believes that "*this world is a spoiled world*"; he assumes "that mankind presented the sad spectacle of thorough failure"; he declares that though "the race of men was capable of communion with God," it yet failed and went away in rebellion from him. Giving the direct lie to the clear testimony of Science he believes in the Fall as described in the Book of Genesis. And yet, while declaring that this world is a spoiled world, he believes in an infinitely perfect, good, and loving God who exists as "three Persons living together in unbroken communion of richest love." He believes that the second Person in the Trinity became man that He might be able to "go between God and men to carry out a blessed work of atonement"—to "draw men back to their Maker

with cords of love and pity." He believes in the Incarnation, Resurrection, and proper Deity of Christ, in heaven and hell, and, of course, in the Inspiration of the Bible. Those are a few of the superstitious beliefs he succeeds in cherishing as the result of keeping his reason under. Are the Christian doctrines true? He does not know or seem to care: he merely *assumes* their truth.

What cruel irony lies in the claim that this "Essay for the Times" was written "in the Light of Modern Criticism, in Defence and Exposition of the Christian Faith"! The "Light" is conspicuous by its absence, and the "Defence" is yet to come.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Word From Australia.

DEAR FOOTE,—The two *Freethinkers* giving an account of your Annual Conference have come to hand. I am glad to see you re-seated in the chair, and am proud to be re-elected one of your vice-presidents. If envy had ever been developed in my nature, I should envy you your organisation, and especially your *Freethinker* staff; but I congratulate you without the shade of an envious feeling; and I hope your success may continue for many years.

Here I am in my new house on the top of a hill, which I call Mount Bradlaugh, and my farm I have named Liberator Farm. It is winter with us now, and we have had it very cold, to-day being extra so. When I say cold I do not mean such temperature as you get in winter. Frost is very rare with us; but the contrast from summer is very severe. After living a salamander life in a temperature of over 100° Fah.—often 105°, 109° in the shade, and at times 160° in the sun—we feel very shivery when the thermometer falls to 40° or to a little over 30°. South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, and Western Australia are very much hotter than Victoria; and I often feel in winter that I should like to shift to "a land that is hotter than this." The Queenslanders have no fear of hell, I am told, as they are quite prepared for the highest temperature likely to be served out to them. However, I am very cold to-day, as we have an antarctic wind coming in gusts and squalls, driving swirling showers along.

On my farm I am not half so happy as some people seem to think I ought to feel. My health is good, and I have plenty to do. I rise every morning before six, and go to bed generally about nine; I write a good few letters more or less on anti-religious subjects; but I am eager to get back again to the open battle-field, there to plan, to fight, and to die in armor. The saints of Melbourne are creeping out of their holes in a divinely courageous manner now I am out of their way, just as the rabbits on my farm sneak out when my back is turned. Whether I shall be able to step up to town and give them a fright I do not know, but will if I can. There is one blatant half-cleric, I am told, striding about there like Pat at Donnybrook Fair, dragging his coat after him to see if someone will tread on its tails; but I am told he is quite unworthy of my notice.

A few weeks back Rev. D. M. Berry, once the Bishop's chaplain, gave a lecture on Genesis i. as far behind the times as a discourse I myself delivered on the same subject forty years and more ago, when I was still "in the gall of [holy] bitterness and the bonds of [pious] iniquity." I debated four nights with this gentleman twenty-one years ago; and his friends said he was "not the man to give Symes the hammering he deserved." Well, I have invited him to meet me in debate on Genesis i., but he declines. The excuse he offers is, I venture to say, the most paltry you ever heard of—he says I have criticised the solar system, and he will not consent to answer a man who can do that! It is positively crushing; and if I tell you it has reduced me to pulp you will not feel surprised. I ventured to write him again

and to suggest that he could not, on second thoughts, consider his excuse at all adequate, that for his own credit I would let no one know until I heard further from him. But his second reply is as bad as the first. I have told him that no one can believe his alleged excuse to be the real one, that his reason for refusing to reply to me in public debate is that he has no reply to offer. I remind him of what even clergymen have said on Genesis, etc., and asked him why he preaches what he knows cannot be defended. Berry is really one of the best and most intellectual clerics in Australia, but he is back into his burrow, and there he'll hide so long as any opponent is on the alert.

You deserve the gratitude of all Freethinkers for the way you have attacked and followed up that holy liar Torrey. Well done! The fellow was here. I exposed him. I was invited to go and hear him! I consented on condition of being allowed half an hour to answer him. My offer was, of course, declined. I offered him my paper, my platform for pious propaganda, provided discussion were permitted; nay, I offered him our Hall for an "experience meeting," if I might be allowed to relate my own experience. Of course, the coward knew better than to accept. He was converting Atheists here in great numbers; and I offered to publish the names of them; but they were never supplied. No one had ever heard of those he converted. A bookseller took a tremendous lot of Torrey's books for sale; but they do not go off. Torrey's visit to Melbourne made just a ripple in the city's life, and then the stream flowed on as before. I should have been delighted if he had converted a few of our prominent rogues into honest men; but that is quite out of the question.

No city in the world, I opine, can show more rogue-politicians, parsons, saints, etc., than Melbourne; and I know of no agency that could convert them. Politics and politicians of the worst possible types, gamblers, socialists, loafers, sportsmen, idlers and fools make up the bulk of our population. There are as good people here as anywhere, but they are so few and numerically so feeble. Hundreds and hundreds of the better sorts have been driven out by want; and their expulsion has rendered me powerless. There is nothing popular here or acceptable to the people which my self-respect will permit me to take a hand in. Demoralisation and poverty are the order of the day. And our clerics, newspapers, and politicians are to blame for almost all the people are suffering.

Australia will some day right itself. The elements of success are here, but nearly smothered under masses of corruption and folly. Still, the future is not hopeless. I shall not live long enough to see the people what they ought to be; but I have done a little to make them so.

By the way, the *Sydney Bulletin* the other day said that I had given up flogging dead horses and gone farming. I have sent a note to say, that the horses I lashed so long were the churches, "God," the Bible, Socialism, Protection, and the so-called Commonwealth; and that I was delighted to learn that they were dead. Whether the note will appear I know not. The *Bulletin* is to a very great extent under priestly dominance; and while ready to give a kick to all other churches, and even to the non-essentials of Popery, it would no more venture upon "mortal sin" than the Devil would dip his caudal extremity into holy water.

A friend was grumbling with me the last time I was in Melbourne because I had not devoted myself to political life, as I might have done so much good of ambition had prevented that; and that, if I had entered Parliament, I should not have found half a dozen men there with whom I could have rubbed shoulders.

By the way, the world *must* be advancing. Some time ago I received a letter from a clergyman, who informs me that a young lady he knew was married to a man who never goes to church or chapel, but, says he, "he's as good as gold." When clerics can

admit that a man may be as good as gold without church-and-chapel grace or priestly radiation, the world must be awaking. Very few parsons would say so much, no matter what they might think.

I am pleased to tell you that the Labor Journals of Australia have begun to tread in the steps of the *Liberator*, and are almost as Atheistic as I have ever been. I rejoice at this, though I do not like their politics.

With best wishes all round,
 JOS. SYMES.
 Mount Bradlaugh, *Liberator* Farm, Cheltenham,
 Victoria, Australia, July 30.

Acid Drops.

Bishop Welldon, preaching at a men's service in Blackburn parish church, said that "as a Christian minister he admitted that Japan had shown to what a height a nation could rise, or seem to rise, apart from the faith of Jesus Christ." By their terms of peace "which they had not so much imposed upon as accepted from their vanquished foe, the Japanese had exhibited a generosity that the nations of Christendom had too often failed to display." Bishop Welldon, however, could not admit that mere Heathen could act in this way; so he set up the pretty explanation that it might be that "Japan had assimilated, perhaps unconsciously, a good deal of the religion of Europe, and was more a Christian nation than she would admit herself to be." That's the style! Nothing will take the cheek out of Christians—not even a good licking. They will do anything sooner than admit that non-Christians can possibly be moral.

Perhaps it was the will of the Almighty, Bishop Welldon went on to say, that "the victorious nation should, sooner or later, accept the religion of the vanquished." It is evidently the will of the Almighty that Bishop Welldon should talk nonsense. Can anyone point to a single case, in the whole of human history, in which a victorious nation accepted the religion of the vanquished? We really want to talk a little common sense to this right reverend father in God. We therefore ask him to refer us to any nation in the world, outside the range or the influence of the Roman Empire, that ever accepted Christianity. The Christianity of America was exported there from Europe. The same is true of all the Christianity in Australia and South Africa. No heathen nation has ever become Christian outside Europe, and it is pretty safe to say that no heathen nation will ever do so. Bishop Welldon's dream breaks itself against the barriers of history.

The Anglo-Israelites regard the British as the lost ten tribes—who, of course, never existed; the story of the twelve tribes being purely mythological. Others have found the lost tribes in Afghanistan; and others now find them in Japan. There is no reason why they should not be found everywhere. It is so easy to locate the non-existent.

During the "peace" riots at Tokio the Russian cathedral was threatened by the crowd who wanted to burn it down, but a sergeant of the guard prevailed upon them to desist by telling them that if the cathedral were destroyed he and the guard would commit suicide. The crowd thereupon withdrew. What a wonderful people! Even the rabble of Tokio seem gentlemen beside the hooligans of London.

Hundreds of Chinese students are now to be found at Tokio, and the *Liverpool Daily Post* sees in this fact a pregnant sign of the awakening of China. Our contemporary predicts that "chemistry and its associated sciences will oust Confucius and his venerable fellow-classics from the place of honor." But what incompatibility is there between chemistry and Confucius? Our contemporary seems to imagine that "Confucius" is a book of religion. It is a book of morals—in which religion is deliberately set aside as unprofitable.

The *Post* goes on to say that Confucius "may still find a place on the shelves of foolish people in England who buy a collection of the hundred best books." We always understood that the Bible was included in that collection. Is it also a witness to the folly of the purchasers? Certainly it stands in more danger from chemistry, which is calculated to make a man wonder how Jesus Christ turned water into wine.

President Roosevelt has his reward at last—partly for his services to the cause of international peace, and partly for

calling Thomas Paine a "dirty little Atheist." An eminent American minister has just declared that "the one man of the world who matches Jesus Christ in seriousness of purpose, in purity of life, is the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt."

"An Australian" in the *Christian World* laughs at the Chinese in the city he writes from for believing that "one building must not be higher than another, lest it interfere with the flight of the invisible dragon." Very silly, of course. But it is so much easier to see other people's silliness than one's own. There are English towns (Southport) for instance, which are quite up to date in most things, where tram cars must not be run on Sunday, for fear of offending an invisible bogey called Jehovah.

Miss M. C. Albright, a Quakeress, lecturing lately at Llandrindod, said that even Buddha and Mohammed were good men. Several members of her audience expressed loud disapproval and left the meeting. Such is Christian bigotry after nearly two thousand years of the religion of "charity"—according to the official prospectus. Buddhists and Mohammedans would not protest if they heard Jesus Christ called a good man. It is only Christians who are capable of this wretched intolerance.

Among the many documents circulated at the Paris Free-thought Congress was one from the "Materialist Group" of Freethinkers, of Givors, Rhone. This circular set forth that it was not by eloquence often misunderstood, or by literary eminence generally not understood at all, that the masses of ignorant, superstitious people would ever be disillusioned. The most effective propaganda was that of example. The great thing was for Freethinkers to be *real* Freethinkers. There were Freethinkers, even members of parliament, who let their sons be taught the catechism and their daughters be sent to mass. Therefore, after a number of "considerings," the Materialist Group of Givors proposed the exclusion from the Congress of all groups and delegates who would not enter into a solemn engagement to break with religion and freemasonry, and to sanction no religious act on the part of their associates or offspring while in the position of minors. No doubt this is too drastic. It is impossible, with due respect to personal liberty, to set up such a rigidly authoritative régime. At the same time it must be admitted that this circular touched a weak place in the Freethought armor. There are some Freethinkers who wish to convert the world and will not make a beginning with their own wives; and Freethinkers who say they detest religion yet let it be instilled into their children. This is a state of things that ought to be speedily terminated.

Here is a sample of the silliness (on religious topics) that finds its way into the English press:—

"During the excavations for the new Hedscha-Mecca railway, in Arabia, a rock-hewn cave, believed to be the tomb of Aaron, the High Priest, has been found. The ruins of a buried Jewish city are being unearthed. Two beautifully proportioned buildings of hewn stones of gigantic size, bearing cuneiform inscriptions, have been discovered."

A buried Jewish city in Arabia is a fine piece of journalistic imagination. So is the tomb of Aaron. According to the Bible, which we believe is still an authority in this country, and among Christians, Aaron died (or was "burked") on Mount Hor. He had no funeral. According to Jewish tradition (see our *Bible Heroes*) Aaron's coffin was carried up by angels to heaven.

Dr. Henry Slade (we don't know what he was "Dr." of) has just died at a Sanatorium in Michigan. In 1876 he was prosecuted in London, where he was doing a roaring trade as a Spiritist "mceejum," and sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labor—though he escaped the punishment on technical grounds by an appeal. His conviction was the subject of a brilliant article by James Thomson, the poet, on "Spiritism in the Police Court." It appeared in the *Secularist*, edited by G. W. Foote, to which Thomson was a regular contributor. Thomson remarked that the whole world of spirits, at the beck and call of countless mediums, had never "dictated or written a single great sentence, revealed a single great truth, discovered a single important fact." There was nothing, he said, but "the dreamiest drivel, or delirium, the most wretched and imbecile juggling tricks, with all sorts of evasions, and deceptions, and lies." "What," he asked, "can be more dark and debasing than this," [it was in answer to talk about the 'dark and debasing doctrines of the materialists'], that we live after death to rap and turn tables, play villainous snatches on light musical instruments, write badly-spelt balderdash, dictate ungrammatical imbecilities or lies, grasp hands and

jog knees—all for the profit of showmen and the hysterical wonder of fools? Who would not prefer annihilation to such a degraded and idiotic immortality?"

Rev. J. Maydew Wamsley preached his farewell sermon at Wesley Chapel, Darwen, lately, and, in the course of it, assured his congregation that man was immortal. If he means that this is the teaching of the Bible he ought not to be so cocksure. The position has been strongly denied by many eminent Christians, including the late Mr. Gladstone. It is all very well to sneer at sceptics who are "more anxious to pose as intellectual than to get at a right understanding." But it is better to be careful oneself than to fling loose charges at other people.

"How to Find Rest" was the heading of an article, or something, by Dr. R. A. Torrey in a recent number of the *Weekly Dispatch*—a paper with an honorable past and a somewhat different present. We don't quite understand how Dr. Torrey can show others the way to find rest. He hasn't found it himself by telling lies about Paine and Ingersoll. Nemesis has overtaken him, and thousands of people, including many Christians, point the finger of scorn at this malicious apostle of the "gospel of love."

At the top of this article, or whatever it is, there appears a little portrait of Dr. Torrey, who wears his best professional look. He gazes at you a bit sideways with a perky air, as who should say: "Behold a really good man; have you been sinning lately?" Of course the article contains the usual story about a nameless "unbeliever" who was converted by the death of his "beautiful Christian little girl." But the public do not swallow these Torreyisms as they did. They have seen some of them analysed.

At one of Dr. Torrey's meetings in the Drill Hall, Sheffield, some one raised a cry of "Fire!" This threw the good Christians into a panic of terror. A rush was made for the doors, and women fainted and screamed. Fortunately there was no fire, not even smoke, and order was restored by the choir singing the "Glory Song." But while the terror lasted it was illuminating. The good Christians liked to hear about heaven, but it was "God save us!" when they saw a chance of going there.

Dr. Torrey's first mid-day meeting for city men at Sheffield was a failure—like the meetings of the same kind he held in London. "There was a good attendance," the *Christian World* said, "but hardly of the character desired." It is the "faithful" who make up all these meetings. Like a stage army, they are counted over and over.

Mountebank Torrey would have people believe that half the suicides in America, if not also a good part of the other half, are caused by Ingersoll's pamphlet *Is Suicide a Sin?* in which he deals with the question in a philosophical and humanitarian spirit. Well now, the latest statistics show that about 70,000 persons in Europe commit suicide in one year. Very few of these ever read a line of Ingersoll's. Most of them, probably, never heard of his name. Torrey's theory of suicide is as childish as his ostrich policy over his libels on Paine and Ingersoll. Not even Mr. Stead's brilliant article has drawn a word from this disgusting libeller. There does not appear to be a spark of "grace" or manliness left in him. He is essentially a vile wretch than any "sinner" he tries to "convert" at his meetings. He is a paltry coward as well as a malignant liar, and we should dearly like the opportunity of making him eat the leek at a public meeting—where silence wouldn't save him.

The voting of Mr. Charles Stone Read off the Directorate of the V.V. Bread Company, because of his connection with the Agapemonites, is a very questionable proceeding. If religious questions are introduced at shareholders' meetings there will be lively times in financial circles. It is all very well to say that Mr. Read's master, Messiah Pigott, is a bold bad man and a wicked impostor. But is he the *only* impostor in England—even in the ranks of religion? Is he any more an impostor than (say) the Archbishop of Canterbury, who takes £15,000 a year, besides living in a palace, for preaching the gospel of "Blessed be ye poor"? All the men of God are more or less in the same doubtful business, and there is a dead set at Pigott simply because he has few friends. Our objection is to the lot of them.

An Aberdeen correspondent invites Mr. Foote to visit that city and hold a debate with a local horbalist orator called Newman, who declares that he has had "several debates

with eminent opponents" in defence of religion. Well, we never heard of him before, and we fancy his "debates" are mythical. At any rate, Mr. Foote is not going to Aberdeen to meet such an august antagonist; and perhaps, on second thoughts, the Aberdonians who invited him will recognise the comical side of the suggestion.

The London *Star*, which never takes any notice of militant Freethought, at least in England, came out the other evening with a great flourish about certain new publishing ventures, including a sixpenny edition of Paine's *Age of Reason*, which the Stonecutter-street organ appears to regard as something quite original. But the sixpenny *Age of Reason*, issued by the Secular Society, Limited, has been some years in the market, and was first printed for the Society by the firm which is bringing out the present novelty. As this is the firm that "improved" some of Ingersoll's Lectures, we can imagine what difficulty it must have had with the still more awkward text of Paine. The "Twentieth Century" edition of the *Age of Reason* is not likely to be eclipsed. And it is an honest edition. Those responsible for it would not tamper with the text of a Freethought classic. Even if they did feel obliged, for any reason, to omit or change a word, they would honorably announce the fact in a footnote. To do otherwise is to abuse the reader's confidence.

John Finney was charged at Tower-bridge Police-station, on Monday, with offering indecent prints for sale in Blackfriars road. The indecent print appears to have been a folding card, bearing on the exterior: "The Abode of Love.—A holy baby born at the Agapemone." Inside was "a highly colored picture of an infant with a nimbus round its head, entitled 'Glory.'" Mr. Rose, the magistrate, said: "I think they are as wicked as they can be." He then remanded the prisoner for further enquiries. Evidently the baby "Glory" is nothing in comparison with the picture of Pigott's bantling. It is not the deed, but the description of it, that mortally offends. For the rest, we presume that by "wicked" Mr. Rose meant "blasphemous." But, in that case, action ought to be taken against Pigott rather than against a poor street hawker.

Armenians at Shusha break into a Mussulman school, and massacre twenty Persian pupils, cutting off their noses and ears. Armenians and Tartars (Christian and Mussulman) fight and kill and mutilate each other at Baku. Religious hatred is at the bottom of this devilry.

"Providence" is remembering poor Russia in the midst of her miseries. Several provinces are afflicted with famine, and the Committee sitting at St. Petersburg recommends that the Treasury should grant four millions sterling for the purchase of cereals. Unless something of the sort be done, and done promptly, the condition of things in these provinces will be appalling.

The Bible Society's last year's expenses, £253,459, left a deficit of £35,000. But what does that matter? The Bible is being printed in many languages and scattered all over the world. Even the Thibetans, whom we lately taught such a beautiful lesson in brotherly love, can now read Genesis and Exodus in their own language. Whether they will read them is a different question. We hope they are not so hard up for entertaining literature.

Dan Leno, it is said, once visited the House of Commons gallery and listened to a debate. When a member asked him what he thought of it, he said "Oh, not bad; but it would have gone better with a piano." He might have said a banjo. And the members are nearly all Christians.

The Comedy of Passive Resistance is still running. A hundred and eighteen P. R.'s were recently summoned at the Kettering Police Court. One of them, the Rev. H. Davis, emitted the old wheeze about Nonconformist teachers being "prohibited from teaching in some thirteen or fourteen thousand schools supported by public money." It does not trouble this sensitive gentleman that Freethinking teachers are practically debarred from all those schools and also from as many more that are really controlled by Nonconformists. Sectarianism is only sectarianism when *they* suffer from it.

Another P. R., Mr. John Boardman, appeared at the West Ham Police Court lately, and had his customary little innings. His co-defendants included a number of Dissenting men of God, who have helped him in getting the *Freethinker* excluded from the Free Library reading-room tables. Bigot Boardman protesting against bigotry is a side-splitting spectacle.

The "Miss Gardner" incident at Blackburn is still smoking. Miss Gardner, a Unitarian, it will be remembered, was appointed as head mistress of the Blackburn High School. Churchmen and Passive Resisters at once joined in denouncing this appointment, and clamored for the lady's removal. Quite recently there has been a largely attended meeting of the Blackburn Ruri-decanal Chapter, at which a resolution was carried almost unanimously regretting the appointment and recording an "emphatic protest against Church bursary holders being sent to that school by the educational authority, believing as the Chapter does that a sound Christian education can only be imparted by one who acknowledges the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ." This should be a warning to Freethinkers. Christians are determined to work the Education Acts for their own sectarian advantage.

General Sir William Butler was adopted by the East Leeds Liberals as their candidate. Although a Roman Catholic he declared himself in favor of national education being put under public control without prejudice to any religious community, and also in favor of abolishing sectarian tests in the appointment of teachers. This tickled the Nonconformist Conscience very agreeably. But subsequently Sir William Butler desired to withdraw his promise to support the abolition of religious tests. Perhaps he had come to see that religious tests must obtain while religious education is imparted. The Nonconformists, however, pretend to think otherwise. Of course they know better, but the pretence is a part of their game in the present Education struggle. The consequence was that Sir William had to withdraw his candidature. Could anything more clearly show that the Liberal party is run by the Nonconformists? The fact is that the two great political parties in this country should be called "Church" and "Chapel."

Writing on Crabbe the poet the *Daily News* observed that his vogue was affected by the appearance of Wordsworth, Scott, Byron, Keats, and Shelley. Shelley was one of those who "conspired to lure readers" from Crabbe! Shelley, who had no readers at all, or so few as to be hardly worth speaking about—unless we include the readers of the pirated editions of *Queen Mab*.

Three recruits attended the other day at the Tottenham Police Court to take the oath of allegiance, and were put through their religious facings by the Rev. David Frothingham. One had passed the sixth standard in a Church school; the others had passed the seventh standard at Board schools. Being asked what was the first book in the New Testament they could not tell. One of them said that Exodus was the second. Neither of them could give any information about Matthew. They had read about Jesus Christ in the Bible. Asked *where*, they replied "All over it"—which ought to please the prophetic lunatics. Being asked what was done to Jesus Christ, two could not answer; the third said he was crucified. He said it was done by the Jews, also that the Roman Governor's name was Peter. Such is religious teaching in elementary schools! This is what the Churches are fighting over! It is enough to make Balaam's ass laugh.

Rev. David Frothingham told the three recruits that they would be supplied with Bibles with their kits, and he advised them to read them. He is a very sanguine gentleman. We admire his optimism.

The West Ham Free Church Council need not discuss labor and other social questions, but if it does discuss them it should refrain from making itself a laughing-stock. According to a newspaper report, the Council "confesses with sorrow and regret its failure, hitherto, so to intervene in local affairs as to advance the interest of the Kingdom of God." This is pretty language, but what the unemployed want is work and bread.

"J. B." of the *Christian World* is an able writer, in his way, but he might be a little more careful in his quotations. He began a recent article on "Our Shadow World" with an "exclamation which the sudden death of Peel drew from one of his contemporaries"—the said exclamation being "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue." But that exclamation is much older than the death of Peel. It came, on a memorable occasion, from the lips of Burke.

The Bishop of Salisbury has made the terrible discovery that "a great many are giving up public worship in England, and that a large proportion of the people pay little attention to religion at all." This does credit to his sagacity, but was it wise to impart the news to the clergy and church workers in his diocese?

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 24, Town Hall, Stratford, 7.30, "The Beautiful Land Above."
 October 1, Queen's Hall; 8, Queen's Hall; 15, Glasgow; 22, Birmingham; 29, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
 November 5, Manchester; 12, Liverpool.
 December 31, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton, Essex.—September 24, Stanley Hall, North London. October 1, Stratford Town Hall; 8, Glasgow; 15, Queen's Hall; 22, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 24, Manchester; October 8, Stratford Town Hall; 15, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 22, Queen's Hall; 29, Liverpool; November 5, Glasgow; 19, Glasgow; 26, Neath, South Wales; December 3, Forest Gate; 10, Coventry.

YOUNGSTER.—The safest rule is never to write verse unless you must. Even then a lot of practice is sure to be necessary before anything you write is fit for publication. We cannot say whether Mr. Stead will reply to our Open Letter. We understand that he is still abroad.

T. DIXON.—Card to hand. Best wishes for both.

MAURICE RAPHAEL.—Debates on Spiritualism have taken place between some of its leading representatives and Secular representatives like Mr. Cohen and Mr. Ward. We do not know that we are called upon at present to carry on a special crusade against it. Our time and energies are needed for the attack upon the great and powerful Christian superstition. We can only attend to other superstitions by the way. Of course we are glad to hear that you are able to deal with Spiritualism in the local press.

E. MOORCROFT.—There is no pocket edition of Ingersoll. Your N. S. S. suggestion shall be considered. There is certainly something in it.

E. OLDING.—(1) Christian Evidences are the greatest farce in the world. What on earth is the use of quoting Galen, as the man you refer to does? How could anything that Galen wrote (even if his lost works did contain the passages alleged) be any evidence as to the historical character of Jesus Christ? Galen was not born till Jesus Christ (if he ever lived) had been dead a hundred years. He died about A.D. 200, and his principal works may be dated about A.D. 180. The Gospels themselves were in existence then. Whatever Galen said about Jesus Christ at that time could only be hearsay. His "witness" is not contemporary. The whole thing is fudge; and, from the point of view of logic and historical criticism, simply contemptible. After all, the passage in Galen's work on the Pulse is merely this: "It is easier to convince the disciples of Moses and Christ, than physicians and philosophers, who are addicted to particular sects." This only means that the Jews and the Christians (who undoubtedly existed at that time) were obstinate in their bigotry. (2) We fear you could not get the back numbers you mention now. (3) We note your suggestion that a series of articles on "Archæology and the Bible" would be welcome.

A. MILLAR.—We think your friend is utterly mistaken. "Speak no ill of the dead" should never be taken as meaning that the truth must not be told about public men after their decease. History would be impossible if that policy prevailed.

F. BENNETT.—Pleased to learn that the Cardiff authorities have yielded to pressure, and withdrawn the order forbidding the Freethinkers to sell literature and make collections (like other bodies) in Roath Park. Pleased also to hear of the success of your own efforts as a propagandist, and that you have found our own writings so useful.

ANTI-HUMBUG.—See paragraph.

THE PARIS CONGRESS FUND.—Joseph Bevins, 10s.

W. C. MIDDLETON.—Glad to hear that a verteran like yourself is so highly pleased with our Defence of Thomas Paine. As soon as we can find time we shall put the articles into pamphlet form, as you and others suggest.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. BINDON.—What are you driving at? How came you to fancy that it was our business to explain or defend any passage in the writings of the late Guy de Maupassant, the French novelist—who, by the way, is one of Tolstoy's favorites?

F. S.—You will see that the cuttings have been useful.

J. WITHAMS.—Thanks for cutting, although we cannot use it this week.

PETER LEE (Rochdale).—Glad you have read the six *Freethinkers* sent you with interest. The other matter is a difference of opinion.

F. DAVIES.—We note your hope that our Open Letter to Mr. Stead will be printed in a separate form. The Bible passages you refer to do not seem to us to have the slightest scientific significance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted. FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention. THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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Sugar Plums.

The special course of Freethought lectures at the Stratford Town Hall, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, with the assistance of the West Ham N. S. S. Branch, opens this evening (Sept. 24), when Mr. Foote will occupy the platform, taking for his subject "The Beautiful Land Above," which will give him a good opportunity of exposing the orthodox methods of Salvation, and defending the methods of Science and Humanity. It is idle to say that this title is blasphemous, or even insulting; for it is taken literally from a well-known Christian hymn. We dare say the Stratford Town Hall will be packed. Those who want to secure seats should come in good time.

Mr. John Lloyd began the course of Sunday evening lectures at Stanley Hall on September 10. He had a good audience, and we hear that his lecture was a fine one. Mr. Foote followed last Sunday evening and was welcomed by a record meeting, which included a considerable number of ladies. His lecture on "Why the 'Yellow Monkeys' Won: an Object Lesson for Christians" was highly appreciated and very warmly applauded. Mr. Cowell, who presided, appealed for discussion, but there was none forthcoming, although, several questions were asked and answered. This evening (Sept. 24) Mr. Cohen occupies the platform at Stanley Hall. No doubt there will be another excellent meeting.

The new Queen's (Minor) Hall course of lectures opens next Sunday evening (October 1) and will be continued throughout the month. Mr. Foote takes the first two Sundays, Mr. Cohen the third and fifth, and Mr. Lloyd the fourth. There will be free admission as usual, and a charge for reserved seats.

We regret that there has been a mistake about the instrumental music at the Queen's Hall lectures. We must have misread the letter in which it was offered. We are now informed that the offer was not intended for all the Sunday evenings in October, but only for Mr. Foote's opening lecture. Perhaps the artists may see their way to oblige on the second evening also, but this is only speculative at present, and rather a pious hope than a prediction. Of course we are greatly obliged to these gentlemen for the offer of their services even for one evening.

The following is the musical program for October 1 at Queen's Hall:—

OVERTURE	...	"Mirelle"	...	Gounod
INTERMEZZO		"Cavalleria Rusticana"		Mascagni
		"Momens Musicals"	...	Schubert
		"Ungarische Tanze"	...	Brahms
		(No. 1 in F Allegretto		
		(No. 2 in D Vivace		
MORCEAUX	{	(a) "Salut d'Amour"	...	Elgar
	{	(b) "Chant Sans Paroles"	...	Tschaikowsky
DANSE STRIENNE		"Czardas" (No. 6)	...	Michiels

Mr. C. Cohen opened the special lecture season at Liverpool on Sunday. He had two first-rate meetings, the largest he has yet had there, the hall being packed at night with an enthusiastic audience.

An error crept in last week's "Sugar Plums." Mr. John Lloyd's visit to Manchester should have been dated to-day

(Sept. 24) instead of last Sunday. South Lancashire "saints" will please note.

The Torrey-Alexander mission is not having things all its own way at Sheffield. Mr. Beresford, a local "saint," is seeing to the distribution of our Torrey pamphlets, of which he has had a good supply, and can have more when necessary. We are glad to see also that letters criticising the Mission are appearing in the *Independent*; a very good one coming from the pen of Mr. G. Wallis, a member of the local Secular Society. Mr. Wallis points out how shockingly Dr. Torrey is behind even the average theology of the Christian Churches in England.

Freethinkers at Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonchouse who are willing to take part in distributing our pamphlets outside Dr. Torrey's meetings (from October 8 to November 5) are invited to put themselves in communication with Mr. G. F. H. McCluskey, 9 Albany-place, Plymouth. We hope they will do so at once, as there is no time to be lost. Mr. Foote will endeavor to visit Plymouth during the mission, if he can only obtain a suitable hall for one or two week-nights.

Our contemporary, the *Two Worlds*, thinks it has caught the *Freethinker* "napping"—which it admits is not a frequent occurrence. In our open letter to Mr. Stead we instanced the Japanese as a case in point against his view as to the necessity of the "supernatural sanction for morality." The Spiritualist organ replies that the Japanese believe in continued life after death. But this has nothing *per se* to do with the supernatural sanction. Ancestor-worship is quite compatible with the natural origin and development of morality. Moreover, as a matter of fact, the educated Japanese are nearly all sceptics, with a strong leaning to materialistic monism.

Rev. Dr. Bevan, of Melbourne, who has just returned home after another visit to England, was interviewed by the *Christian World* before leaving. One of the subjects touched upon was secular education in Victoria. Dr. Bevan spoke as follows:—

"The country, as a whole, is satisfied with its secular system. The religious people—perhaps I ought to say the official religious people especially—are anxious for the introduction of Scripture lessons. The Methodist and Presbyterian Synods have passed resolutions of this effect. The Congregationalists are sharply divided about it."

Evidently it is the "official religious people" who are responsible for all the agitation against secular education in Victoria. It is just the same here. The Churches are professionally opposed to secular education, and they pretend that undying hatred of it is in the hearts of parents—which is simply rubbish.

Tributes to Heathen Japan are flowing in right and left, even from Christians. The following is taken from a speech by the Rev. Prebendary H. W. Moss to a meeting of the Shropshire Church Missionary Association, which was reported in the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*:—

"During the past year our thoughts have been turned especially to Japan. We have admired the heroic self-sacrifice of her sons, we have deplored the torrents of blood which have flowed on the hills and in the plains of Manchuria. We have rejoiced that the humane efforts of President Roosevelt to bring this devastating war to a close have been crowned with unexpected success. When we have marked the enthusiasm with which the Japanese have offered up their lives for the sake of their country, we have looked forward hopefully to the day when their splendid capacity of merging themselves in the common good will be raised to a yet higher level by faith in Him whom we worship as the Redeemer of mankind. And we must often, I think, as members of a Christian nation, have felt a thrill of shame when we have brought the fruits of our own civilisation into comparison with the results which have been produced by the training and traditions of heathen Japan.

This is *all* right. We need not trouble about the reverend gentleman's belief that the Christianity which has done so little for Europe is going to do such a lot for Japan.

Obituary.

I HAVE to send you on behalf of the Glasgow Branch, intimation of the death of Mrs. Muir, 360 Cumberland-street, Glasgow; for many years a faithful, earnest and valued member of the Society. She died on the 14th inst. On Sunday 17th, the Committee of the Glasgow branch passed a resolution of sympathy and condolence with the surviving relatives, which was transmitted to them by the Secretary.

G. SCOTT.

"What Have We to Do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth?"

AMIDST the bewildering profusion of the modern fiction market it is refreshing beyond measure to come across a strong outstanding novel. The output of books at the present day is so stupendous in magnitude, that it were vain for any reader less omnivorous than a Lord Acton or a Macaulay to attempt to grapple with it. The ordinary novel-reader knows not what to read, and mostly wastes his time reading books he sees extensively advertised or noticed in his favorite newspaper, only to find that they seldom come up to expectation or even repay perusal. There is not a single newspaper of any account in this country that does not publish several columns of book notices weekly, and the reading public is liberally supplied with lists of books published, and books that are "selling"; but who will tell us honestly what books are worth reading? Any book that appears with the name of a certain author or authoress on the title-page is, as we know, sure of a large circulation, though it may contain the most arrant rubbish that ever emanated from human brain. On the other hand many a work may fall almost still-born from the press through sheer ignorance on the part of the public that it boasts any particular merit. Who will tell us faithfully the novels we should not miss? And when one considers the amount of log-rolling that goes on in literary journals, one is inclined to fight shy even of novels that come to us with the blushing honors of numerous editions thick upon them. One remembers *Trilby* for instance. Who reads *Trilby* now?

This, however, is a mere preamble to our immediate purpose, which is to notice a novel first published eight years ago, a novel which has attained the distinction of several editions, and is now obtainable in popular form. We scarcely think it necessary to apologise for this belated notice. The book has only recently come under our eye, and from what conversation we have had with Freethinkers we do not gather that it is generally known amongst them, yet it is one they ought to read. Complaints have been ventilated to the effect that advanced novels with a Freethought flavor are not brought to the notice of those most likely to be interested in them. *The Gadfly* is not (as we have seen above) exactly a new book, but it is one with which all novel-reading Freethinkers should make themselves acquainted. It is worth a hundredweight of ordinary novels.

The actuating spirit pervading *The Gadfly* is indicated by the quotation at the head of this article, which quotation is taken from the title-page of the work. The author relates the history of a young man who, from being a devout son of the Church of Rome, becomes at one fell swoop—in one tremendous revulsion of feeling—bitterly antagonistic to Roman Catholicism and the whole cult of Supernaturalism, and thereafter cherishes but one aim in life—the overthrow of clericalism. The setting of the story is in Italy, and it opens at that period in her history when the blood of young Italy was throbbing and leaping in response to the magnetic influence of Mazzini and Garibaldi.

We do not claim for *The Gadfly* any high literary merit. It is the intensely human interest of the story that grips the reader, together with its apparent fidelity to truth; and the combined power and restraint of the writer are also eminently noteworthy. There is nothing of the didactic in the novel, nor does it obtrusively convey the impression that it has been written with a purpose—that most fatal of defects in a work of fiction. In fact it can be read with pleasure by those who only seek a "story," while to the reflective mind it conveys much more. Its engrossing nature may be gauged from the fact that we read it through at a single sitting; though we have, of course, gone back to it in more leisurely fashion since. We can well imagine that its perusal would administer a severe shock to any Roman Catholic into whose hands

it might fall, but the shock might perchance have a salutary effect. For ourselves we rose from the book with our hatred of clericalism and religion renewed, as it were, and strengthened. The verisimilitude of the tale is such that one forgets it is ostensibly fiction. Premising that *The Gadfly* is a book to be read, not to be read about, we will endeavor to marshal the chief points in the narrative.

The hero, Arthur Barton, known later as Rivarez and better by his *nom-de-plume* The Gadfly, is the reputed son of an English merchant in Leghorn, by his second wife, the Roman Catholic governess of his earlier children. Arthur, however, is really the offspring of his mother's *liaison* with Montanelli, a Roman Catholic priest; and we first meet Arthur as a young man in the company and under the tutelage of Montanelli. There is a great strength of affection on both sides, although Arthur is, of course, as yet unaware of the actual relationship in which they stand to each other. Arthur becomes involved, with many other students, in one of the abortive revolutionary movements so numerous in Italy at that period. He betrays himself in the confessional, and is led on in the most natural fashion by the wily confessor to reveal particulars, and the name of one of the moving spirits in the secret propaganda. This leads to the arrest of Arthur and many other of the youthful conspirators. The description of the vile police methods practised by despotic governments in order to induce suspected persons to incriminate one another is admirably done. Ultimately Arthur, on his release from prison, discovers how he had been tricked in the confessional, and also learns the truth about his parentage. Coupled with this, Gemma, with whom he is in love, receives the erroneous impression that Arthur had voluntarily betrayed his comrades, and treats him with corresponding scorn and contumely. Arthur is of an acutely sensitive and high-spirited nature, and the result of all this accumulated disaster is overwhelming. Arthur signalises the collapse of his childhood's faith by demolishing with a hammer the large crucifix in his room, leaves a scrawl to the effect that his body will be found in the harbor, and disappears as a stowaway to South America. Here ends the first stage in the career of Rivarez.

When the central figure of the novel appears once more on the scene, several years have elapsed. The author might have made a good deal more of his hero's sojourn in South America, but only the briefest retrospective allusions are made to it in the subsequent portions of the narrative. It is too harrowing a memory; and, on the whole, one cannot but admire the artistic reserve and effectiveness with which the author suggests rather than reveals the horrors that enter into the life experience of *The Gadfly*. This encomium is applicable in equal measure to his treatment of all the leading characters in the story. None of them parade their griefs, and a just conception of what they have suffered is left to the sympathetic imagination of the reader.

In the second and third sections of the book we find Arthur Burton (now under the name of Felice Rivarez) once more in Europe, and bound up heart and soul in the campaign against Clericalism in general and Jesuitism in particular. We have no intention of spoiling the reader's appreciation of the book by giving all the details of the story. Suffice it to say here that ultimately Rivarez falls into the hands of the Papal authorities, and the interest centres round the struggle in the mind of his father (now Cardinal Montanelli), between his natural affections, and what he considers his duty to his Church, and the pitiful Deity he worships. What a scene that is between Montanelli and Rivarez in the prison! It is here the Cardinal learns that the revolutionary Atheist is his own son, whom he had thought long since dead. Sounds melodramatic, does it not? But read it. It has been represented to the Cardinal by the governor of the fortress, that unless the former gives his sanction to the immediate execution of the prisoner, there would be—on the approaching *fete* day—a desperate attempt at rescue, and he

(the Cardinal) would be answerable for the consequent riot and bloodshed. The Cardinal, naturally averse to bloodshed at all times, is in a dilemma; but it is a case of one life or many. Eventually he visits the prisoner in person, of course as yet unaware of the latter's identity, and weakly submits his difficulty to the consideration of the victim immediately concerned. Rivarez is ill, and has been tortured for days, so that he is in a highly irritable and inflammable condition. The monstrous mockery of the idea of his own case being submitted to him by Montanelli for adjudication, rouses in Rivarez that terrific sardonic humor which is the dominant characteristic of his personality. The Cardinal asks The Gadfly what he would do if he were in the former's position. Let us give one or two extracts from the prisoner's scathing retort.

"At least, I would decide my own actions for myself, and take the consequences of them. I would not come sneaking to people, in the cowardly Christian way, asking them to solve my problems for me! We atheists understand that if a man has a thing to bear, he must bear it as best he can; and if he sinks under it—why, so much the worse for him. But a Christian comes whining to his God, or his saints; or, if they won't help him, to his enemies—he can always find a back to shift his burdens on to. Isn't there a rule to go by in your Bible, or your Missal, or any of your canting theology books, that you must come to me to tell you what to do? Heavens and earth, man! Haven't I enough as it is, without your laying your responsibilities on my shoulders? Go back to your Jesus; he exacted the uttermost farthing, and you'd better do the same. After all, you'll only be killing an atheist.....and that's no great crime surely! And *you* to talk of cruelty! Why that pudding-headed ass (the Governor) couldn't hurt me as much as you do if he tried for a year; he hasn't got the brains. All he can think of is to pull a strap tight and when he can't get it any tighter he's at the end of his resources. Any fool can do that! But you—'Sign your own death sentence, please: I'm too tender hearted to do it myself.' Oh! it would take a Christian to hit on that—a gentle, compassionate Christian, that turns pale at the sight of a strap pulled too tight! I might have known when you came in, like an angel of mercy—so shocked at the colonel's 'barbarity'—that the real thing was going to begin! Why do you look at me that way? Consent man, of course, and go home to your dinner; the thing's not worth all this fuss. Tell your Colonel he can have me shot, or hanged, or whatever comes handiest—roasted alive, if it's any amusement to him—and be done with it!"

Then there is the execution scene. Theatrical, some may call it; but to us it seems of a piece with the nature of the man that Rivarez should deluge with his terrible raillery the unnerved, bungling squad of carbineers, who have to be brought three times to the firing point before they succeed in getting home a fatal bullet. It is a distressing chapter, but undeniably telling in its realism. Wounded and bleeding, with the execution degenerating into sheer butchery, the peculiar humor of *The Gadfly* never deserts him.

There is much more in the novel on which we cannot dilate. Of the three principal characters, Rivarez, his father the Cardinal, and Gemma his earliest—and latest—love, it were difficult to decide which is the most pathetic figure. We might add a fourth,—rough, stolid, faithful Martini. The dauntless, defiant courage of the man Rivarez may seem to take away from the pathos of the character, but really only intensifies it. With all his superficial hardness and bitter irony of speech, Rivarez remains to the last as tender-hearted as a woman at bottom. In fine *The Gadfly* is distinctly apart from the ordinary run of novels, and we have to go back some years to recall one which has moved us so much.

G. SCOTT.

Any castle in the air, whether Swedenborgian, Spinozistic, or Ptolemaic, may be as coherent and consistent *in itself* as the most massy mountain-range; only the former has its baseless base in the air, and the latter is deep-rooted in the firm earth.—James Thomson.

The Resurrection of Jesus—An Historical Inquiry.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH C. ALLEN.

[Reprinted from the *Open Court* (Chicago) as a sign of the disintegration that is going on in orthodox theology.]

(Continued from p. 600.)

And not only these contradictions, but the great volume of the testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, is evidence of some startling and definite fact or experience. Paul had spent fifteen days with Peter (Gal. i. 18). It is obviously, then, on Peter's authority that he gives a list of the appearances of the risen Jesus (1 Cor. xv.). Among these appearances, he states, was one to "above five hundred brethren at once, of whom," he says, "the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep." We can hardly doubt that this particular statement of Paul is based on an actual experience of a large number of disciples at some assemblage, or that the experience was of such a sort as to make them believe that they had either seen Jesus with the physical eye, or felt in the mind His real presence.

This story of the appearance to the five hundred was a part of the apostolic tradition. Why, then, is it not related in any of the Gospels? On the other hand, why is Paul silent about the empty tomb, the appearance to Mary Magdalene, the exhibition by Jesus of his wounds and His inviting the disciples to touch Him, and lastly His eating and talking with them? Here is indicated a profound difference of view between Paul and the evangelists. To him the resurrection was spiritual—not a reanimation of the body. Jesus, he says, "was seen" ($\omega\phi\eta$ 1 Cor. xv. 5) by Peter and others, and lastly by himself. The word emphasizes the mental element, and may be used with especial fitness of visions. It was, in fact, in a vision that Paul had seen Jesus, and he evidently did not think it necessary to distinguish between this vision and the other appearances that he summarises. For to Paul's mind the body of Jesus that was laid in the tomb did not come to life, and the manifestations were not material.

On the other hand, the writers at least of the Synoptic Gospels believe that a physical resurrection took place; and therefore they are not interested in any appearance except such as indicated this physical resurrection. John possibly held a different view, but if he did the Synoptic tradition was in his time so fixed that he had to follow it up in the main.

Paul, then, and the Gospels are not radically inconsistent in their accounts. Each selected such appearances as bore out the one or the other theory of the resurrection. Some at least of the appearances Paul enumerates were actual experiences, whether or not they correspond to any outward reality. Yet at the same time the Gospel stories of the physical resurrection may be based on actual occurrences.

A reanimation of the body is, however, too great a marvel to be proved on the evidence before us. Some even of the Gospel stories are really against it. For a human body cannot pass through walls, to appear to the disciples "when the doors were shut" (Jn. xx., 19 and 26; Lk. xxiv., 36 and 27), appear and disappear repeatedly without regard to physical conditions, and finally rise from earth to the sky. Moreover, the silence of Paul as to the physical manifestations is significant. He had visited Peter and received the Apostolic tradition somewhere between fifteen and twenty years after the event, while the memory of it was still fresh and many witnesses were still alive. The Apostolic tradition must at this time have been a little uncertain as to a physical resurrection, or Paul could not have been utterly silent on this point.

Uniting, then, the evidence of the Gospels with that of Paul, we gather: First, that the disciples had such experiences as convinced them that Jesus was still alive; secondly, that they thought they had also some evidence of His bodily resurrection; but thirdly, that they were not absolutely sure that His body had been restored to life.

What was the evidence that made them think Jesus had risen bodily? Among the Gospel stories of the resurrection, one stands in supreme and unique prominence, namely, the visit of the women to the tomb, and their finding it to be open and empty. All the Gospels, the uncanonical ones included, tell this story without serious disagreement. It is the only resurrection story to which the unanimous and consistent witness of the Gospels is given. In time of occurrence this precedes all other Gospel stories connected with the resurrection, save only Matthew's tale of the watch at the tomb. In all the others of these stories, the women's discovery is presupposed. To all of them it might give a natural occasion. The report of the empty tomb might give rise to the rumor that Jesus had come to life and walked bodily out of His grave. From this might grow other rumors of

His being seen and touched, and of His eating with some of the disciples. These rumors would seem all the more likely when visions of Jesus had actually been experienced. But, on the other hand, none other of the Gospel stories, nor all of the visions, could give rise and general credence to the report that certain women had gone to the tomb on Sunday morning and found it to be empty.

A certain detail of this story of the women deserves more attention than is usually given to it. Mark relates (xvi., 5 f.) that, "entering into the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed." Matthew also writes of the angel, but tells of his being seen outside instead of within the tomb, and of his rolling away the stone door and sitting upon it (xxviii., 2 f.). Evidently these are variants of the same story, and Mark's version is the more primitive. Matthew has also a story of an appearance of Jesus to the women on their flight from the tomb (xxviii. 9, 10). The original ending of Mark probably did not contain a record of this meeting. For the abrupt ending of verse 8, "And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they were afraid—," indicates that the writer has finished telling what they saw. Luke, moreover, tells nothing of this appearance to the women. But John (xx., 11 f.) comes to the support of Matthew in this particular.

Luke's version of the sight of angels at the tomb may throw light on Matthew's story of the appearance of Jesus to the women. He relates (xxiv., 3 f.) that after they had entered the tomb and found that the body of Jesus was not there, "behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel." These were evidently angels; and apparently they were seen by the women inside the tomb. John also relates that two angels were seen in the sepulchre (xx., 11 f.). Now if an early, or perhaps the original, form of this story of the women's experience at the tomb, told of two angels being seen there, it might easily be transformed into the report that one angel and Jesus himself had been seen. But if the women had seen only the one angel, it is not easy to account for the report of two. Furthermore (and this is a stronger point) if they had seen anything resembling one angel alone, the story would have been quickly transformed to the effect that they had actually beheld, not an angel, but Jesus himself. Or if the story of the vision of a single angel were not based on an actual experience, it would just as quickly be transformed. Nothing but the point that two angels were seen, instead of one alone, could keep the story from changing to the effect that Jesus himself was seen.

On the other hand, we cannot think of this incident of the presence of two angels as an imaginative addition to the story of the empty tomb. If it were mythical, it would not speak of two, but only of one. The women must have actually seen what appeared to them to be two men or angels in white garments. This carries with it the necessary inference that the whole story of the visit to the tomb is in the main true.

The seeing of the angels at the tomb evidently made a deep impression on the disciples. All four of the canonical Gospels record it. John, moreover, seems bent on explaining it away. Angels are so seldom mentioned by this writer, and, when mentioned, referred to in so noncommittal a way that it is doubtful whether he believes in them. He relates, in substantial accord with Luke, that Mary Magdalene, looking into the tomb, beheld two angels in white. But he informs us (xx. 3 f.) that a little while before this, Peter and "the disciple whom Jesus loved" had gone into the tomb and seen on one side the linen cloths in which the body had been swathed, and, rolled up in a place apart, the napkin that had been upon the head.

The thought naturally suggests itself, that this was the cause why Mary Magdalene saw the two angels; and the writer seems to have had this thought in mind in telling of Peter's discovery. But beside this purpose to discount a miracle that seemed to him gross and meaningless, there is also here an effort to discredit the tradition that Peter had been the first to see the risen Jesus. For, according to the Fourth Gospel, it was not Jesus, but only the grave-clothes, Peter was permitted to be first to see.

The attempt of the writer of the Fourth Gospel to rationalise the story of the angels at the tomb, is an indication that it was in his day a tradition so well established that he could not afford to ignore it.

The influence of this tradition is seen in one or perhaps two stories that relate to other occasions. The account of the ascension given in Acts (i. 9 f.) tells that, "while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee—" etc. This is a close parallel to Matthew's, Mark's, and especially to Luke's story of the angels at the tomb. Compare, for example, Luke xxiv. 4. Note also the reference to Galilee, which is given besides in Mark xvi. 7, Matt. xxviii. 7, 10, and Luke xxiv. 6. This

story of the two angels present at the ascension, is evidently a reminiscence of the other story about the two angels at the tomb.

The tradition of the transfiguration (Mark ix. 2 f., Matt. xvii. 1 f., and Luke ix. 28 f.) may also have been influenced from the same source. Here also are the dazzling white garments, and the two personages from a supernatural sphere. Note, too, that according to Luke these two persons talked with Jesus "of His decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem." Finally, note that according to Mark and Matthew, Jesus commanded the three disciples that were with Him at the time, to keep silence respecting this thing until after His resurrection.

It has already been argued that the story of the angels must be historic, because otherwise it could not have kept its peculiar form. This conclusion is re-enforced by the consideration that the tradition of these angels was so fixed and persistent, and was potent to create the myth of the angels at the ascension, perhaps also to influence the story of the transfiguration.

Further proof of the authenticity of the woman's story is found in the influence it, as a whole, appears to have exerted. As has been pointed out, the Gospel narratives of the resurrection are all pivoted on this story. That is to say, if these stories are myths, they could not have arisen except on the basis of this report. The physical manifestations of Jesus, the proofs that He carried His natural body with him, presuppose the empty tomb.

And, further, even the evidence that Paul summarises also presupposes a physical resurrection, and consequently an empty tomb. Paul himself, as has been pointed out, did not believe in a physical resurrection. But unless the resurrection of Jesus was physical, it becomes so indefinite and indeterminable, that it cannot be identified for historical inquiry, and consequently cannot be classified as fact or fiction. Take away the defining concept of physical resurrection, and the resurrection from a thinkable historical occurrence dissipates into a series of visions, with no necessary connection and no definite and unalterable relation to any objective reality; or on the other hand it may lose itself in the general idea of personal immortality, or of living in human hearts as an influence.

(To be concluded.)

The Last of the Legends.

GIGANTIC moons did wax and wane. Away!

Vast astral systems trailed like wreaths of snow.

Swifter than thought my Ethrostat dared sway

E'en unto Heaven. O Paradise! But lo!

Where'er I turned from that once lovely gate

I saw no living thing—amazed—a-wander

'Mid battlements of ruin desolate.

[As rat-traps late of "Torrey-Alec" slander,

The bait—the glorious cheese—is gone for ever.]

Stay! One there was who sat alone, loud swearing

Enough to make ten thousand cocks crow. Never

May I forget his most vile-visaged bearing.

'Twas Peter, in a chronic quaking fright—

Like brother rabbit cornered by a stoat—

But when I spake of Heaven's unseemly plight

Of three foul languages he cleared his throat,

And, "Anglers licence," thus of me was heard:—

"Slumbered the Godhead æons seven times seven

As was his wont. What time the Holy Bird

Led on the concourse of sweet song in Heaven,

The fallen angels writhed 'twixt Earth and Hell,

And, plotting, slept not—a strange wheel to invent,

Concussionless and safe, yet swift to expel

From conjoint structure Stygian compounds blent.

O! Calliope! Thine incalescent breath

Might tell how, standing by the gilded gate

I saw (and rushed to hide me from such death)

That sheeny force in panoply gyrate.

As from the lakes subterrene the glittering spray

Is upward whirled in fountains bubbling red

To fairer lightning of the moon's bright ray,

Hell's legions leapt to Heaven overhead,

Till each Colossus of the spreading coil

Grew in his place. The wheel of Hell's desire

Sang a grand fugue whose harmonies o'erboiled,

Glowing again Gehenna's ruddy fire.

The quiet atrocious bombs at dammed speed

Fled o'er the city walls, and outward then,

Of vile expansion circumvolved did breed

Tumults of flame ne'er dreamed of mortal men.

Proud palaces new glistening that day

Caught the mad lustre; and each shuddering tower

Flushed with a molten glory fell away.

Mysterious Jah in his bejewelled bower
Sank—like the Prophet Veiled of Korahssan—
Unseen in life—in death a curse of lies.
No more the nimbus of his awful fan
From ashy ruin—phoenix-like—shall rise.

From that dread smutch a splendid mob sped down

Of supernaturals: Archangels flew

With Bloggs and Muggins—late of London town—

Now Israfel or Gabrielus, who

For reasons to themselves best known, quick changed

Their names from time to time, in alias;

Of character so light that here they ranged

On pillowy cloud in place of paliasse.

Such hectic heraldry of saints so gay!

'Twas wonderful to see them so deploy.

The weak foredoomed—the strong held on their way.

That heavenly host seemed no more to enjoy

The blaze, though used of old to bonfire-nights,

Auto-da-fè's, and such religious fires,

With Hell erstwhile their chiefest of delights.

Alas! Their time was come for cool desires.

As bees at honey-time swarm from a hive

The angel host poured forth. No bootless prayer.

Few 'scaped those sulph'rous catadupes alive.

'Twas worse than something awful to be there.

For then pursued the Tartarcan horde.

Full Sirroc-like their pennate bosom swept;

Yet, for the nonce, saved Heaven's aye youthful lord;

Who trembling saw the horrid sight and wept.

The Prince of Peace, of other help bereft—

His freedom gone—benumbed his righteousness—

One eye like Cyclops' rolled; awhile the left

Marked the discordant fray of Hell progress,

Led of the Tempter whence he could not flee,

His wings all grizzled of impatient dust.

"I really never lived till now," thought he,

"And never really died—as now I must."

O'er seraph forms a lethal torrent waved

To the celestial verge so far and grey.

Those shafts of living light; engulfed and laved,

Mere feeble rings of drift-smoke rolled away.

Like Columbine one straggling angel fell

Back to his smouldering nest, and 'ere he died

Sang of the conquering hosts of Asphodel,

But never more of all the angelic tide.

Spake Hell's brave prince unto his prisoner then:

"We never lived—but let us die—like men.

And 'ere we go from this mad stage—I bear

A human message for thee. Some there were

Wasted their pride of sympathy on thee—

Faithful *sans* evidence—thou infamy.

Others there were who lived and loved and died,

Ne'er knew nor cared if thou wert crucified;

But lived for liberty while round them grew

The chains of thy religion. Now, I too

Suffered in sympathy. The rosy cross

Against my heated lips was prest. I toss

Thee back the bitter taste of it." So said,

He flung the wheel of his sublime invention

To the unechoing gulf. And as it sped

His proud eye flamed his soul's supreme intention.

"Now we are equal. For 'twixt me and thee

The light no more sees my brave soldiery."

Say was thy vengeance ever half so free

As this, my pandect of theology?

The Prince of Heaven waxed exceeding wroth

Plied furious pinion in sudden flight,

Saw his quick opening. But circling forth

Satan thrashed far through the caruelian night.

Two godless cats on Albatrosious wing

Poured soul-like fluids out to blows well struck—

Unnatural gore to holy weapons' sting—

In that Kilkenny scene of whirl and pluck.

Destroyed to utterness. The Fiend—the Son

No more had place. A plume—a wandering shred

Told all the tale of a lost battle won.

Around was silence—silence of the dead.

Petrus, deep sighing, then resumed his tale,

But Mr. Foote his closure must apply.

Here my report shall cease. He draws the veil

O'er many a bitterer time—more tearful eye.

Full long on Earth I fear the truth will hide,

Since priests, by weeding out free men of battle—

Absorbing wealth from all who sinned or died—

Have made e'en us such tame obedient cattle.

On my proud Ethrostat I stepped once more.

To fisher Pete I my last *Freethinker* gave:

For blissful ignorance and Earth's sad shore

Left once gay Heaven quiet as the grave.

GEORGE ELLIS WOODWARD.

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 postcard.

LONDON.

STANLEY HALL (Junction-road, N.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Non-Religion of the Future."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall, Stratford): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Beautiful Land Above."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, a Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies, "God and Morality"; Brockwell Park, 3.30, F. A. Davies, "Infidel France." Wednesday, Sept. 27, corner of Rushcroft-road, Brixton, at 8.30, L. B. Gallagher.

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "The Godhead of Jesus."

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, Debate, "The Story of Creation." Tuesday, Sept. 26, Garnault-place, at 8.15, Guy A. Aldred, "The Testimony of Faith."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, Sept. 28, at 8, R. Poole, "Love and the Poet."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, H. Buxton, "Tolstoy's Resurrection"; 7, H. Percy Ward, "The Christian Creed: Irrational and Immoral." Monday, 8, Rationalist Debating Society: Readings from Favorite Authors.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Should Freethinkers Be Miserable?" 6.30, "Do We Need a Religion?" Tea at 5; 6d. each.

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 6.30, S. Holman, "Can We Believe Jesus Rose from the Dead?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-Place): 7.30, Important Business Meeting—lecture arrangements.

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