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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

DEBATE

ON THE

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

A VERBATIM REPORT OF THE

TWO NIGHTS' DISCUSSION

BETWEEN

MR. CHARLES WATTS & B. H. COWPER, Esq.

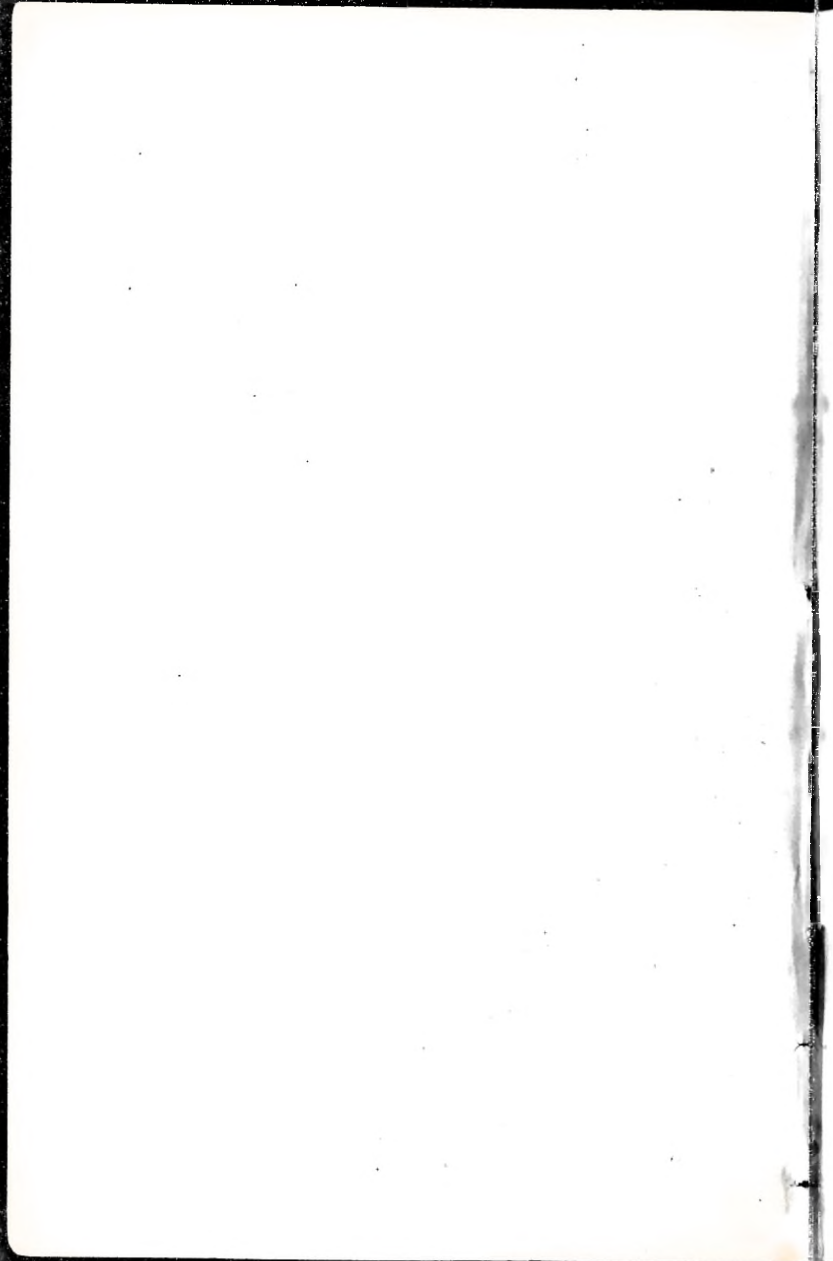
*Held in the School-room of the Congregational Chapel,
Stratford, on Thursdays, Feb. 16 & 23, 1871.*

THOMAS CROWE, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

LONDON:

AUSTIN & Co., 17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1871.



PRELIMINARY CORRESPONDENCE.

[The publication of the following correspondence is considered necessary on account of the reference to it by each disputant on the second evening of the debate. A perusal of the letters will also indicate how the discussion originated and the real questions at issue.]

National Secular Society, 17, Johnson's Court,
Fleet Street, E. C., November 16th, 1870.

SIR,—Mr. Dooley, of Stratford, has forwarded me a letter of yours dated November 8th, in which you express a desire to know whether I will defend in public debate my tracts Nos. 1 and 2 on the Christian Evidences. You also charge me in the same note with “dishonesty and untruth.” Permit me to inform you that subject to mutual arrangements, and when you have stated in writing those portions of the tracts in question upon which you rely to support your charge, and forward the same to me, I shall be most willing and ready to defend in public discussion the tracts you attack.—Awaiting your reply, I am yours, etc.,

B. H. Cowper, Esq.

CHARLES WATTS.

190, Richmond Road, Hackney, November 17th, 1870.

SIR,—I expected to hear from you before. You are aware that I occupied two evenings at Stratford in criticising your tracts, Nos. 1 and 2, and that I not only deny the truth of certain statements therein, but allege that you have shown a want of candour in your quotations—in some of them. Of course I shall be very glad to give you a fair opportunity of defending the tracts in public debate. You ask me to state in writing the portions of the tracts upon which I base my charge. To do this in detail would rather open a literary controversy, for which I am quite prepared if you like it. Otherwise, and in view of a platform discussion, I can only indicate the paragraphs to which I am willing to limit the debate. If you will send me a copy of the two tracts I will mark what I specially object to, and return them to you at once. Then if you feel able to justify them I will consider with you all the arrangements necessary.—I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

C. Watts, Esq.

B. H. COWPER.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

November 18th, 1870.

SIR,—Yours dated yesterday to hand. I only desire you to indicate the paragraphs in Nos. 1 and 2 of my pamphlets, the correctness of which you impeach. That you may do this, I herewith send as you request the pamphlets in question.

Mr. Cowper to Mr. Watts.

November 19th, 1870.

SIR,—I return your two tracts in which I have marked fifteen paragraphs, which I think will furnish sufficient materials. There are in each paragraph statements to which I object, or for which I require proof. Let me hear from you again as soon as convenient to you.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

December 1st, 1870.

SIR,—Your note of November 19th, together with the tracts containing the marked paragraphs, has been mislaid, and only came to hand this morning, hence the delay in the present reply.

The paragraphs to which you object are so vaguely marked that I fail to learn the portions to which you take exception. You have not clearly indicated how much of the fifteen paragraphs you deem inaccurate. It is necessary that I should know this that on the evenings of the debate I may have my authorities with me. By marking the termination as well as the commencement of the disputed statements of the tracts in question you will oblige.

P.S.—I return the tracts for the above correction.

Mr. Cowper to Mr. Watts.

December 2nd, 1870.

SIR,—In reply to yours received this morning I have simply to say that I shall expect you to be prepared to establish the accuracy of whatever I may impeach in the fifteen paragraphs, to each of which I have prefixed a mark. I cannot consent to limit my action any farther, as I may meet with new evidences damnatory of portions which I have not closely examined in those paragraphs. If you do not at once consent to this arrangement, I shall proceed through the medium of a newspaper to set some of your statements in their true light by means of chapter and verse, and you must then defend yourself in print, as indeed you will eventually do in any case. I enclose two stamps to pay for the tracts.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

December 3rd, 1870.

SIR,—In reply to your note of this morning permit me to state that I am prepared to defend every line in my pamphlets. My only object in asking that the parts to which you object may be plainly marked, was that I may be enabled to have the proofs with me on the evenings of debate. Why you decline to comply with my request is doubtless known to yourself. I consent (under protest) to your arrangement, and now call upon you to mention what nights in January, 1871, will suit you for the discussion, my time till then being fully occupied.

Mr. Cowper to Mr. Watts.

December 5th, 1870.

SIR,—In reply to yours received this morning, I beg to say that I have already told you why I decline to restrict myself by any further narrowing the limits of my discussion with you, and, therefore, my reason is *not* "best known to myself."

You must withdraw your very extraordinary protest before I have any more to do with you. I do not understand what you mean by *protest* in this case. If you can defend "every line," as you say, your protest is superfluous.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

December 7th, 1870.

SIR,—I regret if in any way my last note appeared to you offensive. It was not intended by me that it should be so. It is not my wish that you should narrow the limits of the discussion; extend them by all means as widely as you like, only it is necessary that I should know previous to the debate to what extent you purpose doing so. You will remember that one of the conditions upon which I desired to discuss the merits or demerits of my tracts, was that before the debate you sent to me in writing the parts of the pamphlets upon which you relied to make good your charges of dishonesty and falsehood against myself. The necessity for this I have mentioned in a previous note. You undertook to do so, and I am surprised that you now hesitate to carry out your engagement. However, that the debate may not fall through, I will produce proofs for every statement made in the fifteen paragraphs you have vaguely marked. Trusting you will at once fix the dates for debate.

Mr. Cowper to Mr. Watts.

December 8th, 1870.

SIR,—You must have misunderstood me, as I never thought of doing more than I have done in pointing out the limits to which I was willing to confine the discussion.

I propose to meet you on Fridays, Jan. 13th and 20th, at 7 p.m., to close not later than 10 o'clock, and speeches to occupy 15 minutes each. Other details may be arranged, as to Chairmen, etc. On this latter point of Chairmen, or umpires, or other gentlemen introduced, I trust you will see the wisdom and convenience of our joint consent. As to place, I am rather in favour of London, as central. But perhaps you may have a suggestion to make on this.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

December 11th, 1870.

SIR,—I am negotiating for a debate with the Rev. Mr. Matthias, of Merthyr, and I am under the impression that the dates you mention for our discussion will be the same as those I have given for my visit to Wales. I expect to know in a few days, when I will again write you.

As to place I am not particular. London will suit me. I suggest the New Hall of Science, unless you have a more suitable hall in view.

Mr. Cowper to Mr. Watts.

December 16th, 1870.

SIR,—As I gather from your continued silence that you are still uncertain about the Fridays, Jan. 13th and 20th, allow me to say that I will place at your disposal the two following Fridays also, so that you can choose which you prefer. Personally, I do not object to the New Hall of Science for the discussion, but I will consult one or two of my friends as to whether neutral ground would be best. The first thing is to fix the dates, and I am willing to take one tract each eyeing to prevent unnecessary trouble to you in bringing your books.

P.S.—I hoped you would send me your tracts for the two stamps, as you dated from 17, Johnson's Court. I would have returned the postage.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

December 19th, 1870.

SIR,—I find that my engagements will prevent me accepting either of your dates. I can fix, if convenient to you, Thursdays, Feb. 16th and 23rd. Please inform me at once if this will suit you. I sent my tracts to you on Saturday.

Mr. Cowper to Mr. Watts.

December 21st, 1870.

SIR,—I am sorry you will be unable to give Fridays, which are my only open days, and that the dates you name are so far off. But I will assent to them: Feb. 16th and 23rd.

I received the tracts, and enclose stamps for postage.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

December 28th, 1870.

SIR,—I thank you kindly for assenting to my dates for the debate. The *time* being now fixed, it only remains to make minor arrangements. For that purpose I suggest the appointment of two gentlemen, one on each side. Mr. R. O. Smith, 142, Old Street, City Road, will act on my behalf, with whom your representative can correspond.

Mr. Watts to Mr. Cowper.

January 6th, 1871.

SIR,—I have received a note from the Secular friends at Stratford. They think that as the challenge for our debate was given at Stratford, the discussion should be held there. To this I have no objection, if it meets with your views. They also desire to make the arrangements on my behalf. If you agree to this, please let your representative correspond with Mr. J. Dooley, 11, King Street, Chapel Street, Stratford, E., instead of Mr. R. O. Smith.

Mr. Cowper to Mr. Watts.

January 7th, 1871.

SIR,—I should certainly have preferred a more central place, and had decided on the Hall of Science, but as there is at least an appearance of reason in the request of Mr. Dooley and his friends, I shall agree to the debate coming off at Stratford, if a room sufficiently commodious can be obtained. This condition is of course essential. I shall select some one to look after the details of arrangements as soon as may be necessary. I have two friends ready to act as my chairmen, one for each evening. I believe there is plenty of time for arrangements.

DEBATE ON THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

FIRST NIGHT.

Subject of Debate: "Certain paragraphs in No. 1 of Mr. Charles Watts's pamphlets entitled 'Christian Evidences Criticised.'"

The CHAIRMAN in opening the proceedings gave, in a very clear and appropriate speech, an outline of the points to be discussed, and urged the audience to listen impartially, and judge calmly what was advanced by either gentleman. Each of the disputants would make three speeches, each of twenty minutes, during the evening, and no fresh topic was to be introduced in the last speeches of the debate. He then called upon Mr. Cowper to open the discussion.

Mr. COWPER, who was loudly cheered, said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—There are some curious things in a small pamphlet, the title of which I am about to read:—"Christian Evidences Criticised: being the National Secular Society's reply to the Bishop of London and the Christian Evidence Society, by Charles Watts." It is to a portion of those curious things that I am about to call your attention this evening. In order that the discussion may be limited and well defined, it has been arranged that we shall simply take a series of what I may call specimen paragraphs from this pamphlet, and that I, as the assailant on this occasion, shall appeal to any portions of those paragraphs to which I choose to appeal. I am not bound to take up every point, nor to object to every point, but I may if I like. I shall avail myself of this liberty, and shall endeavour, in the interests of the truth which we all profess to honour, and which we all declare ourselves ready to revere, to set before you to-night such statements as shall bear the most careful, minute, and dispassionate examination. The first paragraph to which your attention is to be directed commences on the second page of the pamphlet. In it occurs this question, among others—"Has Christianity anything to recommend it that other religious theories do not claim? Miraculous power, sublime teachings, sound doctrines, progressive aspirations are the supposed credentials of all assumed divine

systems." I would ask the gentleman who thinks this proposition a very formidable question, and follows it up with formidable lists of assertions, what other systems embodied all the characteristics to which he alludes? Can he mention any other religious system, apart from the Bible, which claims to have all these "miraculous powers, sublime teachings, sound doctrines, progressive aspirations?" This is a question to which it is for him to reply, and I beg at the very outset, as a commencement, that he will reply to this, and tell me and tell you what other religious systems embody those assumed characteristics. But I proceed. "It is alleged that the moral excellence of the New Testament stamps it with divinity. This, however, is but an assumption, as illustrated by analogy. The morality of Confucius, Seneca, and Socrates, is read with admiration, but the writings of those philosophers are not regarded by Christians as divine. Their maxims, however, are as practical, as lofty, and as pure as those of the New Testament. Christian morals that can be reduced to practice are ethics borrowed from men who lived long anterior to the Christian era, and who wrote without the aid of Christian inspiration." I take these men in their order, and first Confucius; and again I ask whether it is true (that is the question) that the maxims, the moral maxims of Confucius are as practical, and as lofty, and as pure as those of the New Testament? This is a general statement, and it must apply to all of these, if any, for it refers to them as a system. What is the case with regard to Confucius, who lived 500 years before Christ? That we have only one single book which with any feasibility he can lay claim to as his production, and this book is an autobiography, and therefore we have but little acquaintance, direct and positive, with his actual teachings. I am not a Chinese scholar, and therefore unfortunately I cannot go to the originals in this case; but I can quote from a review in the *Athenæum*, and I do so in the following words: "As regards the Deity, then, the teachings of Confucius are a blank. We come now to consider his views on man's duty towards his neighbour. This may be comprised in one word—'reciprocity;' and, indeed, Confucius himself has used that single term to express, with the utmost conciseness, all the instruction he had to give, on the head we are now considering. Certain writers have ventured to compare this precept of Confucius with the Sermon on the Mount. They expand the saying of the Chinese philosopher into that verse of the Gospel, 'What—

soever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,' and then they exclaim, 'Behold the Christian law forestalled.' But the intentions of the Chinese law-giver were very different from the gist of the precepts which the Christian is called upon to obey. On examination, we shall find that the Golden Rule of the Chinese sage was rather a political maxim than a moral law." Now a man's maxims may be partly gathered from his own interpretations of them in his own life; and as to these I shall read further from the number of September 14th, 1867: "As Confucius ignored the world to come, he found little support under the trials and disappointments which befel him. He was continually wandering about in search of employment, and was often rebuked by meaner men for his dejection under refusal. On one occasion an irreverent spectator, on his canvassing for power, compared his troubled appearance to the disconsolate look of a 'stray dog.' At page 171 we find him acknowledging that he was not unaccustomed 'to be overcome with wine;' and perhaps he was led to that indulgence by desire to wash away his regret for the loss of office. He was not over-truthful, for on one occasion he did not hesitate to violate an oath, excusing himself in the very words which brought such reproach on Euripides: 'My tongue swore, but my mind was unsworn.' He was not a brave man, for he turned pale at a clap of thunder, and migrated from any place where he apprehended danger. He was not a continent man, if the rule *qui s'excuse s'accuse* be true, for he had to justify himself with reference to visits which gave great offence to his disciples. We find him uttering shrewd remarks as to the difficulty of managing concubines, which shows he had experience in that line. He divorced his wife." Let that suffice of Confucius. Whether such morality is as lofty and as pure as that of the New Testament—that is the question at issue—I leave you to judge. I come now to the second name on the list—the name of Seneca. I need not tell you that Seneca was a Stoic philosopher who lived in the time of the Apostles, and that he lived in Rome during the twenty years preceding the death of the Apostle Paul, during which time the doctrines of Christianity were preached in the city, and with which, therefore, he may have been altogether familiar. But what is the fact in regard to Seneca? His morality, taken as a whole (for that is the question, no exception being allowed by my opponent), was it as pure and as lofty as that of the New Testament? He was the tutor

of Nero ; that may not be against him, though some men think it is ; he was a minister under the government of Nero—that may not be against him, and it may. Under Nero he amassed an enormous amount of wealth. This Stoic amassed an amount of wealth which we, in this country and in this age, can scarcely appreciate. Now Seneca taught some little maxims, and exemplified some little morality, to which I should like to refer my friend on the other side of the table. He teaches in his works, sometimes, suicide—self-murder ; is that as practical, as pure, and as lofty as the morality of the New Testament? (Cheers.) You will find this in his works which I have on the table, vol. iii. pages 160 and 170. Another of his maxims, to which I can refer you, inculcates the privilege of occasionally getting drunk. He said, “ We must sometimes come even to drunkenness.” It is to be found in vol. i. page 196. Is that morality as lofty and pure as the morality of the New Testament? Mr. Farrar, who is the latest writer on Seneca, and who has done all in his power to speak well of him, says:—“ So far from resenting his exile, he crawls in the dust to kiss Cæsar’s beneficent feet for saving him from death ; so far from asserting his innocence—which, perhaps, was impossible ; since to do so might have involved him in a fresh charge of treason—he talks with all the abjectness of guilt. He belauds the clemency of a man, who, he tells us elsewhere, used to kill men with as much *sang froid* as a dog eats offal ; the prodigious powers of memory of a divine creature, who used to ask people to dice and to dinner whom he had executed the day before, and who even inquired as to the cause of his wife’s absence a few days after having given the order for her execution ; the extraordinary eloquence of an indistinct stammerer, whose head shook, and whose broad lips seemed to be in contortions whenever he spoke.” Such gross and abject flattery, I contend, is not in accordance with the morality of the New Testament. He even goes so far as to praise Nero as a most innocent man, in a book which is now open upon the table. Nero is declared by Seneca to have been an innocent man ! Is that morality as lofty and as pure as the New Testament? He condemns pity too. In the New Testament our Lord is represented as saying, “ I will have mercy and not sacrifice ;” in the Latin vulgate the word *miser cordia* is used, and Seneca tells us that this word for pity is characteristic of old women and children, and a wise man is not to use it (vol. i. page

301; and vol. iii. page 426). Mr. Farrar in his volume makes a remark which is of great importance because our teacher, who criticises our morality, thinks that Pagan morality was quite equal to Christian morality. On page 6, Mr. Farrar says:—"From first to last it will be abundantly obvious to every thoughtful mind, that alike the morality and the philosophy of Paganism, as contrasted with the splendour of revealed truth, and the holiness of Christian life, are but as moonlight is to sunlight." This is the conviction of a man who has gone to the original sources, and has compared things with one another, and has discovered how greatly they differ. I think I have said enough to show the character of Seneca's maxims in part, that they are not so perfectly immaculate as they are said to be in those vague and mysterious sentences which I have read. Let us now look at Socrates. The *writings* of Socrates, of course, are not regarded by Christians as divine. Will my friend tell me where he has found the writings of Socrates—where he has heard of them? What monstrosity to talk about the writings of Socrates (for what is said of one is said of all), because there is not a line of any of his works in existence. "But they are so pure," it is said. I could tell you what I should blush to tell you from ancient authorities which I have consulted with reference to the morality of Socrates. I have here a book, the "*Memorabilia*," of Xenophon. In book 3, chapter 11, there is a story of this sort, which will give you an idea of those teachings of Socrates which are so pure. Socrates heard that there was a celebrated prostitute who used to sit as a model to artists, and he thought he would like to see her. He determined to go, and some of his friends went with him, and he saw the naked woman, and after he had seen her he stayed and she entertained him, and they had a kind of festivity. Xenophon tells us of the conversation which ensued between the Stoic and the harlot. He taught that woman how to profit more than otherwise she would have done in her most wicked and disgusting vocation. This story occupies the whole of one chapter in one book, and you working men are told that his morality is as pure and lofty as that of the New Testament. (Loud and continued cheering.)

Mr. WATTS on rising was warmly applauded. He said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen—You will ere this have recognised that the subject which we are about to discuss to-night is not an ordinary theological question. You are aware that I appear to-night upon the defensive; and I apprehend

that though it is sometimes considered pardonable in a conflict where victory is the object of the disputants, to adopt any line of conduct to carry out their particular views, yet in a debate where we desire above aught else to arrive at truth, we should endeavour to adopt only those measures we deem best calculated to achieve that result. Mr. Cowper has told you that he has but to criticise certain paragraphs in my pamphlets. Here I may intimate to you, that I wished my opponent, in order that you might have a fair discussion, to specify, some time ago, as minutely as possible, the particular points, and also the particular sentences in my pamphlets that he was about to criticise. I accepted the defence of those pamphlets, because Mr. Cowper had said publicly that I was not only untrue, but dishonest in my statements therein. I acknowledged that the statements which I published might be incorrect, that I might be in error, but I knew that I was not dishonest; and therefore I was willing to come to-night to sit at the feet of Mr. Cowper for the purpose of being set right. If I have been guilty of mistake, I shall acknowledge it when it is pointed out by my opponent. (Cheers.) Up to the present time, however, he has not been fortunate enough to do that. I wish to refer for a moment to what occurred some time ago, when this discussion was agreed upon. It was stipulated that every book to which I should be referred should be laid on the table; but instead of Mr. Cowper sending a list of the books which he would require me to refer to, he sent the fifteen paragraphs of my pamphlets so marked that it was difficult to know which would be attacked; and a cart would have been required to bring books enough to cover the whole fifteen paragraphs. (Hear, hear.) I wrote to my opponent, and a copy of my letter I have here in my possession, asking him to reconsider the matter, and to mark the paragraphs more explicitly, that I might bring every authority required to bear out the truth of my statements. He wrote back to say that he did not mean to do anything of the sort, and could not specify more particularly to what he should refer to-night. I mention this because if I have not every authority here for reference it is not my fault. If he really wished me to bring my authorities for what I had written—(I impute no motives)—if he really wished it after he had read the pamphlets some three months ago, would it not have been better for him a few days since to have said “Mr. Watts, I shall require you to produce such and such books?” (Cheers.) He has not done so. I intend,

however, to follow him line by line, and in the event of his falling into his own trap, he must not blame me, for I shall endeavour to show you why that particular course of action has been adopted by him. Whatever my opponent has done to-night in the way of refutation, he has not attempted to verify or repeat the charge which he made against me, of being dishonest or untruthful. I apprehend that by next Thursday night he will have shown me that he is capable of making one or two mistakes, and I shall then press home the charge and ask him where I show the marks of dishonesty in my pamphlets, and where I utter falsehoods? Strange to say, the very first paragraph which he sent to me marked, he has entirely overlooked, and has made no mention of it to-night. It is, "Much confusion of opinion exists among Christians in reference to the terms 'Divinity' and 'Christianity.' Have these words ever been adequately defined? Or are they not expressions used to represent notions acquired through religious training, notions based on belief, not demonstration; faith, not facts? Have we any knowledge to enable us to distinguish the 'divine,' supposing it to exist, from the 'human?'" Although that is one of his marked passages, he has passed it over, because I suppose, he knows no more of the Divinity than I do, and is unable to give a clear definition of Christianity; and therefore, with his usual ability, he avoids touching the question at all. (Cheers) Then the paragraph with which he commences reads thus:—"Has Christianity anything to recommend it that other religious theories do not claim?" I ask that question—has my opponent been kind enough to tell what Christianity has that other systems have not? I have read a book called the "Koran," which is supposed to represent a religious faith different from that of the Bible. There I find claims to inspiration, divinity, miracles and prophecy. Are not the same claims urged for the Christian faith? My pamphlet does not dogmatise, but it puts the question; and it is for my opponent to answer that question this evening, and when he has done so, I will endeavour to deal with his reply. I deny that the morality of the New Testament is original, and assert that the moral maxims taught by the men whom Mr. Cowper has mentioned would be found as lofty and pure and practical as the morality of the New Testament if compared with it. And then I state that what is practicable has been borrowed from men who lived long anterior to the time when Christ is said to

have lived. Is this true, or is it false? Instead of going to the ancients, my opponent should have gone to the point, and proved first that the morality of the New Testament is practicable, lofty, and pure, and then in the second place that it is more so than the maxims of other systems. I deny both the one and the other. (Cheers.) Then again his extracts to prove that Confucius, and Seneca, and Socrates, were not moral men, go for nothing; because however immoral their conduct may have been, their moral precepts may be as pure and lofty as those of the best men. (Hear, hear.) Shall I apply my opponent's reasonings to Christ? In the New Testament, which I have here, Christ actually offers a premium to a man who deserts his wife. You do not, however, urge that Christ was an immoral man on that account? In chapter xvi. of Luke you have a parable of an unjust steward, who is commended for his conduct, and it concludes in these words:—"I say unto you make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fall they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Now if this were found in a passage of Seneca or Confucius, our friend would say, "Here is a parable extolling a swindling usurious steward—out upon such morality." Then as to the disciples who were going on a mission of propaganda, we are told in the New Testament that if persons would not receive them into their houses they were to shake off the dust of their feet when they departed from the city, and it should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment than for that city. Will Mr. Cowper tell this audience the meaning of shaking off the dust of their feet, in oriental language? If he will do so, you will learn that it meant that the disciples should have a hatred against those to whom they were sent to preach, but who received them not. Then again, one of Christ's disciples requested permission to bury his father, but Christ said, "No, let the dead bury their dead, follow thou me." (Cheers.) Mr. Cowper speaks of the drunkenness of the ancient philosophers, and he says that some of them taught, if they did not practise, suicide. Does that prove that the maxims of those men are necessarily immoral? Because if so, what do you say of the Bible, which in Proverbs says—"Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." If that is not giving permission to get drunk, then words have no meaning what-

ever. And will you have a passage as to suicide? Then I draw your attention to Proverbs xxiii. 1—"When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee; and put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite." Is the morality, as taught in the Bible, original? My opponent says that he is not up in the Chinese language. Neither am I; but in a book by R. W. Mackay, entitled "The Progress of the Intellect," vol. ii. page 376, he says—"It has often been observed that the gospel morality is no absolute novelty, but that the same precepts had been already announced, if not among the Jews, at all events in other times and countries. The requital of good for evil, the virtue of loving an enemy instead of ill-treating him, had been appreciated by the philanthropy of Greeks and Hindoos." Davis, in his work upon China, vol. ii. pp. 41-50, says that the maxims "Guard the thoughts of the heart," and "Do to others as you wish them to do to you," are among the sayings of Confucius. So say Mr. Mackay and Mr. Davis; and the former goes through the precepts of the New Testament, showing that they are either in the Old Testament, or in the writings of the Greeks or Hindoos or Chinese. Therefore you have authority after authority, to show that the morality of the Gospels is not original. (Hear, hear.) I would have you understand that my opponent is here to contradict me. He has said that I have acted dishonestly and spoken untruthfully. If I have not, then all he brings forward to-night upon other matters will not affect my statements. In the pamphlet upon which Mr. Cowper has commented, I have said: "To the truths already uttered in the Athenian prison, Christianity added little or nothing except a few symbols which, though well calculated for popular acceptance, are more likely to perplex than to instruct, and offer the best opportunity for priestly mystification." Here I am prepared to verify that statement from page 19 of Mackay's "Rise and Progress of Christianity." But what says John Stuart Mill? On pages 28, 29, and 30 of his work on "Liberty" he says—"To extract from it [the New Testament] a body of ethical doctrine has never been possible without eking it out from the Old Testament—that is, from a system elaborate indeed, but in many respects barbarous, and intended only for a barbarous people. . . . I do not scruple to say of it that it is, in many important points, incomplete and one-sided. and that unless ideas and feelings not sanctioned by it

had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse condition than they now are. . . . What little recognition the idea of obligation to the public obtains in modern morality is derived from Greek and Roman sources, not from Christian as even in the morality of private life whatever exists of magnanimity, highmindedness, personal dignity, even the sense of honour, is derived from the purely human, not the religious part of our education, and never could have grown out of a standard of ethics in which the only worth professedly recognised, is that of obedience. . . . I believe that other ethics than any which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind." My opponent has attacked my first paragraph, wherein I allege that the maxims of Christianity are not more practical, and lofty, and pure, than those of the ancient heathen philosophers; I think I have not only verified the assertion, but that I have also proved that the morality of Scripture is impracticable. I leave it to you to judge for yourselves. Then our friend has spoken about our having no writings of Socrates. Suppose I adopt the same language and say, Where do you find one line of the writings of Christ? (Hear, hear.) Do you, when you appeal to the working men of England, think they are going to be bewildered like that? You have some teachings attributed to Socrates in the works of his disciples; then, if you do not believe in the disciples of Socrates—why do you believe in the disciples of Christ? I have exhausted my time; I suppose my opponent will have something to say upon other parts of my pamphlet, but, so far as the discussion has gone, I think I have answered him on paragraph one. (Loud cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN intimated that the charge of dishonesty was not made in the room, therefore it ought not to come within the debate. He thought it would be better to keep strictly to the rules laid down.

Mr. WATTS said that in his first letter, which formed the basis of the discussion that night, one of his conditions was that Mr. Cowper should prove that he was untruthful and dishonest.

Mr. COWPER: Gentlemen—Two things will be apparent to my judges: first, that my accusations of immoral teachings and practices against Socrates, Seneca, and Confucius have not been rebutted. (Hear, hear.) The second is this

—it has not been shown that the New Testament teaches suicide, or drunkenness, or hypocrisy, or flattery, or any of the other vices which I have shown were taught by our Pagan philosophers. (Cheers.) Our friend, in referring to a question which I asked when I requested him to produce some other religion in which the conditions he lays down do meet, refers me to the Koran; but I said expressly some other religion outside the Bible. The Koran recognises the Old and New Testaments, and if it does not admit that they are the sole revealed authorities on the matter of religion, it recognises the divinity and truth of both, and quotes largely from them. This is my answer to that. (Cheers.) Our friend said that the morality of Christianity was borrowed—“Ethics borrowed from men who lived long anterior to the Christian era, and who wrote without the aid of Christian inspiration.” I admit that there are many moral maxims in the New Testament which are found in the Old, and there are some which are to be found in the writings of wise men of all countries and times; but it is not the point. The point is that Christian ethics, as a whole, are borrowed from men who lived long anterior to the Christian era. Where is the proof of it? A quotation from Mackay won't do; it is merely bringing up Mr. Mackay to speak for Mr. Watts. A quotation from Mr. John Stuart Mill will not do; it is merely knocking me down with the great philosopher. (Cheers.) I want facts, and until they come I am perfectly safe. I will give another illustration of the morality of Socrates. Plato writes of what is in Latin *convivium*, and in English a banquet. Some gentlemen are represented as being there, and among them is Socrates himself. Another is Alcibiades. They eat and drink; they get drunk, and one after another they go to sleep; but Socrates is able to bear more strong drink than any of them; and he rises at daylight sober, and goes away, and returns home the next evening. That is a specimen of his morality; we are told it is as lofty and pure as that of the New Testament. The Evangelist of Socrates reports their conversation, and that conversation turns upon various vices, and certain practices of the Boulton and Park order. Is th's the morality to be compared with the New Testament? (Cheers.) I told you when I referred to Socrates, that I dared not quote what the most ancient authors say of the man, but I pass on. The next paragraph is on pages three and four, and with that I shall at present note first of all certain quotations which

occur on page five. On page four of the pamphlet it says :—
“ Among the many religions which existed at the time Christ is said to have promulgated his faith, the utmost toleration for the new theological system prevailed. ‘ Each nation,’ says Mosheim, ‘ suffered its neighbours to follow their own method of worship, to adore their own Gods, to enjoy their own rites and ceremonies, and discovered no sort of displeasure at their diversity of sentiments in religious matters. . . . The Romans exercised this tolerance in the amplest manner.’ ”
Now I accuse my opponent of deliberately leaving out of that passage the portion which is contrary to his own cause and opinion. I take Reid’s edition as the best, Murdock’s translation, it is page eight. It reads thus :—“ Each nation, without concern, allowed its neighbours to enjoy their own views of religion, and to worship their own gods in their own way. Nor need this tolerance greatly surprise us. For they who regard the world as being divided like a great country into numerous provinces, each subject to a distinct order of deities, cannot despise the gods of other nations, nor think of compelling all others to pay worship to their own *national* gods. The Romans in particular, though they would not allow the public religions to be changed or multiplied, yet gave the citizens full liberty in private to observe foreign religions, and to hold meetings and feasts, and erect temples and groves to those foreign deities in whose worship there was nothing inconsistent with the public safety and the existing laws.”
That restriction is intentionally left out. The second is from Gibbon, page 36, and it looks like a deliberate suppression, because the part which is suppressed occurs in a footnote. The quotation is—“ The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful.” Gibbon also says (and this is left out by my opponent), “ The Christians, as well as the Jews who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception—so important, indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work.”
Now this is utterly ignored. Then, to show how large this toleration was, my opponent says that “ St. Paul counsels his followers to have no fellowship with unbelievers, but if a man preach any other gospel save Christianity, let him be accursed.” 2 Cor. vi. 14, is a prohibition to have nothing to do with unrighteousness—the word unbelievers is not in the clause; and as to the words, “ let him be accursed,” they are

a misrepresentation of Galatians i. 8. The word "anathema" signifies not condemned in another world, but let him be excommunicated. (Cheers.) Further, before I lay down this pamphlet, in the same paragraph he says, "The same unjust conduct was exhibited by the Independents, who, in the reign of James I., persecuted to death many of the Baptists and Quakers, who sought to carry their Christianity into America, where the Independents had already partially established their faith." I ask what Quakers there were in the reign of James I. for Christians to persecute? Will he show me in what history it is recorded? (Cheers.) If you want illustrations of the measure of toleration which existed among the ancient Greeks and Romans, I can give you all you desire. Gibbon, in the sixteenth chapter of his celebrated book, treats in detail the whole subject of the persecutions which the Pagans inflicted upon the Christians, and he shows why it was that they persecuted the Christians. It was because the Christians brought in a system of religion—a theology which did not happen to be recognised by any Act of Parliament, or any decree of the Senate; of which the professors could not say it was the national religion of any people in the world. (Cheers.) Now the cat is out, and you see, as well as eyes can see, that you have been misinformed, and that in the most palpable manner. (Hear, hear.) If you have any doubt whatever, I would refer you to Neander, who was a later writer than Mosheim or Gibbon, and who, in the first volume of his history, quotes from the ancient jurist, Julius Paulus. He says: "Whoever introduced new religions, whose tendency and character were unknown, whereby the minds of men might be disturbed, were, if belonging to the higher ranks, to be banished, if to the lower, punished with death." What comes, then, of your toleration and progressive aspirations? My friend says "it would be no disadvantage to the Christians of enlightened England if they accepted a lesson of toleration from Pagan Rome;" but, from what I have just quoted, we should have to put them all to death if we carried it out. (Cheers.) Mr. Watts knows very well—it was in the *National Reformer* some months ago—

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow quotation from a book which is not present.

Mr. COWPER: I am not quoting—it is a matter which I state on my own personal honour.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow you to quote from it even

on your personal honour ; you must keep to the terms of the engagement.

Mr. COWPER : I have the book on the table, but I have not charged my memory with the reference. (No, no.) Well, I have said enough to suit my purpose. Toleration, my friends ! and Mosheim quoted for it, when his book is filled with the most bloody persecutions ! Gibbon quoted ; when Gibbon quotes the fact, and records the detail, and philosophises upon them as best he can ! Toleration ! it is of Christian origin, and of Christian conception. But we are told that Christianity is intolerant because an apostle says believers are to have nothing to do with sin ; the Christian morality is intolerant because Christians were told to shake the dust off their feet ! If intolerance never went further than shaking off the dust from your feet to show your displeasure or vexation, intolerance would be a very harmless thing indeed. (Hear, hear.) Secularists must be very sorely tried for their cause to summon to their rescue a passage like that—" Shake off the dust of your feet." What does it come to ? As to the third paragraph, there is a comparison instituted between Moses and Christ. So great is my friend's dislike to Christ, that he draws a comparison between the teachings of Moses and those of Christ to the advantage of the former. I don't object to Moses, but my reference is to Christ, who, it is said, " taught that good conduct in this life was not necessarily associated with its well-earned reward of human happiness and enjoyment. As for sin, he appeared to think it was generally prosperous, that riches and depravity were allied, and that the sinful ones of the earth ' fared sumptuously every day.' " If any man will read the opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount, he will see that it is the good men who are blessed in this world, and he will find that the doctrine of the Apostles is that " godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (Cheers.) Now, it is a doctrine of the Bible throughout, of the Old Testament (for I may refer to that), and of the New, that " the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked." And to the disciples of Jesus Christ is given peace, for he said, " Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Is there anything in that to indicate that the religion of Christ is bad ? (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN intimated that Mr. Cowper had three times imputed motives to his opponent; he hoped Mr. Watts would not see fit to adopt a similar course.

MR. WATTS said: I do not wish to do so; my position is sufficiently good, and my principles are too charitable to require me to ascribe anything mean to my opponent. Although I differ from him, I can believe that Mr. Cowper is sincere and honest. If you give me your attention, I will give you a fair sample of Christian teachings and quotations. You were told that I had not disproved the immorality of the ancient philosophers. I did not try to do so. I admit, with my opponent, that the ancient philosophers may have been immoral to a certain extent; but if a man be immoral, it does not necessarily follow that his writings or teachings are impure. (Hear.) But can my friend say that the teachings of the New Testament are not immoral, and that the disciples of Christ were spotless? Has he replied to what I said in reference to this matter in my former speech? I say that in every age and in every man there is some virtue as well as some vice; and the disciples of Christ showed by their teachings and works that they were not exceptions to this rule. (Hisses.) You who are not prepared to hear both sides of the question had better retire. I presume that you paid your money to hear my opinion as well as my opponent's. I do not allege that the ancient philosophers were moral *par excellence*, I have not stated that in my pamphlet; I am here to defend what I have really stated therein, not what my opponent has represented that I have said. Then we are told that the Koran acknowledges the Bible. Who says it does not? My position is that the Koran has a different theory from that of the Bible. Because it acknowledges portions of the Bible, my opponent says it is not different from the Bible; but Christians do not believe the same doctrines as the followers of the Koran, and therefore their belief must be a different theory, and this theory comprises what Christianity claims as peculiar to itself. (Cheers.) Then you were told that the quotations from the ancients themselves are required in this discussion; but a moment before you were informed by him that some of their writings were not in existence; then why demand that which is not obtainable? Because my opponent could not read Chinese, he went to a certain author and quoted what he required, which was quite right, and I did the same; but he says with the most perfect coolness that

you must accept his author, but not mine. (Cheers.) He says, "A quotation from Mr. Mackay will not do for me; it is merely bringing up Mr. Mackay to speak for Mr. Watts;" but I also produced Mr. Davis. To quote J. S. Mill to Mr. Cowper is only, he says, to knock him down with a great philosopher. Certainly. And if my opponent is not strong enough to hold his position he deserves to fall. I ask whether he can produce to me in the teachings and writings of Socrates and Seneca, the statements of their conduct which you have heard from him to-night? He knows very well that he has not a shadow of direct evidence for the truth of those immoral sayings and doings which he ascribes to them, and therefore he gives incorrect representatives of those men, and not the writers themselves. Now I hold in my hand the "History of Philosophy," by Lewes, and I ask whether that author impeaches the principles of Socrates? Does he not tell you that Socrates taught love, and morality, and forbearance to one another, of which I have spoken? Let my opponent disprove this, and I will then accept his imputations against the authority of Mackay and Lewes, gentlemen who have won laurels by their industry and their care. Then as to toleration, you will remember that it has been said, and truly so, that the Romans persecuted the Christians. Will Mr. Cowper tell me where I said they did not? I said *at the time* when Christ is said to have promulgated his faith, the utmost toleration for new theological systems prevailed. Can it be proved that the earliest Christians, for their faith, were ever persecuted by the Romans—say 1840 years ago, or when Christ was on the earth? My pamphlet states distinctly "at the time," and I defy my opponent to show one passage which will prove that the Christians were persecuted on account of their religion, at the time when Christ is said to have promulgated his faith. Until he does this, all his references to Nero and others will avail nothing. I admit that they were persecuted in the time of Nero, but then what was it for?—because they met in secret, and it was thought that they were conspiring against the civil power, and not till then did the Romans attack their rights. (Cheers.) Then we were told that I left out purposely a passage from Mosheim, which was hostile to my own cause and opinion. I was grieved to hear it stated that this was intentionally done, and I deny the statement. If Mr. Cowper possesses a different edition from the one I quote, then he should, as a gentleman, read every other edition before

charging his opponent with wilfully suppressing a passage. In fact, Mr. Cowper has used Murdock's translation, in which the passage in question does occur, and I have used Maclaine's translation in which that passage does not occur. But do the parts which he says I have purposely left out tell against me? I will read the whole passage:—"One thing indeed, which at first sight appears very remarkable, is that this variety of religions and of gods neither produced wars nor dissensions among the different nations, the Egyptians excepted. Nor is it, perhaps, necessary to except even them, since their wars undertaken for their gods cannot be looked upon with propriety as wholly of a religious nature. Each nation suffered its neighbours to follow their own method of worship, to adore their own gods, to enjoy their own rites and ceremonies, and discovered no sort of displeasure at their diversity of sentiments in religious matters. There is, however, little wonderful in this spirit of mutual toleration, when we consider that they all looked upon the world as one great empire, divided into various provinces, over every one of which a certain order of divinities presided, and that therefore none could behold with contempt the gods of other nations or force strangers to pay homage to theirs. The Romans exercised this toleration in the amplest manner." I contend that these words do not tell against me, but that they tell against my opponent. "The Romans exercised this toleration in the amplest manner;" these words are word for word with my pamphlet, and yet I am charged with dishonesty. If I had left out a word purposely because it did not suit my case, I would never again dare to appear before an audience, for it would have been dishonest; but have I done so, have I perverted the truth, or wilfully suppressed that which was adverse to my cause? Here is the passage on page eight, and I lay it before Mr. Cowper for his own inspection. (Cheers.) Then I am charged with misquoting Gibbon, and my opponent says that on the page from which I have quoted there is a note which modifies that which I have stated in my pamphlet. Let us see, I will read the quotation: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful." That is my statement and here is the book, and on the page there is not one note in reference to what I have quoted. (Cheers.) What am I to do, gentlemen, with an opponent who charges me with

misquoting, and with suppressing words which really are not to be found? (Cheers.) I endeavour to be truthful, and I maintain that I have not misquoted any one passage; but wishing to take no advantage, I place this volume in my opponent's hands for him to verify my statement. Again, I am charged with misquoting from the New Testament—three misquotations I was charged with. We were told the word “unbelievers” is not to be found in one passage. Then our friend has a different version from mine I suppose—he has a different New Testament! Because I read, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” This is the admonition of the apostle Paul, and this is what I have stated in my pamphlet. Then in Timothy, Paul says that if a man does not consent to the words of Jesus Christ, he is proud; does not that bear out what I have said with reference to the intolerance of the Christian precepts? (Hear, hear.) Then we come to the passage which Mr. Cowper attempted to give you. Paul says—“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” We are told that this means “let him be excommunicated.” Will my opponent tell you that the best Greek scholars admit such an interpretation? Are there not some of the best Greek scholars who deny it? (Cheers.) I think, then, I have answered the charge of misquotation. Then as to the general question of Roman toleration. I said that the Romans were tolerant, and I read from Mosheim and Gibbon to prove my assertion; and now I will give you a quotation from Chambers, in their “History of Rome.” On p. 360 they say—“One good quality they (the Romans) pre-eminently exhibited—namely, the toleration of other forms and rituals than their own, no matter whether exhibited at home or in the countries they conquered.” Here, then, Chambers, Gibbon, and Mosheim, corroborate my statement; and now I ask my opponent to answer them. He has not answered them hitherto; if he cannot do so, I have proved my side. Then you are told about shaking off the dust from your feet. My opponent says that if you never have any more intolerance than that, intolerance will be a very harmless thing indeed. You know that I spared him even there, for the chapter teaches something worse than that; for it says of those very parties who would not receive the disciples, that it would be more tolerable in the day of

judgment for Sodom and Gemorrah than for them. Perhaps he will say that they were to be burnt because they did not accept the disciples into their houses! That is Mr. Cowper's idea of toleration. (Cheers.) Then as to the next paragraph—and I am surprised that I have not been challenged for a proof of the statement that the doctrines of Christianity were not original. I say they were not, and I quote the story of Crishna and the history of the Essenes in proof thereof. But to pass on. I have said: "The same unjust conduct was exhibited by the Independents, who, in the reign of James I., persecuted to death many of the Baptists and Quakers, who sought to carry their Christianity into America, where the Independents had already partially established their faith." What is it Mr. Cowper denies in that? Does he deny that the Independents put the Quakers and Baptists to death on account of their religion? If it is a question of date, then I admit he is right; but then I say that Mosheim has made similar mistakes with regard to dates. I urged that the Baptists and Quakers were put to death by the Independents. My authorities are Priestley, and Conder in his "Views of all Religions," a book which I have on the table. Therefore I think that I have established my assertion—namely, that in putting to death the Quakers and Baptists, Christians have exhibited a marked difference from the toleration which was exercised by ancient Paganism. I admit that the date is wrong, but the deed is the same; and I will put other authorities before my opponent, as I have Mosheim and Gibbon, if he says that the Christians did not murder and persecute their brother Christians, because they appeared to be encroaching upon their livings.

The CHAIRMAN asked Mr. Watts as a favour that he would, in his next speech, address the audience, and not Mr. Cowper. He also requested that the audience would not audibly give expression to their feelings.

MR. COWPER.—If men were to deny that the sun was shining at twelve o'clock in the day-time, it would be a difficult thing to prove that the sun was shining. My opponent has said that the Christians were not persecuted because of their religion, but I contend that they were, and if he cannot see that such was the fact from the books I have quoted, I cannot show him further. He has quoted from Maclaine's translation of Mosheim, which is inaccurate in the extreme. A writer, Dr. Murdock, says that "he often added a few words of his own to give more vivacity and point to the sen-

timents of his author, or more splendour to their dress. And whoever will be at the pains of comparing his translation with the original may see that he has essentially changed the style, and greatly coloured and altered in many places the sentiments of his author. In short, that he has paraphrased rather than translated a large part of the work." I have compared these two books, and I have found that Murdock's translation is correct, and I have not hesitated to use it. As to the extract from Gibbon, about which there was a considerable explosion, allow me, from Mr. Watts's own book, to read the words I said he had omitted from his pamphlet, though his edition is a different one from my own—"Some obscure traces of an intolerant spirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (see Juvenal, Sat. xv.), and the Christians as well as Jews who lived under the Roman Empire formed a very important exception; so important, indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work." These words are recorded in a foot-note on page 36; and yet you are told, with the courage of a Hector, that no such words are on the page. (Loud cheering.) I would also call attention to another little matter—the allusions that are made to the Koran. Allow me to observe that the Koran was written several hundred years after the latest book of the New Testament, and therefore the New Testament cannot contain any ethics borrowed from that book. The Koran, if my memory serves me—I shall be, perhaps, told to refer to the book—repudiates the claim of working miracles on the part of Mahomet.

The CHAIRMAN—I cannot allow you to quote the Koran unless it is on the table.

Mr. COWPER—Well, I shall proceed with an observation or two—one only upon the subject of the morality taught by Christ, with regard to toleration. You are told of the people to whom you are to shake off the dust of your feet, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the Day of Judgment, than for them. But this is putting different things together—one is an exhortation to Christians not to have anything to do with unrighteousness and sin, the other being the prerogative of the Eternal God, who shall judge the living and the dead. I have not confounded these two things; I have a duty, and that duty is not to smile at or patronise or favour iniquity to any degree or of any name, for righteousness is not to have any fellowship with unrighteousness. Did any Pagan writer utter a sentiment like that?

(Cheers.) Then we are told that "in the history of the Essenes, a sect that flourished long before Christ, are to be found the principal doctrines and customs contained in the New Testament." I have a book here by Dr. Ginsburgh, of Liverpool, one of the greatest scholars of the day, and among the statements that he makes with regard to the opinions of the Essenes I find he says—"They live in villages, avoiding cities on account of the habitual wickedness of the citizens." We are further told that they "do not marry nor give in marriage, hence there are, properly speaking, no newly born ones among the Essenes, no children, no youths, as the dispositions of these are unstable, and liable to change from the imperfections incident to their age." And he says again—"No one of the Essenes marries a wife, because woman is a selfish and excessively jealous creature, and has great power to destroy the morals of a man, and to mislead with continual tricks, flattering speeches, and other kinds of hypocrisy as on a stage; bewitching the eyes and the ear; and when they are subjugated like the things stultified, she proceeds to undermine the ruling intellect." Now, the Apostle Paul says, "Marriage is honourable in all;" and the difference affecting that very matter—the fundamental principle of the social life—is such, that to say the one and the other correspond, is to say that which is not at all correct. There are other things stated with respect to their manners, such as "they regard ointment as defiling; and if a man is anointed against his will, he immediately wipes it off his body." Now Christ does not regard that as defiling. He says, "When thou fastest anoint thine head, and wash thy face." Then we are told about washing; but the New Testament says—"call no man unclean." But our friend, who does not calculate upon being brought to task like this, tells you that the doctrines of the Essenes are the same as those contained in the New Testament. The next reference is to Krishna. Our friend here, with that marvellous pertinacity which I do not condemn in a man who has a desperate case in hand, writes "Chrishna"—it is written in modern works as "Krishna;" but in the mind of an unbeliever it is supposed to have something to do with Christ, therefore it is written Ch, and sometimes the t is put in. But the name has nothing whatever to do with Christ. (Mr. Watts—Hear, hear.) But again—"Chrishna, the incarnate god of the Brahmins, furnishes the outline of the supernatural structure said to have been

erected by Christ and his apostles." Is that the case? I boldly declare that it is not, for the doctrines upon which my friend relies are later than those of Scripture, as proved by the writings of some of our best writers. I have here some extracts from Max Müller, one of the great writers on Sanscrit, and he says of the book which contains such statements with regard to Krishna, the Mahâbhârata, none knows its date even approximately, or that it was written previous to the Christian era. And yet you are told that it contains an outline of the Christian system! "The poem, as we now have it," he says, "is clearly written with a special view of glorifying Krishna, one of the most recent productions of the theogony of the Hindoos." But I am not aware that any man, or any scholar, and I have taken a great deal of pains to find out, that any Sanscrit scholar now would advocate any antiquity for the story of Krishna, any more than he would think of writing "Chrishna" to make it look like "Christ." Then our friend says that "Chrishna furnishes the outline of the supernatural structure said to have been erected by Christ and his apostles, and that Christianity has been aptly described as Paganism modified, and somewhat refined." Now, in the first volume of the "Asiatic Researches," which I have here, we read these little things about Krishna:—"Chrishna was not less heroic than lovely, and, when a boy, slew the terrible serpent, Caliya, with a number of giants and monsters. At a more advanced age, he put to death his cruel enemy Cansa; and, having taken under his protection the King Yudhisht'hir, and the other Pandus, who had been grievously oppressed by the Curus, and their tyrannical chief, he kindled the war described in the great epic poem, entitled the Mahâbhârata, at the prosperous conclusion of which he returned to his heavenly seat." And then further on in the same book we have a general statement respecting Krishna, and the supposed resemblances of his story with the gospels. At the end of the same article we find the alleged analogies between the character of Krishna and that of Christ, and the writer, Sir William Jones, says—"This motley story must induce an opinion that the spurious gospels which abounded in the first age of Christianity, had been brought to India, and the wildest parts of them repeated to the Hindoos, who engrafted them on the old fable of Césava, the Apollo of Greece." So that Sir William Jones points out the facts of the case. The story of Krishna is modern, and it is as foul and obscene in

its details as it is possible to imagine. I think we may leave the Essenes and Krishna in the oblivion in which they should rest in the estimation of every Englishman. In the next paragraph we are informed "that the Galilean religion really retained many of the Pagan follies, some of which are to this day practised in the Christian Church." Will my friend tell me what Pagan follies Christianity has retained? If my memory serves me, the first chapter of the Romans contains a description of the idolaters, and it is written in a tone of holy indignation. In the first and second epistles of the Corinthians you have allusions to the practices of the idolaters, and Christian men are warned that God has nothing in common with idols, and a great deal more. From first to last, if there be anything manifest on the face of this New Testament and the Old Testament, it is the unswerving spirit of utter condemnation of everything in the shape of idolatry or in the spirit or principles of idolatry; and yet we are told in a pamphlet called "*Christian Evidences Criticised*," that the Galilean religion really retained many of the Pagan follies, some of which are to this day practised in the "*Christian Church*." I regret very much that the multitude of matters prevents me from going into every detail which I have marked in this pamphlet; but there are still one or two more to which some reference must be made, and therefore I at once draw attention to the sixth paragraph, pages seven and eight, in which allusions are made to the opinions of "the alleged founder of Christianity," and "his credulous hearers, that the end of the world was at hand; that their existence on earth was nearly over, and if they accepted his faith, they should not only have houses and lands during their brief stay here, but happiness and immortality hereafter." The whole of this shows such a misapprehension of the spirit of Christianity, that two minutes will not be sufficient to speak upon it. Our Lord speaks of the world in a metaphorical sense, to denote the maxims and condition of this present life of the men of the world, and it was believed, and it is certain that to them the end of the world was very near. They did not live for ever, they passed away; but Jesus Christ and his disciples did not expect this material world to come to such a conclusion as this, because the Gospel was to be made known to the ends of the world. There were to arise scoffers, men who denied the Lord that bought them, who would say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all

things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." There you have an indication that the end of the world was not so nigh; and men of the class described have brought us to this room to-night. (Loud cheering.)

The CHAIRMAN intimated that both Mr. Cowper and his opponent had slightly digressed from the rules laid down, by referring to the Koran, the book not being on the table. He would suggest, as the Koran seemed to be of some importance in the debate, that it should be laid on the table the following week, in order that the statement to the effect that Mahomet repudiated the claim of working miracles and the gift of prophecy, might be verified.

Mr. WATTS supplemented the chairman's remarks by requesting Mr. Cowper to furnish him, before the next meeting, with a list of books which would be required for reference, in order that he might not be inconvenienced by carrying a larger number of volumes than was necessary to support the paragraphs attacked in his pamphlet. He then said:—I will go *seriatim* through what has been said by my opponent. We were asked what was the cause of intolerance in ancient times. For I admit intolerance; but the point was, did the Romans persecute the Christians at the time when Christ was said to have lived? In my pamphlet I state that they did not. Although I have repeated this two or three times this evening, Mr. Cowper has avoided this point, because he knows there is not one line in history to verify his assertion that the Christians were persecuted by the Romans for their religion during the lifetime of Christ. What was the cause of persecution in after times? Mosheim states in substance what is said by Chambers in their "History of Rome," page 332. It is stated:—"In the reign of Trajan considerable excitement seems to have prevailed throughout the empire on the subject of Christianity, occasioned partly by the clamours of the populace in many towns against the Christians, and partly by the suspicion in which they were held by the authorities on account of their secluded manner of life, their aversion to public sports and to military service, and above all, their secret meetings for the purpose of worship." Here is precisely what is stated in my pamphlet, that because they met in secret, and, it was thought, conspired against the State, therefore then, and not till then, were the Christians persecuted. The next point to which my opponent referred was with reference to the modes of worship among the Romans,

when he took hold of Gibbon for the purpose of refuting my statement, and proving that I had misquoted that author. [The CHAIRMAN: Will you kindly look at the audience?] Well, let us see whether he has done so. When this was first quoted, Mr. Cowper said, "If Mr. Watts had dealt fairly with it, he would have said it had a note appended." I deny that the note has the slightest reference to the passage quoted by me. It refers to an extract that has not been read to you to-night. The note refers to this passage—"The devout Polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted, with implicit faith, the different religions of the earth." I never said anything about that paragraph. The extract in my pamphlet is—"The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful;" and to that extract there is not the smallest foot note in Gibbon. My object is to argue the matter thoroughly. If I am wrong, put me right; but do not charge me, without any proof, with dishonesty. (Cheers.) First, I deny that the note refers to my extract. It says, "Some obscure traces of an intolerant spirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (see Juvenal, Sat. xv.), and the Christians, as well as the Jews, who lived under the Roman Empire, formed a very important exception; so important, indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work." To prove what? That the Christians were not persecuted by the Romans. The point does not refer to my extract, and what is more, it points decidedly against my opponent; "I thank the Jew for teaching me that word." (Cheers.) So much for my misquotations. (Hisses.) You are not gentlemen if you hiss; judge on both sides for yourselves. (Hear, hear.) We were told next, that the Koran was more recent than the New Testament, therefore this cannot be copied from that. Who said it is? I never quoted the Koran for that purpose; I mentioned it to show that its devotees claim for their faith many of the same characteristics as the Christians do for their religion. That was my statement, and to that no reply has been given. Then, Mr. Cowper says, with reference to the shaking off the dust from the feet of the disciples, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrhah, that they are two distinct passages, referring to different events. Are they? Why they follow each other. (Cheers.) I will read them:—Matthew x. 13, 14, and 15: "And if the house be worthy,

let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city." (Cheers.) Shame that a learned man should thus come and report to you that I am wrong in my history, that I misquote the Bible, and that I wilfully pervert the sense of my authors. (Cheers.) Then I am challenged about the Essenes. I say in my pamphlet "that the principal doctrines and customs contained in the New Testament"—mark the word *principal*—are to be found in the history of the Essenes. What are the doctrines? The belief in a God, the immortality of the soul, the reward of the righteous; here are three of the principal doctrines which Christians believe. And these are admitted to have been among the doctrines of the Essenes by Josephus and Mosheim. Now come the customs of the Essenes; what were they? Not that all had to abstain from marriage, but that a portion only had to do so. Some were allowed to marry, and there were certain conditions relating to the ceremony. And did not St. Paul specify certain conditions under which Christians should remain single, and mention certain causes which would justify marriage? That is precisely what the Essenes exemplified among their customs, and they taught that persons should mortify their bodies, as St. Paul also exhorted. I would advise my opponent to read my pamphlet with a little more care and thought. Now, as to Krishna—and I was staggered to think that a gentleman who held in his hand the first volume of the "Asiatic Researches" should dare to say what he did—Mr. Cowper said that no writer of modern times ever spelled the word Krishna with a C. What difference would it make if he did not?

The CHAIRMAN.—I must again request you to address the audience.

Mr. WATTS.—I apologise for looking at our friend; you know when a man is destroying or building an edifice he likes to see how his work is progressing. (Laughter.) I will deal with Sir William Jones. Mr. Cowper says that Jones deals with the facts of the case. Admitted. And what does Jones say? First he spells Krishna with a C., and instead of saying that the whole story is modern, as my opponent alleges, he says on page 273, vol. i. "Asiatic Researches," "That the

name of Crishna and the general outline of the story were long anterior to the birth of our Saviour, and probably to the time of Homer, we know very certainly." (Cheers.) Why, it is almost an insult to be asked to discuss here in his way, with a man who denies his own authors. Jones says that Crishna was an incarnate deity; that he worked miracles, and was exposed to persecution as Christ was by Herod; and that he was hidden away, as Christ was; and here are the outlines of the early history of Christ. Then after that we come to Pagan follies. I am asked what Pagan follies Christianity retains? First, the doctrine of the Trinity—three in one and one in three; then sacrifice; then baptism was a Pagan rite; and then burning incense; the follies of Ritualism, too, are some of the follies of Paganism in the past. The last statement alluded to by my opponent was with respect to the end of the world; he denied that the speedy end of the world is taught by Christ to his disciples. Now, I find in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Christ teaching the speedy end of the world most emphatically. I will read it to you—"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Now there was Christ telling the people to whom he was speaking, that the end of the world would come while they were alive. In several places Gibbon and Mosheim state that the early Christians believed that the end of the world really was at hand, and that is my statement in my pamphlet. And then with regard to the learning of the early Christian teachers. Mosheim says that "In general the apostolic fathers and the other writers who in the infancy of the Church employed their pens in the cause of Christianity, were neither remarkable for their learning nor their eloquence; on the contrary, they express the most pious and admirable sentiments in the plainest and most illiterate style." Christ said to the people to whom he preached, You who follow me shall not only have houses and lands in this life, but a crown of glory in the life which is to come. And yet we are told that all this is to be taken in a metaphorical sense. Now, I say that to every question, so far as my pamphlet is concerned, I have given an answer. As to Moses, as mentioned by my opponent in a former speech, I said that in comparison with Christ, Moses took a healthy view of human life. That is

only a comparison. Christ said that nothing that entered the mouth could defile a man ; Moses taught just the opposite. Christ taught that if we are smitten on the one cheek we are to offer the other. Moses taught that if smitten you should defend yourself. Moses taught respecting disease better than Christ, for whatever the faults of the Jews and Moses were, they were particularly clean as to the person. What says Christ? "Take no thought of your life;" "Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all things shall be added thereto." I am asked to defend the passage that represents Christianity as having no charms for the self-reliant. The New Testament teaches that of ourselves we can do no good thing. Christ says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and then we are told that wisdom is foolishness, and that God can destroy the wise, and that men would believe a lie in order that they might be damned. I am also taunted with the text in which a writer of the New Testament spoke of scoffers ; but who was the man supposed to have written those words? It was Peter the convicted liar, who denied his own Master. (Cheers.) I have dealt, so far as my time will allow, with all my opponent's attacks, and if he wishes further to discuss this matter, I invite him to a written debate, that every assertion in my pamphlet may be thoroughly investigated. I entered the debate thinking that I should perhaps be corrected and put right ; but such has not been the case. The greatest scholar my opponents have put forward has not successfully impeached a single statement made by me in No. 1 of the pamphlets. (Cheers.)

The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to Mr. Crow for his able conduct in the chair.

SECOND NIGHT.

Subject for debate: "Certain paragraphs in No. 2 of Mr. C. Watts's pamphlets entitled 'Christian Evidences Criticised.'"

THOMAS CROW, Esq., again presided. He said that he was in favour of public discussions on theological subjects, because, if properly conducted, he thought them productive of great good. He hoped that both disputants would adhere to the questions in debate, and that the audience would listen impartially. Mr. Cowper's duty that evening was to prove that certain statements in No. 2 of Mr. Watts's pamphlets entitled "Christian Evidences Criticised" were incorrect; while it would be the business of Mr. Watts to defend these statements. Mr. Cowper would open the discussion.

Mr. COWPER said: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen,—My first duty to-night will be to comply with a condition agreed upon at the last discussion—viz., to produce from the Koran evidence in support of my assertion, that therein Mahomet rejected the claim to the power of working miracles. The passage which I shall read is one among several. You will find it in the 13th chapter of the Koran, in Sale's translation, which I select as the more popular. It is in these words (p. 55, vol. 2). "The Infidels say, unless a sign be sent down unto him from his Lord, we will not believe. Thou art commissioned to be a preacher only, and not a worker of miracles; and unto every people hath a director been appointed." I now proceed with the discussion, taking up a paragraph, as previously arranged, in the second tract of Mr. Watts, on page 10, number seven on the list agreed upon. This paragraph commences thus:—"When the New Testament was written we have no certain means of knowing." Gentlemen, I do not deny it; but over against it I place this equally confident assertion—when Mr. Watts wrote his tracts Nos. 1 and 2, we have no certain means of knowing. It goes on—"Hartwell Horne, who wrote in favour of Christianity, noticing the diversity of opinion among eminent critics as to the period when the

Gospels first appeared, says: 'In this conflict of opinions, it is difficult to decide,' and so on. My first observation is, that that first sentence refers not to the Gospels as a whole, in Hartwell Horne, but to the Gospel of St. Matthew in particular. The remainder of the extract does apply to the Gospels as a whole; but my opponent, with characteristic cleverness, has omitted this sentence following his quotation—"Since, then, *external* evidence affords us but little assistance, it becomes necessary to have recourse to the *internal* testimony which the Gospel of St. Matthew affords, and we apprehend that it will be found to preponderate in favour of an early date." There is on the first of those pages a list of eminent men who have assigned the Gospel of St. Matthew to various dates, from A.D. 37 to A.D. 64. I care not what date you fix upon, it is for me merely to know that they lie within the limits of the lives of the men who lived when the transactions of the Gospels occurred. He then proceeds to say—"Neither have we any knowledge that the statements of the New Testament were taken down as spoken by Christ and his apostles, or that they were committed to writing at all, previous to the middle of the second century." That I deny; and I appeal to the notorious facts that before the middle of the second century the New Testament was translated into the Syriac language, and also into the Latin. He then goes on with a quotation from Dean Alford's "How to Study the New Testament," which says: "These Gospels, so important to the Church, have not come to us in one undisputed form." He slides from the question of date into that of various readings, without making a new paragraph! But again; what is this extract? I shall not read the words, in order to save my time. But again, with characteristic cleverness, my opponent has omitted the following words immediately after where he stops: "Most of the differences are unimportant to the meaning; but, on the other hand, some are very important even to the omission in some copies, and insertion in others, of passages of considerable length." I know what those various readings are—I am not giving you second-hand information, but the result of personal investigation and inquiry; and I know that, with the exception of two passages, there are not in the whole of the four Gospels any passages of considerable extent regarding which there is any great doubt. The first is, the account of the woman taken in adultery, in the Gospel of St. John, extending over ten or twelve verses, and the second is the concluding verses

of the Gospel by St. Mark, from the 9^h verse onwards. Those are the only two important various readings. But these various readings don't touch the question of date. There are thousands of various readings in the writings of Terence, the Latin poet, but who would doubt the antiquity of the poems because of that? He then goes on, in the paragraph numbered eight, to say—"The fact that neither Josephus, Philo, nor the Apostolic Fathers—writers of the first century—make any reference to the Gospels or Epistles, tends to confirm the opinion that nearly a hundred years elapsed from the occurrence of the events mentioned in the New Testament, supposing them to have taken place before their records were published to the world." With reference to Josephus, I admit the fact; but Josephus does not mention the writings of Pliny, nor the writings of Horace, nor of Virgil, nor Martial, nor men about his own generation. He believed in Martial and Pliny as much as in the Gospels, I have no doubt, that is, in neither; and he quoted neither. (Cheers.) As to Philo, I ask my opponent how Philo could quote from the Gospels when he wrote before they were written? (Hear, hear.) I leave him to solve the chronological order. As to the Apostolic Fathers, I have them on the table, and I will give you a sample of what they have done in that particular direction. In the Epistle of Barnabas, page 7 of Dressel's edition, which is the best edition of the original work, I read thus:—"Let us take heed, lest as it is written, we be found, many called, but few chosen." That is from the Gospel of St. Matthew. I will give you a specimen from the Epistle of Clement, page 95 of this book. It is from the 47th chapter of the first Epistle of Clement. I read from the original:—"Take up the epistle of the blessed Paul in your hands, the first which he wrote unto you in the beginning of the Gospel." He is writing to the Church of the Corinthians, and if that is not a reference to the Epistle of the Corinthians, God knows how you will prove the existence of the book! In the remainder of the paragraph we have a supposed analogy between certain revolting events which took place in Jamaica a few years ago, and the occurrences of the transactions which are recorded of Christ, on the supposition that the events were not recorded until a century later. That is no comparison at all—it is a mere waste of words and of ingenuity on the part of my opponent, and the supposed supposition can only have been introduced in order to suggest a parallel between ex-governor Eyre, with whom

I have no sympathy, and Jesus Christ, with whom I have a great deal. In the ninth paragraph, on page eleven, we read:—"Another instance showing the doubtful history of the New Testament is that, according to Mosheim and Dr. Pye Smith, the early ages of Christianity were remarkable for artful or superstitious copyists." Now you hear the supposed opinion of Mosheim—I will give you his real opinion. On page 36 of Reid's edition (century one, part 2, chap. ii. section 16) I read:—"That the Four Gospels were combined during the lifetime of the apostle John, and that the first three Gospels received the approbation of this inspired man, we learn expressly from the testimony of Eusebius. And why may we not suppose that the other books of the New Testament were collected into one body at the same time?" Then comes the passage to which my opponent refers, but with characteristic cleverness, he has failed to complete it. I shall do so. "These worthless productions would have wrought great confusion, and would have rendered both the history and the religion of Christ uncertain, had not the rulers of churches seasonably interposed, and caused the books which were truly divine, and which came from apostolic hands, to be speedily separated from the mass of trash into a volume by themselves." Mr. Watts may get out of that as best he can. (Cheers.) I refer now to Dr. Pye Smith, whose opinion is given you according to the version of Mr. Watts, but whose opinion I shall give you according to himself, page 67 of the answer to Robert Taylor:—"It is no discredit to the apostolic writings that weak and dishonourable men who had their own selfish ends to answer, attempted imitations of them, and used such artifices as they could to gain credit to their inventions: on the contrary, it is a circumstance which enhances the honour and aids the security of our Scriptures, for two reasons: first, the existence of counterfeits is an evidence of both the reality and the value of that which is true and genuine; and secondly, this fact excited the general body of the earliest Christians to be so much the more careful in separating true from false compositions. Indeed the forgery of books, under the names of great men, was anciently a very common practice. Suetonius complains of such suppositious writings, both verse and prose, circulated as the productions of Horace; though he lived less than a hundred years after the poet's death. Several orations and epistles were given to the world as Cicero's, and their spuriousness remained

long without detection; and forged works were published under the names of Orpheus, Hermes, Zoroaster, and many other revered names." On page 69, he says:—"Who does not see that this is a question only of curiosity, and of no real importance? Is any person sceptical of the genuineness and authenticity of Cicero's orations, or the poems of Horace, because we do not know who first bound together the scattered pieces, so as to make their respective collections?" Paragraph 9 contains this curious statement:—"That the writings of the New Testament shared the fate of other productions is evident from the following objection said to have been urged by Bishop Faustus, as mentioned by Lardner. 'It is certain,' says the Bishop, 'that the New Testament was not written by Christ himself nor by his apostles, but a long while after them, by some unknown persons, who, lest they should not be credited when they wrote of affairs they were little acquainted with, affixed to their works the names of apostles, or of such as were supposed to have been their companions, asserting that what they had written themselves was written according to those persons to whom they ascribed it?'" I ask whether that is taken from Lardner? I dare my opponent to say that he took it from that author, and I tell him that he took it from Robert Taylor's "*Diegesis*," page 106. (Cheers.) Mark the coolness, and at the risk of offending, I will say the characteristic cleverness, of my friend—he introduces this man Faustus without telling you when he lived, and where he lived. Why did not he tell you? Because he knows Bishop Faustus was a Manichean who adopted the two principles of good and evil, held the doctrines of the Manicheans, and was not a Christian at all in a proper sense. It is Infidel against Infidel. (Cheers.) Bishop! What's in a name? He took the title, but I can find the title applied to men in ancient writings who were not bishops at all. Faustus lived 400 years after Christ, and why should you believe in him rather than in Origen or Irenæus, or other men who bore witness to the originality of the Gospels? Why are they left out, and Faustus, who lived 200 years later, put in? (Cheers.)

Mr. WATTS: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen—If this debate is to be productive of good, it should be conducted on both sides with the quietude and the discretion which the pursuit of truth should inspire in the minds of disputants. (Hear, hear.) And let me say also, that both Mr. Cowper and myself must endeavour to be impressed

with the honesty of each other. We have listened to a speech which is remarkable for the earnestness which is commendable, but which dwells too much upon what could be done rather than upon what my opponent himself can do. I do not know that I could give you a better illustration of how careful you should be as to accepting his references, than in noticing the great point in his address. You will remember that he quoted Bishop Faustus's name, which I referred to in my pamphlet, and he charged me with taking the quotation second-hand from the "Diegesis" of Robert Taylor, and he dared me to say that I took it from Lardner, leaving you to infer that Lardner does not mention the fact. If Mr. Cowper has not read Lardner better than this, it is for us not to accept his assertions unless we have black and white for the truth of them. The only quotation throughout his speech which he has dared me to produce I will now read from Lardner's own works (Lardner's "Gospel History," vol. vi., part ii. chap. 63, page 557). It is this:—"Since it is certain that the New Testament was not written by Christ himself, nor by his apostles, but a long while after them, by some unknown persons, who, lest they should not be credited when they wrote of affairs they were little acquainted with, affixed to their works the names of apostles, or of such as were supposed to have been their companions, and saying they were writ by them." Now here Lardner states the facts precisely as I have asserted in my pamphlet. I place the book on the table for Mr. Cowper's verification. (Cheers.) I proceed now to the statement of the arrangement which I have planned during my opponent's speech. I have to regret that the suggestions thrown out by the chairman last week have not been acted up to by Mr. Cowper. I am here to defend passages in my pamphlets which are to be criticised. Which sentences these were I did not know until I came on the platform. It was suggested that Mr. Cowper should send to me during the week the points he intended to attack to-night. Up to the present moment he has not sent me one word or syllable. (Shame.) I do not complain but state it as a matter of fact, so that if I have not every book which will be required for reference you may not conclude it was the result of my misquoting, but through not knowing what my opponent was going to quote. It is only by chance that I have Lardner on the table. If I had not brought it Mr. Cowper would have thought he had won a triumph. (Cheers.) My opponent has misrepresented,

unintentionally of course, the object of the reference to the Koran. I said in my pamphlet that there are other religious theories for which the same claims are put forward as are urged on behalf of the Christian religion. Mr. Cowper said there are not. I referred to the Koran to show that in it inspiration, prophecies, and miracles, were claimed for the Mohammedan faith. He admitted all the claims except that of miracles. Mind, I do not say that Mohammed claimed them, any more than I assert positively that Christ claimed miracles. I do not wish to put myself in a false position by affirming what a man claimed centuries ago; but I state that another religious faith, apart from the Christian, had miracles claimed on its behalf. This Mr. Cowper denies. I quote the Koran to show that the general resurrection at the last day is taught therein. That may be a miracle, but I will not urge it. But I will turn to what are regarded as special miracles. I read from page 43 of the same edition of the Koran as was quoted by my opponent:—"It is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue, and as the more orthodox believe, and are taught by the book itself, inimitable by any human pen (though some sectaries have been of another opinion), and therefore insisted on as a permanent miracle, greater than that of raising the dead, and alone sufficient to convince the world of its divine original. And to this miracle did Mohammed himself chiefly appeal for the confirmation of his mission." That is reference number one; I turn to page 56, where the writer speaks of a certain bone in the body which will always remain uncorrupted to the last day. I read:—"For he taught, that a man's body was entirely consumed by the earth, except only the bone called *Ajb*, which we name the *os coccygis*, or rump-bone: and that as it was the first formed in the human body, it will also remain uncorrupted till the last day, as a seed from whence the whole is to be renewed: and this he said will be effected by a forty days' rain which God should send, and which would cover the earth to the height of twelve cubits, and cause the bodies to sprout forth like plants." If that would not be a miracle, I do not know what would. (Hear, hear.) I now quote from page 57, wherein I find foretold certain indications of the resurrection, the war with the Greeks, and the taking of Constantinople by the posterity of Isaac: "Who shall not win that city by force of arms, but the walls shall fall down while they cry out, *There is no God*

but God: God is most great!" If walls can be made to fall down by simply shouting, it is similar to the falling down of the walls of Jericho mentioned in the Bible. (Laughter.) Then on page 426, we are actually told that Mohammed himself was the subject of a miracle—we are told that Mohammed was caught up to heaven and sent back again. This, I presume, was considered a miracle by the followers of Mohamet. And I find these words said in reply to some who doubted the event: "If any impossibility be objected, they think it a sufficient answer to say, that it might easily be effected by an omnipotent agent." I think I have proved that miracles were claimed for the Mohammedan faith. I do not believe they were true, but these quotations bear out my assertion that other faiths claim miracles as well as Christianity. We have met to discuss to-night not precisely, as it was put to you, the historical value of the New Testament, because my opponent would not consent to meet me on that point; but we have to debate statements in my pamphlet, therefore if I do not take up every position which some of you desire, it is for this reason that I am determined to-night to compel Mr. Cowper to attempt to disprove the statements in my pamphlet, and I hope to show you that the statements cannot be impeached. My duty is not so much to strike my antagonist, but rather to prevent him from striking me home, and to prove that there is no weight in his blows. I will give him many opportunities when this debate is settled to discuss the general question of the historical value of the New Testament. I place before you as a proposition, that historical records are valuable in so far as they state certainties, not conjectures; facts, not speculations. What then can be brought forward in the way of speculation or conjecture will not disprove my pamphlet; the New Testament, to be of historical value, must state that which is true and certain, not that which is merely an opinion. The first question submitted to us is this: Is the history of the New Testament certain? That is the first point of attack. In my pamphlet I state, "When the New Testament was written, we have no certain means of knowing," and I quoted Hartwell Horne in connection with that statement, in addition to Dean Alford. But we are told that the quotation from Horne only refers to Matthew. Is this so? Horne says:—"In this conflict of opinions, it is difficult to decide." Never mind for the moment whether the Gospels were written from the year 30 to the year 80, or not; is the time when they were written

certain? I say, no: and whether there be any grounds for the statement that they were written at the time specified, we will deal with presently. But am I right in affirming that there is no sure ground for saying when they were written? Horne says:—"It is difficult to decide, for the accounts left us by the ecclesiastical writers of antiquity, concerning the times when the Gospels were written or published, are so vague, confused, and discordant, that they lead us to no solid or certain determination. The oldest of the ancient fathers collected the reports of their own times, and set them down for certain truths, and those who followed adopted their accounts with implicit reverence; thus traditions, true or false, passed on from one writer to another, without examination, until it became almost too late to examine them to any purpose." Am I right or wrong in my quotation? Nothing Horne says afterwards in any way disproves that. Mr. Cowper said that if I read further on, I should find that the internal evidence of the New Testament made up for the defects of the external. As to the external, this is one point to me; and I will show that there is no more certitude in the internal than in the external. (Cheers.) Is there anything certain about the time? Lardner says in vol. i. of his supplement, page 69, that we should not be too precipitate in giving a date to the Gospels, and on page 48 he puts it as doubtful whether the gospels were written until after some of the epistles. Here are Christian authorities, and they say it is a matter of uncertainty when the Gospels were written. My opponent spoke of certain various readings in a Latin poet; if he will say that the same consequences attend the rejection of the poems of the Latin author, which he says attend the rejection of the gospels, I will go into the subject of the Latin poems, and treat them as I have treated the New Testament. As there is simply everlasting condemnation for the rejection of the one, and no penalty attached to the rejection of the others, I do not care whether the Latin poems be genuine or not, it is a matter of small moment. (Cheers.) Then in my pamphlet I say, "Neither have we any knowledge that the statements of the New Testament were taken down as spoken by Christ and his apostles, or that they were committed to writing at all, previous to the middle of the second century." Mr. Cowper in attacking this sentence says that there were several editions, taken down in certain languages. His telling you this will not do, he must

prove it. My pamphlet says that there is no knowledge of the fact; his saying that there is, does not prove it; and though I have great respect for him, I cannot accept his word instead of the demonstration which must be produced to me, if it exists. When he has shown you "some knowledge" on the subject, then I will see whether it affects my position; but up to the present he has given no facts. Lardner says that "At the rise of the Christian religion there were no written systems or records of it. . . Afterwards it was taught by word of mouth, and propagated by the preaching of his apostles and their companions." Thus the statements of the New Testament were at first promulgated by tradition, and at a time when we have no knowledge about its being taken down in writing. Dean Alford, according to my opponent's own admission, says that there are misreadings upon important points in the New Testament. But more of that presently. As to the time when mention of the Gospels is first made by the early writers, Mr. Cowper has not produced any evidence to show that the Gospels were written or mentioned within a hundred years after the events reported in them are said to have occurred. If he can do so, now is the time. Mere assertions will not falsify my statement to the contrary. He admits that my reference to Josephus is correct, but throws out an inuendo about Philo which I shall be happy to take up in another debate. My question now is, however, as to the truth of my pamphlet. With respect to the Apostolic Fathers, will Mr. Cowper state that what he has quoted as the writings of those Fathers is given from books which are now admitted to be genuine? I have here the writings of Dr. Giles on this matter, and he says that there is not a word in the Apostolic Fathers where any reference is made to the New Testament. Early writers may have used expressions that are found in the New Testament, for that book is composed of sayings that were once the common maxims of the time. To disprove my statement, my opponent must prove that the early writers quoted not current phrases, but specifically the New Testament. I shall resume the discussion of this point, if necessary, in my next speech. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN acknowledged that he had not clearly stated in opening the proceedings, what the subject of debate exactly was. He led the meeting to suppose that it was the question of the historical value of the New Testament, but that was wrong; he ought to have said the question of the

truthfulness of certain selected passages in Mr. Watts's pamphlet, which however he did not possess. (Interruption.)

Mr. COWPER protested against the Chairman's remarks.

The CHAIRMAN maintained that he was strictly in order, and thought that his suggestion at the last meeting, to the effect that the exact propositions of debate should be sent to himself and Mr. Watts, ought to have been carried out. He came that night twenty minutes before the time announced for commencing the discussion, thinking that Mr. Cowper would put him in possession of the points to be debated, but he had not done so, neither had he (the speaker) heard from him since the last meeting. (Disorder.)

Mr. COWPER then said: Gentlemen,—I have a work to do, and I must do it in the name of God. (Cheers.) I indicated to Mr. Watts the beginning and the end of every portion of his tract which I proposed to discuss; I indicated to the Chairman the beginning and the end of every passage which I proposed to discuss. (Cheers.) Mr. Watts asked me to tell him what books he was to bring; has he given you the titles or chapters of any three books? Have I not had to ransack and rummage the works of Lardner, and Pye Smith, and Mosheim? and should I be such a nincompoop as to give him the information which he asks for? ("Oh, oh," and cheers.) I now come to my opponent. I asserted that he had borrowed his quotation from Faustus from Robert Taylor, and not from Lardner. He read his book. Although my time is precious, I shall give you the extracts from the three. First from the tract:—"Asserting that what they had written themselves, was written according to those persons to whom they ascribed it." Robert Taylor:—"Asserting that what they had written themselves, was written according to those persons to whom they ascribed it." Lardner:—"Or of such as were supposed to have been their companions, and saying they were written by them." Are they the same? ("No, no.") All this bluster about the Koran might have been spared. It was asserted last Thursday by me that the statement of Mr. Watts was not true of religions outside of the Bible, his statement being in the form of a question—"Has Christianity anything to recommend it that other religious theories do not claim? Miraculous power, sublime teachings, sound doctrines, progressive aspirations, are the supposed credentials of all assumed divine systems." I challenged him to prove that with reference to religions outside the Bible. He appealed to the Koran, and

I retorted that Mahomet did not claim the power to work miracles, and I have read from Mahomet his own disclaimer. With reference to the quotation from Horne (page 257), he has contradicted me, as he has throughout. As to the introductory sentence, I said it applied to St. Matthew; he has denied it. The paragraph commences:—"Matthew is generally allowed to have written first of all the evangelists." Horne then mentions various authorities who fix the date of Matthew's Gospel at different dates, but all within the first century, and then says:—"In this conflict of opinions, it is difficult to decide." I do not think it is difficult; it must refer to Matthew, and it can refer to no more. Then, as to the quotation from the Apostolic Fathers, my opponent threw dust into the eyes of his disciples. He says that we have no proof of the date of these books; I am not going to prove that we have, for he has admitted it. He says:—"The fact that neither Josephus, Philo, nor the Apostolic Fathers—*writers of the first century*, make any reference to the Gospels," &c. He himself has admitted it. (Cheers.) I now proceed then, for I cannot and will not be drawn away from what I have undertaken. Paragraph numbered 10, p. 11, says:—"Mosheim and Simon also mention that during the early centuries of Christianity, there were numerous gospels and epistles claiming to be of divine origin, in addition to those now regarded by Christians as genuine." I have read a passage from Mosheim, page 36 of Reid's edition, which shows to you Mosheim's own opinion on the subject, and he does not say that they claimed to be of divine origin, but that they were ascribed to apostolic writers, or words to that effect. I take Simon, and on pages 1 and 2 of the original edition we have his own opinions, and not the opinions which are "fathered" upon him. He says: "It is an admitted truth, by the consent of *all* ancient orthodox writers, that there are Four Gospels, but yet there appeared others after the beginning of the church." On page 2 he says: "Those who published them asserted that they were veritable collections of the doctrines and preachings of the apostles, but having no character of truthfulness, they had reason to reject these apocryphal books as filled with things false or doubtful." There is the original French copy. My opponent quotes Mackay, and Giles, and Evanson, but I repudiate them utterly, because I do not deal in second-hand statements, I deal in positive statements, the result of my own inquiry. (Cheers.) Then "as to when this selection was

made, Hartwell Horne admits that history is silent." Now here again, with characteristic cleverness, my opponent has substituted—(hisses)—gentlemen may hiss, but they prove themselves geese by so doing. He has substituted the word "selection" for the word "collection." (Shame.) The passage really is:—"Neither the names of the persons that were concerned in making this *colliction*, nor the exact time when it was undertaken, can at present be ascertained with any degree of certainty; nor is it at all necessary that we should be precisely informed concerning either of these particulars. It is sufficient for us to know that the principal parts of the New Testament were collected before the death of the Apostle John, or at least, not long after that event. Modern advocates of infidelity, with their accustomed disregard of truth, have asserted that the Scriptures of the New Testament were never accounted canonical until the meeting of the provincial synod of bishops from parts of Lydia and Phrygia, commonly termed the Council of Laodicea in Phrygia Pacatiana, A.D. 368." Our friend, instead of quoting that, after transforming a collection into a selection, says that "According to the opinion of many writers upon this subject, it is supposed that the New Testament was canonically settled in the fourth century, at the Council of Laodicea, which is said to have been held A.D. 364." I say that there is not an author who would say that a provincial council could fix the canon of the whole church. "Dr. Irons is of opinion," he says, "that the church did nothing to the canon for 400 years; nothing, except by individual and much neglected and opposed doctors, for 500 more; nothing authoritative till the sixteenth century; nothing satisfactory to herself even then; nothing to settle by authority the Hebrew or Greek text, till this hour." Dr. Irons shall himself distinctly score the back of my friend with a white stroke—"Such are the facts bearing upon the claim of the Church of Rome. . . . she did nothing to the canon for 400 years," &c. What Dr. Irons said of the Church of Rome, my opponent says Dr. Irons said of the church. (Cheers.) In paragraph eleven on page 12, my friend says: "Equally uncertain is history as to the mode of selection. Some writers mention that when the bishops met to decide what should be the word of God, the books were put to the vote of the meeting, and those Gospels and Epistles which had the majority of votes were regarded as 'divine.' By other writers it is stated that the bishops put

the whole of the books under the table, and besought those that were inspired to leap on to the top, and it happened accordingly. To believe this, however, would require a leap of the imagination. What became of the rejected books we know not. The Apocryphal New Testament contains some of them, but there are many of which we have no trace." I ask him first, who are the *writers* who say the bishops met and did as he says? And who are the *other writers* who state that the bishops made the selection by putting the books under the table, &c.? And which of the rejected books can he lay his finger upon in the Apocryphal Gospels? I challenge him to find one respectable author of any country or age who will say the one or the other. (Cheers.) In paragraph twelve he says: "The characters of the men who are alleged to have composed the council, rendered them unfit to decide upon the merits of any book." I demand what council he means; the only council he has mentioned is the council of Laodicea; and of that it would be emphatically untrue. Then "Neander and Tindal state that they were remarkable for quarrelling and fighting." I throw out Tindal as not being a Christian man, but where is it said in Neander that the council were remarkable for quarrelling and fighting? Then to whom is it that "one of the company is reported to have said that 'he fled all assemblies of bishops, because he never saw a good and happy end of any council, but that they did rather increase than lessen the evil; that the love of contention and ambition always overcame their reason?'" In paragraph thirteen, page twelve, he says: "Critics who profess to have examined ancient manuscripts, allege that in the English version there are passages and chapters not to be found in those manuscripts." I challenge him to mention any manuscript in the world that has been thus mutilated, and that does not contain every chapter of the New Testament as we have it. I know what he will do; he will tell you that according to some one who lived in the fourth century, the Ebionites rejected the first two chapters of the New Testament. That will not do; he must show the critics who will point out any chapter that is absent from those books. (Cheers.) He then makes an extract from Dean Alford, pages 21 and 22, and as usual he slides out of his subject, utterly forgetting what he was writing of. (Oh, oh, and laughter.) I ask, Is a man like that fit to refute Biblical literature and refute all England? (Loud cheering.) He is talking of various readings, and

then to bolster up these various readings, he quotes what Dean Alford says about the English translation! Mistaken translations are one thing, and mistaken readings are another. We know the English translation of the Bible is not infallible—(oh, oh)—and gentlemen who wish to overthrow the faith of Christianity must have an infallible system to put in its place before they can hope to succeed. Mr. Watts mutilates his extract. He says: "A formidable list of passages might be given in which our version either has confessedly misrendered the original, or has followed a form of the text now well known not to have been the original form."

. . . . "It is not a word more than the truth to say that it [the New Testament] abounds with errors and inadequate renderings." Now what Dean Alford really says is: "The English version for faithfulness, for simplicity, for majesty, will bear comparison with any that ever has been made; yet it is not a word more than the truth to say, that it abounds with errors and inadequate renderings." Why did not my opponent quote the two sentences, in order to give you a correct estimate of what he said? (Hear, hear.) And then Dean Alford says—"A formidable list of passages might be given, in which our version either has confessedly misrendered the original, or has followed a form of the text now well known not to have been the original form. These might be corrected at any time; and it is a grievous thing that this has not been done, or is not now in doing." Mr. Watts tells you of the mistakes, but he does not tell you that they can be corrected by any competent scholar. I have half a minute left, and I say after all that he has said as to my want of generosity, I can tell you that I have done what very few debaters have ever done—I have allowed him the final speech on each evening instead of myself. (Cheers.)

Mr. WATTS.—Mr. Cowper need not think I am under any obligation to him for allowing me the last speeches in this debate. If he will make up his mind to debate Christianity or Secularism in general he shall have the last speech; but as, in this discussion, he is attacking my pamphlets, it is only fair that I have the final reply. You had much of the last quotation from Dean Alford's "How to Study the New Testament." "Why did not I finish the last passage?" my opponent asks. Because it was not necessary to my argument! And why did not Mr. Cowper read on? He wound up his quotation with the words: "These might be corrected at any time, and it is a grievous thing that this has

not been done, or is not now in doing." Had he read the next sentence you would have learnt the Dean's practical conclusion: "For, as matters now stand, we are printing for reading in our churches, we are sending forth into the cottage and the mansion, books containing passages and phrases which pretend to be the word of God, and are not." (Cheers.) Mr. Cowper repeats that my quotation about Bishop Faustus was not from Lardner. But I read it to you from the very page where Lardner records it. Would it not be better, instead of fighting with each other because we do not give the precise words or the whole of the statement of a writer, to deal with the broad question, to be careful only as to fact? Instead of that, when my opponent finds himself in a corner he is glad to pick at any hole he can discover, in order to get out. This really is not debating simply for the truth. He says that he communicated to me the passages he meant to discuss, but he was careful in marking those passages in my pamphlet not to indicate the sentences which he has dealt with. He has spoken upon others, instead of those which he had marked; and I can state on my own honour, and on the honour of the Chairman, that we have never had the sentences marked by Mr. Cowper. (Shame.) I will now go through, as rapidly as I can, the points touched. First, Have we evidence that the books of the New Testament were published to the world before the middle of the second century? That is one of the questions I want answered. My opponent has studiously avoided it. I say that there are no writers in the first century who refer to the New Testament, and that nothing certain is known of it till the second century. I quote two authorities, Dr. Evanson, a gentleman who has been acknowledged to be a scholar, and Mosheim. Evanson says on page 30 of his "Dissonance:"—"The whole weight of the historical evidence in favour of the authenticity of the Four Gospel, amounts to no more than this, that these books, in the main of their contents, were extant in the latter end of the second century." Now for Mosheim; and permit me to remind you, by way of parenthesis, that in reading Mosheim last week, Maclaine's edition was called in question by my opponent. He told you that it could not be relied upon. This is the fate of men who write honestly, and have more regard for the truth than for orthodoxy. Such men as Giles, Evanson, Irons, Priestley, and Mackay, are to be thrown overboard by the advice of my opponent,

because they do not agree with his theological opinions. He says that Maclaine's translation of Mosheim is not trustworthy. Now, in a biographical sketch of Maclaine, I read:—"He was educated at Glasgow, under the celebrated Mr. Hutcheson, for the Presbyterian ministry. . . . During his residence at the Hague, he was known and highly respected by all English travellers, and not unfrequently consulted, on account of his extensive erudition and knowledge of political history, by official men of the highest rank. . . . His superior endowments of mind and heart, his genius, learning, and industry, constantly directed by a love of virtue and truth, by piety and charity, diffused a beneficial influence over the whole of his professional and domestic sphere. As a scholar, a gentleman, and a divine, uniformly displaying a judicious taste, an amiable deportment, and an instructive example, he was admired and loved by all who enjoyed his society." Now, here is a picture of a Christian man; but he is untrustworthy, forsooth, because he does not agree with Mr. Cowper. To show that Maclaine is an accurate writer, take his translation of the passage as to the toleration of Rome; it agrees with Tytler, Gibbon, Chambers, and Priestley; so if he is wrong, he is in good society. My object in quoting Mosheim here, is as to the time when the books of the New Testament were collected. Mosheim says:—"The opinions, or rather the conjectures, of the learned, concerning the time when the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, as also about the authors of that collection, are extremely different. This important question is attended with great and almost insuperable difficulties to us in these latter times." I quote this to show that we know nothing about the New Testament as a book till the second century. If Mr. Cowper asserts that he does, it is for him to bring proofs; but he has not done so up to the present time. Neither has he again touched upon the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. I quote men like Dr. Giles, who has won a reputation for his scholarship, and reached an eminence in literature to which our friend, with all his ability, cannot hope to aspire. (Cheers.) Now my opponent asks: Is it true that the early ages of Christianity were remarkable for artful or superstitious copyists? I quote Mosheim for it. He says: "For not long after Christ's ascension into heaven, several histories of his life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed by persons whose intentions, perhaps,

were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance. Nor was this all: productions appeared which were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men, as the writings of the holy apostles." And as to the genuineness and purity of the text of the various documents which make up the New Testament, Dr. Evanson says: "Before the invention of printing it was very easy for artful or superstitious copyists, not only to interpolate authentic writings with such alterations and additions as accorded with their own credulity or cunning, but even to produce entire pieces of their own or others' forgery under the name of any writer they pleased. And this practice was actually so common amongst several who called themselves Christians, in the second and succeeding centuries, that if what we call the Scriptures of the New Testament were not so tampered with, they are almost the only writings upon the same subject, of those early times, which have escaped free." Not true that the early ages of Christianity were remarkable for literary frauds! Why, Mosheim says that for several centuries the Christians thought that by resorting to lying they committed no sin, if they thus could promote the glory of God. (Mr. COWPER: Read it.) Well, I will do so, although it will take up my time, and I want to deal with other matters. You see how my opponent jumps when he thinks I have not the volume at hand, but fortunately I am prepared for that. On page 55, Mosheim says:—"The Platonists and Pythagoreans held it as a maxim that it was not only lawful, but even praiseworthy to deceive, and even to use the expedient of a lie, in order to advance the cause of truth and piety . . . and the Christians were infected from both these sources, with the same pernicious error, as appears from the number of books attributed falsely to great and venerable names. . . . It cannot be affirmed that even true Christians were entirely innocent and irreproachable in this matter." On page 77, the same writer observes:—"Thus it happened . . . that they who were desirous of surpassing all others in piety, looked upon it as lawful, and even laudable, to advance the cause of piety by artifice and fraud." If you want still further corroboration, you will find it on page 202, where Mosheim repeats himself, charging Christians with lying and deceiving to promote the glory of the church. Let Mr. Cowper answer that. Then my opponent puts it that there were no other gospels besides those in the New Testament that claimed to be divine. I hold in my hand an authority on the subject

which I think he will not repudiate. Jones says on page 4, vol. i., "Canon of the New Testament"—"The number of books that claim admission is very considerable. Mr. Toland, in his celebrated catalogue, has presented us with the names of above eighty, which he would have us receive with the same authority as those we now do. I cannot do him that honour which Mr. Nye does in his Answer, viz., to say his catalogue is complete; for it will sufficiently appear there are many more of the same sort which he has not mentioned. . . . They are generally thought to be cited by the first Christian writers with the same authority (at least many of them) as the sacred books we receive. This Mr. Toland labours hard to persuade us; but what is more to be regarded, men of greater merit and probity have unwarily dropped expressions of the like nature. Every body knows (says the learned Casaubon against Cardinal Baronius), that Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and the rest of the primitive writers, were wont to approve and cite books, which now all men know to be apocryphal. Clemens Alexandrinus (says his learned annotator Sylburgius) was too much pleased with Apocryphal writings. Mr. Dodwell (in his learned dissertations on Irenæus) tells us that till Trajan, or perhaps Adrian's time, no canon was fixed—the suppositious pieces of the hereticks were received by the faithful, the Apostles' writings bound up with theirs, and indifferently used in the Churches. To mention now no more, the learned Mr. Spanheim observes, that Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen very often cite Apocryphal books under the express name of Scripture." Here then are gospels and epistles that were said to be in existence in the early ages, and claimed precisely that which you claim for the New Testament. Jones observes, moreover, that there were epistles published with St. Paul's name attached. And the author of what is termed "The Gospel according to St. Luke" admits that other gospels were in existence before he began to write his, and says that these were written not by the eye-witnesses themselves, but were taken in hand "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." That is, they were taken down from hearsay, from tradition; or if founded on loose original written memorials, what has become of those real authorities for the later gospels, which only "set forth in order a de-

claration of those things" which were most surely believed among the early (not the earliest) Christians? Mackay says that there were hundreds of gospels in the early centuries, and asks why four were selected from the many others. Oh, but Mr. Cowper says he will not accept Mackay. No, because Mackay differs from him; but we ought in this debate, in order to arrive at truth, to go to any author who can give us information. We ought to go to the bar of reason and seek truth wherever it is to be found. (Hear, hear.) Speaking of Horne, my opponent referred to him to prove that my reference was not correct. Horne mentions the gospels in the plural, and how the gospels can be but one, I do not know. He says "it is difficult to decide." Mr. Cowper says he does not think so. But I am here to discuss what history says, and not what my opponent thinks. Mr. Cowper throws over my authorities, simply because they are against him, and he cannot disprove them by counter authorities. Then as to when the selection of the books of the New Testament was made. My opponent says that I have put "selection" for "collection." I have done nothing of the kind; it is my own word I use in the pamphlet and not one quoted from any authority, and really there is no difference in the sense in which I have used the terms. My opponent admits that history is silent as to when the New Testament was written, and we have no certain means of knowing when its selection and collection took place. That is my statement in the pamphlet, and I challenged him to disprove it. He has not done so, and his silence proves that I am right. (Cheers.) On page 117 of "The Bible and its Interpreters," Dr. Irons says: "At what time the various parts of this Book were arranged in this present form? At what time each part of it was first written? and *by whom?* and where preserved? and how *edited?* It almost looks as if some pains had been taken to *hide* these things! So widely known, and yet not known; so royally translated, and yet from *what ascertained originals?* We are thwarted at every point. If we could get at the clear beginnings of but one of its twenty-two books, it would be something literary to start with; but no." Here, then, Dr. Irons verifies my statement, although when I penned it, I had not read him. Dr. Lardner tells you also that the New Testament was simply received by tradition; that there can be no time fixed for the settlement of its canon. I have proved previously that there

were many gospels in existence in the early centuries; I wish now to know when the selection or collection was made. Dr. Giles and Dr. Irons say that no one can tell, Dr. Lardner says that it was received by tradition, Mosheim says that the question is attended with insuperable difficulties, and Jones and Evanson say that it was received by conjecture. (Cheers.) Then, as to how the selection took place. My opponent asks, where did I learn about the books being put under the table, and those that were inspired leaping on to the top? If he had told me that he wanted my authorities for this report, I could have brought the books; but I will now quote from a work of Dr. Perfitt's, which I happen to have here. (Hisses.) Will those who dispute the Doctor's statement, try to refute him on this question? In "The Life and Teachings of Jesus," on page 158, Dr. Perfitt's statement is to be found about the books being under the table. In my pamphlet I said: "To believe this, however, would require a leap of the imagination." I do not give it as a fact, but simply as a rumour, implying in my tract that it is not true. And the same authority I give in reference to the character of the bishops who met in council. It is on page 159 of his work, the "Life and Teachings of Jesus." Dr. Perfitt refers to Neander's Church History, vol. iii., p. 249, to support his position. My time is now up. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN said it was true that he had a marked pamphlet sent to him, but what he wanted was the exact propositions to be discussed. (Disorder.)

Some dispute then took place between Mr. Cowper and the Chairman, the former of whom thought the remarks of the latter were unfair, and were also out of order. The Chairman contended that he was perfectly in order, and took a show of hands to test whether he enjoyed the confidence of the meeting. The vote of confidence was carried unanimously.

Mr. COWPER: As this is the last time I shall be permitted to speak, I must state a fact in the correspondence by which the terms of this discussion were arranged between myself and Mr. Watts. He said in one letter that he accepted my arrangement for marking the paragraphs, under protest. I wrote in reply to say I could not limit it more than I had done; he must withdraw his protest. He wrote back, saying he accepted; but now he is in this assembly, he again comes forward with the protest which he withdrew in writing. My

reading of certain passages from Dean Alford appears not to have given complete satisfaction ; but I think my statement or admission that our authorised version is not absolutely perfect, ought to have prevented the necessity for the remarks of my opponent on the one hand, and for the joyous expression and exultation of his disciples and friends on the other. My friend informed me that he was fully prepared to defend every line of his writings ; and being prepared, I never anticipated all these Gambetta-like telegrams of victory. (Cheers and hisses.) Still following in his old track, he assails me with not one particle of his own industry, but with extracts from authors whom he can turn to his purpose. When I tell him like a man that I am not going to take heed of such names as I have referred to—Dr. Giles, Tindal, and the rest of that class—he immediately proclaims that they are paragons of learning. Dr. Giles, he says, edited the Apocryphal Gospels ; I have not only edited, but I have translated them ; and after an examination of Giles's book, I have come to the conclusion that he has distinguished himself by this one circumstance—that he knew nothing of his subject. (“Oh, oh,” and laughter.) As to Dr. Evanson, a writer of the last century, I must at least claim to be on a level with him. As to Dr. Irons, it is well known that he is a most eccentric man ; he would put the Bible in the shade to-morrow if you would allow him to administer the sacraments ; and as for his curious writings, he is disgusted with these men who misquote him, and I am prepared with authority for this, if necessary. Dr. Jowett's name was foisted into the last speech ; I never condemned his writings ; I have too much respect for him to do so ; he is an admirable scholar, and worthy of all praise, and it is an unrighteous thing to represent me as having condemned his scholarship. We have Maclaine again. Dr. Pye Smith says : “ I prefer using my own translation in preference to Maclaine's ;” and in Dr. Murdock's translation of Mosheim, which was taken by me last week because of Maclaine's being a bad one, he was charged with adding something of his own occasionally ; and further, Dr. Murdock says : “ Nor is this all, for the old translation has actually exposed Mosheim to severe and unmerited censure from different quarters ; and Maclaine has long stood accused before the public as a translator ‘ who has interwoven his own sentiments in such a manner with those of the original author, both in the notes and in the text, that it is impossible for a mere English

reader to distinguish them, and in divers instances he has entirely contradicted him." Yet in the face of these facts, my opponent says he regards him as a scholarly man. Finally upon Mosheim, I find that Dr. Reid's translation is perfectly correct, and a man who can deny that is at liberty to do so in the public prints, or in any other way. As to the story about lying, we have that thrust in our faces; but do not Secularists depart sometimes from the truth? (Hear, hear.) Do not unbelievers sometimes speak with such a faltering tongue that it is difficult to recognise the truth? I can give you proofs of it from the table, and therefore it is ungracious to say, because certain men disobeyed the law of Christ, while they professed to obey it, that on that account Christianity teaches lying. The law of Christ is that you "put away lying, and speak truth every man to his neighbour." (Hear.) The sentence of Christ, as uttered by his disciples, is "that all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"; and "whosoever loveth or maketh a lie." Is not that strict enough? Well then, if you find men professing to be Christians who love lies and speak them, you prove nothing but that they are hypocrites. This is the right way to treat the subject: here are certain books which we call "Acts of the Apostles;" do these books look like the productions of honest men or liars? If liars, how is it that they have kept their countenance so perfectly that they do not deny the fundamental principle upon which they proceed, and that none of them ever was detected until the mighty Mr. Watts rose above the horizon? (Cheers.) I will tell that gentleman one thing he perhaps does not know, which is yet in Mosheim, his holy oracle—that these hypocritical Christians who cheated and deceived, obtained those lessons in lying from the Platonists and Pythagoreans—those brilliant oracles you had depicted here last week. As to the extract from Jones. Jones is an honest man, and I am strongly inclined to think that the extract was something that my opponent had extracted from another man; I shall be glad to know. With these remarks, I do not wish to hurt anyone's feelings. I have gone on with this debate with the spirit of a lamb; but my opponent seems to think that my feelings are so deep that he has not been able to get down to them. (Laughter.) Paragraph 13: I now come to pages 12 and 13. This paragraph gives us a rigmarole regarding the opinions of certain critics. I do not care how many of these opinions are brought against

me, because for every one my opponent brings contradicting what I believe, I can bring twenty supporting what I believe. (Cheers.) But he appears to be driven into a corner in which he says, "I cannot settle the question for myself, or express an individual opinion;" so he ransacks different men's opinions, and hurls them at the Christians; why not give opinions of his own as to the genuineness of these books? And with reference to the King James's translation, I want to know what that has to do with the discussion in question? Thoroughly muddled is the man who drags in the critical value of the authorised version, or who blackens good men on the faith of Scott Porter and others. As to Erasmus, did any man with one letter of the vocabulary of criticism in his noddle ever talk of an "author" of a New Testament in Greek? We say the editor of a book of which a man is not the author, but here our friend makes Erasmus the author; whereas he was not even the editor of the book from which our version was made. The translation was mainly taken from Robert Stevens in 1550, in small folio, without the verses being marked. I have a copy in my possession. Now, with the assault upon Erasmus I need not occupy your time, but as it is a trivial thing, and we want something to enliven us, I shall read from Dr. Tregelles on this matter. He says: "Ninety-two is the MS. famous as that which was brought forward for the purpose of compelling Erasmus to insert the passage of the three heavenly witnesses (which he had promised to do if it were shown him in any Greek copy)." Erasmus said, "If you can show me a copy with the verse in, I shall insert it." The paragraph quoted is this: "Erasmus, the author of the Greek edition from which the English Testament is taken, admits, says the Rev. Scott Porter, that he inserted into his edition this very verse, ('For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one') knowing it to be a forgery, just to silence the clamour which was then raised against him. Erasmus does not attempt to conceal that he was dishonest and careless; that his Greek Testament was 'tumbled out headlong rather than edited.'" This is not true; and suppose it were true, have there been no critics since Erasmus? His work came out first in 1516, and since that time the manuscripts have risen in number from four or five, to perhaps 1,200, thanks to the labours of Christian critics—not infidel critics. (Cheers and hisses.) Some are offended—facts are

facts. There is not on the roll of eminent Scripture critics, one infidel as a collator of the Greek Testament, and having myself been a student of the whole subject for many years, I ought to know something about it. Then in the fourteenth paragraph there is a long array of names of men who held different theological opinions; but do they prove that my opinions are wrong? If they do, they also prove that my friend's opinions are wrong. That men differ from me is no more than that they differ from him. I am a great advocate of religious liberty, as all intelligent Christians are at the present time; so I shall pass over the whole of the names. Then I shall go on to the fifteenth paragraph. In the fifteenth paragraph the first two sentences read thus: "The truth of the claims of Christianity depends upon the 'fidelity of the Gospel history.' If this is defective, 'the Church herself is in error,' and, says Dr. Tischendorf, 'must be given up as a deception.'" That is a misquotation. But my time is gone, and I leave the truth with you. (Cheers.)

MR. WATTS: The last shall be first. Our friend in sitting down left the statement from Tischendorf in my hands charging me with a misquotation. That Dr. says: "If we are in error in believing in the person of Christ as taught us in the Gospels, then the Church herself is in error, and must be given up as a deception." This is what I stated in my pamphlet. I will now clear off matters as quickly as I can. I was referred to my statement from Dr. Irons, that the Church "did nothing to the canon for 400 years." Mr. Cowper said it refers to Rome, whereas in my pamphlet I say it refers to the Church. I am surprised at a learned gentleman like my opponent talking thus. My words in the pamphlet are, "According to the opinion of many writers upon this subject [the selection of the New Testament] it is supposed that the New Testament was canonically settled in the fourth century, at the council of Laodicea, which is said to have been held A. D. 364. This, however, is mere conjecture. Dr. Irons is of opinion that the Church did nothing to the canon for 400 years." The words of Dr. Irons are to be found on page 59 of "The Bible and its Interpreters." Of course the Dr. referred to the Church of Rome. Was it not the Catholics who had the Bible at that period in their keeping? I had been alluding in my pamphlet to the council of Laodicea, which was composed of Catholics, and immediately I quoted Dr. Irons to support my statement. Any ordinary reader there-

fore of the sentence in my pamphlet would understand that it was of the Church of Rome I spoke. And I should like to know what Protestant Churches were then in existence. Throughout the middle ages the Church of Rome was practically the whole Church of Christ. Mr. Cowper says that I withdrew by letter my protest against his way of marking the paragraphs. I never did; and I defy him to show a letter of mine containing a withdrawal. I said in the correspondence that I had no wish to offend Mr. Cowper; but as to withdrawing the protest, I challenge him to send me the letter which he says he has, and if therein I retract my protest, I think that I can guarantee that it shall appear in the *National Reformer*. Then my opponent says that I have not done anything from my own industry. This is a palpable untruth; every line of my writings now in question—whether right or wrong is another matter—is the result of sixteen years' hard study, and the careful reading of the best literature which I have been able to obtain. (Cheers.) Anyone would think judging from Mr. Cowper's own account of himself that he was unequalled in industry, as he is in good taste and courtesy. I do not boast of my ability, but with all my ignorance I have too much love for learning to despise it or its votaries. If my opponent knows so much, how is it that he has not in answer to my request brought forward the productions of the Apostolic Fathers? If he is so learned, how is it that he failed to give us the writings of Confucius in the Chinese language? Was he not obliged to retail them second hand? If Mr. Cowper wants to discuss and parade his knowledge of Greek and Latin, imperfect as are my scholastic acquirements, I will undertake to match his authority with authorities at least as weighty on the general questions of the genuineness and antiquity of the books of the New Testament. Our friend must needs boast of his learning—"I have done this and that," he says. Never mind what you have done; if it is worth knowing the world will find it out; prove what you can do now. Show by your answering me this evening that you have the ability to silence an "Infidel," and when you have done that you will have some reason to talk. (Cheers.) Professor Jowett has been accepted as an authority. Well, what does he say? On p. 444, cheap edition of "Essays and Reviews," are these words, "When we demand logical equivalents and similarity of circumstances, when we balance adverse statements, St. James and St. Paul, the New Testament with

the Old, it will be hard to demonstrate from Scripture any complex system either of doctrine or practice." This corroborates another point in my pamphlet that was to have been attacked. Then as to lying. You have at last had it admitted that Christians are sometimes given to lying. (No, no.) Mr. Cowper never denied what I read from Mosheim on this subject. If—(A voice: "He said hypocrites lie")—if he does not deny it, what answer has he made to the historical statement? He says: "Do not Secularists lie?" Professed Secularists may lie sometimes, but they never teach that to do so is a virtue, as I showed you that for centuries the Christians did. My opponent says: "Is this an argument against Christianity?" I never put it as such. I only quoted it to show that the early ages of Christianity were remarkable for fraudulence and lying. That was my statement. Then Mr. Cowper spoke of Christ's teaching; is this a debate on Christ's teaching? What would be said if I left off defending my pamphlet, and began to argue about Christ? I say that if Mr. Cowper, or any other Christian will meet me upon the teachings of Christ, I will gladly undertake to argue with him on the subject. (Cheers, and cries of "Question.") If he will meet me on the credibility of the Bible, I will meet him with pleasure. (The cries of "question" continuing, the Chairman rose, and intimated that he considered the speaker was perfectly in order.) (Chairman to Mr. Watts: "Proceed.") Then, having the decision of the Chairman in my favour, I say that if Mr. Cowper will meet me upon the credibility of the Bible, or any other subject connected with Christianity, I will meet him either in written debate or on the platform. (Cheers.) I am found fault with for producing extracts from modern writers. What of that? My opponent should have proved that they were not worthy of being put forward as authorities. He doubts the genuineness of my passage from Jones. Mr. Cowper insinuates that I have falsely ascribed it to that writer! Well, I will put the passage in his hands for him to verify. (Cheers.) I should be ashamed to impute bad motives to an opponent if I could not answer him. "Why did I not give my own opinions instead of those of other men?" he asked. Why? Because I am here not to give my own opinions, but to vouch for the truthfulness of the statements in my pamphlet; but I am ready to give my own opinions if necessary. But suppose I had said in this debate, "I think this, and I think that," what would my opponent have said? He would have replied,

" I don't want to know what Mr. Watts thinks, but I want his authorities for what his pamphlets contain." (Hear.) Then I am told about Erasmus, and a joke is made about my saying Erasmus was the author of the Greek edition from which the English Testament is taken. I don't think there is much difference between the author of a text and the father of a text. I hold in my hand a work by the Rev. Scott Porter, wherein he says that Erasmus was the father of the Greek text, and that " his Greek Testament was tumbled out headlong rather than edited." If my opponent can prove to this audience that the rev. gentlemen quoted by me are making mistakes, then more's the pity for the faith that is in them, that it does not prompt them to write correctly I say that Erasmus put in the verse pertaining to the Trinity in order to still the clamour which was raised against him. Erasmus acknowledged this himself. We are told that there are no Infidels that examine the texts of Scripture, who are learned critics. I have mentioned a few in this debate. Remember, however, that avowed " Infidels " are excommunicated, their services refused. You have an instance now—that of Vance Smith ; because he is a Unitarian, efforts are being made to strike him off the list of the revisers of the Bible. There are one or two points more. As to the books which were rejected in the early ages, Jones, on page 8, gives a list of those which were rejected by Christians themselves. Some of the very books which you have now included in the New Testament, were once regarded as not of divine origin. Is the New Testament now in the condition in which it is supposed to have been centuries ago ? How is it that my opponent, with all his knowledge, has not told us what he knows of the original manuscripts ? The fact is, he knows nothing of any manuscript which goes back farther than the fourth century : if he does, he should have informed us. (Cheers.) In Mr. Cowper's last speech but one, he asked me for the author who said that the fourth century was the time when some persons thought that the New Testament canon was settled. I answer that Lardner, vol. 1, page 54, states : " It has been sometimes said that the Council of Laodicea first settled the canon of the New Testament." Horne also, on page 68, vol. i., of his " Introduction to the Scriptures," states that it has been asserted that the " Scriptures of the New Testament were never accounted canonical until the meeting of the council of Laodicea, A. D. 364." Here are my authorities, your own men, Lardner and

Horne. I have only three minutes left. I was going to quote Dr. Giles on this very subject. My opponent says that there are no writers of any eminence who have rejected the Gospels. I have here Professor Norton's work on "The Genuineness of the Gospels," and on pp. 16 and 17 of vol. i., he rejects the first two chapters of the present Gospel of Matthew; the account of the saints rising out of their graves and going into the holy city, and appearing unto many after the resurrection of Jesus, in the 52nd and 53rd verses of chap. xviii.; and the account of Judas in the same chapter. I have here Luther's judgment as quoted by Sir William Hamilton; he rejects the epistle of St. James, considering it simply as "an epistle of straw." And Eusebius mentions as doubtful the epistle of Jude, the 1st of Peter, the 2nd and 3rd epistles of John, also the epistle to the Hebrews. In the face of such facts as these, my opponent says that there are no men of ability who reject portions of the Scripture! My time has run out, I have not discussed this matter so thoroughly as I could desire, but I have endeavoured, and I trust successfully, to give good authority for the truth of every statement in my pamphlets which has been called in question. Now what you have to consider is this: Was I justified in my statements put forth in these two pamphlets? If you believe that I was, then you must give the verdict for me; if, on the other hand, you consider that I have therein misrepresented and spoken falsely, then you must vote against me. I am surprised that my opponent, who has so much more learning than myself, will not discuss the broad question of the Bible, will not discuss the broad question of Christianity, and the broad question of Secularism. How is it that he must have my pamphlets for two or three months before he is prepared to assert that they are untruthful? You must consider these questions for yourselves. Let us learn in all future debates that we should not impute to our opponents bad motives; let us rise above the passions of our early tuition and prejudices; let us regard each other as so many pilgrims on the road to truth; and if some of us halt and take refuge in the citadel of orthodoxy, and have not the strength or courage to travel farther, let them not be jealous of us who still advance, as we are not scornful of those who linger behind; let us all do our best, and, whether we be right or wrong in our opinions, bear this in mind, that in the Bible, as elsewhere, there are truths, and our duty is to gather lessons

wherever they are to be found ; and if there be a God above, he will smile upon the honest intentions of his people, and he will not condemn us because we have been faithful to what we thought right. (Cheers.) When this debate is printed, read it carefully ; and I hope you will, in your cool moments, impartially consider which is on the right side. I say that I have endeavoured to do my best, go you and do likewise. I have spoken as to wise men ; judge you what I have said. (Cheers.)

A vote of thanks, moved by Mr. Watts, and seconded by Mr. Cowper, was then accorded to the Chairman ; after which, by the consent of both disputants, it was resolved to publish the correspondence relative to the terms of the discussion, in order that it might be shown whether it was really a fact, as stated by Mr. Cowper, that his opponent had withdrawn his protest against the method of marking the paragraphs of the pamphlets.

The meeting then dispersed.